



December 2007, Volume 20, Number 4

December dinner meeting

5:45 p.m.
Tuesday, December 4, 2007
Place Louis Riel
190 Smith Street

Understanding and applying job competencies for fun and profit!
with Keith Sinclair

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

Future Meetings

January—*Progression* [6 topics TBA]

February—*Emotional Intelligence* with Heather Erhardt

March—*Organizational Development* with Leanne Douglas

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December dinner meeting program—presenter, Keith Sinclair

Understanding and applying job competencies for fun and profit!

For well over a decade, Human Resources professionals have led the identification, development and implementation of job competencies. Job competencies pop up in

- recruitment profiles
- career development assessments
- succession planning processes
- performance management systems
- job evaluation criteria



Are job competencies a legitimate organizational tool or yet another evil scheme hatched by misguided, controlling HR reps?

Learn how you can apply competencies to determine, develop and represent your capabilities. Understanding and applying job competency models can help you in your personal development, career advancement, and job search activities.

(“Job competencies” continued on page 2)

Report from the November dinner meeting

Objective or subjective?—Justifying your analysis

by Rachel Ines

On a chilly November night, Ron Blicq attracted 31 people to his presentation on “Writing a comparative analysis (or writing a justification).” Ron’s regular fans knew not to be discouraged by the dry-sounding topic. His reputation was probably a factor in also attracting several new faces to one of our best-attended dinner meetings ever.

Ron described the parts of a report on an investigation that leads to drawing conclusions and making a recommendation. Referring to specific cases, he demonstrated differences in how the readers of a report might be served by a comparative analysis that follows either a primarily objective or a primarily subjective approach.

(“Analysis” continued on page 3)

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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Secretary, Holly Steele
Treasurer, Nirdosh Ganske
Membership, Andrew Quarry
Public relations, Kevin Longfield
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

Editor's note: In our attempts to publish this month's newsletter in a timely manner, we accidentally published Brad's letter to Santa instead of his regular letter from the president. Check back next year for Brad's regular column.

Dear Santa,

This year I have been a very good technical communicator. Here is my list. I hope you don't think it's too long. Please check it twice.

This year we had three technical communication students from Red River College win [scholarships](#): Lydia Klassen, John Lovering and



Neil Ternowetsky. They have all worked extremely hard over the past year and are all very deserving. You can read all about their accomplishments in this issue of *Manuscript*. Could you please send each one of them a cheque for \$300?

Are any of your elves busy this upcoming April? We are having our fifth annual technical communication conference and we need people to present. The conference call for presentations

has drawn some interest already, but we need more. Would any of your elves be interested in presenting at our conference? Perhaps one of them could give a toy building workshop.

Oh yeah and Santa, could you please remind all STC Manitoba members to renew their memberships?

And last but not least, if it's not too much trouble, could you bring me that new fishing boat I've always wanted?

Well, that's all for this year. I hope you like the meatloaf I left out for you. Thanks Santa.

If you have any thoughts or suggestions please feel free to send me an email at brad.l.friesen@gmail.com. You can also send me a private message on the STC Manitoba Forums.

Brad

("Job competencies" continued from page 1)

With over 20 years of corporate HR and consulting experience with TSE 100 and 300 firms, Keith will share his insights and expertise in this informative and interactive session.

Presenter's bio

Keith joined The Harris Consulting Corporation in 2004, with particular emphasis on executive search, human resource, leadership development, executive coaching, business strategy, board governance and organizational effectiveness consulting.

As a Human Resources Executive and Vice-President, Keith has worked in senior HR capacities for employers with revenues from \$50M to \$5B, and employee bases from 500 to 60,000.

Keith earned a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree from the University of Winnipeg, majoring in Political Science, and has undertaken post-graduate studies towards a Masters in Public Administration. He holds the professional designation of Certified Human Resource Professional (CHRP).

... and the winner was!

Brad Friesen's photo, "Sunset," won a poll conducted on the STC Manitoba Forums to choose a graphic for use in the *Manuscript* banner. The new banner is unveiled in this issue. As a member of the executive, Brad is ineligible to receive the \$50 prize.

The new banner will also be used on chapter brochures, web site, and other chapter promotional and communication items.

With thanks for his participation, the prize is being awarded to Mike Bradshaw who submitted the Golden Boy and winter scene. The winter scene will be used intermittently in some issues of the newsletter. Be on the lookout in upcoming issues.



Ah, what a lovely sunset view! As Manitobans, we'll appreciate this scene in the upcoming months!

(*"Analysis" continued from page 1*)

When you are selecting the approach to use when writing a report, Ron suggested taking the following into account:

- If you and the audience don't know one another well, or if there's a risk that the audience will think that the facts are being manipulated, you'll probably find a report written with an objective approach easier and safer to write—the writer is more likely to be seen as just stating the facts and not voicing an opinion.



Senior STC member, Ron Blicq, engages the audience with the secret to writing a comparative analysis.

- If you and the audience do know one another well and they clearly value your opinion, they will probably find a subjectively written report more enjoyable and, in this sense, easier to

read—you must take care to avoid manipulating the information.

Ron also presented some principles to observe when doing your analysis and developing your report:

- Listing subjects (such as alternative methods for resolving a problem): If possible, restrict your analysis to three or four alternatives and clearly state the justification for focusing on these.
- Describing subjects (alternatives): When describing alternatives avoid comparing them directly to one another—this shouldn't occur until you are drawing conclusions. At a point in the process that differs according to whether you are using the objective or the subjective approach, you may compare the alternatives by looking at how they meet the selection criteria, but avoid comparing alternative to alternative until drawing conclusions.
- Stating conclusions and recommendations: No surprises! Never bring in any information not discussed earlier.

The audience participated enthusiastically in discussing Ron's ideas and relating their own experiences to the report writing process.

Ron's presentation will be published in the upcoming issue of *Communicator*, the journal of the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators.

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*.

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 January 1, 2008

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). 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.

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. (Select *Full-time programs*, T).

For more information about the conference, see the conference Web site at 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) or Andrew Quarry (andrew_quarry@cadencehs.ca) for more information.



Three cheers for the technical communication students!

The Prairie Lights Restaurant at Red River College's (RRC's) Notre Dame Campus saw three technical communication students receive scholarship awards at the annual student awards luncheon, held November 15.

Lydia Klassen won the Society for Technical Communication, Manitoba Chapter Award, based on demonstrated exceptional qualities as a technical communicator and contribution to the community. John Lovering and Neil Ternowetsky each won a Technical Communication Faculty Scholarship, based on writing skills, research

skills, teamwork skills, overall communication skills, and professionalism.

Lydia, John, and Neil are all fourth-term students in RRC's Technical Communication program. They will be presenting their capstone projects at the upcoming conference in the spring.

Net proceeds of the annual joint STC/RRC technical communication conference are used to fund the STC Award and the Faculty Scholarship. The fifth annual technical communication conference, Technical communication: the bridge over muddy waters, will be held April 14 and 15, 2008, at the Princess Street Campus.

STC Manitoba Forums

A funny thing happened on the way to the forums ...

If you're a regular reader of *Manuscript*, you may recall seeing references in Brad's "From the President" column to the STC Manitoba forums. Forums? What about the forums? Well, if you haven't checked out our forums, start now by visiting <http://www.stcmanitoba.org/forums/>

that you don't just access them—you participate in them through interaction and sharing. If you're not already active on other forums, consider participating on our forums not just for the specific information you might find there, but also as a means of improving your professional understanding of how this communication environment functions.

New to using forums?

Before registering, please remember to read the rules. You can also improve your understanding of forums by reading the answers on the FAQ page, which has a link at the top of the page.

Forum	Topics	Posts	Last Post
PLEASE READ FIRST			
Forum Rules Please read the rules before using the forum. Moderators: read.lesao , rachel.les	1	1	Fri May 25, 2007 1:53 pm In: STC Manitoba Forum Rules By: admin
Welcome to the STC Manitoba Forums			
Welcome and Introductions Welcome to the STC Manitoba Forums. Use this forum to introduce yourself to the rest of our online community. Moderators: read.lesao , rachel.les	6	13	Wed Sep 12, 2007 10:41 pm In: Hi from Chad By: Brad Klassen
Announcements Competition winners, newsletter notifications, STC press, chapter news, and more. Moderators: read.lesao , rachel.les	9	9	Mon Nov 05, 2007 4:50 pm In: So glad you replied! By: rachel.les
Forum Feedback Submit enquiries and feedback here or post any questions related to the forums. Moderators: read.lesao , rachel.les	1	4	Tue Oct 09, 2007 6:13 pm In: Forum Feedback By: Chad
General Discussion			

The executive committee tested the forums this summer. Since then, we've made several posts to encourage participation. While we've had a few chapter members try out the forums, there are still many members who haven't signed up and participated.

As a means of renewing communication with chapter members, the forums allow members who are not always able to come out to dinner meetings or participate on chapter committees to interact with one another and share information. As a source of information, there will be some overlap with the chapter's web site. However, the special value of the forums stems from the fact

The information available on the forums is organized in general categories. Do you have an announcement or a question you want to share with your fellow members? Post it in on the forums—such posts don't have to be as closely tied to technical communication as might be the case for items on the web site or in the newsletter.

If you're a regular subscriber to *techwr-l* or any of the STC forums, you probably already have an appreciation of the potential value of forums. Consider giving our local chapter's forums a boost by visiting them and sharing questions and information.

From the (acting) editor

Christmas will soon be upon us and I could not be more excited! Christmas just happens to be my favourite time of the year. Mostly because I'm usually done my Christmas shopping by now ... that's mainly because after working nearly ten years in retail, I know better than to be at the mall! But December is not only special because of the holidays, it also means I'm done school! At least for this year.

Over the past couple of months I've been taking a course called "The new literacy: Communication with blogs, wikis and podcasts." The primary activity has been blogging and I have never been much of a blogger. I've read a few blogs on occasion, looked at my friends blogs; but,

personally, it's never really been my cup of tea. I found this course to be quite challenging. Blogs are a kind of online journal, but in my case it was more of writing online.

Blogging is quite challenging, as it's really not for everybody. Since blogging is so public and interactive, a blogger must write daily and develop a certain style of writing. As a technical communicator, I can appreciate the work that goes into writing a blog, but as for maintaining my own blog ... I think it's best to leave that to others.

I hope you all have a very happy holiday season and an even happier new year!

Until next year,
Rachel



STC membership renewal

Don't forget your renewal!

STC membership numbers to date: * Manitoba membership as of September 2007

Manitoba 45*

**STC membership as of November 9, 2007

Canada 1 398**

The STC is made up of 155 communities, including 104 professional chapters, 30 student chapters, and 21 Special Interest Groups

Worldwide 14 686**

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

NB: Costs are listed in US dollars

Professional development courses

Course	Date	Offered at
Facilitating Adult Literacy Development and Basic Education in the Information Age	Jan 7–Apr 11, 2008	University of Manitoba
Social Technology for Teaching and Training: Exploring Today's Communication Tools	Jan 7 to Apr 11, 2008	
Designing and Writing Manuals	Jan 7–Mar 17, 2008	Red River College
Technical Communication— Introduction	Jan 9–Mar 12, 2008	
Web Marketing Communications	Jan 8 – Mar 25, 2008	University of Winnipeg
Effective Written Communication	Jan 8 – Mar 25, 2008 Jan 10 – Mar 27, 2008	
Writing for Public Relations	Jan 9 – Mar 26, 2008	
Effective Oral Communication	Jan 7 – Mar 31, 2008 Jan 15 – Mar 25, 2008 Jan 16 – Mar 26, 2008	
Enhancing Communication in the Workplace	Feb 23, 2008	
Effective Grant Proposal Writing	Mar 1, 2008	University of Winnipeg
Mastering Reports and Proposals	Mar 5, 2008	
Report writing	Mar 18–May 13, 2008	Red River College
Effective Oral Communication	Apr 7 – Jun 23, 2008 Apr 8 – May 15, 2008 Apr 9 – Jun 18, 2008	University of Winnipeg
Effective Written Communication	Apr 8 – Jun 17, 2008 Apr 10 – Jun 19, 2008	
Writing for Public Relations II	Apr 9 – Jun 18, 2008	

For more information on these courses, visit the following schools web sites

Red River College

<http://www.rrc.mb.ca/files/File/coned/07-08%20C+DE%20Program%20Guide%20Final%20.pdf>

University of Manitoba

<http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/cms-filesystem-action?file=pdfs/dce/timetable-0708.pdf>

University of Winnipeg

http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/con_ed/mpcp/calendar/request/ce_guide07-08.pdf