



November 2009, Volume 22, Number 3

November chapter meeting

6:00 p.m. (5:45 registration and networking)

Note: new start time

November 3, 2009
Red River College
160 Princess Street

**Starting a business
Andrew Quarry**

Please confirm your attendance by noon, Friday, October 30, with Joanne Kusiak at meetingcoordinator@stcmanitoba.org

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November chapter meeting

Starting a business

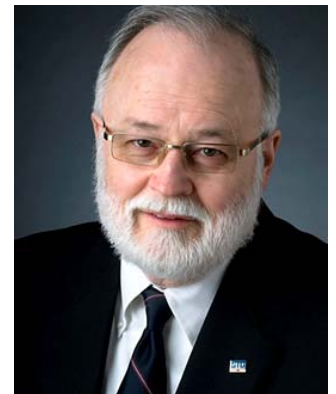
About the program

If you are planning to start a business or are just curious about what might be involved, Andrew Quarry’s recent experience in establishing his technical communication firm will be relevant to you.

As a recent graduate of the Meyers Norris Penny (MNP) Self-Employment Program, Andrew’s observations on their structured approach apply to starting up businesses in general; and, as a technical communication practitioner for over 30 years, his observations on the special challenges faced by technical communicators, when they are starting a business, apply to most of those in our typical chapter meeting audience.

About the presenter

Although he was not conscious of it for the first decade or so, Andrew has spent most of his working career as a technical communicator—developing policy and procedure documents, computer system specifications, forms, and training documentation. His introduction to technical communication came in the form of editing income tax regulations. His realization that he really liked doing this sort of thing came when he was trying to streamline the gathering of information for welfare payments. And his realization that he was a technical communicator came when, as an employee of Manitoba Hydro, he started to attend STC Manitoba meetings. After leaving Hydro, he joined Cadence Human Systems as a consultant. After Cadence ceased operations last year, he attended the MNP Program and established Andrew Quarry Business Writing Services in January of this year.



Andrew has been active in the Manitoba chapter of STC ever since its second meeting. He was its first formally elected Secretary and has served as its President for three terms. At the international level of the Society, he has been recognized with the rank of Associate Fellow, partly for his work as manager of the Technical Communication in Western Canada Project.



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.

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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For more information about STC Manitoba, please visit our Web site at www.stcmanitoba.org.



Executive Committee
2009–2010

President, Ben Davies
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Vice-President, Susan Haire
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Past President, Andrew Quarry

Secretary, Vacant

Treasurer, Donald Nordman

Membership, Vacant

Public relations, Dorothy Davidson

Program, Vacant

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 President

We knew it was coming, and now it's officially here: STC International has finally released its dues increases for 2010, and it doesn't look good.

Basic dues no longer include membership in a local chapter and SIG. Basic membership is now \$215 USD, and to join a chapter, you must purchase an "a la carte" membership for an additional \$25 USD. Joining a SIG will cost you an additional \$10 USD.

You can also purchase a gold membership package for \$395 USD, which includes "membership in one chapter and SIG, free registration for seminars, webinars, one online certificate course, the Salary Survey, and a Premium listing (50-word description) in the Online Buyers Guide & Consultant Directory. The value of this package is \$1,458 USD".

However, to help alleviate some of the financial burden and help members pay for the dues increases, STC is offering a split payment plan where members can make four payments throughout the year using a credit card.

Another significant change to membership this year is that all members with basic membership will now receive electronic versions of STC publications (Intercom and Technical Communication) instead of print copies. If you wish to receive print copies of Intercom and Technical Communication, they are available for \$30 USD and \$75 USD respectively.

To most, it probably seems a little counter-productive to be raising dues during a recession. Unfortunately, it's the only way STC will survive.

When renewing your membership, STC Manitoba would like to remind you to please consider re-joining our chapter for the 2010–2011 year, to ensure we maintain our local Manitoba presence at STC International.

Ben

Around the STC

STC is offering the following events and web seminar. Visit www.stc.org for more details on the time and cost.

Events

- November 2: Technical Communication 101: Deliverables and Definitions
- November 9: Technical Communication 101: Writing procedures
- November 16: Technical Communication 101: Design and layout
- November 23: Technical Communication 101: Editing & moving on

Web seminar

November 8
1:00–2:30pm EST
Moving unstructured content to structured content
Presented by Bernard Aschwanden

From the Editor

Font off! That's exactly what home furnishing giant IKEA has done, much to the chagrin of many of their customers and designers across the world. No matter where you are, the yellow uppercase letters on the blue background can be spotted from miles away.

But that has now changed. IKEA's typeface, which was customized version Futura, has now been changed to Verdana. While the outrage may seem a bit silly, it's just a company's typeface after all ... many companies go through some kind of re-branding at some point (think Walmart), it mainly has no effect on the general public. So why all the fuss?

For many of us, we can understand why there might be a fuss. As technical communicators, document design is a part of our design. That includes the selection of specific fonts that are not only user friendly and audience appropriate, but

also appropriate for the medium it's being used. We know that serif fonts are best for print documents, as the little lines and hooks provide more guidance for the users and they are easier to read for longer documents. In contrast, sans serif fonts are best for online documents.

While the IKEA font is a part of the company's brand, its usage is a sore point because of the source. Most people are aware that Verdana is a Microsoft font and see its selection as a nod to the software giant. Others are unhappy because IKEA is seen as a company who understands good design principles. I guess it just goes to show you that good design principles are always recognized by product users.



Until next month,
Rachel

October chapter meeting

The little chapter meeting that could

By Andrew Quarry

Eight of us finally got together on *Wednesday*, October 7, for the "student night" STC chapter meeting at the Princess Street campus of Red River College. Although the turnout was lower than we had hoped it would be, there was a sense of accomplishment in holding the meeting—given the obstacles to overcome, the meeting might not have occurred at all.

On the same day, *Tuesday*, as the originally announced date, we discovered by chance that our meeting room at the campus was double booked. Rescheduling for the following evening resolved the double-booking issue but created time conflicts for some of the original participants.

While Ben Davies, our President, was trying to manage our response to this issue, he was also trying to manage his own state of health. A trip to a walk-in clinic was a factor in his decision that he would not be able to preside at the meeting. Susan Haire stepped in as his replacement for the meeting.

Despite the obstacles, the business of the meeting unfolded as we had hoped it would. We recounted our personal work histories and, is typically the case with technical communicators, found that a characteristic we share is that we have come to the present point through very indirect routes.

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 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!

STC Manitoba chapter members

The first 15—Where are they now?

By Susan Haire

STC Manitoba became a chapter in January, 1989, after 15 people joined STC. But even though we were not officially a chapter, we had an executive and several meetings leading up to that momentous occasion.

Our newsletter editor wanted to mark our twentieth year as a chapter by running a series of articles about these first 15 members. As this year's chapter Vice-President (and one of those first 15 members myself), I was asked to track down my fellow pioneers and find out what they're all doing now. I asked everyone the same five questions, and you will see their responses in the issues of the newsletter over the next year

This month we will be interviewing one of our STC Fellows, Tony Rhodes-Marriott.

Q. How did you get involved with STC Manitoba back in 1988?

TRM: I was a member of STC just before it became STC—when it was STWP (The Society for Technical Writers and Publishers). I started a local chapter of the STC as the Winnipeg Chapter in 1980/81 timeframe when I moved into Winnipeg. That Chapter dissolved in the 1985/6 timeframe. I was naturally disappointed. When Alexa Campbell approached me to see if I was interested in a new helping to form a new Chapter, I was delighted and readily agreed.

Q. What was your role at that time?

TRM: I held a position on the executive, not sure what position, over the years I have held many positions.

Q. What have you been doing over the past 20 years? Are you still involved with STC Manitoba and/or technical communication? Did your membership in the chapter help you in any way?

TRM: I worked as a writer, editor, and manager at Bristol Aerospace Limited, until the demise of the

F-5 program, when the Technical Publications group was disbanded. I was the last member of the group to leave. I then formed my own company and was slowly gaining clientele, when an opportunity came to join BNI, later bought by Nortel Networks, I became a telecommuter and took an evening teaching position with Red River College. When I eventually ran out of a job with Nortel I decided only to do some teaching, later retiring from that. The only thing I have done recently was to help Bristol with their 75th Anniversary history book. STC generally helped me with contacts for many activities, hiring and problem solving. Through the Society I have a wide network of friends and colleagues world wide. I am interested and amazed at the changes

that have taken place as the world of communication continues to evolve, even though I am no longer involved in a business sense. My grandkids keep me challenged with the latest "E" words and devices. I recently saw my first great nephew live on Skype, which we have had for some years now.

Q. How do you see the chapter moving forward in the next few years?

TRM: I believe the previous STC Chapter folded due to a number of factors, the prime reason was, that the majority of members were all in one industry, namely agriculture. The secondary factor was the economy. Probably the economy is a factor today in

troubling times for the chapter. One of the challenges for STC is finding people who are Technical Communicators, yet do not realize it. They tend to think they are one of a kind and no one else has similar challenges. Once these people find out they are technical communicators, if they can be convinced to get involved, they learn and become more involved. Thus grows the chapter. I was the sixteenth member of the Toronto Chapter, which has, through the years had its ups and downs too.

("The first 15" continued on page 5)



Tony Rhodes-Marriott, one of the original founders of the STC Manitoba chapter

Designing products for a sustainable world

By Rachel Ines

World Usability Day will soon be here, so mark your calendars for November 12, 2009. This year's theme focuses on how various products are designed using a 'cradle to cradle' approach.

The approach is bringing the design back to nature. Looking at the lifecycle of products, it encourages users to look at recycling or re-using materials and assessing if products are not only user friendly, but environmentally friendly as well.

Why should the lifecycle of designing products matter? Think about it ... humans consume a lot of products. According to Statistics Canada, in 2006, Canadians recycled 20% of their garbage and threw out 837 kg of non-hazardous solid waste. Consider the amount of products we dispose of on a daily basis, not to mention the type of products we dispose of on a daily basis.

We create user friendly documents and we probably have some kind of user friendly product that we use in our everyday life. It might be a cordless mouse or keyboard, office chair, workstation, monitor, or footrest. Ergonomic products not only help make our life easy, but allows us to work in comfort.

Consider the products that you, your neighbours, or your workplace throws out when products use their usefulness. People want the newest and latest items. When a product breaks down or is difficult to use, sometimes it is easier to buy a new item rather than fix an existing one. If a

product is difficult to use, it is easier to replace it with something that requires us to expend less energy.

While the move towards user friendly products has been in existence for some time now, we must now consider the move towards creating sustainable products. As humans, we have a responsibility not only to each other, but to the animals, and to the future generation to provide a safer and healthier world. Not only will it make our life easier, but it will also make our world better.



About World Usability Day

World Usability Day was established in 2005 to ensure that services and products are easy for users to access and simple to use. As an initiative of the Usability professionals' association, this day takes place on the second Thursday of November annually, with the goal to raise awareness and train professionals to good usability, research, development, and practise.

For more information about World Usability Day events, visit [<add link>](#).

Rachel Ines is completing her third (and final) year as newsletter editor ... *Yes, I'm putting the job ad out early this year!* She graduated from the Technical Communication Diploma Program and is an active chapter member, serving on the STC Manitoba Executive Committee as Secretary and Vice-President. She is also the chapter archivist and is always interested in collecting STC Manitoba related archival materials.

("The first 15" continued from page 4)

Q. Any other comments or words of wisdom you would like to share with the chapter?

TRM: Just get involved, that way, you will learn, and have a lot more fun, and meet a lot more people. If at all possible go to an STC Conference,

talk to others and even present papers.

Final note: Where is Jack Lee? I have been unable to find any contact information for Jack Lee. If anyone knows how to reach him, please contact me at susan_haire@hotmail.com.

Susan Haire has been a technical communicator and member of STC for over 20 years. She was one of the 'first 15, and has served the chapter as President, Secretary, and Vice-President (this year).

2009–2010 presentation schedule

Speaker	Presentation title	Date
Andrew Quarry	Starting a business	November 3, 2009
—	Technical Communication Q&A, Holiday networking event	December 1, 2009
Various speakers	Progression	January 12, 2010
Kelly Thibodeau	Writing for the web	February 2, 2010
Various speakers	Technical Communication café <i>held at Prairie Ink Café, Polo Park</i>	March 2, 2010
IMRIS	Tour of IMRIS	April 6, 2010
Sue Hemphill	Conflict resolution	May 4, 2010

Professional development courses

Course	Date	Offered through
MS Visio 2007 2	November 2–9	Red River College
MS PowerPoint 2007 2	November 3–10	
MS Word 2007 2	November 3–10	
Establishing Effective Employee Relations	November 3	University of Winnipeg
Effective Feedback Skills and Strategies	November 7	
Effective web communications	November 14–28	
Creative Thinking for Problem Solving	November 21	

For more information about the courses listed, consult the institution's Web site.

Red River College Continuing and Distance Education: www.rrc.mb.ca

University of Winnipeg: www.uwinnipeg.ca

Bring a guest contest

STC Manitoba's Bring a guest contest is back for 2009–10.

Win a free membership worth roughly \$250.00. For more details, visit the STC website at www.stcmanitoba.org.

