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STC Mission Statement:

Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.

Contact the STC at
901 N. Stuart St., Suite 904
Arlington, VA 22203-1822
Phone: (703) 522-4114
Web site: www.stc.org

Southern Arizona Chapter Mission Statement:

To increase public awareness of the technical communication profession and to serve as a resource to STC-SAZ members.
Web site: www.stc-saz.org

Meeting Notice

Meet Susan Burton

The STC Phoenix chapter is hosting a meeting with Susan Burton, the Society for Technical Communication's (STC) new executive director. Susan will provide an opportunity to hear what is happening in STC from Society-level leadership. Because this is a special opportunity, there are extended plans for the day.

Save the Date: Thursday, Feb. 15

Place: University of Phoenix, Chandler Campus, 2975 W. Linda Lane (off Price-Loop 101 and Ray Road)

Time: Town Hall meeting from 3 to 5 p.m.
Networking from 5 to 6 p.m.
Dinner and program at 6 p.m.

Menu: Order from a select menu. Dinners are served with soft drinks, iced tea and coffee.

Cost: Dinner and meeting: \$20 STC members; \$25 nonmembers; \$15 students
Meeting only (includes dessert): \$10 for everyone.

RSVP: To reserve your spot, contact Mike Schwinghammer at (480) 314-3494, e-mail stcphoenix@juno.com, or visit www.stc-phoenix.com **by noon, Sun., Feb. 11.**

Walk-ins are welcome. No-shows will be billed.



STC Elections

The 2007 STC election will open in early March. In the meantime, you can review candidate biographies on the STC Web site at <http://www.stc.org/candidatesFAQ/>.





Letter From the President

Chapter News

By Carrie Cooper, STC-SAZ President

Here are the latest news bulletins for our chapter from the January planning meeting:

- Please note an important date change for our February program meeting: We will be joining the **STC Phoenix** chapter on **Thursday, Feb. 15**. The topic is "An Evening with Susan Burton, STC's Executive Director." The location is University of Phoenix, Chandler Campus, 2975 W. Linda Lane (off Price-Loop 101 and Ray Road). If you are planning on going to this special meeting, please contact [Brenda Huettner](#); she is coordinating car pools.
- The STC-SAZ executive council reviewed the Chapter Achievement Award (CAA) application. The application form is much improved, and the streamlined format provides several ideas for new chapter activities and initiatives. We are planning some exciting new projects this spring. The good news: We're doing very well as a chapter.
- STC-SAZ Treasurer **Richard Cook** is stepping down at the end of his term. He has served us well for three years. Obviously, we will need a new treasurer. As an incentive to encourage candidates to run for this position, the new treasurer will receive the latest copy of Quicken software for their home computer (this is how he keeps the books now).
- It's time to revise the STC-SAZ Strategic Plan. **Kitty Aughey** is in charge of this project. She would like to ensure our objectives align with Society goals. You download a copy of our plan at <http://www.stc-saz.org/resources.html>. E-mail your comments and additions for the Strategic Plan to [Kitty](#) as soon as possible.
- The Election and Nominating Committees need a third member to help find STC-SAZ officers. E-mail your suggestions for committee members to [Kitty](#).



Web Site of the Month:

I recommend <http://www.cookingforengineers.com>. As the tag line for this site says, "Have an analytical mind? Like to cook? This is the site to read!" There is an impressive amount of information for each recipe: an ingredients list, photographs showing the step-by-step assembly, printer friendly view, and a recipe card.

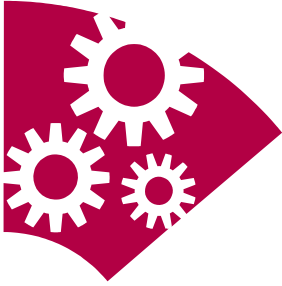
Most intriguing is the concise grid format shown at the end of each recipe. Ingredients are on the left, and instructions are on the right. Here is an example of the recipe grid for Eric's Chocolate Pecan Pie:

Preheat oven to 375°F	
4 Tbs. butter	cream
1/2 cup dark brown sugar	
1 large egg	mix
1/2 cup maple syrup	
6 oz. pecans	stir
6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate	
1 pie crust	pour 8 level
	bake 375°F 45 min.

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From <http://www.cookingforengineers.com>

Each recipe is tested and documented (we love that). The site has tons of links. And, who knows? Cooking for Engineers may inspire you to rethink some of your standard documentation formats — such as recipes. ■



This article first appeared in the Dec. 2006 issue of the STC Orlando chapter newsletter, *Memos to Members*.

Feature Article

Getting Yourself Hired

by Dalton Hooper, Member Orlando and Suncoast Chapters

Lesson 1: Providing a Sample of Your Work

Do you bring examples of your writing with you on job interviews? Hopefully, you answered in the affirmative. But, did you know that someone sent the interviewer an example of your writing before your interview was even scheduled?

The Most Important Writing Sample

Would you expect a candidate applying for a job as a tailor to show up at the interview wearing a suit that did not fit well? Would you expect a candidate for an auto mechanic's job to pull into the parking lot in a car that was knocking loudly and spewing black smoke? Then why would you, as a technical communicator, send a résumé to a prospective employer that was not an example of your very best documentation work?

As a technical communicator you are unique, in that you are able to get the interviewer to see a sample of your work without having to wait for an interview. The person who sent the interviewer an example of your writing before your interview was even scheduled was – YOU! If you haven't caught on by now, your résumé IS an example of your work! The question is: Is it an excellent example?

What Would Make Your Résumé Excellent?

Let's think about this for a moment. What is the value that we, as technical communicators, typically bring to the creation of documentation to make it excellent? Some examples include:

- Identifying the intended audience (the interviewer)
- Assessing the needs of the intended audience
 - What is the interviewer looking for?
 - How can you meet the interviewer's needs?
- Understanding how the documentation will be used (as an aid in deciding who to interview)
- Determining the optimal method by which to transform the source information into understanding for the intended audience (creating a résumé with the right information, in the right amount, and in the right layout)

It is appropriate to think of your résumé as a type of job aid, with the interviewer being the user and the objective being to assist in the decision whether to pursue you further (i.e., interview). Consequently, an excellent résumé would be one that convinces the reader that you should be interviewed.

The Right Information

Your résumé should contain information supporting your assertion that it is in the company's best interest to pursue you further. Your résumé should only address what you can do for the company – not what the company can do for you. In too many instances, résumés waste valuable space (not to mention the reader's time!) in relating what a position with Acme Widgets would mean to the candidate's career, livelihood, and self-esteem. Frankly, companies are not in business to serve the needs of their employees, but to serve the needs of the owners (stockholders) of those companies. Filling the needs of the employees is simply a fortuitous byproduct.

The Right Amount

Your résumé should contain enough information to convince the reader you should be interviewed. No more, no less. That is, after all, the objective of a résumé – to get you the interview!

The Right Layout

This is very important: Your résumé should be easy to skim, with liberal use of white space. The first thing the reader sees when viewing your résumé for the first time is not the content – but the layout! The layout sets the tone in the reader’s mind before they have even read the first line. If your layout is very busy, with small point type (less than 10 pt), narrative form (i.e., little or no bulleted lists), and goes on for too many pages, the reader will dread the upcoming reading, rather than be enticed by it. The more you give the reader a feeling that they will be able to easily glean the information they need from your résumé, the more likely it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The Write Stuff

Even if you followed all the advice mentioned above, if your résumé contains a misspelling, grammatical error, nonparallel construction, or any other violation of documentation standards recognized by technical communication professionals, it will rightly go on the “reject” pile. After all, when deciding which writing samples to bring to an interview, you wouldn’t dream of including an example that had not been spell-checked, grammar-checked, proofread, and critiqued, would you? Why hold your résumé to a lesser standard? It is, after all, what determines whether there will even be an interview in which to show off those writing samples.

About the Author

Dalton Hooper is currently the documentation project manager for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts Information Technology. Dalton directs a team of technical writers responsible for providing all relevant technical documentation during the development and support of internal business systems for Disney parks and resorts worldwide.

He can be reached at dalton.hooper@disney.com. ✚



Scholarship Opportunities

Instructional Design Scholarship

The Instructional Design and Learning (IDL) SIG scholarship team proudly announces a \$500 scholarship to assist students of all ages who are pursuing an undergraduate degree, graduate degree, or certificate in the area of instructional design. Students applying for this scholarship are expected to be able to demonstrate their focus on topics related to instructional design through their academic studies, current jobs, graduate or certification program, special projects, and/or the STC annual conference.

This award is wholly funded by the IDL SIG. The award may be used for registration fees, books, or attendance at the upcoming STC annual conference in Minneapolis. All winners and honorable mentions will be published in the IDL SIG quarterly newsletter. The deadline for submission is March 15, 2007. Winners will be notified by April 15, 2007. For more details and all necessary forms, go to

<http://www.stcidlsig.org/cms/> and click **Scholarships**. ✚



Society News

Want to Attend the Annual Conference?

By Rachel Houghton, Senior Member, Willamette Valley Chapter

The STC conference is coming in May 2007, and it's time to convince your supervisor (if he or she isn't already convinced) to support your continuing education. You'll need to show why it's beneficial – not just for you, but for your company as well.

Apply Conference Elements to Your Company's Needs

First, you'll need to review the preliminary program (to be sent in February). Highlight sessions that could save your company money – for example, sessions on choosing an online technology or tool, or making sure your documentation is ready for translation. Are you getting ready to start using a new tool? Check for sessions or conference workshops on how to use that tool or similar tools. Conference tracks address specific areas: designing and assessing user experiences; developing and delivering content; producing and publishing information; managing people, projects, and business; developing your skills and promoting your profession; and applying theory and research to practice.

Next, create a list of session and/or workshop topics and note their relevance to your job and company. Use specific phrases to describe how each session will help you handle a project or task. Mention that you will be able to pass on the knowledge gained to your co-workers, and your notes and copy of the proceedings will be available for reference. The proceedings include papers from many sessions and is provided free to all full-conference registrants.

Certificate Programs Provide In-depth Look

Does your supervisor want a more specialized, in-depth look at a subject? Consider the conference certificate program. You'll attend a two-day preconference seminar and four designated conference sessions during the three days of the conference. The price of the certificate program includes full registration for the conference. There are five certificate programs to choose from: Technical Communication 101, Master Writers, Usability, Content Management, and Team Management.

Arrange for Travel, Lodging, and Vacation Time

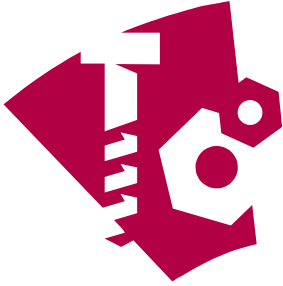
List the transportation costs, registration fee, meal costs, and the price per night of the hotel room. You can find the registration fee and preferred conference hotel rates on the travel section of the conference Web site, as well as discounts for travel and lodging available to conference attendees. Don't forget to negotiate vacation time. Some companies, if they are not able to fully (or even partially) fund your conference attendance, will allow you to attend the conference on company time.

Compare the cost of the conference with other conferences. Although conference rates increased this year, the rates are less than those for conferences held by various other organizations. Take advantage of the early-bird rates to save your company money. If you register by Feb. 28 as a member, you save \$250 over someone who doesn't register until he or she is on site, and \$150 over someone who registers before May 4.

Consult Sample Memos

If you need a helping hand writing a memo or e-mail to your supervisor, see the sample memo in the December issue of *Intercom* or at the STC conference Web site.





Book Review

Managing Virtual Teams

Review by Kathleen Rea, Member (KeaRea@aol.com)

By definition, a virtual team is a group of individuals with common goals but located in different places. Separated by background, technology, culture and time, virtual teams face unique challenges.

Many books have addressed the challenge of creating and managing virtual teams, and other books have outlined the tools available. All have their respective strengths and weaknesses, but this book has brought these two important subjects, teams and tools, together in an effective format for managers. The authors were part of a virtual team as they wrote this book, and their experiences in bringing this book to fruition clearly show the challenges and rewards.

Part 1 of the book outlines the basic setup of a virtual team, including the team life cycle and specific challenges a virtual team experiences. The chapters describe how to choose individuals for your team, how to choose the tools and exploit the technology, and how to overcome the basic issues and risks as you try to mold individuals of differing backgrounds and beliefs with varying availability of technology into a smoothly operating team with the same goal – the successful completion of the project. Communicating with team members who are asleep at the other side of the world when you are working is a challenge at best!

I was quite impressed with the chapters dealing with the review and evaluation processes, which I have found to be considered as afterthoughts or given short shrift with the virtual teams in which I have participated. These chapters thoroughly describe the importance of these processes with reviews and evaluations tailored to your team and the need to incorporate them from the very beginning.

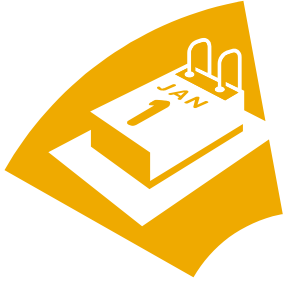
Part 2 provides an overview of the many tools available for virtual teams: instant messaging tools, blogs, wikis, and RSS feeds, among others. Communication is integral to the success of a virtual team. The authors used a wiki, an editable Web site, to construct their book, but they stress that this is only one of many tools available to managers. Managers need to pick and choose the best tools for the project, keeping in mind the technologies available to the team members.

When I read this book, I had the distinct feeling that I should have read this book six months sooner, when I was a member of a virtual team. The members of my team were in India, the Philippines, and the U.S., with all the various cultural, time, and technology challenges. Now that I look back, this book could have helped our team work through the risks and changes any virtual team faces. I believe anyone reading this book will have the same feeling. This is an easy-to-read-and-follow guide for virtual teaming and also contains a nice list of available tools. It is a perfect tool for virtual team members.

The wiki the authors used – <http://www.wikiwackyworld.com/> – is also open to the readers of their book and anyone who has comments and ideas on how to work with virtual teams, inviting us to all become a part of their virtual team!

Book Information: *Managing Virtual Teams: Getting the Most From Wikis, Blogs, and Other Collaborative Tools*. Authors: M. Katherine Brown, Brenda Huettner, and Char James-Tanny. 2007. [ISBN-10 1-59822-028-4. 384 pages. Wordware Publishing, Inc. \$29.95 Paperback]





Chapter Activity

SAZ Program Schedule

Programs are held on the **second Thursday** of each month in Tucson, except February in Chandler.

New meeting location effective September 2006: El Parador, 2744 East Broadway (south side between Country Club and Tucson Blvd.), www.elparadortucson.com

- **September 14, 2006:** Network and Nibble.
- **October 12, 2006:** Avon Murphy
- **November 9, 2006:** DITA with Tom Escobedo, IBM..
- **December 14, 2006:** Holiday party.
- **January 11, 2007:** Casual networking dinner (no program). City Grill.
- **February 15, 2007:** Susan Burton, STC's Executive Director (U. of Phoenix, Chandler, Ariz.)
- **March 8, 2007:** Knowledge Management at Intuit and chocolate raffle fundraiser for scholarship
- **April 12, 2007:** Brad Keller will be present to discuss the past, present, and future of Help authoring and news about Robohelp, Doc-To-Help, and Microsoft.
- **May 10, 2007:** Annual Meeting: Awards and Recognitions.

The program schedule is subject to change without notice; for up-to-date meeting information, visit www.stc-saz.org.

SAZ Planning Schedule

All chapter members are invited to join the executive council and committee heads at the monthly planning meetings. Come participate in the way the chapter is run! You'll have an opportunity to express your opinion and learn about the inner workings of our chapter.

August 22, 2006	December 19 2006	April 24, 2007
September 26, 2006	January 23, 2007	
October 24, 2006	February 27, 2007	
November 28, (e-mail)	March 27, 2007	

Regular planning meetings are held in the café at Barnes and Noble on Broadway (east of Swan) at 6 p.m. on the **fourth Tuesday** of the month.

Committee Openings

Publicity and Public Relations

This is a fun, very visible job that is critical for the communication efforts of our chapter. Two to four people would make an ideal team. For more information, contact Brenda Huettner at bphuettner@aol.com.

Education Outreach

This group would be our liaison with the Tucson academic communities, both for higher education and secondary schools.

Scholarship Committee

This person solicits and processes applications for our annual scholarship award from the college communities in Tucson.





Educational Opportunities

STC Remote Seminars

With all seminars, the cost is per site, not per person. Note that registration closes 24 hours before the seminar. For more information, visit the STC Web site, www.stc.org/seminars.asp.

Creating Indexes on Web Sites and Intranets

Just as readers of print documentation benefit from indexes, so can users of online content benefit from site A-Z indexes. Browsable, alphabetical indexes have long been the standard method for precision searching in books and other printed documents. Although online content enables search-engine searching, search engines are not the most accurate means of finding information. Managers of Web or HTML content should also consider implementing manually created site A-Z indexes to best fulfill the searching needs of the users.

Heather Hedden is principal of Hedden Information Management, providing services and training in indexing and taxonomy creation. Heather previously served as senior vocabulary editor at Thomson Gale.

Heather teaches online courses in Web site indexing, both independently and through the Continuing Education Program of Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science. Heather has published numerous articles on Web site indexing and is currently working on a book, *Indexing Specialties: Web Sites*, to be published jointly by the American Society of Indexers and Information Today Inc.

Heather is a coordinator of the American Society of Indexers' Web Indexing SIG and is 2006 president of the New England Chapter of ASI. Heather has a B.A. from Cornell University and an M.A. from Princeton University.

- **Presenter:** Heather Hedden
- **Date:** Wednesday, Feb. 7 | 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
- **Seminar Level:** All Levels

Working in Global Teams

Do you work in a geographically distributed team? Have you only “met” your colleagues over the phone or on video? Are time zones a primary concern when setting up meetings? Do you find yourself studying other cultures? Whether you're looking to optimize your virtual relationships or just getting started in a virtual team environment, you will find this presentation useful.

Virtual, global teams require us to use our communication skills in ways that were unimaginable 20 years ago. In this seminar, Makarand Pandit discuss ways to build successful working relationships in virtual environments. If you are working with teams in India, this seminar will be especially useful: The speaker will discuss the state of technical communication in India and share the experiences of Indian technical writers working in virtual teams based on their 2005 survey.

Makarand (Mak) Pandit is the CEO of Technowrites Pvt. Ltd. (www.technowrites.com) with over 12 years' experience as a technical communicator. He is a senior STC member and was India chapter president in 2005. He also played a vital role in conceptualizing several technical writing courses for the Department of Journalism & Communication in the University of Pune, India, where he continues to serve as visiting faculty. Reach Mak at mp@vsnl.com.

- **Presenter:** Makarand Pandit
- **Date:** Wednesday, Feb. 21 | 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
- **Seminar Level:** All Levels



About the Newsletter

Editor

Pat Markey:
pat.markey@comcast.net

Copy Editor

DeAnn Drottz:
chemist@c2i2.com
Judy McCabe:
caribe966@cox.net

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Publication Policies

We welcome contributions, book and product reviews, letters, and articles that are relevant to the field of technical communication. **Content is due the fourth Tuesday of every month.** Your text may be edited to conform to style guidelines and space restrictions of the newsletter.

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Chapter Contacts

Administrative Council

President

Carrie Cooper: carrie.cooper@acs-inc.com

Vice President

DeAnn Drottz: chemist@c2i2.com

Secretary

Bill Rost: slimtuc@msn.com

Treasurer

Richard Cook: rcook6701@yahoo.com

Immediate Past President

Kitty Aughey: kaughey@cox.net

Committee Contacts

Bylaws Committee

Manager – Carrie Cooper: carrie.cooper@acs-inc.com

Communication, Community Outreach, and Competitions Committees

Manager – Brenda Huettner: bphuettner@aol.com

Newsletter Editor – Pat Markey: pat.markey@comcast.net

Newsletter Copy Editor – Judy McCabe: caribe966@cox.net

PR/Publicity – Open

Web Site – Kim Diezel: kdiezel@pacbell.net

Education Outreach Committee

Manager – Carrie Cooper: carrie.cooper@acs-inc.com

Election and Nominating Committee

Manager – Kitty Aughey: kaughey@cox.net

Committee – TBD

Membership Committee

Manager – Kitty Aughey: kaughey@cox.net

Membership Assistant – Open

Database – Richard Cook: rcook6701@yahoo.com

Employment – Paul Veverka: paul.veverka@misyshealthcare.com

ListServ – Kitty Aughey: kaughey@cox.net

Program Committee

Manager – DeAnn Drottz: chemist@c2i2.com

Facilities – Pat Markey: pat.markey@comcast.net

Past Presidents of the Southern Arizona Chapter

1998-1999 – Dirk Arnold

1999-2000 – Debra Parker (Crawford)

2000-2001 – Barbara Fraps

2001-2002 – Brenda Huettner

2002-2003 – Helen Marty

2003-2004 – Patricia Markey

2004-2006 – Kitty Aughey