



February 2008, Volume 20, Number 6

February dinner meeting

5:45 p.m.
Tuesday, February 5, 2008
Place Louis Riel
190 Smith Street

Emotional intelligence for achieving personal and organizational success with Heather Erhard

Please confirm your attendance by noon, Friday, February 1, with Joanne Kusiak at meetingcoordinator@stcmanitoba.org

Future Meetings

March 4—*Organizational Development* with Leanne Douglas
April 14 and 15—Fifth annual technical communication conference
May 5—Annual General Meeting

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February dinner meeting—presenter, Heather Erhard

Emotional intelligence for achieving personal and organizational success

“The rules for work are changing. We’re being judged by a new yardstick; not just how smart we are, or our expertise, but how well we handle ourselves and each other. The new rules predict who is most likely to become a star performer and who is most prone to derailing.”

Daniel Goleman, author, *Emotional Intelligence*

Research shows that emotional intelligence can be twice as important as IQ and technical skills in determining who will become a top performer.

Topics

- Discover emotional intelligence—What is it? Why should you be interested in it?
- Learn why “smart” people fail—the case for self-awareness and self management
- Complete a “subjective” analysis of your own emotional intelligence, using the BarOn EQ-i Model

(“Emotional intelligence” continued on page 2)

Conference registration forms now available Prepare to bridge the muddy waters!

If you haven’t received your form, you may download one from our Web site—<http://www.stcmanitoba.org/conference/>

This year’s conference offers a new type of stream—TC skills for technical people. The new stream has been developed with members of APEGM in mind, but others may register for this extra-cost stream as long as space is available. The keynote and closing sessions, which are described on [page 3](#), are open to registrants in all streams.



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. Submissions and ideas are welcome. Please make arrangements in advance 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.

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Program, Autumn Robbie-Draward
Meeting coordinator, Joanne Kusiak
Job bank, Bev Shafirka

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 President

Now that the holiday season is over and we are all back to the normal swing of things, the STC Manitoba Executive/Conference Committee has been keeping busy planning for the remainder of the year.



The January progression turned out to be a really fun event. I had a good time, learned something new, and ate some great food. I wish I had been able to participate in all of the presentations being offered. Speaking of dinner meetings, this month's dinner meeting looks to be another great event. Heather Erhard will be joining us to talk about emotional intelligence. I hope to see you all there.

The conference committee has made excellent progress, and we are all getting excited for the big event. New this year is an education stream. If you know anyone who would like to polish their technical communication skills, the education stream is an excellent opportunity to do so at an affordable price.

This year we also have four out-of-town speakers: Brad Keller (ComponentOne); Saul Carliner (our keynote speaker); Sharon Burton (MadCap Software); and Mollye Barrett (conference speaker). Make sure to stop by the MadCap and ComponentOne display areas at the conference.

By now you all should have received the first registration notice for the 5th annual technical communication conference. If you plan on attending the conference be sure to register **before March 7** so that you can take advantage of the early-bird registration prices. If you didn't receive the registration form in the mail, no worries; the registration form is available on the conference Web site <http://www.stcmanitoba.org/conference>.

That's all for this month. As always, if you have any thoughts or suggestions please feel free to send me an email at brad.friesen@gmail.com. You can also send me a private message on the STC Manitoba Forums.

Brad

(From "Emotional intelligence," continued from page 1)

- Determine how to use emotional intelligence for leadership and personal development, selection and retention, and career development.

About Heather Erhard

Heather brings over 20 years experience in management consulting and training. She specializes in the design and implementation of management consulting and training assignments, tailored to meet the needs of each organization. Heather was formerly a Program Director at the Manitoba Institute of Management for 10 years. She is a member of the Canadian Association of Management Consultants and the Human Resources Management Association. She has taught at the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba and Queen's University.

Conference Keynote Speaker: Dr. Saul Carliner

Our keynote speaker, Dr. Saul Carliner, is an associate professor in the Department of Education at Concordia University in Montreal.



Keynote speaker
Dr. Saul Carliner

A former international STC president, Carliner is well known to STC members for his sense of humour, his dedication to technical communication, and his passion for scholarship.

His current interests centre on practical design and management issues in learning and communication for the workplace, museums, and grassroots community organizations.

The title of his keynote presentation is "Recent research in information and document design."

About the presentation

What can research tell us about creating effective practical communication materials? This session attempts to answer that question in a way that is relevant to both researchers and practising professionals. It first defines some of the key terms guiding the research in information and document design, then provides a brief history of research already conducted in this and related disciplines, and how six current trends generate the need for further research. Last, this session explores some of the challenges of research in this field and offers some solutions to it.

Note: this presentation is based on Carliner's contribution to the book *Information and Document Design: Variety on the Research* (John Benjamins).

Conference Closing Speaker: Dr. Aftab A. Mufti

Our closing speaker, Dr. Aftab Mufti is a Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. He is also the



Closing speaker
Dr. Aftab Mufti

Program Leader and President of ISIS Canada—a Network of Centres of Excellence, and President of the International Society for Health Monitoring of Intelligent Infrastructures.

Dr. Mufti's research interests include FRPs, FOSs, FEM, bridge engineering, structural health monitoring and civionics. As author or co-author of 9 books and

more than 350 technical publications on Bridge Engineering, Finite Element Analysis and Computer Graphics, and an engineer of renown, he has been the recipient of many prestigious awards including those received for the steel-free bridge concept, of which he is the principal developer. Most recently (May 2006), he received the Sanderson Award from the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering for outstanding contributions to the development and practice of structural engineering in Canada.

Dr. Mufti is also the holder of several patents on the steel-free bridge deck concept. In addition, he is the Chair of the Technical Subcommittee of the Canadian Highway Bridge Design Code that recently completed developing code clauses to design, rehabilitate and repair structures using fibre reinforced polymers.

Chapter action

Bring a guest contest

Are you tired of paying yearly dues? Do you find yourself discussing chapter dinner meetings with your colleagues? Do you find that your colleagues are interested in STC Manitoba activities?

We still have three months left in the contest, so why not invite a colleague and earn credits towards the STC Manitoba "Bring a guest contest." The winning chapter member will be announced during the Annual General Meeting in May.

No April dinner meeting

Speaking of dinner meetings ... There will **not** be a dinner meeting April 1, 2008. This is **not** an April Fools joke! We're focusing our attention that month on the *STC/RRC conference—Technical communication: the bridge over muddy waters*.

Chapter members are encouraged to attend the STC/RRC conference sessions. We hope to see you there!



Progressions—Communicating while eating

Sustained by finger food, persons at the December dinner meeting were able to move from table to table attending up to 3 of the 7 presentations of about 20 minutes each.

We've been helped by a team of reporters for this article.

Technical communication is too, sexy!

presented by Susan Haire
reported by Brad Friesen

Susan Haire asked "What do James Bond, the Cirque du Soleil, and the Cheesecake Factory all have in common?" Going along with the title of Susan's presentation Brad answered, "they're all sexy." But he was wrong. It turns out they all require instructions and they all have technical communicators working for them. For instance, James Bond has "Q" to explain how all those crazy gadgets work. Since the Cheesecake Factory changes its menu every four to six weeks, the technical communicators who train the servers and cooks about the menus also write the policies and procedures manuals.

To further prove her point, Susan pulled out a stack of job profiles of STC members who have "sexy" technical communication jobs. The jobs varied from writing instruction manuals for video games to working as a relief worker writing for the Red Cross.

Susan suggested that, if you are someone who wouldn't mind having a "sexy" job, try to think of places where you would like to work, including the industry and the location. If you don't have too much experience, you could always volunteer to gain some valuable experience. Working as a consultant can also give you a variety of jobs, some of which may end up being "sexy." For a more in depth look at some "sexy" jobs, you can also check out the "My job" column in issues of *Intercom*.

Digital photography tips

presented by Henry Shorr
reported by Brad Friesen

Alright everyone, say cheese! Henry Shorr shared some excellent digital photography tips with us. Whether you're an amateur or a professional photographer, these tips can apply to everyone.

- Keep your subject within the range of your flash. Most built in flashes are usually good for 10 to

- 12 feet so your photos will not turn out when the zoom is farther out than the flash.
- Keep the zoom within the flash range. This also means that if you get too close with the zoom while using the flash, your photos may seem a little washed out.
- Include an interesting foreground in your photo, such as a fence, when taking scenery photos. This will add depth to the photo and also make the photo more interesting. For scenic shots you should also try to have a curved line leading to the subject.
- Let more light into your camera if you are photographing dark objects. The photo will show more detail.
- Use a high shutter speed when taking action shots. This is usually the "sports" setting or "action" setting on most point and shoot digital cameras. If you were to use a low shutter speed for action shots, the photo may become blurry and won't be as sharp.
- Use depth of field efficiently: less zoom for more depth of field and more zoom for less depth of field. Using a narrow depth of field will place more emphasis on the subject.
- Don't amputate the subject. For example, if you're taking a photo of a deer's head, make sure you get all of the deer's antlers in the photo.
- Crop out any extraneous details and use a program like Photoshop to further doctor a photo.
- And finally, get prints of photos you want to keep!

Ready, set, get organized!

presented and reported by Rachel Ines

Where do you keep your archives and what's in your collection? Rachel Ines provided ten tips on how to organize your archival collection. Her tips included

- Start small. If you try to organize a big collection without knowing what you have, you can become frustrated. It's easier to start small and refine your process as you go along.
- Document your work. Nothing is more frustrating than working on a project someone else has started and trying to re-trace their footsteps. An issue arising is the loss of knowledge translation as people move or transfer jobs and take information with them.

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("Progressions" continued from page 4)

- Work with others to assess your collection. What you may see as important may not be at all. Keeping archives such as working drafts and multiple copies of a document that can easily be found elsewhere may not be necessary.
- Establish an importance list using a rating system. Don't keep something just because it has sentimental value. If you don't have the space to store your archives, identifying the importance of an item in your collection will assist you in the assessment process.

Since meeting attendees were trying to archive their work collections, Rachel shared her experiences and tips from working with various archival collections in archaeology and museums.

Empathy, imagination and the perfect public speech

presented by Dennis Rogers
reported by Louise Worster

A speech is a meeting place between the speaker and the audience, says Dennis Rogers, a writer with 30 years experience in speech writing. Giving a speech is a lively and dynamic art form that is influenced by the style of the speaker, delivery, audience, setting and context.

Writing a speech for someone else is one of the most demanding tasks for writers because we must invest ourselves in the process while laying aside our egos.

While there is no simple formula for writing the perfect speech, Rogers suggests four things to consider: empathy, simplicity, ingenuity and authenticity.

Empathy means getting into the mind of the audience and the speaker. The writer should get to know something about the speaker's life, habits, views, preferences and experiences. Speakers can engage an audience more easily if they are tuned into the audience's interests and perspectives. As writers, we can research the audience by using libraries, the Internet, and the speaker's knowledge of the audience.

Simplicity means that the speech has a central theme and that the speech meets the audience's need to get something of value from the speech, for example, a new concept.

Ingenuity is the element that makes a speech enjoyable, vivid and memorable for the audience. We can ask, "What's fun about this topic?"

Finally, authenticity is the quality that makes the audience believe in the speaker. A speech has

value when it contains information that rings true. As writers, we should strive to understand the information and then to make it into something that is important to us and to the audience.

Decision making: How to sort through the haystack

presented by Kevin Longfield
reported by Louise Worster

If you are making a decision and have more than two options to choose from, there is a logical method to sorting through a haystack of choices.

Kevin Longfield, a technical writer and instructor at Red River College, explains that his method is useful in the workplace and at home. He recently used it when he was buying a family vehicle and was considering different models. His method involves a comparison of options by assigning numerical values to features and qualities.

The first step is to list all the attributes that are desirable. From that list, identify those attributes that are essential, for example, at least five seat belts and a price of less than \$35,000, and those that are nice to have, for example, a sun roof. An essential item should be objective and simple. If an option does not include an essential item, you can eliminate the option.

The second step is to assign a number between one and 10 to identify the importance for each nice-to-have attribute.

The third step involves evaluating the nice-to-have attributes for each option and scoring them between one and 10. You can use objective criteria to help in scoring. The fourth step is calculating a value for each nice-to-have attribute by multiplying the numbers in steps two and three. The final step is to calculate the total value for each option. The option with the highest value is the best choice.

How to prepare a speech in five minutes

presented by Kevin Milne
reported by Autumn Robbie-Draward

Kevin Milne, Senior Auditor with the City of Winnipeg, and a Toastmaster, gave his audience some advice on how to write a speech in five minutes. He presented his material in an easy to understand, step-by-step process. Most of us are familiar with and practise all the key points he made—write an introduction that is supported by at least three points and conclude on the introduction. However, perhaps the most valuable tip on how to prepare a speech quickly was to

("Progressions" Continued on page 7)

From one technical communicator to another I – pod, U – pod, we – pod

By Rachel Ines

This is the second article in a series about tips discovered while working in different software programs.

Podcasting. Online “podcasts” of meetings, symposiums, and just about anything continue to grow in popularity. You may have heard of podcasts and listened to them, but have you ever created one? As technical communicators, we can use podcasts as a tool for developing products and as a training feature in our everyday work. Probably the best known podcasting technical writer is Mignon Fogarty, whose podcast “Grammar Girl’s Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing” has taken her career in a whole new direction.

Creating a podcast is actually quite simple as long as you have the required equipment. Gathering the equipment is easy; it’s liking my own voice that I’ve found to be the tricky part. So ... how do you create a podcast?

Required equipment

- a computer with Internet access
- a microphone (preferably a hands free headset with microphone)—I found mine on sale for \$20
- a script
- a downloaded podcasting program such as Odeo or Audacity

Creating the podcast

My experience is based on a podcast that I created as part of a course requirement. Rather than create a script from scratch, I used an article that I had written for my “Letter from the (acting) Editor” *Manuscript* column.

In this article, I’ll be comparing my experiences with Odeo and Audacity, the podcasting programs.

The Odeo experience. Initially, I selected Odeo (<http://studio.Odeo.com/create/home>), because I knew I would be making a short recording and I wouldn’t be editing my audio recording. Odeo appeared simple use. All you need to do is sign up for an account and begin recording. The program is free and is available online.

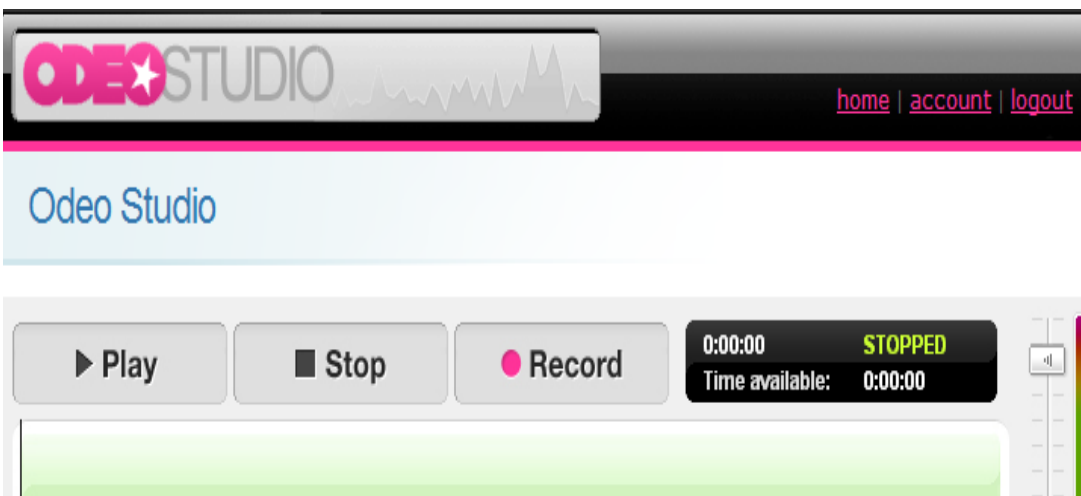
Odeo provides you with two hours of recording time. You don’t need to download the program as your podcast will be saved online. All I had to do is click on the record button, speak into the microphone, press stop once I was done recording, and save the file.

Although Odeo was simple to access, it was not exactly intuitive to use. It took a lot of memory recall from the class demonstration and clicking around before I figured it out. One disadvantage I encountered was the program’s tendency to freeze—frequently. I was unable to save or retrieve my podcast since the program is available online. Once the computer freezes and if you haven’t saved the program, it is irretrievable.

The Audacity experience. Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download>), in contrast to Odeo, allows you to download the program to your computer and save the recording on your hard drive.

This program provides a mini recording studio program on your computer enabling you can go back into the file and cut in clips when needed.

At first glance, Audacity’s many controls and features made it more intimidating than the three-
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The Odeo recording program

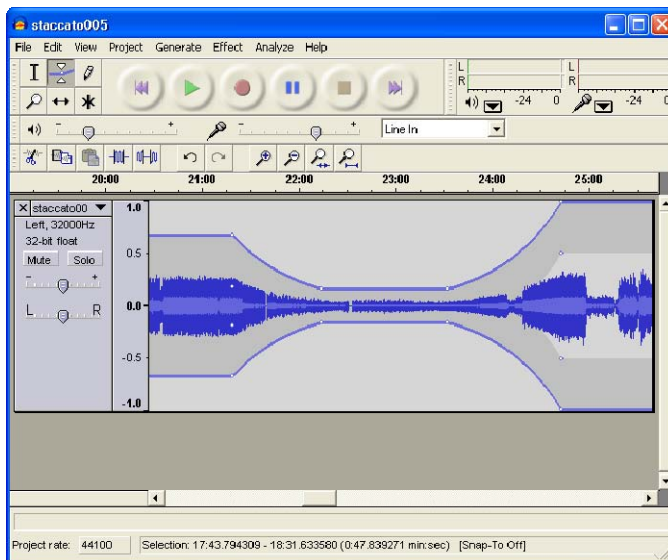
(“Podcasting” continued from page 6)

button interface on Odeo.

Despite this complexity, I was won over by the clearer playback quality of the recordings made with Audacity until I encountered another hurdle. Audacity requires you to download and use another program LAME, to create the mp3 file that was my intended podcast file format. I had a problem using this program and had to settle for saving my podcast in WAV file format.

While I preferred the internal operation of the Audacity program, the problems encountered with saving the file in mp3 format dissuaded me from using this program further. Others among my classmates, also encountered this problem.

While my brief experience revealed bugs to work out, some established podcasters create shows which can be comparable to a regular radio show, complete with music, hosts, and formal introductions.



The Audacity recording program

In the future, I'd like to see the chapter moving towards incorporating this technology into our meetings, perhaps starting with creating a podcast of one of our STC chapter dinner meetings.

Rachel Ines is the current Vice-President of STC Manitoba. She graduated from the Technical Communication Diploma Program at Red River College and has been a regular contributor to *Manuscript*.

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choose one side of the issue and develop key points that support that issue. He said that to argue both sides of the issue makes it more difficult to prepare quickly but most importantly it confuses the audience. By taking a stance, either for or against an issue, you can develop your argument quickly and convey conviction to your audience. Other tips included making eye contact, allowing for pauses in your delivery and smiling! And Kevin certainly displayed all those gestures in his presentation.

Simple Credibility -- Visual Aids Tool Belt

presented and reported by Andrew Quarry

Engaging the interest of subject matter experts (SMEs) and other key players in a development project can be a challenge.

Andrew Quarry demonstrated and described three inexpensive tools that he likes to use to encourage active participation at the outset of projects:

- foam boards and PostIt notes for requirements gathering
- easel binders for PowerPoint presentations
- information plans for avoiding unpleasant surprises

Andrew's presentation covered the following points about these tools, which he sometimes calls “cheap tricks”:

Foam boards and PostIt notes. Hand out PostIt notes and (low-odour) markers and ask SMEs to write down their thoughts as a means of subtly encouraging active participation. To get more blood flowing, have them stand up and post their notes on foam boards.

Easel binders. For small audiences (1 to 10 persons), print your PowerPoint slides and have participants cluster around while you flip through printouts of the slides. Although binders designed for use as easels are available, you can substitute an ordinary three-ring binder propped up in landscape orientation on Cirlox binding coils, which prevent the covers from spreading apart on the table top. This lo-tech approach has the advantages of speedy setup, decreased dependence on electricity, and higher rates of participation generated by the more intimate atmosphere.

Information plans. Plans *à la mode de JoAnn Hackos* are of critical importance for ensuring that the lead technical communicator and the client (project manager) have comparable understandings of a project—especially with regard to purpose, key success factors, and approach. Always develop a formal plan, even for what may seem to be very small projects. Unlike the other tools, this one isn't ridiculously cheap; but, even if you factor in the cost of attending a Hackos workshop, the ratio of benefit to cost is excellent.

From the (acting) Editor

Normally I try to find something of general professional interest to discuss, but this month you'll have to excuse me as I switch hats and put on my archivist hat. At the January progression, I gave a short presentation on archiving which got me to thinking ... what has become of our chapter archives?

I've devoted some time to work on the chapter archives, which is no easy feat. Last year, a small committee and I sorted through boxes and boxes of our chapter archives. As I've completed a second cull of our records, I've noticed that there are many pieces here and there that have gone missing or there is no record as to why they are missing. I've only been a member of this chapter for two years but as I've come to know chapter members, I've learned who is and isn't more familiar with STC Manitoba's chapter history. So right now I'm making a call to any member who has ever served on the executive or on a committee for your help.

As a member of the executive, I've been involved in some interesting discussions of past chapter

activities. Did you know that STC Manitoba had a time capsule? While this might be interesting to share with our newer members ... unfortunately our archival record cannot inform me who the keeper of the time capsule is. We're also missing records of minutes from 2001 to 2005. A list of missing or information requested will be posted on the STC Manitoba forums—please take the time to review the list and let me know if you have any of this information that you can provide the chapter.

STC Manitoba received their charter in January 1989; as we approach our 20th anniversary, I think it would be a great opportunity for old, new, and former members alike to share their experiences in our chapter history. Perhaps we can even look at displaying an exhibit of our chapter's history during a dinner meeting in the near future and see how far we've come from the early days. Wouldn't that be something?

History is a novel for which the people is the author.
—Alfred de Vigny, *Réflexions sur la Vérité dans l'Art*

Rachel

STC membership renewal

Don't forget your renewal!

Membership type	Includes	Cost
Classic	Printed publications Online publications Choice between the following: one chapter + one special interest group (SIG) or up to three SIGs	\$175 (add \$15 for extra postage)
E-membership	Online publications Choice between the following: one chapter + one SIG or up to three SIGs	\$165
Student	Online publications One student chapter One regular chapter Up to three SIGs	\$60
Retired	Online publications One student chapter One regular chapter Up to three SIGs	\$75