

# SuperScript

Volume 11, Issue 5



## 2002 Region 7 Conference in Vancouver

- Fena Maucieri, Region 7 Conference Manager 2003

This year, the Region 7 Conference, *ShapeShifters*, was hosted by the Canada West Coast Chapter at the new Sheraton Wall Centre in downtown Vancouver. Led by Rahel Bailie, Director Sponsor for Region 7, the conference began with pre-conference workshops and an evening reception on Thursday, November 7. With over 320 registered attendees, the Region 7 Conference was off to a great start!

On Friday, November 8, the attendees woke up early to listen to Jared Spool as he shared his insights on user interface engineering. The main reason to assess user interfaces is to increase the quality of people's lives by decreasing the frustration of technology.

One example Jared cited was [www.BrainTalk.org](http://www.BrainTalk.org). It is an online patient support Web site for individuals afflicted with brain injuries or diseases. Each day, the site receives over 30,000 visitors who come to the site to talk with other people with brain-related diseases. The site has simplistic software resembling a bulletin board mechanism. Although it is easy to use, it means each person has to write their question and the people on the chat site have to repeat their responses over and over again. Jared suggested this is an area where usability needs to be assessed so the information is structured.

Unfortunately, in today's downsized economy, it is difficult for usability practitioners to "peddle their wares". Today, no one has money for usability studies. Two years ago, money was

**Jared Spool asked us to think about a fundamental question: "Are you trying to make yourself a specialist or are trying to educate?"**

readily available and companies needed a way to differentiate products. They were spending money on anything that could help differentiate them.

Jared commented that "for years, we've been insisting that businesses change their practices to succeed." He continued to say, "Perhaps, we are the ones who need to change our practices."

Why did usability become unpopular in 2001?

- The promise of increased usability never materialized.
- Sites today are not measurably more usable than sites of five years ago.
- Best practices are no more than opinions.
- The popular writings on usability are more philosophical.

Jared recommended change and provided a series of areas where we, as usability experts, need to change:

- To abandon the "specialist" mindset.
- To understand what our clients need.
- To promise results that matter.
- To ensure we keep our promises.
- To measure our effectiveness.

The base of the presentation suggested we, as technical communicators and usability practitioners, need to move to an education mindset. We should strive to be sure everyone on the team has the right skills and tools available to them. As well, everyone should consider

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INSIDE SUPERSCRIPT



## A Word from Our President

- Ken Schatzke

November proved to be a busy month for the Alberta Chapter.

On November 7 to 10, about one dozen Alberta Chapter members from Calgary and Edmonton attended the 2002 Region 7 Conference in Vancouver. The conference was very successful, with over 300 participants from British Columbia, Alberta, the Pacific Northwest, Japan, and Singapore. While Vancouver will be a challenging act to follow, I'm confident that Fena Maucieri and the other members of the 2003 Region 7 Conference Committee will be successful in hosting the event in Calgary next October. Several presenters and participants at the Vancouver conference noted their interest in attending the Calgary conference, which will use the theme *New Heights*. In addition, we were able to promote *New Heights* in Vancouver through our booth at the conference's exhibition area as well as word of mouth.

While attending the conference, I was able to meet several Alberta Chapter members for the first time, including some members from Edmonton. Lorraine Gorman, Mala Rupnarain, and the other Edmonton volunteers should take pride in their achievements to date. They are working on a full slate of professional development and networking programs, developing a strong relationship with the Professional Writing program at Grant MacEwan College, and participating in this year's competitions and the 2003 Region 7 Conference Committee. As you may or may not know, the Alberta Chapter is somewhat unique in the STC because we operate in two major municipal centres relatively distant from each other. While some chapters have found geography to be a barrier to their operations, we have turned it into an advantage—offering technical communicators in southern and northern Alberta the opportunity to communicate and learn from each other.

In addition to attending the 2002 Region 7 Conference, we completed the judging portion of the Chapter's annual competi-

tions in November. Because we were unable to find a partner Chapter to trade entries with this year, we completed the judging internally. Jeanne Gonnason and Ruth Maryniuk, this year's coordinators, ensured the judging was impartial by having Calgary judges evaluate Edmonton entries and vice versa whenever possible and by ensuring judges did not evaluate their own entries. Congratulations and thanks to Jeanne, Ruth, and the competition entrants and judges for another successful year of competitions.

Lastly, in November we actively advertised two essential positions on the Executive Council requiring volunteers: Programs (Calgary) and Registration and Hospitality. While we have not been able to find volunteers for these positions, the Executive Council has developed an alternative solution. We are arranging topics and presenters for three to four programs in Calgary during the first half of 2003. We will advertise these topics and presenters in the coming weeks, and we will request a volunteer for each program. Each program's volunteer will be responsible for the following:

- Advanced registration
- Fee collection
- Food and hospitality
- Disbursement of surveys
- Presenter needs (display devices, photocopying, and so on)
- Request for newsletter article
- Feedback forms

I believe, and I hope you agree, that this is an excellent opportunity to volunteer with the Chapter without having to commit to a full year of service. As I have noted in previous articles, there are many benefits to volunteering: adding to your resume, meeting other technical communicators, and developing your professional skills.

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### Alberta Chapter STC Executive Council 2002-2003

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## 2002 Region 7 Conference

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usability at every stage of planning, design, development, and deployment.

Jared concluded his speech with a challenge. He asked us all to think about a fundamental question: "Are you trying to make yourself a specialist or are you trying to educate?"

The conference continued over the next two days with about 54 sessions led by speakers from all over North America. The sessions varied from XML to single-sourcing to my personal favorite, "How to Survive in Chaos."

Next year, the Alberta Chapter will host the Region 7 Conference from October 2 to 4 in Calgary. A team of Alberta Chapter STC volunteers from Calgary and Edmonton were at the conference in Vancouver to promote our conference, *New Heights*. Our booth looked great with a new logo and give-away magnets for all the attendees. In-between all the sessions and socializing, we made sure to meet with our Canada West Coast Chapter counterparts to gather their advice and ideas. We're all set and ready to prepare for another great Region 7 Conference! If you are interested in helping with the conference, please contact me.

A special thank-you to all the volunteers who helped prepare for the Region 7 Conference in Vancouver:

Kamali Abelson  
Victoria Clarke  
Nancy Sequeira  
Jeanne Gonnason  
Ian Hawkins  
Laurie Holtby  
Caroline Kutschke  
Alexis Macpherson

Blair McNaughton  
Helen Schleedoorn  
Theresa Termaine  
Angela Wiens  
Jenny Whittome  
Ken Schatzke  
Suzanne Scott 



*Newly renovated Alberta Chapter STC booth*



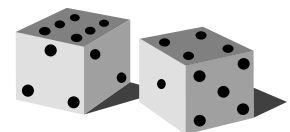
*Alberta Chapter STC members at Region 7 Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia*

## WANNA SEE VEGAS?

Mark your calendars now!

STC Region 8 is pleased to announce its 2003 Annual Conference "Around the World in T.C. Ways!" to be held January 12-14, 2003, at the Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino on the world famous Las Vegas strip!

For more information, see [www.stcregion8conference.org](http://www.stcregion8conference.org).




## A Word from Our President

*Continued from page 2.*

So, now that you know what happened in November, here's a preview of December and January:

- The Bylaw Review Committee will meet for the first time on Tuesday, December 3. At this meeting, the Committee will review the structure of the Executive Council (both as defined in the bylaws and in reality). We will examine how other chapters structure their governing bodies, and we will also consider the legal rules we must follow as a society in Alberta and as an entity of a legally incorporated charity (The Society for Technical Communication, Inc.) in the United States.
- The 2003 Region 7 Conference Committee will assume responsibility for [www.region7conference.com](http://www.region7conference.com) from Vancouver. This site will be our primary online communication tool for *New Heights*.
- We will hold our annual pub night in Calgary. See the "Mark Your Calendars" section at the end of this newsletter for details.
- We will begin planning programs and workshops in Calgary for the first half of 2003.

As you can see, your Alberta Chapter volunteers will be as busy as Santa's elves this holiday season.

Happy holidays and all the best in the new year. 




**Non-members will now be asked to pay in advance for workshops. Fees can be sent to our mailing address:  
Box 2947, Station M  
Calgary, AB T2P 3C3**

## Are You Missing Messages?

*- Ian Hawkins, Webmaster*

Are you a Cadvision customer who has changed your e-mail address to Telus? Are you a Shaw customer who changed from home.com to shaw.ca? Or have you switched jobs, and lost the use of your old e-mail address?

These are just some of the reasons why you might not be receiving Chapter announcements or postings to the discussion list. If you think you might be missing out and you would like to correct it, you can either send a message containing your old address and your new address to [lists@stc-alberta.org](mailto:lists@stc-alberta.org) or you can re-subscribe by following the instructions at [www.stc-alberta.org/email\\_lists.php](http://www.stc-alberta.org/email_lists.php). 

### *Latest News*

The Chapter's Annual Report for the year 2001-2002 is available on the Chapter Resources page of the Web site.

See what the Chapter accomplished in the past year: [www.stc-alberta.org/resources.php](http://www.stc-alberta.org/resources.php).

## Reminder



Keeping your STC member information (including your mailing and e-mail addresses) current ensures that you don't miss out on STC publications and announcements.

### **STC International**

Member information can be updated online on the society Web site at [www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org).

### **Alberta Chapter**

To update your information for the Chapter, send an e-mail to our Membership Coordinator at [membership@stc-alberta.org](mailto:membership@stc-alberta.org).

# STC Membership: This Year, More Important Than Ever

- Rahel Anne Bailie, Region 7 Director-Sponsor

Now that the Region 7 Conference is over, it's time to turn our attention to the regular annual cycle, and that means that this is not only holiday season, but also STC membership renewal season. For those of us who have benefited from STC membership for a number of years, renewing is as automatic as renewing our car or health insurance plan. But for those of us who are new to STC, or who may be unemployed or under-employed, renewing our STC memberships may not be at the centre of our focus.

It's interesting, then, that this is a time when keeping our STC membership current *should* be in our line of sight. All well and good for a Director-Sponsor, you might think, but my career hasn't been immune from the recent economic downturn. My position for a company in the telecommunications industry was eliminated in early 2002—and my membership in STC has been the single biggest factor in the development of my career to where it is today.

I think of STC as a kind of “career insurance” or, more appropriately, career assurance. I've sought to distinguish myself from the technical communication “wannabes” (who talk a great line but don't walk the talk). Here are my reasons for renewing my membership in the world's largest association for technical communication professionals:

- Membership provides me with opportunity to develop expertise in my community of practice.
- Membership provides me with opportunities to discover related communities of practice, areas where I may want my career to go.
- Membership demonstrates to employers and potential employers that I am committed to my career path, not simply going from job to job.
- Membership tells my peers that I take pride in my profession and my professional development.
- Membership provides me with an opportunity to make an informed choice about how to develop my career path, and where to invest my career development dollars.
- Membership gives me a community of peers whose opinions I can solicit, or experience I can draw on.
- Membership gives me a community of peers from which I can choose a mentor.
- Membership qualifies me for discounts to chapter meetings, conferences, and other professional development opportunities.

- Membership gives me access to a wealth of resources such as *Technical Communication*, *Intercom*, and Chapter information.
- Membership delivers regular information from industry experts, many of whom are known worldwide for their expertise.
- Membership gives me access to both local and international employment banks.
- Membership gives me the privilege of joining one or more Special Interest Groups, giving me information specific to a topic area.

All this for about the price of a movie a month. My career is worth a lot more than that; isn't yours?

You can renew your membership online at: [www.stc.org/join.asp](http://www.stc.org/join.asp) 



**PUB NIGHT IN CALGARY**

**LOCATION:**  
BREWSTERS BREWING COMPANY AND  
RESTAURANT (834-11 AVENUE  
SW)

**DAY AND TIME:**  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2003  
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M. (OR LATER)

**REGISTRATION:**  
NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED.

**FEE:**  
WHATEVER YOUR DRINKS COST YOU.  
FREE PARKING.

## October Program: Quebecor World Tour

- Joan Beckett, STC Member

As a small business person who wears many hats—including a technical writing hat—I was interested in seeing behind the scenes of a printing company. I wanted to know what happens to my documents once they are given over to the printer. What I learned was interesting, valuable, and applicable for dealings with any printer in general.

The evening began with a video presentation about Quebecor World Printpak, followed by a discussion of its history and capabilities. The highlight of the evening was the plant tour that took us through both Quebecor printing facilities in Calgary; the Docutech digital black and white (b&w) print centre, and the colour offset print centre. We then wrapped up with delicious and substantial evening snacks (very much appreciated by those of us who didn't have enough time for a proper evening meal).

Both of Quebecor's printing facilities are almost entirely computerized. Most clients send their print jobs by electronic means including e-mail, disk, or File Transfer Protocol (FTP). Even the jobs that are supplied as hard copy are scanned into the system and then processed for printing. The most typical files Quebecor receives for printing are PostScript (PS) or Portable Document Format (PDF), but other types such as Word Document (Doc) files are also common.

Our Quebecor World host, Ms. Tina Thrussell, shared some valuable experience and words of wisdom with us regarding the creation of electronic files. She emphasized five key points that are applicable to any electronic print job (colour or b&w):

1. Talk to your printer before you create the electronic file.
2. When saving, remember to embed the fonts used within the document.
3. Try to create clean graphics.
4. Print to your Printer's PostScript driver.
5. Create a test file with a couple of sample pages and send to the Printer for feedback.

By far the most important tip is to talk to your Printer before you create your PS or PDF file. Most printers, including Quebecor World, have information sheets they share with clients to help them create printable output. The information is often given in step-by-step procedures for a particular software program and may describe how to embed fonts, or what pitfalls to avoid in creating clean graphics. In addition, the printer should be able to supply you with its PostScript printer driver, which you should install and then use to print your document. Again, the printer should have information sheets available for novice users to guide them through the driver download and installation procedure. Lastly, sending a test file with a couple of sample pages to the printer is good practice and allows you to check if what you produce is acceptable to the printer. Testing a sample won't replace a press check or complete b&w printed copy review, but it will likely save you time in the long run by catching file errors before creating the final PS file.

Our host Tina, who is also an account manager at Quebecor World, was our tour guide for the Docutech digital b&w print centre. She explained that once the client file is received, it is checked to confirm it is printable with correctly embedded fonts, graphics, and properly PostScripted. Then the file is transferred to the Docutech system for a sample print for client review, followed by a full production print run. Each printed copy is considered an original because it is produced from the electronic copy residing in the Docutech system memory. A rule of thumb at Quebecor World is to print no more than 5,000 copies of a print job from the Docutech system. If the client needs a larger run, then it would probably be more cost effective to go to offset printing, even for a b&w print job.

Offset printing is what most of us consider traditional printing due to the process of creating plates, applying ink, and pressing the ink onto the paper. But there is, of course, a lot more to offset printing than that, which Mr. Derek Standen, Quebecor World's manufacturing manager, demonstrated to us as he took us through the colour offset print facility.

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## Congratulations!

**Our Alberta Chapter STC members have done well again!**

Have you seen the November 2002 issue of *Intercom*? Alberta Chapter's own **Marcia Wright** published an article entitled, "Designing a Table of Contents" (see pages 18 to 21).

**Angela Wiens** of Edmonton was part of a dynamic team recently nominated for an award for Web-based training materials. PHARMALearn.com was chosen as a finalist in the e-Learning category of the 2002 Alberta E-Business Leadership Awards Finalists (see [www.albertaawards.com/Finalists2002.htm](http://www.albertaawards.com/Finalists2002.htm)).

If you or an Alberta member you know has been published or recognized, let *SuperScript* know by e-mailing us at: [newsletter@stc-alberta.org](mailto:newsletter@stc-alberta.org).

# October Program: Quebecor World Tour

*Continued from page 6.*

Derek explained that offset printing technology has changed dramatically in the last 10 years due to computer software and hardware advances. Most pre-press production, which is the work involved to produce a plate for the printing press, is done today by computer (referred to as digital technology) instead of by manual labour (referred to as analog technology). Files are received electronically, checked for readability (embedded fonts, proper graphics, and colours, etc.), then sample prints are generated for layout review and colour review. Once client approved, the files are sent to a single machine that creates digital negatives of the colour separations and prints each onto a plate for the printing press. Contrast today's digital technology with the older analog version where pages were physically laid-out on paper by hand, photographed, colour separations stripped out manually, negatives produced, and finally plates for each colour were generated. Clearly the digital technology is faster, less expensive, and easier to work with, but analog technology still has a place in printing even today because not everything is digitized.

Regardless of how the plates are produced, the rest of the offset printing process is the same. Quebecor World actually has four printing presses in-house that they can run 24 hours a day if required. I was amazed at how large these machines are


but was told that they need to be due to the size of the paper they use. Large paper sheets are more economical because several pages are printed onto a single sheet that is folded, cut, and trimmed to size.



Quebecor World is just one of many printing facilities located in Calgary but I think it has much to be proud of. The company has a long history in Canada and has transformed itself into the world's largest printing company through numerous mergers and acquisitions. At the same time, it has maintained a sense of small company pride and professionalism in its work, which was evident during our tour.

Throughout the company's transformation, it was able to keep many of the same management and staff which, to me, says something significant about the depth of knowledge and

expertise the company can offer to clients. The company has also implemented a recycling program that recovers almost 90% of waste produced by the plant. Almost everything it uses is recycled, including the empty ink cans.

In summary, I would like to sincerely thank our Quebecor World hosts, Tina Thrussell and Derek Standen, as well as the STC for making the evening possible. The tour experience was educational and entertaining, and I encourage everyone to participate in future events whenever possible. 

## Shock.doc...The Ultimate Team Writing Showdown

### The Event

Eight teams, each consisting of four student technical writers and one trainer/coach representing an undergraduate technical writing program will have 48 hours to create a document that will solve a problem. The problem will be "real" and set by industry, then carefully checked and structured for the purposes of the contest by the Alberta Research Council.

Sequestered on campus at Mount Royal College, teams will have access to computer labs, library services, limited technical support, food and fluids, and beds for when the technical warriors stumble.

At exactly 48 hours from the starting point, submissions will be sealed and judged by experts chosen by the Society for Technical Communication and the winners will be chosen.


### Prizes

1<sup>st</sup> place: \$5,000.00 in scholarships  
2<sup>nd</sup> place: \$2,500.00 in scholarships  
3<sup>rd</sup> place: Software

### Time and Place

May 1-4, 2003  
Mount Royal College  
Calgary, AB

For more information, contact:

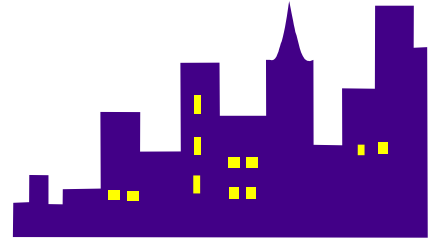
Janice Robertson, Chair of Technical Communications at [jrobertson@mtroyal.ab.ca](mailto:jrobertson@mtroyal.ab.ca). 



# EDMONTON

V

- Lorraine Gorman, Edmonton Liaison



E

## November's Meeting

At the November meeting, we had an informal question and answer on the wheres, whys, and hows of getting into the tech writing industry. We talked about formats for résumés, interview strategies (such as how to answer the typical question “What are your strengths and weaknesses?”). We talked about the importance of volunteering—especially for the STC, how to create a portfolio, as well as having good references and how to acquire them (such as networking with your peers at STC meetings). A couple of Web sites were introduced, uncovering the hidden tech writer market in Alberta: [www.albertatechnologyguide.com](http://www.albertatechnologyguide.com) and in BC: [www.bctechnology.com/frameset\\_emp.html](http://www.bctechnology.com/frameset_emp.html).

N

## December

December's meeting will be a holiday celebration. Jenny Whittome has generously invited us to a Christmas social potluck on December 19 at her home. Please RSVP Jenny at [jwhittome@shana.com](mailto:jwhittome@shana.com) (and get the address and directions).

T

S

## January

The January 8 meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. at Second Cup on 104<sup>th</sup>. Coffee will be compliments of the STC. Jenny will talk about embedded assistance. Angela Wiens will talk about a presentation she attended called “Scent of a Web Page” (about the user's ability to find your Web page), and Nancy (if she's not on holiday, at some beach, no less) will talk about the hot, trendy topic of XML and single sourcing (and how realistic these approaches are for outfits smaller than IBM or Nortel). We want to thank the GMC building for their wonderful hospitality at the last couple of meetings we've had. Although for the more informal atmosphere, January and April will revert back to informal coffee nights at Second Cup.



## February

### Managing Electronic Records: State of the Art

Pat Beelby, Vice President of TRAC Records Inc., will offer us a presentation on how organizations can manage their electronic records better. She will answer the question: “Why do organizations want to do that?” with answers such as: “their network servers are rapidly filling up with documents”, “their e-mail has become a management nightmare”, “they want to access information faster”, “to increase document sharing while protecting them from change or destruction”, and finally “to backup business-critical documents”. Pat will provide an overview on electronic document management systems: what they are, their features and benefits, and tips on how to decide if your organization needs one.

## Steering Meeting

We need some feedback from our members as to what direction to take the Edmonton group. We want to keep current members happy and interested, yet at the same time create an atmosphere that welcomes new members. Topics of possible discussion are: what meeting locations are best, what time meets the needs of most, possibly creating a list of speakers able to promote the STC, and other relevant topics. If you are interested in participating in deciding on these topics, e-mail Lorraine at [edmontonliaison@stc-alberta.org](mailto:edmontonliaison@stc-alberta.org) to offer your thoughts, suggestions, and ideas.

## Other Organizations

Wired Woman Society has invited women in all technical sector careers to participate in their group. The head chapter is in Vancouver, with four offices across Canada (and one in Calgary). They have a mentorship program ideal for budding female technical communicators interested in obtaining information on technical careers. See [www.wiredwoman.com](http://www.wiredwoman.com) for more information.

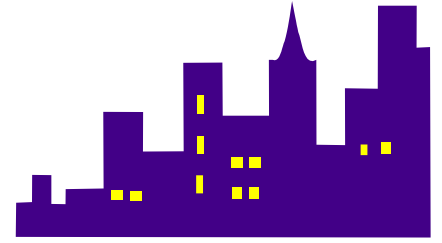
Toastmasters is another organization that can help technical communicators polish their oral presentation skills. See [www.suite101.com/welcome.cfm/technical\\_writing](http://www.suite101.com/welcome.cfm/technical_writing) for several articles on tech writing, the profession, how to get started, advice, and tips.

*Continued on page 9.*

# EDMONTON

# V E N T S

*Continued from page 8.*



## On FrameMaker & Word

It sounds like we will have an advanced class for FrameMaker. We have recently been informed that Grant MacEwan College is equipped with a FrameMaker lab. Anyone interested in taking a FrameMaker workshop (taught by one of our members) should get in touch with Mala ([edmontonprograms@stc-alberta.org](mailto:edmontonprograms@stc-alberta.org)) stating what level you want.

For simple editing or short to medium-sized documents, MS Word is the program of choice. It is basically an advanced word processor with some DTP (desktop publishing) facilities. Word 2002 is fairly stable now, almost on level with Word 97, but it still has a large number of more or less useless new features.

### Advantages of Word (compared to FrameMaker)

- Very easy to use, with uncomplicated “normal” editing facilities.
- Relatively low price, especially when included in the MS Office packages.
- Everybody else has it, so proofing is easy.
- Placing graphics into Word is easy, even if a bit clumsy compared to previous versions.
- Good PDF export facilities with Adobe Acrobat 4+.

### Disadvantages of Word (compared to FrameMaker)


- Problems with long documents. The limit depends on the RAM available, but linked non-embedded graphics help. The “master document” function is still unreliable and should be avoided. The problem is somewhat improved now because most computers generally have more RAM.
- Automatic page shifts are not stable because they are printer and “normal.dot” template dependent.
- No colour separation features (for example, using CMYK). This can, however, be remedied by exporting to Adobe Acrobat 4 PDF format, which many print shops accept as input.
- The internal HTML handling is close to useless!

For long (100-200 plus page, multi-chapter) documents, FrameMaker is the best tool. FrameMaker is basically a DTP program optimized for text handling. Its closest competitor is the XML-oriented Broadvision Quicksilver (nee Interleaf), which is much more expensive and far less used.

### Advantages of FrameMaker (compared to Word)

- Intelligent use of templates, tables.
- Use of conditional text.
- Professional colour control, and handles colour separations for colour printing.
- Very stable, and no problems with long documents.
- Available for Windows, UNIX, and Mac.
- Proofers can use Frame View without having to purchase another FrameMaker license.
- Prevents documents from being updated by engineers or programmers as they do not usually have a copy of FrameMaker, whereas they probably do have a copy of Word.

### Disadvantages of FrameMaker (compared to Word and PageMaker)

- Doesn't have drag and drop.
- High price.
- A reputation for being a little difficult to learn and less user-friendly than MS Word.
- Documents are difficult to keep updated if the updating is to be made by SMEs because they typically have MS Word but not FrameMaker. 

## October Workshop: Adobe Acrobat

- Sandra Sterling-Weicker, STC Student Member

Until recently, I had only used Adobe Acrobat to create the occasional PDF file. In my quest for lifelong learning, I decided to attend a workshop on Saturday, October 26, where Murray Nicholson introduced me and an enthusiastic group of workshop participants to many of the other powerful features of Adobe Acrobat.

Attendees arrived at Mount Royal College on an icy-cold morning for the half-day workshop. The new half-day format meant every minute was chock full of valuable information. Attendees consisted of both experienced users looking to discover some of the advanced features of Acrobat, and novice users looking to glean insight into the basic capabilities of Acrobat. This workshop included something for everyone.

Murray provided several helpful resources, from which we learned that PDF, or Portable Document Format, is a file format that offers many advantages. First, it is a cross-platform file format that allows users to view a document independent of the software, hardware, and operating system used to create the document. Second, the PDF file format includes many built-in tools that allow users to navigate easily. These tools include internal and external links, bookmarks, and thumbnails. Third, PDF files are ultra-printable as they are based on the PostScript language imaging model. This allows for accurate printing on almost all printers. Lastly, PDF files are ultra-viewable, meaning they provide an on-screen colour match regardless of the monitor used. All of these factors make a compelling case for creating and using PDF documents in our work as technical communicators.


Murray's workshop began with an exploration of how to create PDF documents using two built-in tools: Acrobat Distiller and PDF Writer. PDF Writer performs a quick conversion, while Distiller provides a more robust conversion. Despite some technical difficulties in the computer lab, participants completed several practice lessons using both of these tools.

Participants also learned how to save Web pages as PDF files. Murray explained this can be a very useful technique when building a Web site for a client, as completed pages can be distilled and sent to the client for review. It is also helpful to PDF and save an existing Web site if there is concern the site might eventually be discontinued.

Murray also familiarized participants with Adobe's Acrobat Reader. Although most had used this built-in tool, students practiced navigating through documents and creating bookmarks and thumbnails.

In the final portion of the workshop, Murray demonstrated various techniques for editing PDF documents. Students learned how to crop pages and how to edit text in a PDF document. Techniques learned also included inserting, delet-

ing, extracting, and replacing pages. The session concluded with inserting notes, movies, and links to URLs into PDF documents.

This workshop provided a great overview of some of the most useful features of Acrobat. Murray's extensive knowledge of the software made for an interesting and informative session. I always knew that Acrobat was a powerful tool and now I feel more confident using it. 

### MRC Now Offers January Work Terms

Since 1995, the Applied Communications Degree in Technical Writing (at Mount Royal College in Calgary) has produced hundreds of professional technical communicators, helping to make understanding business easier.

This year, the Centre for Communications Studies is launching work terms in the January semester for the first time!

We invite you to participate in the program's 2003 events such as:

- Profile your company at our Communications Speaker Series
- Get involved in our first annual 48-hour Technical Communication Team Contest
- Hire a Directed Field Study Student for a work term
- Join our Technical Communication advisory board
- Be a student mentor

Please contact Trish Matthews at 240-8963 for more information on getting involved in the Technical Communications program!



## Saturday Workshop: Optimizing Images for Use in Print and on the Web

Want to learn how to develop images for print and the Web? Attend this half-day workshop and find out just how easy it can be!

- by Jocelyne Pigeon

**Instructor:** Ron Chenger  
**Location:** Mount Royal College (Room E141), 4825 Richard Rd. SW  
**Date:** Saturday, February 1, 2003  
**Time:** 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
**Fee:** \$50.00 for STC members  
\$25.00 for STC student members  
\$110.00 for non members\*

**Registration:** Required. To register, complete the form at [www.stc-alberta.org/registration.php](http://www.stc-alberta.org/registration.php). (Registration must be cancelled one week in advanced of the workshop, or the registrant will be billed the workshop fees.)

**Sign up quickly as space is limited. \*Non-members: Payment must be received by January 27, 2003.**

### What you need to know to develop images for print and the Web with Photoshop

This workshop will focus on measuring the quality of a scanned photograph; improving deficiencies, adjusting the size, improving colour quality, cutting or cropping out unnecessary information, and saving optimally for print reproduction or the Web. The principles and concepts learned will apply to any professional graphic application. Photoshop is the application that participants will use to complete the hands-on exercises. The topics include:

- Differences between Raster (bitmap) and Vector (EPS) files
- Black and white images
- Grayscale images
- RGB images
- CMYK images
- Identifying image quality
- Improving image and colour quality and sharpness
- Photo retouching
- Creating artwork in Photoshop using editable features
- Saving files for print and the Web

Ron Chenger is a Calgary-based graphic designer and consultant who teaches courses on software used for print and the Web. Ron has developed and delivered courses on Photoshop, Illustrator, QuarkXPress, HTML, Dreamweaver, and Flash, as well as courses on design basics for print and the Web. He previously instructed at Media Classroom as well as for CDI. He has been in the business for 25 years. Visit his site at [www.rchenger.com](http://www.rchenger.com).



# Mark Your Calendars!

## Programs

Attend programs to discover the ideas and technologies that affect today's technical communicators.

<b>Location:</b>	McDougall Centre 455-6 Street SW, Calgary
<b>Time:</b>	Third Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. <i>Please arrive at 6:30 p.m. for registration.</i>
<b>Registration:</b>	<b>Required.</b> Register by the Monday prior to the program.
<b>Fee:</b>	Registered
	Members \$5.00
	Student Members Free
	Non-members 10.00

## Workshops

Attend workshops to gain in-depth knowledge and skill through instruction and hands-on activities.

<b>Location:</b>	Mount Royal College (Room E141) 4825 Richard Road SW, Calgary <i>\$8.00 parking passes can be purchased from the parking office located by the West Gate.</i>
<b>Time:</b>	Scheduled Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
<b>Registration:</b>	<b>Required.</b> Register at least 10 days prior to the workshop. <i>Registration must be cancelled one week in advance of the workshop or the registrant will be billed for workshop fees.</i>
<b>Fee:</b>	Members \$50.00
	Student Members 25.00
	Non-members 110.00

## Coffee Nights

Attend coffee nights to meet with your fellow technical communicators and discuss a monthly topic in a casual setting.

<b>Location:</b>	Annie's Books (Literary Salon) 912-16 Avenue NW, Calgary <i>Parking is available behind Tim Hortons.</i>
<b>Time:</b>	Second Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
<b>Registration:</b>	Not required.
<b>Fee:</b>	Free for both members and non-members.

## Executive Meetings

<b>Location:</b>	Schlumberger (formerly Merak) 600, 322-11 Avenue SW, Calgary
<b>Time:</b>	Third Monday of the month, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. <i>Building doors are locked after 5:30 p.m.</i>

## December 2002

Monday, 9	Executive Meeting
Tuesday, 10	Coffee Night: Fine-tune Your Skills with Local Courses and Workshops
Friday, 13	Telephone Seminar: Finding Work in Troubled Times
Tuesday, 17	Telephone Seminar: A Brief, Comprehensive Indexing Primer
Wednesday, 18	Region 7 Conference Meeting, Schlumberger, 6:15 p.m.
Wednesday, 25	Christmas Day



## January 2002

Wednesday, 8	Region 7 Conference Meeting, Schlumberger, 6:15 p.m.
Wednesday, 8	Telephone Seminar: Organizing and Leading a Software User Interface Design Team
Tuesday, 14	Coffee Night: Tools—Top 5 Must Haves, Top 5 to Avoid
Wednesday, 15	Telephone Seminar: Using Personas to Bring Your Users into the Development Process
Monday, 20	Executive Meeting
Thursday, 23	Pub Night: Brewster's Brewing Company 834-11 Avenue SW, Calgary



## To register...

...for programs and workshops, use our online registration form at [www.stc-alberta.org/registration.php](http://www.stc-alberta.org/registration.php).

**Note:** Due to new security policies at McDougall Centre, advance online registration is now mandatory for Thursday programs.

# SuperScript

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**Submissions:** The Editors invite readers to submit articles, news, reviews, and other items of interest. Articles may be edited for size. Note: By submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to *SuperScript* to run the article and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. Copyright is held by the writer. In your cover letter, please let the editors know if this article has run elsewhere, and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications.

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**Advertising:** *SuperScript* accepts advertising of interest to our readership, and which furthers professional development. We reserve the right to limit or refuse advertising.

## Rates:

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Half page	\$100.00	Business card	\$20.00

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