



# SuperScript

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SuperScript is the official newsletter of the Alberta Community of the Society for Technical Communication and is published 10 times a year. The editors welcome submissions and advertising that will be of interest to our members. If you have an idea for an article or if you have an advertising enquiry, please contact us.



## SuperScript has a new look!

This is our new look, short, simple and more colourful. I hope that everyone will embrace the new format and the possibilities of moving to an "e-newsletter". We will keep you informed of upcoming events, local news and content through the use of this monthly e-newsletter, as well as through our website and via e-mail announcements. Access the [STC Alberta website](#) for more information.

## Happy New Year! (President's Message)

[SuperScript's new look](#) (as I promised in December) is being rolled out for this edition. Some may be pleased to see this format -- short, simple, more colourful -- and others may be disappointed. I hope that everyone will soon realize that our volunteers were not able to sustain the previous newsletter format.

## 2007 STC Alberta Salary Survey Coordinator Needed!

The STC Alberta Executive is looking for a volunteer member to assist in administering the invaluable STC Alberta Salary Survey. This year the survey will run from May 1 through to May 30 and will appeal to members who want to be more involved in the chapter but cannot make a long-term commitment to an executive position. For more information, access the [SuperScript page](#).

## 2007 STC Alberta Membership Survey Results

The STC Alberta Executive would like to share some of the results from the recent Membership Survey. Questions which rated the quality and importance of STC Alberta's services and events identified those services which you found important and critical. For more information, access the [SuperScript page](#).

## New Heights

In 2006, Caroline Stern presented **Instruction Design: Theory-Based Practical Applications** at the New Height Seminars in both Edmonton and Calgary. See the [New Heights](#) page to read the full review and see the pictures.

## 2006/7 STC Technical Communication Competition Awards

Results for the 2006/7 STC Technical Communication Competition Awards have been announced. For more information, see the [Competition](#) page. Awards will be presented at this year's Annual General Meeting in June.

## Upcoming Events

**Feb. 15** - [Program: Intellectual Property and Technical Communication](#)

**Feb. 24** - [Documenting APIs and SDKs, by Manuel Gordon \(STC West Coast Chapter\)](#)



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The Alberta Chapter newsletter, *SuperScript*, is published ten times a year, with double issues in December/January and July/August. *SuperScript* presents feature articles from inside the Chapter and out, program and events calendar, profiles, tips and tricks to improve your skills, and important contact information. [Contact our SuperScript Editors](#), with any comments, stories, technical tips, book reviews, advertisements, or questions. [>> Previous editions.](#)

## STC Alberta News and Updates — February 2007

### Happy New Year!

*Ruth Maryniuk, President, STC Alberta*

[SuperScript's new look](#) (as I promised in December) is being rolled out for this edition. Some may be pleased to see this format -- short, simple, more colourful -- and others may be disappointed. I hope that everyone will soon realize that our volunteers were not able to sustain the previous newsletter format, and that you will embrace the possibilities and potential of moving to an "e-newsletter" format. Much of what was published in the monthly newsletter was also posted to our website, and what was not could very easily be posted there as well. We will continue to keep our members apprised, in a timely fashion, of upcoming events and local news and content through the use of this monthly e-newsletter, as well as through our web site and email announcements. If you have any ideas or suggestions, the newsletter team would welcome your help. We are looking for volunteers to assist with content writing, copy editing, and photography.

### Survey Results

[Results from the 2006-2007 Membership Survey are in.](#) Members of the executive are reviewing the overall results and your comments and suggestions. I would like to thank all of the members who took the time to respond to this survey and who made the effort to tell us what you think about STC Alberta, and the job that we have been doing. I also want to acknowledge Lucille Worone for giving her time and for doing such an amazing job in compiling the questions submitted by the executive. Lucille has also compiled the results into a report where we are reviewing the results. We have already met once to talk about these results, and have several action items to work on. Overall, our members have told us that we are doing a good job, but there are areas where we can improve. Discussion of the survey results will definitely be on the agenda at the next few meetings. If you are interested in attending these meetings to help us form the future direction for STC Alberta, please contact me. We have many options for you to get involved, and provide us with the member-power required to make our chapter exceptional!

### Thursday Programs

Our annual Pub Night in January was very well attended. I hope everyone enjoyed the evening, and learned some very interesting things about each other. Our [first program this year](#) will be on Thursday, February 15th. We will be presenting Michael Whitt, from the law firm Borden Ladner Gervais. He will be speaking about Intellectual Property and Technical Communication. I think this will be an excellent opportunity for our members to get information from a lawyer about legal issues in technical communication. I hope you will have your questions ready for Mr. Whitt!

## Next Term

I am in the last half of my second term as President. While I am firmly committed to continuing on with the board, I will not be standing as President for another term. I am actively looking for volunteers to fill several positions on the executive. Some have already indicated that they will stay on, and others will be changing positions or leaving. If you would like to contribute to the future of the STC in this province, please contact me at [president@stc-alberta.org](mailto:president@stc-alberta.org). The current executive has many dedicated and committed members who are supportive and open to new ideas. Your contribution, no matter how small, can make a difference.

## 2007 STC Alberta Membership Survey Results

*Lucille Worone, Vice President, STC Alberta*

I would like to thank the 55 members who took the time to complete the Membership Survey. While the survey results will be used primarily by the STC Alberta Executive for planning purposes, I would like to share some of the results that I feel are of interest to our membership.

One of the survey questions involved rating the importance of STC Alberta's services and events. The percentage of members who ranked the item as "important" or "critical" is summarized in the following table.

Service or event	Very important or critical
Jobline	78%
Salary survey	75%
Website	73%
Professional development events	69%
SuperScript newsletter	49%
Networking events	42%
Discussion list	27%
Mentorship program	18%
Competitions	13%

We asked our members to rate the quality of each event or service.

Overall quantity as ranked by users of the service or event <sup>1</sup>	Good or Excellent
Jobline	91%
Salary survey	91%
Website	90%

Professional development events	88%
SuperScript newsletter	85%
Networking events	71%
Discussion list	70%
Competitions	70%
Mentorship	60%

1. The responses with the value "never used" were removed from the total number before calculating the percentages.

The first table shows that there are five services at least half of the participants rank as very important or critical. These are: Jobline, salary survey, website, professional development events, and SuperScript.

The second table shows the quality of these five core services was rated as good or excellent by at least 85 per cent of our members. While the survey identified important areas where we can improve (e.g. networking events), STC Alberta is on the right track overall in providing our core services.

## 2007 STC Alberta Salary Survey Coordinator Needed!

*Lucille Worone, Vice President, STC Alberta*

The 2006 Salary Survey was conducted from May 15 to June 15. Many members indicated that this is a valuable tool, and think the survey should be done annually. The recent membership survey confirmed this.

The STC Executive is looking for a volunteer member to assist in administering the survey. The tasks for this position would include:

- revising the 2006 questionnaire
- emailing the survey announcement to the membership
- compiling the results in a spreadsheet
- writing the report.

This year, the survey will be open from May 1 through May 30, 2006 and the final report will need to be completed by the end of June.

This position will appeal to those members who want to be more involved in the chapter, but cannot make a long-term commitment to an executive position.

**The survey will not be held this year if a new coordinator does not come forward.**

For more information, or to apply for this critical position, please do not hesitate to contact me at [v.president@stc-alberta.org](mailto:v.president@stc-alberta.org).

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## Highlights from the 2006 New Heights Seminars



Caroline Stern, PhD, presented ***Instruction Design: Theory-Based Practical Applications*** at the 2006 New Height Seminars in Edmonton and Calgary.

Caroline began with an introduction into instructional design, covering basic terms, costs, and instructional design (ID) models. A key point was distinguishing the differences among the terms training, instruction, and education. Training involves changing the learners' behaviour, often by teaching how-to skills such as how to use the features of Microsoft Word. Instruction builds upon training and seeks to have the learners apply the general rules. In instruction settings, learners apply or adapt learning basics to new sets of conditions. Education, or institutionalized learning, involves systematic, cumulative, long term, purposeful learning of concrete and abstract principles. Examples of education are academic degrees or professional accreditation.



Diane Laverty Ken McKee Caroline Stern and Stan Backs

We then looked at ID models, such as ADDE (or ADDIE), which provide a basic approach to ID projects. The models' phases guide the instructor in developing quality instruction.



Margaret Sadler and Tracy King in Edmonton

In the workshop, we participated in exercises that showed us four styles of teaching: receptive, directive, guided discovery, and exploratory. We examined the pros and cons of each style of teaching and evaluated which styles were best suited for different learner audiences.

One of the key concepts that I came away with was anchor the learning, meaning to start with what the learners know and move forward from there. In addition, Caroline emphasized that you can't teach adult learners what they don't want to learn, so providing a rationale to the learners is critical.

It was great to learn some new instructional design tips and to confirm concepts already in my toolbox. Overall, it was an enjoyable day with fellow technical

communicators.

-- *Angela Wiens*



Last updated: February 05, 2007



## Competitions

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## 2006 / 2007 STC Technical Communication Competition Awards

The judges have completed their review of this year's entries. Congratulations to the following winners.

### Online Communication:

- Merit Award: Laurie Holtby - *"SiteView User Guide"*
- Merit Award: Angela Wiens, Barry Power, and Karen Weir - *"QUIT: Quit Using & Inhaling Tobacco"*

### Technical Publications:

- Merit Award: *Sherry Wilson McEwen, Enform COR Department, and Enform Training Department, for "Auditors' Handbook for the Petroleum Industry"*

Awards will be presented to the winners at this year's Annual General Meeting in June.

This year's competition was especially interesting. STC Alberta judges also judged entries for the the Canada West Coast and Israel chapters. The Web and lightweight CDs made it much easier to have overseas partners!

A heartfelt thanks to our hard-working judges:

- Ken d'Albenas
- Jeanne Gonnason
- Don Harman
- Ian Hawkins
- Ken Schatzke

Please consider volunteering for this fall's competitions. We need a competitions manager, a coordinator and judges. It would be ideal if we could have a competitions manager in place before summer. For more information, please contact [Jeanne Gonnason](#), Competition Coordinator.



# STC Alberta Calendar of Events

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## STC Alberta Activities

Check out our [Programs](#), [Workshops](#), [Coffee Nights](#), [Administrative Meetings](#), and [Social Events](#) for an opportunity to meet & greet, learn a tool or skill, or further develop your technical and writing expertise.

The calendar shown below outlines upcoming Alberta Chapter events. These events, unless otherwise stated, are held in Calgary. Please see our [Edmonton](#) page for a listing of "Upcoming Events" in that city.

## 2007 Upcoming Events

Stay tuned! This schedule will be updated with new events after they've been confirmed.

February 15	Program: <a href="#">The Law and Technical Communication: Identifying Legal Issues in Provision of Content from the Author's Perspective</a>
February 24	<a href="#">Documenting APIs and SDKs</a> , presented by Manuel Gordon (STC West Coast Chapter)
March 15	Program: <a href="#">Getting the Next Job -- Marketing for Technical Writers</a>
April	<a href="#">DocTrain UX</a> : Documentation&Training: The User Experience, April 18-23, Vancouver, BC
May	<a href="#">STC International 54th Annual Conference</a> , May 13–16, Minneapolis, Minnesota (USA)
June 14	AGM, stay tuned for details
	Year-end dinner/social

Throughout the year, STC Alberta presents a wide variety of opportunities to learn, share and to become involved in the field of technical communication. Through workshops, social events and regular meetings we endeavour to:

- Present the latest information regarding theory and practice of technical communication
- Provide opportunities to learn and experiment with new tools and techniques

- Open up opportunities to network by meeting and exchanging ideas with fellow STC members
- Provide on-the-job training and opportunities to share your skills through our mentoring program.

Register in advance for all Programs and Workshops through our [online registration page](#).

**Note:** When space is limited, preference is given to current STC members.



Last updated: February 11, 2007