

## November dinner meeting

5:45 p.m.  
Tuesday, November 6, 2007  
Place Louis Riel  
190 Smith Street

### Writing a Comparative Analysis with Ron Blicq

Please confirm your attendance by noon, Friday, November 2, with Joanne Kusiak at [meetingcoordinator@stcmanitoba.org](mailto:meetingcoordinator@stcmanitoba.org)

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STC Manitoba  
is a chapter of



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

## November dinner meeting program

### Writing a Comparative Analysis with Ron Blicq

When you write a report or proposal in which you evaluate alternatives, such as plans, products, sites, or methods, you have to compare the alternatives clearly and persuasively, and so provide a justification for the recommendation you will make. You will learn how to compare alternatives against set criteria, using either an objective or a subjective approach.

#### Presenter's bio



The presenter will be Ron Blicq, who previously taught written and oral communication to engineering technology students at Red River College, and currently (in his "retirement") presents workshops on writing letters, reports, proposals and email to technical and business professionals in the workplace.

Ron is a seasoned and well-respected presenter who has made great contributions to the field.

## Report from the October dinner meeting

### Shocking tales ... of the Shockknife!

by Rachel Ines

When you think about October, what comes to mind? Cold weather? Thanksgiving? Pumpkins and Halloween? For the audience of October's meeting, speaker Alex McIlraith's presentation wasn't scary at all—but it was shocking! [Cue scary music, lightning, and darkness.]

Alex's presentation "The Shockknife Evolution: From Concept to Product," was an interesting look at the development of a product from beginning to end. Alex is an Instructor in the Electrical/Electronic Engineering Technology program at Red River College

*("Shockknife" continued on page 3)*

## 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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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



Rain drops keep falling on my head. Wait a minute, that's not right. Snow flakes keep falling on my head. D'oh! Winter is coming! Sorry folks, don't mind me. I think the change of season is getting to me, especially since I just got back from my vacation in New England.

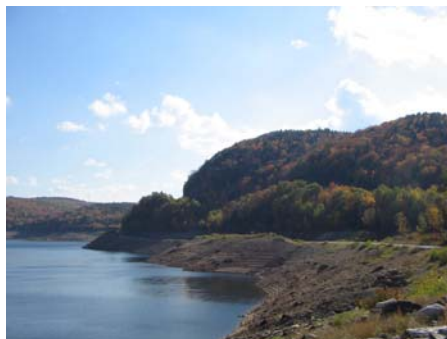
The conference committee has been working hard to prepare for the fifth annual technical communication conference. The conference Web site is officially up and running ([www.stcmanitoba.org/conference](http://www.stcmanitoba.org/conference)). We are currently looking for presenters to speak at the conference. If you are interested in presenting, please visit the Web site for more information or read the Call for Presentations on page 4.

Speaking of the conference, Saul Carliner has agreed to be the keynote speaker at this year's conference. I haven't had the opportunity to see one of Saul's presentations, but from what I hear this should be an excellent opportunity for everyone. Our senior members may recall that Saul served as President of the international STC in 1995-1996 and has been a presenter at a chapter meeting. As more information becomes available, it will be posted on the conference Web site.

We have received a few photo entries for our photo contest. Three photos have been posted on the STC Manitoba Forums and a voting poll has been created under *Announcements*. I highly encourage everyone to register and log in to the forums so that you can vote for your favourite photo. (For voting details see page 7).

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.l.friesen@gmail.com](mailto:brad.l.friesen@gmail.com). You can also send me a private message on the STC Manitoba Forums.

Brad



What better way to enjoy a beautiful fall day in New England?



How about a sunset view in New York?

Photos taken by Brad Friesen

(Continued from page 1)

(RRC). He is also one of the product developers. Technical communication diploma students may remember Alex as the course instructor from Electronics class.

### From idea to reality

The Shockknife concept was the brainchild of Jeff Quail, edged weapon trainer for the Winnipeg Police Department. Jeff wanted to create a produce to help train police officers during simulation training and to find a tool more effective in training than using a rubber knife.

Jeff developed a wooden prototype and realized that the concept was patentable. He approached Phil Poekter, a product designer and inventor, to help with the design concept. Phil, in turn, then approached Will Miller, Department Chair of the Electrical/Electronic Engineering Technology Program, looking for someone who could help with

developing the electronic component of the product. Miller referred Phil to Alex.

Jeff, Phil, and Alex wanted to create a product that was small and efficient, manufacturable, safe, and made in Manitoba. The designers conducted extensive research as they had no previous experience in this area.

The design process was completed within one year. Jeff, Phil, and Alex designed a fully commercialized product, that today, is being used in law and military training in over 15 countries.

Alex “shocked” the audience with his demonstration of the Shockknife. The Shockknife can simulate a knife attack—which is visible by the sparks from the knife—at four different settings. Alex demonstrated how the knife works by using it on himself, at a low setting and walking away visibly unscathed.

For more information or to see how the shockknife works, visit the web site at [www.shockknife.com](http://www.shockknife.com).

Rachel Ines is the current Vice-President of STC Manitoba. She works as a research technician with the IEGC Project at the University of Manitoba. Rachel graduated from the Technical Communication Diploma Program at Red River College and has been a regular contributor and has worked as guest editor on *Manuscript*.

## From the (acting) editor

Technology—what a magnificent thing it can be—and then again maybe not. In September, I had the opportunity to participate in two web seminars (or webinars) on issues dealing with copyright. I was looking forward to these webinars as I was hoping to gain some insight into copyright law and education, primarily because the project I’m working on is scheduled for completion next year.

To my dismay I encountered many problems, which in hindsight probably could have been avoided, had I known what to do. Since my project office is located off campus from the University of Manitoba, listening to the webinar required much planning and assistance from the IT department where my office is based. I have to call a number, state the problem, and then wait for someone, whether through guidance on the phone or by magically logging onto my computer screen, to fix the problem.

The IT department managed to finally provide me access to the webinar, but once I logged on I couldn’t participate. Why? The webinar had reached capacity and I was locked out and would have to wait for the podcast version. “Fine,” I thought, “there’s a second seminar in the afternoon.” During my lunch, I listened to the seminar that I had missed.

Afternoon session. Log on. Same problem as in the morning. AAARGH!! Rather than calling IT again, I just decided to forget about the whole experience and wait for the podcast edition later in the day. Obviously, I just wasn’t meant to participate in the session.



My thoughts about technology during my webinar experience.

answers to questions right away. Technology has made our life so much simpler, but in many ways, technology has created a different set of challenges.

Until next month,

Rachel

Recap: I wound up missing both seminars, but through the magic of technology, I was able to listen to the webinars online at my convenience. Although this opportunity allows a simulated environment of what it would have been like had I been able to join in initially, it’s not the same—primarily when you need

# 2008 Technical Communication Conference hosted by STC Manitoba and RRC

For those interested in  
technical communication in Manitoba

April 14–15, 2008

Red River College, Winnipeg, Manitoba



## Call for presentations

Deadline for entries December 1, 2007

### Be a presenter at the conference

You are invited to be a presenter at the fifth annual technical communication conference held in Manitoba, jointly hosted by the Manitoba Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC), and the Technical Communication Diploma program of Red River College (RRC). You'll enhance your resume, establish your credentials as an expert in a field of practice, and increase your visibility in the technical writing community in Manitoba. You'll also get a discounted registration rate for the conference.

### About the conference

The conference *Technical communication: the bridge over muddy waters* consists of two days of sessions on Monday, April 14, and Tuesday, April 15, 2008. You are encouraged to submit presentations in the following areas of interest to those who engage in technical writing.

- *Covering the basics* includes topics such as editing, writing, grammar skills, developing relationships with subject matter experts, project management, career development for technical communicators in Manitoba, human factors.
- *Collaboration and teamwork* includes a look at how you can work more effectively in groups using media, knowledge management, virtual teams, and so on.
- *Technology* looks at new developments in technology to help or challenge technical communicators, such as FrameMaker, XML, handheld devices, publishing with Adobe Acrobat, single sourcing.

### About presentations

Each session is fifty minutes. You may request a double session for a longer presentation or workshop.

Presentation formats are

- Individual presentation: an in-depth analysis of a specific topic by an individual speaker
- Workshop: an interactive presentation with learning exercises
- Panel discussion: an in-depth analysis of a subject by a group of experts, followed by an informal discussion with the audience
- Progression: small group exchanges consisting of a 15-minute presentation including group discussion

## How to submit your presentation

Submit your proposal by email to Brad Friesen ([brad.l.friesen@gmail.com](mailto:brad.l.friesen@gmail.com)). Please put *Conference Proposal* in the subject line. The deadline for proposals is December 1, 2007.

Provide the following information:

- Outline and objectives of your presentation
- Overview of your presentation
- A short biography of no more than 100 words (this will be published in the Preliminary and Final programs)
- Format of the presentation (individual talk, workshop, panel discussion, progression)
- Audience level
- Any equipment needs
- Any other special needs (for example, wheelchair access)
- Scheduling restrictions (any days or times you cannot be at the conference to present)

You will hear early in January whether or not your proposal has been accepted.

## About the hosts

The Manitoba Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC) has been an award-winning chapter since it received its charter in 1989. STC internationally is an organization dedicated to advancing the arts and sciences of technical communication—it is the largest organization of its type in the world. Its approximately 18,000 members include technical writers, editors, graphic designers and multimedia artists. For information on the Society, see the website at [www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org).

Red River College launched its two-year Technical Communication Diploma program in 2002. For more information about the program, see the program website at [rrc.mb.ca](http://rrc.mb.ca). (Select *Full-time programs*, T).

For more information about the conference, see the conference Web site at [www.stcmanitoba.org/conference](http://www.stcmanitoba.org/conference).

## Contact

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### Conference volunteers wanted!

The STC/RRC Conference committee is still looking for volunteers to assist with the planning and organizing of the conference.

If you would like to help plan or would like to help with conference preparations, we need you! Whether you can volunteer one hour, or three hours, or as many hours of your time as you can, your help would be appreciated. Contact Brad Friesen ([brad.l.friesen@gmail.com](mailto:brad.l.friesen@gmail.com)) or Andrew Quarry ([andrew\\_quarry@cadencehs.ca](mailto:andrew_quarry@cadencehs.ca)) for more information.



## Other organizations—local meetings and events

by Andrew Quarry

As the genesis of a column on this subject, I've taken information from the web sites of a few local organizations and an upcoming event that I think you might find of professional interest. If you would like to share any comparable information, please let me know about it by email to [andrew@cadencehs.ca](mailto:andrew@cadencehs.ca)

### Flash in the Peg: Winnipeg's Adobe User Group

<http://www.flashinthepeg.org/>

Darren Osadchuk, this group's founder and operator says, "Flash in the Peg is Winnipeg's first Adobe User Group. ... Although you might think from the name that the Group will be dedicated to all things Flash, I hope that it will become a meeting place for users of a range of Adobe products."

To start getting meeting notices, go to <http://four.pairlist.net/mailman/listinfo/flashinthepeg>

Usual meeting time: monthly at 7 p.m. on a date specified via email

Usual meeting place: Room W411, Red River College, Princess Street campus

Some topics at recent meetings:

- Getting Started with Flash
- Flash Media Server 3 and Audition 3
- ColdFusion 8 Launch Event

### Manitoba Editors' Association (MEA)

<http://www.manitobaeditors.ca/>

MEA is a group open to those who practise, have practised, or aspire to practise the subtle art of editing. They feature several workshops per year, usually on Saturdays.

Questions about the MEA may be submitted by sending an email message to [meaworkshops@gmail.com](mailto:meaworkshops@gmail.com)

### New Media Manitoba (NMM)

<http://www.newmediamanitoba.com/>

NMM an association of professionals that advocate and provide focused training, support, and guidance to the new media business and

development community.

Training events have included internet application development, convergence media workshops, new media workflow, visual effects, new media business training, and video game design. Activities are targeted toward new media professionals. However, all are welcome to participate. Most training events are free unless otherwise stated.

You can be notified of future training events as well new media job postings by signing up to their [mailing list](#). Most training events are free unless otherwise stated.

Usual meeting time: 2nd-last Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m.

Usual meeting place: A/V centre in Psych Health Centre on William

Some topics at recent meetings:

- Develop Mental for the Xbox 360
- Web Development that Doesn't Hurt
- Ruby on Rails (RoR).
- The Anatomy of a Game

### FITC Road Show—Winnipeg 2007 November 17

[http://www.fitc.ca/event\\_detail.cfm?festival\\_id=20](http://www.fitc.ca/event_detail.cfm?festival_id=20)

Over of the main event:

- One full day and night of Design & Technology
- Two tracks of presentations
- Presentations in Creative, Technical, and Business areas, focusing on cutting edge trends and developments within the New Media Industry
- Renowned design and technology presenters from around the globe
- FITC evening mixer event

Tickets range in price from \$59 for students to \$225. The latter price is for the "Works," which apparently includes admission to a one day pre-event workshop on CS3 Flash, held on November 16, 2007.

It's not too late—vote today!

## STC Manitoba photo competition

Beginning in September of this year, we announced a contest asking *Manuscript* readers to submit photos for our photo contest.

From our submitted entries, we've selected several photos and now we're asking **you** to vote for your favourite photo. The winning photo will replace the current photo used on the STC Manitoba newsletter and web site banner.

The voting deadline is **November 2, 2007**. The winner will be featured in the December issue of *Manuscript*.

### How to vote

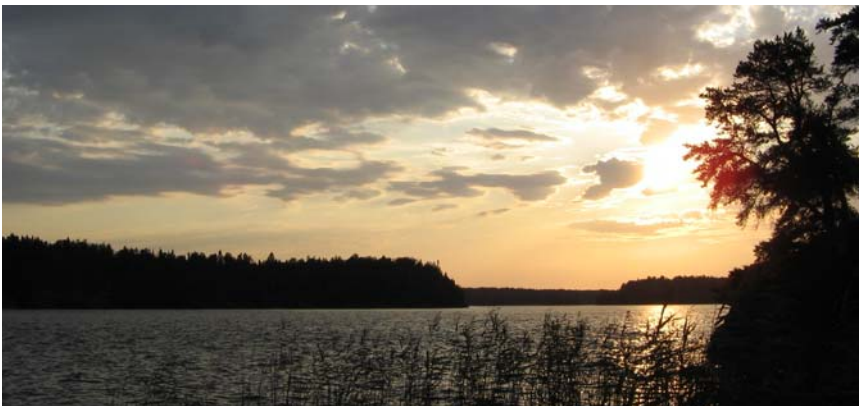
1. If you haven't done so, register yourself on the forums. (<http://stcmanitoba.org/forums/>) Only registered individuals can vote.
2. Log on to the forums.
3. Click on the [Announcements](#) section of the forums to find the poll.
4. Under announcements, click on [\[ Poll \] STC Manitoba Photo Competition](#) to be directed to the poll web page.
5. Vote for your favourite photo.



**Winter scene**



**Golden Boy**



**Sunset**

## Did you know...



November 8, 2007 is World Usability Day. The theme for this year is healthcare.

World Usability Day events are happening around the world. Although no events are scheduled in Manitoba, you can participate in online events.

Of interest to technical communicators is a web cast "Accessible but not Usable?: A Look Beyond Design Guidelines," which is scheduled for Thursday, November 8, 2007 from 5:00 am PT – 6:00 am PT.

Worldwide, technical communicators are acknowledging this day by holding conferences and meetings in the United States and New Zealand.

Visit the web site to see what events are happening around the world.  
<http://www.worldusabilityday.org/>

## Professional Development

Course	Date (2007)	Course offered at
Writing for Public Relations	Nov 1 – Dec 12	University of Winnipeg
Mastering policies and procedures manuals	Nov 21 – 22	
Designing and delivering dynamic workshops	Nov 29 – 30	University of Manitoba

### Events

Event name	Date	Event information
FITC New Media Road Show	November 25, 2006	Ramada Marlborough Hotel 331 Smith Street <a href="http://www.fitc.ca/presentation_list.cfm?festival_id=13">http://www.fitc.ca/presentation_list.cfm?festival_id=13</a>

## Chapter Dinner Meetings Schedule

Tuesday	Topic	Presenter
December 4, 2007	Job Competencies	Keith Sinclair
January 6, 2008	Various topics in Progression	TBA
February 5, 2008	Emotional Intelligence	Heather Erhardt
March 4, 2008	Organizational Development	Leanne Douglas
May 6, 2008	Annual General Meeting	TBA