



# Lakeshore Connection

Wisconsin Chapter, Society for Technical Communication    Volume 4, Issue 2    March 2003

## January meeting recap

Our January 14 meeting was a panel discussion on "Practical Methods for Usability and Information Architecture." The panel featured three presenters/speakers:

**Amii LaPointe** (Multex Services, Inc.) presented "Task Analysis and Mapping."

- Task analysis is the study of how users achieve their overall goals while using your products
- *Mapping* is a way to represent this visually

**Brian Molstad** (Molstad Consulting) presented "Information Architecture."

- Information architecture (IA) is "the art and science of structuring and organizing information environments to help people effectively fulfill their information needs"
- Information Architecture is an integral part of usability and user-centered design

**Sam Racine** (Unisys Corp.) presented "User Testing Minus the Users."

- Sometimes, you can't get to any end users for testing purposes. Then you need to re-create the user in your mind.
- Remember: the user is not you. Users' motivations and environments are going to be different than yours. ♦

## "Clarity is King" to be topic of March meeting

Join us on Tuesday, March 11 to hear David M. Freedman talk about writing techniques for electronic communications.

The title of his presentation is "Clarity is King -- Electronic Communications in Perspective."

David M. Freedman is a Chicago-based writer, editor and publishing consultant. He began his career in 1978 as a magazine writer and editor, and served on the editorial staffs of

professional, trade, business and consumer publications. Since 1999 he has advised businesses and professional practices on a wide range of marketing communications projects.

The meeting will be at the MSOE Alumni Partnership Center, 1120 North Broadway (just south of Juneau and Broadway). Parking is available in the lot next to the APC (south side).

The meeting schedule is:

5:30 p.m. -- 6:00 p.m.  
Networking

6:00 p.m. -- 7:00 p.m.  
Dinner and brief announcements

7:00 p.m. Presentation

The cost (which includes dinner) is \$13 for members, \$18 for future members, and \$10 student members.

You can make reservations by email to

[kgorski@execpc.com](mailto:kgorski@execpc.com) or via the STC telephone reservation line at 414-299-0048. Additional information will be sent via e-mail to chapter members. ♦

## “Seeding the clouds”

The speaker at our attendance-challenged February 11 meeting was John Hedtkke, a member of the STC’s Nominating Committee and an Associate Fellow of the STC. He is currently President of the Hoosier STC Chapter.

(The meeting attendance was reduced by a snowstorm and bad driving conditions that night.)

His topic was “Seeding the clouds: How to make it rain on you even during a dry spell.”

The presentation was geared to technical communicators who have been affected by the current bad economic conditions.

His presentation included many ideas that can improve a writer’s financial outlook during bad economic times.

Hedtkke suggested these things that you can do to improve your chances of finding work (if you’re out of work):

1. Update your résumé.
2. Create a portfolio.
3. Build a web site.
4. Add some new skills.
5. Change your mode.
6. Change your venue.
7. Expand your geographic area.
8. Sign up with a lot of agencies.
9. Evaluate what you’ve done already.
10. Write magazine articles.

11. Network as much as possible.
  12. Go to every STC event you can!
  13. Go to lots of non-STC events, too.
  14. Volunteer!
  15. Speak to groups.
  16. Participate in your alumni association.
  17. Consider lowering your standards.
  18. Write a book.
  19. Write 3<sup>rd</sup>-party books for a company.
  20. Don’t let your employment situation affect your lifestyle.
  21. Be ready when the floodgates open.
- (List of suggestions and “Seeding the clouds” presentation © John Hedtkke. All rights reserved.) ♦

## Coming Soon: Member 100000

(Reprinted from *Tieline*, February 2003, Volume XVI, Number 2)

In the next few months, STC will achieve a milestone of sorts. Some lucky new member will be assigned member number 100000! That’s a measure of how many technical communicators over the years have recognized the personal and professional value of STC membership. (Note: The Society did not start assigning membership numbers until 1985, when it computerized its membership records. Since the founding of STC in 1953, more than 115,000 individuals have been members of the Society.)

However, this milestone may also be a minor administrative headache. For example, the STC membership database and the log-on field for the members-only section of the STC Web site need to be modified to accommodate six-digit membership numbers. The IT staff at Society headquarters is looking for other areas where this rollover has the potential to create problems, and recommends that all chapter and SIG webmasters and membership managers examine their Web sites and databases. Now is the time to make sure your chapter is ready for member 100000! ♦

## STC Launches 50th Annual Conference Web Site

*(Reprinted from Tieline,  
Volume XVI, Number 2,  
February 2003)*

The Web site for STC's 50th Annual Conference is up and running at [www.stc.org/50thConf](http://www.stc.org/50thConf). In addition to providing comprehensive, up-to-date information on educational and professional opportunities at the conference, the site features a dynamic online registration form that simplifies the registration process for members. The form can be viewed at [www.stc.org/50thConf/regOnline.asp](http://www.stc.org/50thConf/regOnline.asp). When a member enters his or her five-digit member number, the name and address fields are automatically populated with information from the STC membership database. (Note: To register at the member rate, members *must* enter their membership number, which appears on the address labels of *Intercom*, *Technical Communication*, and all other correspondence from the Society office. Members who need to be reminded of their membership numbers should call the office at 703-522-4114.)

Another new feature of the conference Web site allows visitors to view all of the technical sessions scheduled for a particular day. The session information appears in a printer-friendly format and includes brief descriptions of the sessions, their locations and times, and the names of moderators and speakers. As the conference draws near, this information will be updated frequently with cancellations and room changes. Members are encouraged to visit the site often for the latest information.

STC's 50th Annual Conference, to be held May 18-21 in Dallas, Texas, marks an important milestone in Society history. For a half-century, STC has been promoting the arts and sciences of technical communication. In February, STC will launch a Web site devoted to Society history at [www.stc.org/stc@50](http://www.stc.org/stc@50). The site will feature a timeline of important dates in technical communication, juxtaposed with a chronology of developments in science and technology. Visitors will also be able to contribute to a Web log that records memories and reminiscences of their experiences as STC members. ♦

## Wisconsin Chapter Officers and Contacts

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## Upcoming Chapter events and meetings

**March 11, 2003**

### Clarity is King -- Electronic Communications in Perspective

Speaker: Dave Freedman,  
D.M. Freedman Consulting,  
Chicago. Topics will include:

- where does electronic/  
online communication  
fit into your overall  
strategic  
communications or  
publishing plan?
- writing techniques for  
electronic  
communications in a  
technical environment

**April 8, 2003**

### Writing and Editing Like a Pro

Speaker: Bill Van Pelt,  
Associate Professor of  
English, University of  
Wisconsin - Milwaukee

**May 13, 2003**

### Managing Multiple Responsibilities

Speaker: Michael Tobis,  
Ph.D., Ducks in a Row  
Consulting, Madison  
(Joint meeting with ASTD  
and possibly PMI)

**June 10, 2003**

### STC's 50th Birthday!

Panel Discussion on STC  
Past, Present, and Future  
Panelists: Mollye Barrett,  
Michelle Berkes, and Ken  
Cook ♦

## Please check your e-mail address

Kathie Gorski, our Programs  
Manager, reports that her  
last e-mail to all chapter  
members resulted in 17 e-  
mails that were bounced  
back to her as invalid. Also,  
we don't have e-mail  
addresses for some members.

If you haven't been receiving  
notices of upcoming  
meetings, we either have an  
incorrect e-mail address or  
no e-mail address for you.

The best way to have your  
information updated is to go  
to [www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org) and update  
your information online. That  
way, it's updated there and  
for our chapter. ♦

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