



Quill & Disk

SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION
SAN GABRIEL VALLEY CHAPTER

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A Mixed Bag of Job Prospects for Tech Writers

Inside this issue:

Job Prospects	1
Speaker info	1
Onward & Upward	2
Ode to Word	2
Reminder/Holiday Party/Hear Ye, Hear Ye/Dear STC Member	3
The English language/STC Region 8 Conference	4
Notices/Classes-Training/New Sr. Members	5
Our advertisers	6

The ITAA is a non-profit service organization supported by a membership of over 500 information technology corporations in the United States. The report, "When Can You Start?", a newly released study from ITAA shedding some light on job prospects for tech writers, is based on the results of close to 700 telephone interviews with hiring managers.

Eight broad job classifications were recognized in the survey: Technical Writing, Programmer/ Software Engineering, Web Development/ Administration, and Network Design/Administration.

A general conclusion of the study is that "companies appear ready to rein in their hiring plans and proceed cautiously. But not freeze hiring. This trend suggests that job candidates should likewise sharpen their professional

focus in building skills and seeking work."

One of the areas the survey looks at is supply and demand. Of the estimated 258,332 jobs that IT hiring managers predict they will add this year, only 1,799, or less than 1%, are for tech writers. This is down a whopping 91% from the year 2000 where the 20,773 available tech writer jobs accounted for almost 5% of the total. The news may not be as bad as it sounds. On the supply side, there is an expected shortfall of 1,008 qualified candidates in filling the open tech writer jobs.

Another aspect examined by the report was hiring qualifications. For technical writers, having specific experience with the responsibilities of a prospective job was the #1 factor to the hiring managers. The most important type of formal education was a 4-year col-

lege degree. The managers ranked on-the-job training as the top approach for garnering career advancement.

Career path-wise, Technical Writing lagged in advancement opportunities behind Technical Support, Network Design, and Programming. Web Development slightly trailed Technical Writing in advancement potential.

The survey also looked at employment incentives. Among IT employees, 43% picked good compensation as the most important incentive.

The complete printed report is available from ITAA at a cost of \$75 for non-ITAA members (\$50 for ITAA members). An executive summary is available online (without specific data or analysis). For info see www.winwriters.com.

Joe Welinske, President
WinWriters

October 22th meeting — "Information Mapping"

Speaker: **Matthew Larkin**

Matthew will be providing an overview of the patented method for information mapping.

In addition, the audience will hear about the main information types and principles, and how the use of this method can benefit clients with a wide range of business objectives, both globally and on the project level. This method is not just for tech writing depart-

ments. He will share stories of how all levels of an organization, from the CEO to the Receptionist can use it in their daily jobs, to become more efficient in their communications with others and how the method can positively impact customer service, employee performance, and operations.

Join us Monday, Oct. 22, 6PM at the Four Points Sheraton in Monrovia. Cost: \$14 for STC members or \$16 for non-STC members.

Meeting Dates for the rest of the quarter:

- October 22
- November 26
- December—holiday party 12/10

Make your reservations, now!

Email: maispeco@aol.com



ONWARD AND UPWARD!

September marked our first meeting at the Four Points Sheraton in Monrovia. We were delighted at the enthusiastic turnout, as about three dozen of you turned out to greet our new place! Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many of you letting us know how much you enjoyed the food and the location.

We have booked meetings at the Four Points Sheraton for the fourth Monday of October and November, and will book for next year provided attendance remains high and feedback positive. In the meantime, you can do the following to help make our meetings a success:

- Make sure to make your dinner reservations early (no later than five days before the meeting) by emailing Maria Christophel at maispeco@aol.com. Maria needs to call in a final count to the hotel four days before, so early reservations help.
- Encourage other technical writers to attend the meetings and join STC. You are the chapter's and Society's best publicity tool!
- And please, provide feedback to the chapter council on any changes you would like to see happen. It's your chapter, and we appreciate your suggestions! Council members are available at any meeting, or via email (addresses found on the Contacts page on our Web site).

Hope to see you on the 22nd!

Kathy Broman, Chapter President

Ode to Word

Doing things in Word is easy, they say,
But after working with it, I don't see it that way.
Someone has decided just how things should look.
After searching and searching, there's no clue in
the book.

I finally, after hours, get things just where I want,
And when I look back, where it was, it is not.
I look around, and as I'm beginning to rage,
I find the copy -- Word made a new page.

I didn't ask it to alter my copy or think,
But the wizard did this without even a wink.
So I look in the book and follow directions,
To keep Word from making unwanted corrections.

But nothing does work as the book says it will.
The frames and their copy won't seem to stay still.
They jump around for no rhyme and no reason;
Try as I might there is no way to freeze'em.

But I, who can make PageMaker and Quark jump
through hoops,
Find Word undecipherable and made up of loops
That allow copy in frames to jump all over the
place,
And move in a flash into undesigned space.

So it is thus that much of my time is wasted
On documents where parts don't stay pasted
In this program I find to be so absurd,
Known to all as Microsoft Word.

Jacque, Foreman Graphics - c1999



REMINDER —

Please Keep in Touch!

If you move, please be sure to notify STC of your new contact information (address, phone number, and/or email address). Updates can easily be done online at www.stc.org by clicking Members Only/Address Changes/Updates. And if you use your work address to receive mail, please be sure to notify STC when you change jobs!

Don't Miss Our Annual Holiday Party! Monday, December 10th

It's not too soon to start thinking about the holidays, and our festive annual Holiday Party! No speaker, just a great chance to get together with fellow chapter members for fun, a scrumptious gourmet dinner, and a few holiday surprises! We'll be meeting again this year at McCormick and Schmick's Seafood Restaurant in Pasadena, and you have a choice of three delicious entrees:

Fiji Island Mahi Mahi with a Soy Ginger Glaze and Papaya Salsa
Oven Roasted Half Chicken with Chili Garlic Marinade
Eggplant Parmesan served on a bed of Penne Pasta

Dinners come complete with appetizers, salad, dessert, and coffee or iced tea. (Alcoholic beverages are available at extra cost.) This is a \$30 value for the low price of only \$20! And each chapter member can bring one guest at the same price!

Don't miss out on the fun - email your reservation (with dinner choice) to Kathy Broman at kabroman@aol.com today!

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

STC SGV Volunteers Needed Three Positions Open!

STC San Gabriel Valley chapter has an immediate need to fill three volunteer positions. Volunteering is a great way to serve the chapter, network with others, and maybe even add something to your resume! If you can serve in any of the following capacities, please contact chapter president Kathy Broman at kabroman@aol.com or (818) 951-7301.

2nd Vice President - Membership: This position advises and assists the President in chapter operations, and has primary responsibility to increase chapter membership and maintain chapter membership records, including the chapter email list.

Hospitality Manager: This position provides hospitality for the chapter, including greeting guests and newcomers at chapter meetings, and helping coordinate meals/ refreshments at chapter meetings and

events. Also assists in coordinating the annual Holiday Party (planning for this event is already in progress).

Newsletter Editor: This position produces the chapter's newsletter, the Quill and Disk. Sadly, our current editor, Nance Parry, will be relocating soon and can no longer serve in this position. The new editor is needed for the November issue.

Thank you for helping!

Dear STC Member...

We're asking for your help. The 2002 dues renewal season is here, and you can help us conserve STC funds by renewing online and early. Renewing online is quick and convenient. If done early, it allows us to save money on printing and postage costs for paper renewal forms. Not only does renewing online and early help us conserve STC funds, but it reduces our use of paper--thus helping

the environment.

Renewing online is easy--you pay by credit card on STC's secure Web site. The Web form will ask you for your postal/Zip code (91020-1433) and your membership number (89332). If you decide not to renew at this time, a renewal form will be mailed to you in late November. Don't put it off--renew online

today at :

<http://www.stc.org/renew.html>





Subject: The English confusion, I mean language

Reasons why the English language is so hard to learn:

The bandage was wound around the wound.
 The farm was used to produce produce.
 The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
 We must polish the Polish furniture.
 He could lead if he would get the lead out.
 The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
 Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
 A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
 When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
 I did not object to the object.
 The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
 There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
 They were too close to the door to close it.
 The buck does funny things when the does are present.
 A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
 To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.

The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
 After a number of injections my jaw got number.
 Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
 I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
 How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

Let's face it - English is a crazy language. There is no egg in Eggplant. Nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig. And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and

hammers don't ham.

If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices? Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend. If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

Have noses that run and feet that smell? How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which an alarm goes off by going on.

2001 STC Region 8 Conference

THE GUERRILLA CONFERENCE November 1-3, 2001 Irvine Marriott Hotel 18000 Von Karman Avenue Irvine, CA, USA (half a mile from John Wayne Airport)

FULL DETAILS AT: www.stcregion8conference.org/region8/ Return to this site frequently for updated news and information.
 KEYNOTE SPEAKER: RICHARD LEDERER Author of Anguished English and Sleeping Dogs Don't Lay

PROGRAM

The conference will include presentations to enhance your knowledge of: Professional development and long-range career strategies; authoring tools and technologies; technical publications management; writing, editing, and information design; education and training.

WHY A "GUERRILLA CONFERENCE"?

Times have changed. It's a tough economy out there. Technical communicators must often employ guerrilla tactics (figuratively speaking) to find a job, stay employed, grow professionally, or enter the profession. This conference will address the current professional climate and give support as you prepare for battle in the job marketplace of the 21st century.

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 The 2001 STC Region 8 Conference committee needs table hosts for the conference luncheons on Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, 2001. All you need to do is start up the conversation at the table and get people to introduce themselves and exchange business cards. The table host gets their lunch for free in return. What a deal!!! If interested, contact Bruce Alexander, the Networking Lunch Coordinator, at balexander@monauto.com.

The 2001 STC Region 8 Conference Publicity Committee has placed documents on the STC Region 8 Conference Web site. This is a "Tree-Friendly" conference. Announcements are being posted to the Web site so that users can select and print only what they wish to read. These documents can be viewed or downloaded at the following web addresses:

- www.stcregion8conference.org/region8/pdf/conflyer.pdf (Conference Flyer)
- www.stcregion8conference.org/region8/pdf/proposalflyer.pdf (Proposal Flyer)
- www.stcregion8conference.org/region8/pdf/regform.pdf (Registration Form)

Notices

Association for Computing Machinery -
Special Interest Group for Documentation
(SIGDOC)

October 21-24: SIGDOC 2001 Confer-
ence on the Design of Communication in
Santa Fe, New Mexico. The theme for
2001 is "Going Global: Communicating in
the New Millennium."

For more information, see
<http://www.acm.org/sigdoc/>
Or call Dr. Scott R. Tilley
UCR Dept. of Computer Science
(909) 787-6438

Reviewers Needed for IEEE Conference

The IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Elec-
tronics Engineers) is looking for volun-
teers to review technical (aerospace)
documents for an upcoming conference.
Papers will be reviewed in a one-day ses-
sion on Saturday, **October 21** in El
Segundo, and volunteers will be treated
to catered meals.

To participate in the Paper Review Work
Party, contact Bob Willett at (310) 545-
2300 (H) or email cromlett@telis.org. For
more information about the conference,
check out www.AeroConf.org. They
would also love to hear from you if you
could help out in future years.

STC Scholarships Available

Each year, STC offers scholarships to
full-time graduate and undergraduate
students pursuing careers in technical
communication. Fourteen awards of
\$2,000 each will be awarded for aca-
demic year 2002-2003. The application
deadline is **February 15, 2002**. Appli-
cation forms are available from the STC
Web site at [http://www.stc.org/
grants_loans.html](http://www.stc.org/grants_loans.html) (look under
"Scholarships").

New Senior Members

The grade of senior member is con-
ferred upon those who have held the
grade of member in STC for five years.
Congratulations to Marilyn R. Brody
and Patricia L. Shelton of our chapter,
who have recently achieved senior
member status!

Classes-Training

WebWorks Publisher Self-Paced Training

Need WebWorks Publisher Profes-
sional training--on a nonexistent train-
ing budget? The new WebWorks Pub-
lisher Workbook can help.

When used with the popular Web-
Works Publisher Cookbook, The Work-
book provides a self-paced introduc-
tory WebWorks Publisher class. By
following the step-by-step exercises
In the Workbook, you'll build projects,
create and modify styles, and produce
output. The CD included with the
Workbook contains helpful video clips
that show you how to use WWP's inter-
face, and the Workbook references
important conceptual information in the
Cookbook.

The Workbook is available only
through Scriptorium Press.

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commercial product, process or service by trade
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recommendation, or favoring by the Society for
Technical Communication (STC).



HAPPY HALLOWEEN!



SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL
COMMUNICATION
SAN GABRIEL VALLEY CHAPTER

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Quill & Disk



Mail To:

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.STCSGV.ORG

Our new logo:

San Gabriel

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