

SuperScript

Volume 9, Issue 5



society for technical communication

The mission of the Society for Technical Communication is to improve the quality and effectiveness of technical communication for audiences worldwide.



A Northern View: State of the Art Technical Communication in Canada

- Amanda Goldrick-Jones, Vice-President, STC Manitoba

Call for materials for a unique STC project

The overall goal of STC is to advance the theory and practice of technical communication. STC Manitoba is also mandated to encourage research and stimulate the exchange of information through publications as well as meetings and conferences. To further this goal, our chapter seeks to publish a combined print and online anthology of work intended not only to inform each other but the public about state-of-the-art technical communication in Manitoba and Canada.

The collection will highlight the work of STC members, but non-STC practitioners, educators, and trainers are also invited to submit materials. We aim to provide a good balance of communication practices, theoretical perspectives, and teaching or training strategies, as well as represent a variety of genres and formats.

This anthology promises to be a unique and "state of the art" project for STC. It will not only combine print and online media and a variety of formats, but will also present Canadian (and possibly other non-American) perspectives about the

increasingly important role of technical communication in our professional lives.

Genres and topics may include but are not restricted to technical reports, proposals, public-interest writing, documentation and/or instructions, specialty journalism, training materials, academic or theoretical analyses of technical communication, cross-cultural work, and examples of document design, graphics, and illustration. An online supplement to this book will showcase web-based projects and documents.



By **January 5, 2001**, please submit by e-mail or in hardcopy a completed article, document, or artifact, or a 250-word proposal outlining a work-in-process to:

Amanda Goldrick-Jones
Vice-President, STC Manitoba
Centre for Academic Writing, University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg MB, R3B 2E9.
Office Phone: 204-786-9453
Fax: 204-774-4134
E-Mail: a.goldrick-jones@uwinnipeg.ca

If you wish to send an e-mail attachment, please convert your material to RTF or to Microsoft Word 97. Note that all works-in-process must be completed by **March 1, 2001**.

Please put all contact information on a separate page or e-mail message, not on the proposal or work. All materials will be blind-reviewed by an interdisciplinary panel of STC Manitoba members between **March 1, and April 30, 2001**. Notifications of acceptance will be issued by May 1, 2001.

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A Word from our President

- Mai-Ann Sprung



SuperScript and Web site changes for 2001

Welcome to the holiday season. If your schedule is like mine, you're probably running from turkey dinner to shopping mall to Christmas party to the tree lot and, if you're lucky, stopping along the way to catch a breath and a hot cup o' joe. Forget the 12 minutes of sleep you had planned....

Well, like your personal lives, the chapter has a busy month ahead. But there are two things that require special notice, aside from the regularly scheduled chapter events.

First, this issue of *SuperScript* marks the last of nearly 20 years of printing and mailing our chapter's primary news vehicle. After discussing the results of the "To Print or Not to Print" poll at the November meeting, the Council voted in favour of moving to electronic delivery. Despite the fact that several members of the Council personally preferred print versions, the Council's vote was unanimous. After looking at the STC Web site, it seems that we are not alone; we are joining the majority of Canadian

and Region 7 chapters who currently publish newsletters. Although this in itself is not a reason to make the shift to electronic delivery, it does reinforce the poll results and our decision to switch formats.

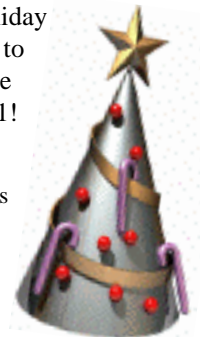
Of the 114 members who responded, 77% were in favour of moving to electronic delivery.

Beginning in February, you will receive monthly e-mail notifications that the newsletter is available for downloading from our Web site. These messages will have an HTML link to a Web page that is not accessible from elsewhere in the STC Alberta Web site (a precaution we are taking to try to maintain *SuperScript* as a "members only" benefit of your membership dues).

The second item of note is an alternative use of some of the reallocated funds:

earlier this month, STC International announced that they will no longer offer Web hosting services. We have until April to obtain space and move our Web site to a new location, which may also result in purchasing our own domain name. Although this change is certainly an inconvenience, it does open up possibilities around security and accessibility that we could not address while being hosted by STC International. We'll know more about this transition in the New Year.

Well, off I go to a 6th Annual Christmas tree decorating party. Have a wonderful and safe holiday season; I look forward to seeing you as we hit the ground running in 2001!



If you have any comments about either of the issues discussed above, please contact Mai-Ann at maianns@merak.com.

Alberta STC Executive Council 2000-2001

Mai-Ann Sprung
President
maianns@merak.com

Suzanne Scott
Vice President
suescott@telusplanet.net

Blair McNaughton
Secretary
final.draft@home.com

Ian Hawkins
Treasurer
ihawkins@telusplanet.net

Leila Meyer
Past President/Membership
leila.meyer@olantra.com

Lucinda Yaworski
Jobline
yaworskl@cadvision.com

Fena Maucieri
Mentorship
fena.maucieri@windriver.com

Gillian Ward
Webmaster
gillian.ward@home.com

Ken Schatzke
Education
ksschatzke@home.com

Caroline Kutschke
Programs
ckutschke@efasoftware.com

Brian O'Malley
Competitions
Membership Survey & Directory
omalley@nucleus.com

Darren Tenor
Coffee Night/Special Events
tenor@nucleus.com

Glenn Ruhl
Canadian Issues Committee
Mount Royal College Liason
gruhl@mtroyal.ab.ca

Kim McKenzie
Hospitality and Registration
kim.mckenzie@home.com

Laurie Holtby
Volunteers
holtby@cadvision.com

Angela Wiens
Liason, Edmonton
wiens@telusplanet.net

Open
Public Relations

Grant Sorensen
Archivist
wallis@telusplanet.net

Roger Baumgarten
SuperScript Editor
roger.baumgarten@cdcg.com

Jessie Channey
SuperScript Editor
jessie.channey@hyprotech.com

Helen Schleedoorn
SuperScript Editor
hschleedoorn@visto.com

Hire Education!

- Irene Jackson, Career Services, University of Calgary

Communications Studies and English students at the University of Calgary are participating in Co-operative Education programs. These programs are designed to give students 16 months of career-related work experience before they graduate.

The Co-op program is beneficial to all participants; it helps bridge the gap between theory and practice, between student and professional, and between the University and employment community.

Students are admitted into the Communications Studies and English Co-op



programs based on their ability to achieve a minimum academic standing of 3.0/4.0 and 2.7/4.0 respectively for majors and a minimum of 3.3/4.0 and 3.0/4.0 for Honours. By the time they begin their first work term, students have completed two years of academic study. However, employers can also choose senior Co-op students in their third or fourth academic year who have completed one or more work terms.


Communications Studies and English students are well equipped for employment, having taken courses that prepare them for a variety of duties and responsibilities that include:

- researching, writing and editing reports, brochures, press releases, manuals, speeches and articles for magazines and

newsletters

- preparing presentations, overheads, graphs
- organizing special events and promotions
- developing and maintaining databases for fund raising and marketing
- researching and analysing issues
- planning communications strategies.

Co-op students are available on a year-round basis for four or eight-month work terms beginning in May, September, or January.

For more information on the University of Calgary's Communication Studies and English Programs, contact Career Services at 403-220-8434 or visit our Web site at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/students/jobs>. 

Mount Royal's

Part-time Credit Certificate in Technical Writing

Join the program in Winter 2001. January enrolments are now being accepted for:

- ACOM 2261 Technical Writing I
- ACOM 2263 Stylistics for Technical Writers

This 10-course curriculum, all evening courses, earns you a credit certificate, and positions you to enter the degree program at Mount Royal with advanced standing.



For more information, contact: The Centre for Communication Studies, (403) 240-6909
Mount Royal College, 4825 Richard Road SW Calgary, AB T3E 6K6
Web site: www.mtroyal.ab.ca E-mail: admissions@mtroyal.ab.ca
SPECIFY "Part-time Credit Certificate in Technical Writing"

Program Demonstrates Mapping Frame Files to WebWorks Files

- Caroline Kutschke

Styles, templates, mapping, and converting made up the key elements to Ken Yasenchuk's presentation on WebWorks Publisher Professional Edition (WW) at the Thursday night Program in November.

Using sample FrameMaker book files and a pre-existing WebWorks template, Yasenchuk, a senior technical writer at QC Data Ltd., demonstrated the main components for a conversion of FrameMaker files to an online format in WebWorks Publisher.

The software, which costs between \$595 and \$695 (US), is essentially a mapping tool, he explained. And, although the program is powerful, Yasenchuk cautioned against using too many FrameMaker templates in documents that are intended for a conversion to a WebWorks format. Keep maintenance simple, he suggested. He recommended using one FrameMaker template before converting to WebWorks, and ensuring it is finalized as much as possible before mapping the FrameMaker styles to the associated styles in WW Publisher. Otherwise, making styles consistent between the FrameMaker and online documents becomes too much work. If you have too many FrameMaker Templates, it will "cause problems," he said.

Demonstrating the conversion process, Yasenchuk showed how to create new WebWorks styles while converting a FrameMaker document to an existing WebWorks template.

For a brief example, prior to actually converting documents, define styles in both the FrameMaker and the WebWorks templates. Next, mapping consisted of selecting a FrameMaker style and then its associated WebWorks style from fields in a conversion window. From that window, options are available to edit or create a new WebWorks style. Once the style is edited or created, the user can select the new style and continue.

A key thing to remember, Yasenchuk noted, is that WebWorks does not convert Word documents. It works only with FrameMaker documents. As he outlined some of his less than positive experience with earlier versions of WebWorks (converting documents locked up the rest of the system's processing power), Yasenchuk noted that WebWorks Publisher produces HTML that is compatible with Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer (4+).

He also highlighted some of the differences between the Standard version of WebWorks that comes with FrameMaker 6.0 and the Professional version, which is available as a standalone. The standalone is more robust, he said, and provides more templates, online formats, and options for editing. Comparing WW to PDF, Yasenchuk pointed out that WW has a higher up-front cost than does PDF.

Using WW also requires more time to maintain, especially when considering the steep learning curve in the beginning and time needed for testing.


On the other hand, while admitting only limited knowledge of the Professional version at this time, Yasenchuk noted that WW Publisher allows for more impressive online formats than does a

PDF format. And, once a Publisher template is created, conversions are relatively fast and easy.

Yasenchuk also pointed out however, that WW documents are created in such a way that allows editing of the documentation. He added that the ability to do so isn't immediately obvious to users.

Users can expect a three-week learning curve, he said, acknowledging that learning time can vary according to the individual, the working environment, and of course, deadlines.

To view the presentation, go to the following address: http://members.home.net/yasenchuk/wwp/wwp_files/frame.htm.

Ken also provided other information sources: www.webworks.com, www.scriptorium.com, www.pusers.com, www.egroups.com/group/wwp-users. Four WebWorks Publisher Professional Edition demo CDs are available in the chapter's archives. 

WebWorks Publisher allows for more impressive online formats than does a PDF format... conversions are relatively fast and easy.



Call for Papers

- Suzanne Scott, Vice President

The executive for the Alberta Chapter of the STC is looking for speakers to present at our 2001 Annual General Meeting.



The topic can be on technical writing, project management, tools of the trade, or new technology. If you are interested in doing a presentation, please send your proposal in Word or PDF format via e-mail to the Vice-President of the Alberta Chapter, Suzanne Scott at suescott@telusplanet.net. 

The EAC Announces...

The Prairie Provinces Branch of the Editors' Association of Canada presents

EDITING FOR THE WEB


with VIRGINIA ISE, BRAINIUM

CALGARY: Friday, Feb. 16, 9-4pm
EDMONTON: Saturday, Feb. 17, 9-4pm

COST: \$107 for EAC members,
\$160.50 for non-members (both prices include GST).

EDITING FOR THE WEB will address the basic considerations of editing for the World Wide Web. Using different Web sites as examples,

Virginia Ise will cover the differences between print and online



content, how the editor fits in the Web development process, and what to look for when editing Web sites.

Virginia Ise is the senior content developer and game designer at Brainium, an online provider of interactive educational products. She has more than 10 years of experience as a writer and editor and has studied Interactive Writing, Human-Computer Interface Design, and Information Architecture.

Space is limited. Contact Lori Burwash at 403-282-3641 or eac-calgary@cadvision.com to register. 

Technical Writing Instructors Wanted!

The Faculty of Continuing Education & Extension at Mount Royal College offers a Technical Writing Certificate of Completion Program. We currently offer courses in: Technical Writing, Editing for Technical Writers, Online Documentation, Introduction to Indexing for Technical Writers, Writing Technical and Training Manuals, and RoboHelp.

We are planning to expand our instructional team for the Winter and Spring 2001 term.

We are looking to hire technical writing professionals who have:

- **Content expertise**
- **Several years industry experience in technical writing**
- **Proven ability to facilitate/train adult learners**

If you are interested in instructing in this dynamic area, please forward your resume to Gina Kordoski, Coordinator, Business Education and Training, by e-mail: gkordoski@mtroyal.ab.ca or fax (403) 240-6670. For more information, please phone 403-240-6857, or visit our Web site: www.mtroyal.ab.ca/conted.



It's That Time of Year Again...

Do you remember? It was this time last year that everyone was panicking about Y2K. Obviously we've survived the year 2000 without any major computer glitches. (Other than the ones that made our OWN editors' computers crash, that is.)

We'd like to take this time to remind everyone of Pub Night 2001. Being held at the James Joyce pub in downtown Calgary, this will be the first STC event of the new year. We encourage members and non-members alike to attend. Admission is free and you cover your own food and drinks. For details on time and location, see the back page of this newsletter.



*Enjoy the
holidays,
have a Merry
Christmas,
and a great
New Year!!*

Wishing you the best,

STC Executive

Important Reminders

THE JOBLINE ACCESS CODE HAS CHANGED!

Effective November 1, 2000 you will need to enter a new code to access the Jobline. To receive the new access code, send an e-mail with your full name (as it is registered with the STC) to our Jobline coordinator, Lucinda Yaworski at yaworskl@cadvision.com.

HAVE YOU MOVED?

If your mailing address, phone number, or e-mail address changes, please inform us so you will continue to receive STC communications. You can update your contact information with STC international online at http://www.stc-va.org/fmbr_menu.htm.

Also, please e-mail Leila Meyer at leila.meyer@olantra.com to update your contact information for chapter communications. ✍️

Bitter Ink.

So Rand. You think our product names are too boring huh?



Ok, what would YOU suggest?



Well, anything!
"Export Module"?
"Data Administrator"?!
Gimme a break!



How about "PhoenixLink"?
Or "InfoVault"?! We can add
some excitement for our customers,
AND for us!



Uh huh. You want excitement?
How about I change your job title
to "Manual Blaster"?
Or "Word Jockey"!?



She could have stopped
at "Phrase Monkey"...



XML—History and Managing Change to an XML Tool

- Caroline Kutschke, Programs

At the next Thursday Program on February 15, 2001, Chapter member Robin Etherington will present a topic on XML—History and Managing Change to an XML Tool.

Some of the areas this topic will cover include: what to think about if getting an XML tool (or wondering if you should), how to choose, and managing expectations once you've got it. Hand-outs from the presentation will be provided. (Note: This topic will not be a technical information session on XML code programming.)

This program will be held at the MacDougall Centre, 5th Avenue and 6th Street SW, Calgary. The program



starts at 7 pm and runs until 9 pm, but please arrive from 6:30 pm on to sign in, get your receipt, and mingle.

The deadline for advance registration is Monday, February 12. The advance fees are: \$7 for members, \$5 for student members, and \$10 for non-members.

Drop-in fees are: \$10 for members, \$8 for student members, and \$13 for non-members.

To register in advance, please dial 230-6072 and then press 2. After the message, leave your name and number and specify which program you are registering.

HELPING YOU PLAN WAAAY AHEAD...

On Thursday, March 15, 2001, Roland Davis, of Sun Microsystems in Calgary will present the topic "De-mystifying Java."



The November issue of SuperScript was produced by a new addition to our newsletter team, Roger Baumgarten. Roger joined us in late September and put his newly learned PageMaker skills to work last month. Despite the fact that his computer crashed (and how!), he and Helen managed to fix things up just in time. Good job Roger and Helen!

- Jessie

EDMONTON

- Marcia Wright



V E N T S

On Thursday, November 9, Edmonton members enjoyed a presentation by Amanda Leslie-Spinks, Coordinator of a new degree program at Grant MacEwan Community College. Amanda and her advisors began planning the program in May and were ready to launch the new course of study in September. The four-year Bachelor of Applied Communications in Professional Writing degree includes course work in:

- language skills
- writing for government and corporations
- editing and publishing
- technical communication
- project management
- applied research
- visual literacy
- portfolio development
- field study



The program's emphasis is on professional writing and includes several streams, one of which is technical communication. Amanda visualizes job opportunities for graduates in a variety of areas, including government, business, industry, and freelancing.

Students not in the degree program can obtain a diploma after two years of study.



Mark Your Calendars!

Executive Meeting

Mon. January 15, 2001

5:30pm - 7:30pm

Coffee/Pub Nights

7pm - 9pm

January 25

James Joyce Irish Pub (John Mulligan Room)

114 - 8 Avenue SW

This free event is a great way to start off the new year and get together with old and new friends alike!

February 27

Who Needs Documentation?

March 27

It's Alive! (focus on portfolios)

Workshops

Sat. February 3

9am - 4pm

Advanced Microsoft Word
by Brian O'Malley

Programs

Thurs. February 15

9am - 4pm

XML—History and Managing Change to an XML Tool
by Robin Etherington

Alberta Chapter's Year-At-A-Glance

(Dates and locations subject to change.)

Location and Details

1. 7pm at Annie's Books. 912 - 16th Ave NW in the Literary Salon. Parking behind Tim Horton's. Free for both STC members and non-members.

2. 5:30pm at the Merak Building. #600, 322 - 11th Ave SW. Free parking available in the lot on the west side of the building. Open to all STC members.

3. 6:30pm at the MacDougall Centre. 455 - 6th Street SW. Discounted rates for advance registration.

4. 9am to 1pm at Mount Royal College. Main Campus, East Wing Lecture Hall E167. **Advance Registration is required.** Pay Lot Parking only - bring LOTS of change.

5. 9am to 4pm at Mount Royal College. Main Campus, Computer Lab E141. **Advance Registration is required.** Pay Lot Parking only—bring LOTS of change.

To register in advance:

Phone **403-230-6072**, press **2**, leave your name and phone number after the message and indicate which event you wish to attend. The Hospitality Coordinator will call back to confirm. The advance registration deadline for Programs is the Monday previous to the event; advance registration deadline for Workshops is 10 days in advance. Payment for non-member registration must be received 10 days in advance of the Workshop.

December 2000

12 (Tues) Coffee Night¹

18 (Mon) Executive Meeting²

January 2001

15 (Mon) Executive Meeting²

25 (Thurs) Pub Night - James Joyce Irish Pub and Restaurant (John Mulligan Room)

February 2001

3 (Sat) Workshop⁵

15 (Thurs) Program³

15 (Mon) Executive Meeting²

27 (Tues) Coffee Night¹ (New Night)

Thursday Program Fees

Advance Registration

Members:	\$7
Student Members:	\$5
Non-Members:	\$10

Drop In

Members:	\$10
Student Members:	\$8
Non-Members:	\$13

SuperScript

SuperScript is the official newsletter of the Alberta Chapter of STC, the Society for Technical Communication, and is published 10 times annually, including double issues in July-August, and December-January.

Submissions: The Editors invite readers to submit articles, news, reviews, and other items of interest. Articles may be edited for size.

Reprints: Original articles appearing in *SuperScript* may be freely reprinted, provided that the author and source are acknowledged, and a copy of the reprint is promptly sent to the Editors. Reprints may not be edited for content, or used for commercial or morally repugnant purposes.

Distribution: *SuperScript* is distributed to members in Alberta and Northwest Territories, to all Canadian chapters and Region 7 chapters of the STC, and to interested companies and individuals upon request. Circulation is 275.

Advertising: *SuperScript* accepts advertising of interest to our readership, and

which furthers professional development. We reserve the right to limit or refuse advertising.

Rates:

Full page \$160.00 Quarter page \$50.00
Half page \$100.00 Business card \$20.00

To place an advertisement: send your cheque, payable in advance to Society for Technical Communication, Alberta Chapter, Attn: Treasurer, at:

STC Alberta Chapter
Box 2947, Station M
Calgary AB T2P 3C3

Web site: <http://stc.org/region7/alb>
E-mail: albwww@stc.org
Phone: 403-230-6072

Editors:

Roger Baumgarten roger.baumgarten@cdcg.com

Jessie Channey jessie.channey@hyprotech.com

Helen Schleedoorn h schleedoorn@visto.com