



December dinner meeting

5:45 p.m.
 Tuesday, December 2, 2008
 Place Louis Riel
 190 Smith Street

So you want me to do what???: The art of persuasive writing
 Kevin Longfield

Please confirm your attendance by noon, Friday, November 28, with Joanne Kusiak at meetingcoordinator@stcmanitoba.org

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December dinner meeting

So you want me to do what???: The art of persuasive writing



Kevin Longfield

Could you persuade the widow of the man you just murdered to marry you? During the victim’s funeral procession? Shakespeare could, or at least his Richard III could. Compared to that task, successfully persuading others—co-workers, customers, suppliers, friends and family—to respond favourably to your point of view should be easy!

In this talk, senior STC member and theatre buff Kevin Longfield explains some principles of persuasive writing, using

Shakespearean text as examples. Lend him your ears for a lively discussion of just what it is that persuades an audience.

About the speaker

Kevin Longfield is a playwright, independent theatre producer, and sometime movie extra. He is a founding board member and former chair of Shakespeare in the Ruins. He also wrote From Fire to Flood, a History of Theatre in Manitoba. From Fire to Flood won the Margaret McWilliams award for local history in 2002.

January dinner meeting

The first dinner meeting of the new year will be held January 12, 2009. January has now become our regular progression meeting and various knowledgeable speakers will be presenting, so mark your calendars now!

STC Manitoba is a chapter of



Society for Technical Communication

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

| Date (2009) | Speaker | Topic |
|-------------|------------------|---------------------|
| January 13 | Various speakers | Progression meeting |
| February 3 | TBA | TBA |
| March 3 | TBA | TBA |

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.

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Executive Committee
2008–2009

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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 (Interim) President

The joy of employment insurance



First, the bad news: I now qualify for employment insurance [EI] benefits. Next, the good news: I now qualify for EI benefits.

This is no minor event in my life. I've paid EI premiums for 45 or more years, but, until this year, I've been disqualified from collecting benefits on various technicalities. Despite being unable to find employment, I'm feeling rather upbeat about my current situation because of a program that I'm enrolled in as an indirect EI benefit: the Self-Employment Program. You have to be (or have been) receiving EI benefits to be eligible to apply for the Self-Employment Program.

The Self-Employment Program is a federally and provincially funded program delivered in several different versions across the country. In the case of Winnipeg, it is delivered by two organizations—the YMCA-YWCA and Meyers Norris Penny [MNP]. I'm enrolled, along with eight others, in the version being delivered by MNP.

I think the design of the MNP version of the program is brilliant. Over the course of a month, I'm spending about 90 hours in a classroom with eight other persons receiving presentations from specialists in business planning, market research, legal issues, networking, effective sales, and so on. The presentations are of consistently high quality and I'm left with a sense that the support provided by the program runs deep—it certainly runs long. For another 11 months I have access to consulting support from MNP.

If you find yourself qualifying for EI and considering self-employment, consider applying for this program. Your initial contact could be with Jennifer.Walkey@mnp.ca.

November dinner meeting summary

Researching in a Web 2.0 world

By Lauren Bailey

At our November dinner meeting, we were treated to Everything's on the Internet... isn't it? Doing research in a Web 2.0 world by Betty Braaksma. Betty is responsible for promoting information literacy skills development at the University of Manitoba.

Betty's talk covered topics such as researching for a living, where and how to look for information and how to evaluate information you receive. She opened her talk with an explanation of how search engines, particularly Google, work, and how you can use different combinations of the same words to get different results. The main issue with researching with standard web browsers is that they only

("Researching in a Web 2.0 world" Continued on page 3)

From the editor

There is no ideal Christmas; only the one Christmas you decide to make as a reflection of your values, desires, affections, traditions.

—Bill McKibben, Author

Well it's that time of year again ... and as the Christmas season approaches, I wish all Manuscript readers a very happy holiday season whether you're celebrating Christmas, Hannukah, or one of the many other seasonal holidays.

Christmas is the season of giving. We give presents to our loved ones, give donations to one of the many deserving charities in the city, or we find some other way of giving back. Looking at the spirit of giving, I am encouraging many of you to give back, but this request is specifically for our chapter, STC Manitoba.

You may be wondering, what or how do I give back to the chapter? As many of you are aware, STC Manitoba has been stagnant and looking for ways to encourage member participation, whether as a volunteer or meeting attendee. As the chapter looks forward to its twentieth year, why not find some time to give back to the chapter in some capacity. I know some of you may be thinking that I'm asking for a lot of help but really, I'm not.

I'm not asking for a big commitment from chapter members, but there are many small things that you can do to help support the chapter.

1. Attend a chapter meeting, even if only once a year. Come out and mix and mingle with your colleagues, a \$5 commitment (no dinner) to hear a speaker isn't spending a lot of money.
2. Volunteer your time. The search for a new executive will take place next year. Whether you're a seasoned member or a new member, we need you. If you were following the American presidential race, think of Barack Obama's slogan "Change we can believe in."
3. Renew your STC membership. STC Manitoba needs its chapter members to help promote technical communication in Winnipeg.
4. Find some other way to contribute. I'm always looking for ideas for the newsletter, whether a story idea, newsletter article, or opinion piece (letter to the editor)—your contribution matters. The chapter is also looking for volunteers for the chapter Web site or one of the many other chapter committees.

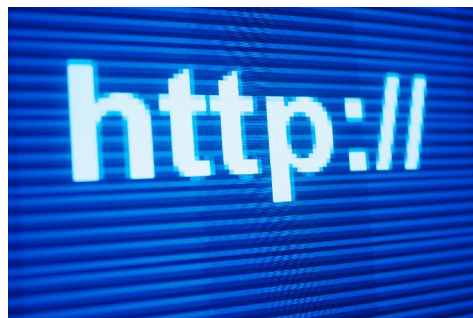
As chapter members, your involvement matters. This holiday season, don't forget about giving back to the chapter—however you can.

Rachel

("Researching in a Web 2.0 world" continued from page 2)

bring back results from the "surface web" and ignore the other 90 to 98 per cent of the Internet.

There are ways, however, to delve into these hidden resources—programs such as Google Scholar, which directs you to PDF articles or journal links online or search engines like the Winnipeg Public Library database. Each of these information searches has a small drawback—not all of the articles listed on Google Scholar are available for free, and you do need a current Winnipeg Public Library card to access the WPL database.



Other deep search engines include WorldCat, a catalogue of the holdings of most major world research libraries and Intute, a peer-reviewed articles database. Again, some charges may apply to access the data offered.

Betty also spoke about knowing when to stop searching for information, and how to make sure the information you do receive is valid. She presented two web pages – one was fake and one was real – and asked the audience to say how they would verify the information.

Suggestions included verifying with other sources, looking up professional names and addresses and checking with website registry sites to see who or what corporation backs the site.

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.

How cute is this document?

By Rachel Ines

As technical communicators, it is essential that we have as many of the necessary tools used for business communication to make our work easier. However, many of the tools that we need come at a price—sometimes a big one. So, how can we stay current whether as consultants, freelancers, or employed workers? The Internet offers many tools; and, if you look in the right places, you may find what you need at low or no cost.

Over the summer I was introduced to a free PDF program called Cute PDF (www.cutepdf.com). Cute PDF is compatible with any PDF program including Adobe Acrobat. Cute PDF has been identified as one of the top free download programs available by Computer Shopper and The Centre for Learning & Performance Technologies.

In need of a PDF program and on a very, very, very limited budget, I thought I would test out the program. I have to admit, I was a bit skeptical at first. But I found that the free version of Cute PDF did exactly what I needed it to do. It easily converted my documents into PDF format and after downloading a compatible program (during the initial download), Cute PDF worked well with my Adobe documents. A professional version of Cute PDF is available; however, the program must be purchased before you can access any of the professional features.

Product review

The program is not perfect. Having tested it for several months, I have some problems to report.

Appears to be fussy with Macs. You might be surprised to know that I can't get enough of my fill of newsletters. I am also the newsletter editor for another non-profit organization in the city. A Mac user who was supposed to review the newsletter had trouble opening some drafts, but not others.

Truncated hyperlinks do not work. I have tried many times to make Web site links accessible when in PDF format; however, I discovered that hyperlinks that are broken over two lines, internal hyperlinks, and hyperlinking one word within an

entire hyperlink do not work. I am a bit frustrated with the lack of consistency with accessing hyperlinks in CutePDF format, but have not resolved this issue as of yet.

Large documents with images become distorted. I always make it a point to send my documents in PDF format so that I can protect the original file I created—troubling was the fact that the images I had carefully edited into a black and white format became distorted and looked like reverse images or were blurred when using the free Cute PDF program. This type of file was unacceptable for printing and I had to scramble to find someone who not only had Adobe Acrobat, but was able to convert my Microsoft Publisher 2003 file. Thank goodness for Red River College instructors who saved my day!

File sizes are not necessarily smaller. I've discovered that by converting a file, for example in Publisher into Cute PDF, the PDF file does not reduce the size of the converted file. In fact, the file sized stayed about the same size as the original document, or in some cases, became bigger*. This made it difficult for emailing large PDF files for review.

The following table shows the final files sizes yield by the free version of Cute PDF and two other professional PDF generating programs:

| Document | Cute PDF | Adobe | Nitro |
|----------------------|-----------|--------|----------|
| Annual report | 30 847kb* | 2075kb | 17 417kb |
| Final report | 5397kb | 773kb | 3472kb |
| Newsletter 1 | 1359kb | 282kb | 534kb |
| Newsletter 2 | 935kb | 146kb | 338kb |

("How cute" continued from page 4)

Creating conditional text and images in Word 2003

By Holly Steele

Editor's note: This article is part one of a two part series.

Have you ever been frustrated with Word 2003? I certainly have. One of the most interesting challenges I have had with Word was trying to create a Word document using conditional text.

Now, I admit, when I was learning FrameMaker I complained. I didn't like how different it was from Word. However, when I needed to use conditional text in Word, I lovingly longed for FrameMaker's ease and simplicity.

Fortunately, there is a way to use conditional text in Word using templates and hidden styles. It is not perfect or foolproof and there are annoying problems that may arise along the way. However, it is the most simple and straight-forward method that I have found to use conditional text in Word using the features of the program.

What is conditional text and when should you use it?

Conditional text is text that is hidden in certain versions of a document. You can use conditional text as a single-sourcing tool. In other words, instead of creating several documents with repeating content, you can use conditional text to create one document in which certain text or images are hidden when the document is viewed in a particular way.

Clear as mud? Here is an example:

Suppose you need to create two similar manuals for two different types of clients: a Forestry industry client and an Agriculture industry client. Most of the text and images are generic and apply to both clients; however, there is information specific to the Forestry or Agriculture client that

can't appear in the Agriculture or Forestry version of the manual.

Instead of creating two separate documents, you could create one manual that includes the specific Agriculture and Forestry content. Using the conditional text and template process, you could make the Forestry text and images hidden when you view the document as an Agriculture manual. You can use the same process to make the Agriculture text and images hidden when you view the document as a Forestry manual. To make text and images hidden, use hidden styles. To view the document as a Forestry or Agriculture manual, use templates.

Overall method

This method of creating conditional text requires that you create your own styles in Word, rather than letting Word create styles for you.

Create the document using your standard template, or create styles as you go. When you create Forestry or Agriculture specific text or images, mark the text and images with a style that tells you it is specific to Agriculture or Forestry. For example, you might call the style Forestry or Forestry bullet etc. This naming convention is very important and will prove extremely useful when you make the styles hidden.

You can mark the conditional text and images with paragraph or character styles. Paragraph styles are useful if you want other styles to be based on it. Some types of styles can only use paragraph styles, such as bullets and numbers.

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

("How cute" continued from page 4)

Overall thoughts

At the end of the day, within limits Cute PDF works as it should. It converted my Word, Publisher, and PowerPoint documents into a compatible PDF format. I am able to easily send documents by PDF at no extra cost. So, if you're

in need of a program that converts your documents into PDF, have a small document, aren't using a lot of images, and you don't have a big budget, use Cute PDF.

Have any of you tried using this program? How did the program work for you? Send your comments to Letter to the Editor rachines@hotmail.com.

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” continued from page 5)

Character styles are useful for images and if you need to mark a specific word or phrase with the style. For example, the company name may be different for Agriculture and Forestry. In that case, you would want to use a different character style to mark the each company name.

In the example below, you could use an Agriculture character style to mark the words “Agriculture company”. You could use a Forestry character style to mark the words “Forestry company”.

Agriculture companyForestry company

You need to run the words together with no spaces so that when the Agriculture or Forestry company name is visible, there isn't an extra space.

After you have created the document and marked the text and images with the relevant styles, choose a conditional style to hide (for example, either Forestry or Agriculture) and make those styles hidden. Then, view the document in Print Preview mode to see if everything you marked as hidden is actually hidden.

Fix what doesn't work or modify it. Then save your document as a template. Change the hidden and shown styles and save the document as a different template for the other hidden styles. Then, make all styles shown and create a master template.

Overwhelming? It is actually not that hard. Here's how.

Using hidden styles

Once you have created all your styles, the next step is to choose a conditional style (e.g. Agriculture or Forestry) and make that style hidden.

To make a standard text or image style hidden is pretty straight-forward. To make the style hidden, follow these steps:

1. Select the style you would like to hide (e.g. Agriculture).
2. On the Styles and Formatting menu, click Modify.
3. Select Font.
4. Select the Hidden check box.

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

The process is a little more complicated if you want to make a bullet or number style hidden. To make a bullet or number style hidden, you need to make the bullet or number hidden as well as the text beside it. Use the instructions above to make the text hidden and use the instructions below to make the bullet or number hidden.

1. Select the style you would like to hide (e.g. Forestry bullet).
2. On the Styles and Formatting menu, click Modify.
3. Select Numbering.
4. Select the Bulleted or Numbered tab.
5. Click Customize.
6. Click Font.
7. Check the Hidden check box.

You can make tables hidden as well as the text and images inside the tables, although, I haven't been able to determine how to consistently make tables hidden without leaving an extra space.

When Show/Hide is on, small dots will appear under a bullet, number, text, or image that is hidden. When you view the document in Print Preview mode or when Show/Hide is off, the hidden text and images should not be visible.

When you are finished making all the relevant styles hidden, view the document in Print Preview mode to check to see if your styles really are hidden. As I mentioned earlier, this is an imperfect method, and Word does some pretty odd things from time to time.

You may encounter some problems with numbering if you use two different numbering styles (for example, a regular number style that is used in Agriculture and Forestry and a number style that is used only for the Forestry guide). Word might try to automatically number and make it difficult for you to make it work properly.

Troubleshooting all the possible difficulties is beyond the scope of this article. I found that the technical writers at techwr-l (www.techwr-l.com) are very helpful in answering questions. I am also including my e-mail at the end of the article and am more than happy to help troubleshoot one-on-one.

Read part two of Holly's article in the January issue of *Manuscript*.

Don't forget your renewal!

Well it's that time of year again—STC renewal time! Chapter members should have received their STC renewal notices by now, whether by e-mail or in the mail. Chapter members are encouraged to

promote the STC to non members through the STC membership contest "Member-Get-a-Member (MGAM) Campaign" (www.stc.org/membership/mgam-toolkit.asp).

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

Seeing and hearing it all—56th annual STC conference

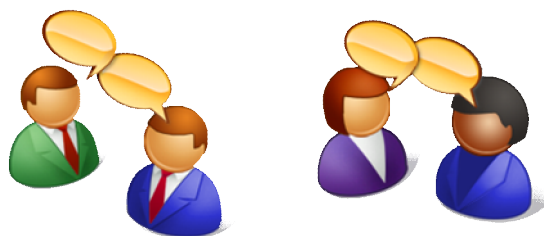
The STC Board of Directors has just approved the purchase of [conference management software](#) that will give STC the capability to record the entire conference. The audio recording will be synchronized with the PowerPoint presentation and be available to each conference attendee as part of their registration package.

This will give attendees the opportunity to "attend" all sessions they could not attend on site, virtually, and at their leisure. STC will also make the package available, at a significant fee, after the conference to those who did not attend.

From STC Washington DC chapter (www.stcfdc.org/wdcblog/2008/10/24/stc-to-record-entire-conference-in-atlanta).

Coffee talk? How about TC talk? Discuss ...

Talking shop is sometimes a good thing. Starting with the December chapter meeting it will be encouraged. As you sign in at our next meeting, please add a question related to any aspect of technical communication to our draw box. During the meeting, questions will be drawn to get talking underway.



Professional development courses



As the new year approaches, are you looking for a reason to try something new? Well why not take advantage of one of the many courses offered through our many post secondary institutions? For more course information, consult the institution's Web site.

| Course | Date (2009) | Offered through |
|--|---|------------------------|
| Facilitating adult learning | Jan 9 to Apr 9 | University of Manitoba |
| Writing for public relations | Jan 7 to Mar 25 | University of Winnipeg |
| Effective oral communication | Jan 7 to Mar 25 Jan 12 to Mar 30 Jan 13 to Mar 31 | |
| Effective written communication | Jan 7 to Mar 25 Jan 8 to Mar 26 | |
| Project management | Jan 12 to Mar 30 | |
| Basic Business Communications | Jan 5 to Mar 16 Jan 10 to Mar 21 Jan 15 to Mar 19 | |
| Graphic Design 1 | Jan 12 to Mar 16 | |
| 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 | Red River College |

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

Red River College Continuing and Distance Education: www.rrc.mb.ca/index.php?pid=4633

University of Winnipeg Continuing Education: www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/cms-filesystem-action?file=dce/uofwdcetimetable2008-2009.pdf

University of Manitoba Continuing Education: www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/con_ed/mpcp/calendar/request/ce_guide08-09.pdf

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!