



January 2009, Volume 21, Number 5

### January dinner meeting

5:45 p.m.  
Tuesday, January 13, 2009  
Place Louis Riel  
190 Smith Street

#### Progression Various speakers

Please confirm your attendance by noon, Friday, January 9, with Brad Friesen at  
E-mail: [meetingcoordinator@stcmanitoba.org](mailto:meetingcoordinator@stcmanitoba.org)  
Phone: 975-0500 ext. 3326

#### In this issue

- January dinner meeting..... 1
- From the President ..... 2
- December dinner meeting summary..... 3
- STC Manitoba job bank..... 3
- Around the STC..... 3
- From the Editor ..... 4
- Book review ..... 4
- From one technical communicator to another ..... 5
- Software review ..... 6
- Professional development ..... 8
- Membership renewal ..... 8

### STC January dinner meeting

## Progression meeting

Wanting a change from hibernating during those cold January nights? Got an hour to spare and in need of good company? Why not attend the January progression meeting. Three speakers in 30 minutes ...

Presenting for the January meeting will be

#### Lauren Bailey "Writing 50,000 in 30 days—for fun"

#### Brad Friesen "Google Goes Chrome"

As part of their ploy to take over the world, *Google* has released a new Web browser to compete with *Internet Explorer* and Mozilla *Firefox* for world dominance. This presentation will look at some of the features of *Google Chrome*.

#### Holly Steele "Creating conditional text in Word 2003"

Have you ever wanted to create two similar documents in which certain information appears in one document but doesn't show up in the other document without using cut and paste? Using conditional text allows you to do just that. Many software applications, such as *FrameMaker* and *Flare* have built in features that allow you to use conditional text. Creating conditional text using the features of *Word* is more challenging, but possible.

So if you've got the time to spare, ring in the new year with your STC colleagues.

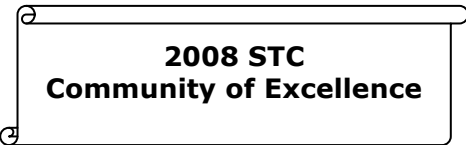
	Members	Non-members
Cost	Free!	\$5

Light refreshments and snacks will be served and is included in the cost for the meeting.

### STC Manitoba's 20th anniversary

For those of you who might not be aware, January 2009 marks the 20th anniversary of our chapter. A retrospective display of the chapter evolution and events will be on display during the meeting. Don't miss out on this chance to reminisce a little with colleagues old and new.

If you have something you feel would be of interest for the display, please contact chapter archivist, Rachel Ines ([rachines@hotmail.com](mailto:rachines@hotmail.com)).



STC Manitoba is a chapter of



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

## About *Manuscript*

*Manuscript* and its shorter sibling *Micro Manuscript* are the official newsletters of STC Manitoba. Together, they are published 10 times annually between September and June. The opinions expressed are those of the authors. Submissions, news, reviews, and other items of interest are welcome. Contributions may be edited for length. Deadline is the fifteenth of every month. For example, the deadline for the November issue is October 15. with the editor. By submitting an article, you agree to its publication in *Manuscript* and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. The writer holds copyright. When submitting an article, please let the editor know if it has been published or submitted elsewhere.

Rachel Ines  
Newsletter Editor  
[rachines@hotmail.com](mailto:rachines@hotmail.com)

Andrew Quarry  
Editorial Assistant  
[andrewquarry@gmail.com](mailto:andrewquarry@gmail.com)  
Printed copies of documents can be mailed to the address below:

STC Manitoba  
c/o Andrew Quarry  
135 Lawndale Avenue  
Winnipeg MB R2H 1T2

For more information about STC Manitoba, please visit our Web site at [www.stcmanitoba.org](http://www.stcmanitoba.org).



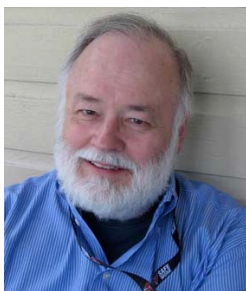
President [Interim], Andrew Quarry  
[andrewquarry@gmail.com](mailto:andrewquarry@gmail.com)  
Vice-President, Margaret LeSage  
[margaretl@caamanitoba.com](mailto:margaretl@caamanitoba.com)  
Past President, Brad Friesen  
Secretary, Holly Steele  
Treasurer, Donald Nordman  
Membership, Vacant  
Public relations, Dorothy Davidson  
Program, Lauren Bailey

Meeting coordinator, Joanne Kusiak

Members of Manitoba's STC chapter gather at the Annual General Meeting in May and elect members to the STC Chapter. Each member on the executive is elected for a term of one year.

## From the (Interim) President

### Please let me rant



*The following is intended as a break from all the syrupy Christmas goodwill that you're being exposed to.*

How much space is the right space?

In the course of about 38 years of observing Winnipeggers, I've concluded that they don't seem to need, want, or appreciate as much space as folks elsewhere—at least folks in

Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Minneapolis, or New York. I say "they" because, although I consider myself a Winnipegger in most respects, I'm feeling rather alienated in this respect.

The issue presents itself in many ways. The first I noticed is the size of meeting rooms in Winnipeg. There seems to be a tendency to favour long, narrow rooms with no space to squeeze behind others to get the empty chair at the far end of the room. And, on the rare occasions when a room is generously proportioned to accommodate, say, 15 people it will frequently be used to accommodate 20. A similar tendency can be observed in the design of whole buildings or complexes such as Portage Place and the walkway system that feeds in and out of it. The whole complex seems to have been scaled down 20% to 25% from what might be comfortable. In some cases, the spin-doctors appear to have been at work to obscure reality. Broadway, for example, is not really all that broad.

The issue extends beyond physical attributes to personal behaviours. Winnipeg drivers, for example, appear to loath empty intersections. They will drive against red traffic lights to ensure that the intersections are filled with cars, just in case drivers on the cross streets fail to participate in the game of gridlock.

The issue extends beyond the attributes of large objects to the attributes of small objects such as business documents. The default 1.25-inch left and right margins in Microsoft Word have drawn some criticism in the world at large. In Winnipeg, there is less cause for criticism. A disproportionate number of Winnipeggers appear to have learned how to change their margins just so that they can reduce them to the limits that their printers can accommodate.

Best wishes of the season.  
Andrew

### Did you know ...

If you enjoy learning about grammar—and who doesn't—the Grammar Girl has published a book on her popular podcasts.

Read the book review on page 4 of this issue.



## December dinner meeting summary

# Shakespeare as a persuasive writer

By Lauren Bailey

All communication is goal-based. Kevin Longfield's December 2 presentation to the members of the Society for Technical Communication Manitoba used examples from two of Shakespeare's plays (*Richard III* and *The Tempest*) to illustrate his point.

Kevin began his presentation with an overview of persuasive communication—whether giving directions to a friend or attempting to sell something to a stranger, the process model is the same:

- the sender forms, encodes and transmits a message
- the receiver receives and decodes the message
- the receiver forms, encodes and transmits feedback
- the sender receives and decodes the feedback

A barrier to this process model is “noise”, which can block the understanding of the message at any stage.

According to Kevin, there are two types of persuasion—ethical (as seen in *The Tempest*), and unethical (as seen in *Richard III*).

With the help of an assistant, Kevin used critical scenes from each of the two Shakespearian plays

to illustrate how the persuaders understand their audiences, show their credibility and build an argument about meeting the determined needs.

*Richard III* contains an excellent unethical persuasion scene where Richard (the Duke of Gloucester) convinces Lady Anne to marry him—after he has killed both her husband and her father. Richard connives and finagles Anne—allows her to call him every name imaginable, begs her to stab him or marry him. She finally relents and agrees to be his wife.

Conversely, in *The Tempest*, a sprite named Ariel ethically persuades the old man Prospero to release his captives. Ariel relies on Prospero's innate goodness and appeals to his sense of mercy. Eventually, Prospero relents.

It is interesting to note that the ethical persuasion scene is less than one minute long, while the unethical persuasion scene was (before Kevin's edits) nearly five pages. Personal credibility counts for much in persuasion—even in 500 year—old scripts.

Above all, Kevin's presentation was informative, entertaining and a timely reminder that all writing is persuasive, even the classics.

Lauren Bailey is a 2007 graduate of the Technical Communication Diploma program. She is currently dabbling in freelance work while also employed outside of the industry.

---

## STC Manitoba Job Bank

Searching for that perfect job? Need a change in your career? Visit the STC Manitoba job bank online: [www.stcmanitoba.org/forums](http://www.stcmanitoba.org/forums) at **Employment > STC Manitoba Job Bank** to find the most recent jobs posted. STC members who have registered for the forums are able to view new postings for 10 days before the postings are made available to the general public.

Remember, if you haven't registered on the forums yet, please do so! You must register for the forums to be certain that you are viewing the most recent job postings. Don't be the last to know!

## Around the STC

STC webinar

Wednesday, January 28, 2009

1:00 – 2:30 pm ET

[Practitioner and Academic Relationships](#)

Presented by Joel Kline



## From the editor

As technical communicators, we are more than just manual writers or instruction designers. Unfortunately many potential employers fail to appreciate how our skills can be applied to

- design and develop document layouts
- write a variety of communication materials such as newsletters, annual reports, brochures, and posters, etc.
- design, develop, and maintain Web sites
- manage projects

These are just a few of the many things that we are capable of doing, yet for many of us, our skills go unnoticed by employers who are unfamiliar with our profession and focus on hiring “professionals” whose training they are more familiar with.

Recently, I was asked to participate in a meeting with several former graduates of the technical communication diploma program. During the meeting and hearing about the diverse work that

each of the former graduates do, I was left to ponder what makes a technical communicator so different from say, a communications officer (which is a more descriptive title of my former job). Not much. In fact, as a technical communicator I feel we have much more to offer in terms of audience analysis and adapting our writing for diverse audiences.

What struck me was the need to increase the profile of our profession even more. As technical communicators, we possess strong writing, editing, and document designing skills. Although these may not be as recognizable to employers, an awareness of our profession would help demonstrate what we have to offer. As the chapter approaches its 20th year, wouldn't it be something if we were able to not only showcase our chapter and its accomplishments, but our profession as well.

Until next month,  
Rachel

---

### Book review

## Getting the dirt on how to write better

By Rachel Ines

If you're a regular reader of *Manuscript*, you may have seen mention of the Grammar Girl's podcast (<http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com>) or you may have come across it yourself. For those of you who feel in touch with your inner grammar girl (or boy as the case may be), Mignon Fogarty has published a book compiling tips from her podcast.

What I like about Fogarty's book is the clever introductions for each section, which I feel makes understanding grammar fun. For example “Which's brew: That versus which,” “How you doin'?: Good versus well,” “If I only had a brain: Misplaced Modifiers,” or my personal favourite : “Comma, comma, comma, comma, comma Chameleon” (I do enjoy a Culture Club song every now and then!). Many of the introductions are clever quips from popular culture or song quotes—and if you're anything like me—who doesn't like talking in song?

While most of the grammar tips Fogarty discusses

are something we as technical communicators are quite familiar with, her simple explanations and real life examples from her audience provide an interesting insight into her explanations.

While the book is mainly devoted to explaining grammar, Fogarty touches upon writing for the new media in her chapter aptly entitled “Internet Intervention.” She also discusses writing styles and provides helpful appendixes.

Overall, is this a book to teach experienced technical communicators? Perhaps not, although it is quite light and handy if you need a portable reference guide. You can never have enough grammar reference books, can you? As technical communicators we are more likely to recommend this to the not so grammatically challenged, but more so, to the grammatically unaware.

Fogarty, Mignon. (2008). *Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing*. Holt Paperbacks. \$14.00

Rachel Ines is actively involved in the Manitoba chapter and has been an STC member for over two years. Rachel graduated from the Technical Communication Diploma program at Red River College.



## Creating conditional text and images in Word 2003

By Holly Steele

Editor's note: This is part two of a two-part series. It assumes that you have already performed the steps that Holly Steele outlined in part one (see December issue).

### Using templates

After you have hidden one set of conditional styles (for example, all the Agriculture styles), you need to save your document as a template file (.dot). In this example, you might save it as Forestry\_template.dot.

After you have finished creating the Forestry\_template.dot, save the document as a template representing your second set of styles. In this example, you might save the document as Agriculture\_template.dot.

In this new template, show the hidden styles (Agriculture) and hide the shown styles (Forestry). If you have more conditional styles, create templates for those styles with the appropriate hidden and shown styles.

I found it useful to create a master template that shows all styles. Showing both styles within the document made the document easier to edit.

So far, using my example, we have created three templates: Agriculture\_template.dot, Forestry\_template.dot, and Master\_template.dot.

After you create the templates, then the fun begins: Linking the document to the templates.

### Linking the documents to templates

To view the document with the appropriate styles hidden or shown, link the document to the appropriate template (for example, Agriculture or Forestry).

To link documents to templates, follow these steps:

1. Open the Word document that you would like to link to the template.
2. From the menu bar, select *Tools>Templates and Add-Ins*
3. Place a check mark in the *Automatically update document styles* check box
4. Click the **Attach** button.

5. The *Templates* dialog will display.
6. Select the template that you would like to link the Word document to.
7. Click **Open**.
8. Click **OK**.

To view the document with the hidden text, turn the Show/Hide button on. The hidden text, images, bullets, and numbers should have small dots underneath them. If you view the document in Print Preview mode or with the Show/Hide button off, the hidden elements should disappear.

To view the document as a Forestry document, link the document to the Forestry template. To view the document as an Agriculture document, link the document to the Agriculture template. To view all the styles as shown, link the document to the master template.

Now, what happens if you need to modify a style or create a new style? You can modify the style easily. However, you need to make sure that you transfer the new style or modified style to all the templates. Document management is an important element to this whole process.

### Transferring styles

To transfer a style from one template to another, use the *Templates and Add Ins* menu item in Word.

1. Open the document in which you made the style change.
2. Select *Tools>Templates and Add Ins*
3. Click **Organizer**.  
The *Organizer window* opens
4. In the section that does not name your document, click **Close File**.
5. Click **Open File**.
6. Browse for the template you would like to add the style to.
7. Click **Open**.
8. Select the style or styles you would like to transfer over.
9. Click **Copy**.

("Creating conditional text and images" continued on page 6)

("Creating conditional text and images" continued from page 5)

4. Click **Close**.

Transferring styles is not very time consuming. However, if you forget to transfer a style to a template, your styles may not appear consistent throughout the different views of the document.

## Conclusion

Creating conditional text using hidden styles and

Holly Steele is a technical writer. Her business, Train Write Solutions, offers technical writing and training services to small and medium-sized businesses. She is also the Secretary of the Manitoba chapter of the STC. Holly Steele can be contacted at [trainwritesolutions@gmail.com](mailto:trainwritesolutions@gmail.com)

templates is a useful technique if you need to use *Word* as your medium. *Word* is not designed to easily create conditional text, and other software, such as *FrameMaker* or *Flare* has tools that allow you to create conditional text a lot more easily.

While this method is not foolproof and may involve some troubleshooting along the way, I found that it was a simple and straight-forward way of creating conditional text and images in *Word 2003*.

---

## Software review

# CoffeeCup HTML Editor: Web creation on a budget

By Leslie McKendry-Smith

I usually don't begrudge spending money on software applications for client work. I've been in business long enough to understand that you have to spend money to make money. However, spending money on software to run my business is another matter. I tend to be a little frugal there. And when I say frugal, I actually mean really, really cheap.

So when I wanted to revive my long dormant business Web site, I went searching for the impossible: full featured, cheap Web development software. I wasn't able to find full featured software, but I came close and I was able to stay within my budget.

I started looking at open source and freeware applications. Unfortunately, I couldn't find anything that even looked like it was worth the effort to download.

In the inexpensive category, I found two possibilities: *Top Style Pro* for US\$79.95 and *CoffeeCup HTML Editor 2008* for US\$49.00. On the Web, they looked more or less equivalent, so I thought that I would start with the less expensive of the two.

About three weeks later my Web site was up and I never got around to trying *Top Style*.

When I sat down to use *CoffeeCup* for the first time, it was clear what I had to do. The layout is very familiar. *RoboHelp*, *Flare*, and *Author-it* users will get a strong feeling of *déjà vu*.

The Resource panel sits on the left and displays file lists, tags, code snippets, or character codes, depending on the selected tab. In the main work area, you can choose to work in either the Code Editor or the Visual Editor. To preview your work in your default browser, just click the Preview tab. If you have a lot of screen real estate, you can split the work area and display a preview pane under the editor.

## Great features

What appealed to me initially was the Visual Editor. *RoboHelp* and *Author-it* have insulated me from the real world of HTML coding, so it's been a while since I'd worked directly with HTML tags. I wasn't certain that I'd retained any skill and I hoped that using the Visual Editor would help get me up to speed.

Working in the Visual Editor is like working in *Word*. Instead of applying HTML tags, you apply formatting and *CoffeeCup* determines the correct or closest tag.

I wouldn't recommend the Visual Editor for developing a compliant site, but an HTML novice could create a functional site fairly quickly.

The Visual Editor works well and was especially useful for setting up tables. But, within an hour, I switched to the Code Editor. Being able to see the list of tags in the Resource panel and having auto-complete enabled as I typed, helped retrieve my deeply buried HTML skills. It was also easy to

("Coffee cup HTML editor" continued on page 7)

(“Coffee cup HTML editor” continued from page 6)

check my work by switching to the Preview tab.

One feature that I hadn’t considered when looking for a HTML editor, was project management. *CoffeeCup’s* Projects feature is very basic, but I found that it worked well enough for my small Web site.

I was able to add and remove files and folders in the project without accidentally deleting any of them from my hard drive. The project dependencies check ensured that I didn’t forget to add any dependant files and images. And uploading to the Web server was a breeze. *CoffeeCup* uploads only new and changed files.

The only problem that I had happened after I installed the registered version. The software seemed to lose track of which files were current and wouldn’t update my site correctly. Rebuilding the project seemed to fix the problem.

The Code Snippet feature is pretty much the same as Snippets in *Flare*. A Code Snippet is a piece of pre-written code or a script. For example, I saved the class names from my style sheet as Code Snippets.

Once added, all I had to do was double-click on a snippet to copy it into a file. Using Code Snippets saved a lot of typing and I didn’t have to remember all of the classes that I had added to the style sheet.

By far, my favourite feature was the DHTML Menu Designer. With a minimal knowledge of *Javascript*, I was able add a dynamic menu to my site.

Not only does the dynamic menu look good, but it’s easier to maintain than embedding a menu in each file. This is the feature that sold me on *CoffeeCup*.

### Room for improvement

For the price, *CoffeeCup* is a great HTML Editor, but there is room for improvement.

I didn’t like the Style Sheet Wizard at all. Perhaps I’m being a little harsh. I didn’t really use it much. Why? Because I couldn’t get it to work.

As I was building my Web site, I tried the Style Sheet Wizard, but quickly gave up. Instead, I used

the free CSS editor that I’d been using off and on for the past year, *Top Style Lite*. (Yes, it’s the free version of the HTML editor that I never got around to evaluating.)

While writing this article, I thought that I should go back and try again. Still no luck. The wizard gives me an error message when I try to add a class. It doesn’t display classes in the preview and often displays tags incorrectly.

If I didn’t like *Top Style Lite* so much for maintaining style sheets, I might pursue the problems further. But life is short.

Although the Projects feature is one of my favorites, I think that it could be better.

Creating and maintaining a small Web site as a project makes it easier to edit and update, up to a point. Because there isn’t a way to re-order the file and folder list or search for a file, I anticipate that managing my site as it grows will become more of a challenge.

It seems to me that sorting and searching are pretty basic functions. Hopefully, they will appear in a future version.

### Summary

If one of your job functions is Web Developer, then *CoffeeCup HTML Editor* isn’t for you. It’s not even close to being a replacement for *Dreamweaver*.

But, if you have to create and maintain a small Web site and your budget is tight, *CoffeeCup* may be the answer. Or, if you’re an HTML novice with a deadline, *CoffeeCup’s Visual Editor* may reduce your stress level a bit.

*CoffeeCup HTML Editor* is available in a fully functional, free 30 day trial version, so you have nothing to lose by giving it a try.

### References

CoffeeCup Software  
[www.coffeecup.com](http://www.coffeecup.com)

TopStyle  
[www.newsgator.com/individuals/topstyle/default.aspx](http://www.newsgator.com/individuals/topstyle/default.aspx)

Leslie McKendry-Smith is a technical communication consultant and a long time member of STC Manitoba. You can see her Web site developed with *CoffeeCup* at [documentsonline.home.skyweb.ca](http://documentsonline.home.skyweb.ca).

## Professional development courses

Course	Date (2009)	Offered through
Graphic Design 1	Jan 12 to Mar 16	Red River College Visit <a href="http://www.rrc.mb.ca">www.rrc.mb.ca</a>
A/V Short Video Production	Jan 13 to Mar 17	
Editing Plain Language	Jan 13 to Mar 17	
Blogging Wiki's and the User Centric Web	Jan 15 to Feb 12	
Effective written communication	Jan 7 to Mar 25 Jan 8 to Mar 26	University of Winnipeg Visit <a href="http://www.uwinnipeg.ca">www.uwinnipeg.ca</a>
Writing for public relations	Jan 7 to Mar 25	
Project management	Jan 12 to Mar 30	
Writing for the Web	Feb 4 to 25	
Intro to programming and software development	Feb 7 to 28	
Presenting to challenging audiences	Feb 21	University of Winnipeg

## Annual STC membership renewal

For more membership information, visit [www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org).

Membership type	Includes	Cost
<b>Classic</b>	Printed publications Online publications Choice between the following memberships: one chapter + one special interest group (SIG) or up to three SIGs	\$175 (add \$15 for extra postage)  NB: Costs are listed in US dollars
<b>E-membership</b>	Online publications Choice between the following memberships: one chapter + one SIG or up to three SIGs	\$165
<b>Student</b>	Online publications Receive the following membership: join up to three SIGs and up to two chapters	\$60
<b>Retired</b>	Online publications One regular chapter Up to three SIGs	\$75
<b>Super SIG package</b>	Printed publications All SIGs One regular chapter	\$300