



IDeal: Design for Learning

Newsletter of the Instructional Design & Learning SIG

<http://www.stcsig.org/idl/newsletter.shtml>

SIG MANAGER'S THOUGHTS

by Jane Smith, SIG Manager



*"Making a difference...
watching people learn...
seeing light bulbs go off..."*

Greetings SIG Members,

I seem to spend most of my time communicating business news and needs to you, and that's not how I like to

operate. Some of you in the SIG are practicing instructional designers, and others of you are curious on-lookers or hopefuls. For those of you who have little experience or knowledge about the field of instructional design, I thought I'd share why I like being an instructional designer.

Many years ago, I was teaching part-time at a local community college and not totally content with my situation. For various reasons, I sought out a career counselor who put together my love of clothing design (I'm an accomplished seamstress of kids' clothes and swimming suits) with my love of teaching to come up with the field of instructional design as a possible good fit for me. I tried it, and it was. Although my road was not always smooth, I have never regretted my decision to become an instructional designer.

First, I love instructional design, because I am never bored. I always have, or create, the opportunity to learn new businesses, new aspects of a business, or new systems as well as new tools, methods, and techniques. In more than 18 years, I have not outgrown this field and have been able to grow successfully in it to meet my needs as well as build new skills, and expand my horizons in so many ways. When I decided to join the forces of independent folks, I found that I had even greater opportunities to choose my directions and skills.

How wonderful to have found something that I can grow with, not out of.

Second, I love instructional design for the front-end analysis part. I'm extremely analytical and love to organize almost anything. When I needed to be alone as a mom, I'd organize my sewing projects! But doing the job task analysis and organizing the content into meaningful, job-related bits is extremely satisfying to me. I am learning, sorting, analyzing, and making order out of what might seem like chaos.

Third, I love instructional design because I find it far more creative than writing documentation. Not only do I get to create the most effective, efficient sequence to teach folks, but I also get to make up stories, make business assumptions (I'm usually right), and generally get into another space where left-field scenarios and ideas assist rather than hinder me. Yet I'm so grounded, I never get lost up there.

(continued on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SIG MANAGER'S THOUGHTS	1
A WORD FROM THE EDITOR	2
ARTICLES	
Ten Ways to Engage Online Learners, Part 2	3
Implementing Online Learning (Part 1)	5
TIPS & HINTS	
The Complete Development Cycle	5
MEMBER NEWS	7
SIG & SOCIETY NEWS	
Participate in a Web-Based Training Survey	8
IDL SIG Goals	9
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	
Experiencing Technical Communication -	
Next Year's Conference	10
STC Telephone Seminars	11
BOOK REVIEWS	
E-Learning Tools and Technologies	11
Rapid Instructional Design:	
Learning ID Fast and Right	13
YOUR LETTERS	14
ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER	14

One drawback of instructional design, especially of e-learning, is that I do my "thing," then give it to a facilitator or burn CDs, and off it goes to Never Never Land. I wonder if it makes a difference, but I rarely get feedback on e-learning courses. Except once. I was on-site to research a new project, and I was interviewing someone who was about to go to another department at her location. When she mentioned the other department, I told her that there were some good training tapes available to help her with her job. She immediately responded, "Yes, and they're great!" Imagine my joy at finding someone who had actually benefited from my work. At this stage in my career, to meet my need to know if my work made a difference I try to connect through giving presentations, workshops, and classes. From those, I know if someone learned something or benefited. Giving back, through these means, completes the circle and brings me in touch with people — people like you who can also go out there, create quality instructional materials, and change lives. That's what it's about, isn't it? Making a difference ... watching people learn ... seeing light bulbs go off ...

Thanks to all of you who have contributed to the world through our profession! I hope it means as much to you as it does to me. Now, let us hear what instructional design means to you.

With respect
and best wishes,
Jane

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

by Dave Williams, Newsletter Editor

"In the simplest terms, online learning is any form of instruction via computer."

As instructional designers, we hear the words "online learning" more and more. In the simplest terms, online learning is any form of instruction via a computer. It can be a simple web page that lists instructions or a highly interactive "online" course with streaming video, chat, and interactive components. Computer-based training (CBT), Web-based training (WBT), and e-learning are all forms of online learning. In this issue of IDeal: Design for Learning, our members share their research, experience, and resources about online learning including:

- Ways to Engage Online Learning Audiences
- Implementing Online Learning: One Company's Experience
- E-Learning Tools and Technologies

In addition you'll find the information and resources on ID you've come to expect in IDeal: Design for Learning. In this edition, we have the following tip and a book review:

- The Complete Development Cycle
- Rapid Instructional Design

You will also find several new sections such as the SIG and Society News, Educational Opportunities, Tips and Hints, and Member News. One of the goals of this newsletter is to build community. To let you know you're not alone. You're not the only one trying to select a Learning Management System. You're not the only one trying to teach customers who were forced to attend your class. You're not the only one has to explain for the bazillionth time what an instructional designer is. Check out our newly added Member News section and you'll see — you're not the only one!

Finally we hope you'll find this newsletter useful. Let us know what you want to see and how we can improve it by giving us feedback. The Newsletter Team is a dedicated group who generously volunteer their time and expertise. If you like what we've done and have any positive words to say, we're also interested in knowing that. Thanks a bunch and ...

Joy in the learning!
Dave

ARTICLES

Ten Ways to Engage Online Learners (Part 2)

By Ann-Marie Grissino and Harman Singh

Acquiring knowledge requires learner motivation. But, what motivates learners? To some, it's using new technology. To others, it's a certificate after course completion. These are just parts of the answer. Motivation for learning is based on learners' needs (what it is that they need to know), the strength of that need (how quickly it must be learned or how important it is to learn the material), and the students' knowledge of consequences after learning (for example, getting a certificate, a raise, a job, or recognition).

In short, engage the learner any way you can. Here are more effective ways in which you engage the learner. See strategies 1 through 5 in the 2004 Summer issue: www.stcisg.org/idl/newsletter/2004_summer/article_2.shtml.

6. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

In many e-learning courses, we include one practice event or one "Check-Your-Progress" event for a topic. However, we learn by repeating actions by practicing.

Include additional practice options. Let learners replay events or try something out as often as they would like.

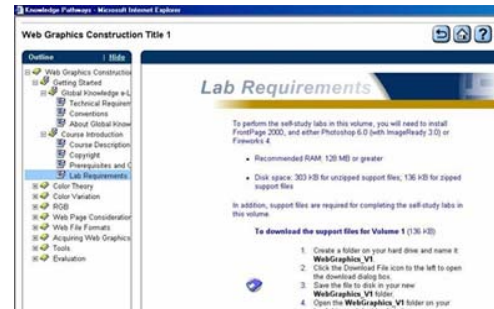
The following course that we made for clinicians using Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) let the clinicians practice entering text on the PDA by moving the cursor, which looks like a stylus. Students could practice many times.



Course Interface

7. CREATE LABS

After course content delivery, include a Lab page that instructs the user to download files needed for the lab work that complements the course. Provide the lab requirements and procedures as part of the course, as shown in the next illustration of a course by Knowledge Pathways.



Lab page from Knowledge Pathways

8. MAKE CLICKABLE FLASH ANIMATIONS

Macromedia Flash® animations can be more than just animations that students view. Create hotspots where learners can click on their answers and receive responses based on their answers.

We included a Flash graphic in a course on supply chain management that required the user to click on the country that must pay the import duty and click on the duty amount. The Flash graphic included a pop-up response based on the user's action.



Macromedia Flash® clickable hotspot

9. CREATE SIMULATIONS

Use simulations to represent reality-based events. Although this is an enormous topic of study in e-learning journals, this article will only mention it briefly.

Simulation Categories

These simulation categories might help jump-start your thoughts.

- **Calculative simulations**
Use this type for science and math applications where you let the user enter variables and see what happens based on the program's algorithms.
- **Process simulations**
Let the learner view a process; for example, an engine working, a hurricane traveling over water, or a volcano exploding.
- **Social simulations**
Students participate in real-life scenarios and make choices based on various roles, similar to role-playing.

Simulation Examples

MIT and the Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) at Carnegie Mellon University produced e-learning simulations that helped train emergency workers to handle terrorist attacks. To succeed, teams had to open new communication lines while fighting an accident involving toxic materials.

In another project, MIT students participated in a historical simulation in a game called *Neverwinter Nights™*, which enabled users to create their own versions]. Learners played individuals living in Williamsburg, Virginia. This allowed students to choose on which side to fight during the Revolutionary War, and then deal with the consequences of those choices.

Other simulations show Flash graphics or Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) of copiers, printers, and network equipment that let service technicians open drawers, test buttons, view software consoles, and replace parts.

10. MOVE COURSEWARE TO HANDHELD DEVICES

Moving courseware to handheld devices is a study unto itself, yet we can't resist the topic. Moving courses to such small devices intrigues us—how will we ever manage to create good courseware on these? Let's look at a few applications.

At the University of North Carolina, students grab a PDA at the door to a lecture hall. While waiting for the professor, students review their typed notes from last week's presentation and review the presentation on the PDA. The professor arrives, unpacks, and beams this week's presentation to the students. During the lecture,

the professor needs to collate data from the students and so beams a poll to the PDA. Students, who might not otherwise raise their hands, are now participating directly with the instructor. Students answer and send data back to the professor, who then shows the results on a projected screen. Professors can beam presentations right after delivering them to students' PDAs.

Other examples include training demos on the go, where corporate trainers review presentations anytime, anywhere. Traveling employees can see corporate annual report presentations, review presentations they will deliver, or read messages from the CEO.

The following illustration shows a prototype for a network architecture course we are creating for delivery on a Pocket PC® device. The voice-enabled presentation has audio synchronized with the presentation. The topics appear after the learner selects Menu.



Table of Contents (Topics) that appear when a user selects Menu on PDA

Stay tuned for more on mobile learning or m-learning.

REFERENCES

- (1) Daniel, Graeme and Cox, Kevin. "Learning with Role-Playing Games." *Web Tools Newsletter*, 29 June 2003.
- (2) King, Brad. "Educators Turn to Games for Help." *Wired News*, 2 August 2003.

Ann-Marie Grissino is President of Keypoint Consultants, Inc., a firm specializing in online communication design and delivery. She has won numerous awards including an Excellence and Best of Show for e-learning development. Ann-Marie participated in the October 2002 Technical Communication Delegation to China as part of the People to People Ambassador Program. You can contact her at (919)-562-2464 or send email to amgrissino@keypointconsultants.com.

Harman Singh is the President and CEO of a North Carolina-based e-learning solutions company, Sikhya Solutions. Sikhya Solutions provides custom e-learning software and solutions, including authorGEN, a family of products that help content authors and instructional technologists develop and deliver knowledge to their audiences. You can contact him at hsingh@sikhya.com or visit his Web site at www.sikhya.com.

Implementing Online Learning: One Company's Experience (Part 1)

By Kim Lambdin

OPPORTUNITY TO INTRODUCE E-LEARNING

In my role as training manager for a 600-employee financial services company, I am responsible for making sure our associates have the proper training on our software applications. In addition, I need to stay current with the best learning and development practices. So last year when we upgraded to a new operating system, I thought what a great opportunity to introduce e-learning to this organization.

SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Rather than growing our own, I partnered with New Horizons of Colorado to use their Online ANYTIME hosted e-learning program. I was thrilled at the opportunity to introduce self-paced e-learning to our organization and could not wait for associates to experience online learning. After carefully coordinating all the logistics, I was ready for the registrations to roll in. After all, this was something new and different for our geographically dispersed company.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSE

Well, was I surprised? About 70 registrations slowly came in (I had estimated about 220). I eagerly signed up the 70 participants and prepared to follow up with each individual to see how they enjoyed the online learning experience. After three months (and well past our upgrade go-live date), only 21 of those participants actually logged into the course. Only four completed it.

What happened? After calling many associates and listening to a wide variety of excuses, it boiled down to three main issues:

1. "No time during the day to go through the lessons."
2. "I'm worried that people will think I'm not doing real work if I sit at my desk going through the modules."
3. "I realized I don't learn well in an online environment."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Now I have the hard facts to support the lack of enrollment in this online learning initiative. Somehow, associates muddled through our operating system upgrade without the online learning I thought so important.

I look back on this initiative as a good learning experience on many levels. I also realize that if I am to implement online learning at this company and in this culture, I will need to take a different approach.

NEXT IN THIS SERIES...

Part 2 will address ideas and strategies regarding the perception that asynchronous online learning is not doing real work and that there is no time during the day to do online learning.

Part 3 will look at participants who do not do well in an online learning environment.

Kim Lambdin, M.Ed. has over 18 years of experience in training, training management, technical writing and educational project management. She is currently the Training Manager for a financial services company in Denver, Colorado. She is also a member of a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about the joys of Golden Retriever ownership. You can contact her at kasran@earthlink.net

TIPS & HINTS

Do you have a short tip or quick reference guide that you use when designing instruction or when teaching? Send your tips or hints to Williams.210@nd.edu.

Complete Development Cycle: A Simple Aid for Instructional Designers

By Jack Butler

I wrote the following documents to help keep the sequence of instructional design steps in front of me while I work through a project. This is not a complete design strategy — it is a simple job aid for instructional designers who just need a reminder that there is a path to follow. Hang it in your closet and haul it out when you want to remind yourself how the bones all go together.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN: COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT CYCLE (BASIC OUTLINE)

1. Needs assessment to identify major goals
2. Front end analysis
 - a. Instructional analysis
 - b. Audience analysis
3. Performance objectives (goals)
4. Instructional strategy
5. Assessment (evaluation of learning, measurement, and metrics)
6. Instructional material
7. Formative evaluation (may also conduct summative evaluation)
8. Instructional revision

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN: COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT CYCLE (DETAILED)

1. Needs assessment to identify major goals
 - a. Identify the needs, the problems, and the mission.
 - b. Describe the history of any past efforts to deal with the needs.
 - c. Conduct interviews to get a diversity of perspective.
 - d. Task analysis: Watch experts in action.
 - i. Identify sequences.
 - ii. Take photographs and videotape. Analyze to better understand the work, the workers, and the environment.
 - e. Analyze skills and knowledge.
2. Front end analysis
 - a. Instructional analysis
 - i. Identify the material that must be taught.
 - ii. Identify references materials and resources.
 - iii. Identify subject matter experts.
 - b. Audience analysis
 - i. Analyze learners and contexts.
 - ii. Describe learners as a group and as individuals.
 - iii. Describe the work environment and the training environment.
 - iv. Identify motivation for learners.
 - v. Identify prerequisites. What must learners already know? Skills?
 - vi. Describe the rewards for learning. Will learners get certification? Will they have to pass tests?

3. Performance objectives (goals)
 - a. Prioritize the list.
 - b. Identify the imperatives. Separate the "must know" material from the "nice to know" material.
 - c. Identify any sequences that must be followed.
4. Instructional strategy
 - a. Choose a format for delivery.
 - b. Describe the durability and longevity of the training material. How long is it expected to last until changes are needed?
 - c. Identify any need for job aids and material making demands on memory.
5. Assessment (evaluation of learning, measurement and metrics)
6. Instructional material
7. Formative evaluation (may also conduct summative evaluation)
8. Instructional revision

DEVELOP THE ASSESSMENT FIRST AND YOUR TEACHING/INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN WILL BE BETTER

One of the features of this path that many teachers have not yet discovered is that the assessment development should precede the development of instructional material. (Alas, my students suffered from my lack of this realization for many years.) Many academic teachers and instructional designers leave the writing of assessment to the end. That is a mistake. Think back to some of the classes you have taken in your life and you will most likely remember the frustration of trying to guess what it was the instructor really wanted you to master. Those teachers' tests were difficult and not very good at assessing what you knew of the stated curriculum. Student-centered teachers/instructional designers want to see students succeed, so they write the assessment tasks first. That helps the teacher/designer to better know what content to write and how to write it.

So if you need something brief and skeletal rather than a set of books to help you remember the essentials, then this may just help.

Jack Butler (right) is an instructional designer at IBM. You can contact him at butlerja@bellsouth.net



MEMBER NEWS

By Sylvia Miller, SIG Membership Manager

Welcome to a brand new column of the newsletter! In each newsletter we will welcome new members and recognize the accomplishments of other members. You could call this the IDL SIG's gossip column.

NEW MEMBERS

The following new members joined the IDL SIG since the last newsletter:

Ellen Ashdown	Debora Larry-Kearney
Elizabeth Avery	John Lee
Lori Barclay	Becky Lash
Anne Block	Rosie Maple
Nancy Cisneros	Yvonne McCleary
Charles Coursey	Claire Moller
Stephanie Costa	Petrina Moore
Philippe Coudert	Kathryn Morse
Gail DiPetra	Cheri Mullins
Deborah Doyle	Laura Poeppelman
Alane Fitzgerald	Tara Reynolds
Juston Eivers	Michael Richards
Jim Frost	Lindsey Robbins
William Gill	Veronica Romero
Laura Green	Amber Rost
William Griswold	Andrea Spikes
Steven Heitman	Lynda Stevens
Michael Heberger	Nancy Tamez
Joan Holmquist	Barbara Thomas
John Howe	Helen Tipps
Jennifer Hua	Emily Twaddel
Carol Husa	Alan Vickers
Daniel Iwasaki	Sonya White
Lee Kolm	Astrid Winkle
Ellen Kurr	Julie Wohlers
John Lancaster	Bridget Walsh
Robert Lane	

These 53 new members hail from 18 states in the U.S., plus France, Germany, Ireland, and Canada. Welcome to all of you! If you have not yet received a Welcome letter from me, email me at sylviamiller@woh.rr.com. I hope you're already taking advantage of the listserv to network with other SIG members.

MEMBER PROFILES

Our members are busy! Here are a few that emailed me.

George Ardell

George has more than 14 years of experience as a technical writer but is making great progress toward becoming a Web developer. He has one Web site with an online store and will soon be adding a second online store. He's using PHP, MySQL, CSS, and HTML to build his sites, and plans to add Java and JavaScript to his development toolbox. He has a B.S. in Journalism



and an MBA with plans to finish his B.S. in Computer Science very soon. Email him at gardell1015@MyE.net.

Vincent E. Lasnick, Ph.D.

Vincent is an instructional designer/Developer & Knowledge Architect. He has written the following article:

Lasnik, V.E. (in press). "Developing Prescriptive Taxonomies for Distance Learning Instructional Design." In Patricia L. Rogers, (Ed.): Encyclopedia of Distance Learning (Volume 1: Distance Learning Technologies and Applications). Scheduled for publication in spring of 2005 by Idea Group Publishing.

The following is an abstract of his article:

One of the central problems and corresponding challenges facing the fields of distance learning and instructional design has been in the construction of theory-grounded, research-based taxonomies for prescribing what particular strategies and approaches should be employed when, how, and in what combination to be most effective. This article addresses the critical issues involved with understanding the nature and function of prescriptive educational taxonomies for improving instructional design solutions within the burgeoning field of online learning and distance learning environments.

Visit www.idea-group.com/encyclopedia/ for more information.

Jane Smith

Our own IDL President is one of those very busy folks! Jane has more than 18 years of experience in instructional design, and in 2003 was designated a Certified Performance Technologist by the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI).

Over the next several months Jane will facilitate "Developing E-Learning Courses" in Phoenix, San Francisco, Chicago, and Baltimore. For STC members Jane is offering a \$100 discount. For more information, visit www.jemcommunications.com/Crs-DevELrng.htm.



Lee S. Tesdell

Lee presented his paper titled "Converting Technical Communication Courses to Online Delivery: Learning Objects, Software Tools, and Delivery Media in an E-Learning Environment" at the 2004

International Professional Communication Conference (IPCC) recently held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. IPCC is organized by the Professional Communication Society of IEEE and publishes the conference papers in a volume of proceedings. Lee is an assistant professor at Minnesota State University, Mankato where he teaches technical communication courses online.

Visit his Web site at www.intech.mnsu.edu/tesdel.

MEMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Have you noticed the excellent articles by our IDL SIG members in recent issues of Intercom?

- "Come Play! Using Games to Teach, Motivate, and Engage" by Karen Baranich (September/October issue)
- "E-Learning: When and Why" by Jane Smith (September/October issue)
- "Instructional Design: Choosing the Proper Authoring Tool" by Gene Holden (November issue)

Other good instructional design articles have also appeared in recent issues of Intercom. Hats off to these folks for taking the time to share their knowledge with all of us!

You can see that you have a wealth of experienced folks whose brains you can pick at conferences and to whom you can post questions, issues, and challenges through the listserv.

While you're patiently awaiting the next IDL SIG newsletter, remember to send me information about your recent accomplishments. Send them to me at sylviamiller@woh.rr.com. (Be sure your email editor doesn't correct "woh" to "who.")

SIG & SOCIETY NEWS

Wanna find out what's happening in STC and in the Instructional Design and Learning SIG? Well here are just a few things that you might find interesting:

Participate in a Web-Based Training Survey

Does your work involve some aspect of the design, development, production, administration, support, and/or evaluation of web-based training (WBT)? If so, you can contribute to our body of knowledge about those who work with WBT by participating in an online national survey and asking others who also work with WBT to take the survey.

Briefly, you will access the online survey here

www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=7419633537

...and respond to the 36 main survey items (quick choice selections) and some demographic questions. Preliminary tests show that the survey takes 15-45 minutes to complete. More about this research project and procedures are detailed at the survey site including contact information for Texas Tech University Human Resources, my dissertation chair, and my survey sponsor. The survey closes November 30, 2004.

Note: The survey is housed on SurveyMonkey, and they do use cookies for the time you are taking the survey. However, they do not store information on you. Also, their servers have been pretty slow lately. I apologize for that.

If you are in my survey population, please help by taking the survey! If you are not in my survey population but know someone who is, please help by forwarding this survey announcement to them.

Thanks!!!!!!

Ida L. Rodgers, ABD, Texas Tech University
ilr@rhetime.net

IDL SIG Goals

by Jane Smith, SIG Manager

A hearty thanks to each and every one of you who participated in the survey that our leadership team member, Jenny Achtemichuk, developed during the summer. From your responses, we were able to determine some of your concerns and begin to take steps to address those. The SIG Leadership Team met early in September to determine goals and begin to make plans towards obtaining those goals.

First, as a SIG, we need to pat ourselves on the back for our participation and presence at this year's conference. Because of that presence, we are in a better place to communicate our needs and concerns with the International staff. Second, we are in a better position to retain and gain members and to invite more active participation from you.

At our September meeting, the team decided on two broad goals, based on your responses and our own conversations with members individually or at the conference:

Goal 1: Provide meaningful and timely information to members regarding SIG activities, SIG/ID-related issues, and how to participate.

To do this, we plan to:

- Add more links and resource information to the Resources section of our website. Jackie Damrau is heading up that task, and you can help by giving her names of job resources, organizations, events, training resources, and Instructional Design sites by completing the contribution form at www.stcsig.org/idl/resources_add.shtml or sending Jackie on email at jdamrau3@airmail.net. Thanks, Jackie!
- Create a business directory in which members can advertise their services. Jackie has also assumed responsibility for this section. Submit information online at www.stcsig.org/idl/directory_new.shtml. Thanks, Jackie!
- Solicit and find meaningful articles and information related to instructional design and learning for the newsletter. The due dates and publication dates have already been established. David Williams (williams.210@nd.edu) is heading up this effort. You can submit articles to him or volunteer to assist with the newsletter. He has successfully distributed

three newsletters this year, including this current edition. Congrats, David!

Goal 2: Organize teams and committees to streamline work efforts, minimize duplication of efforts, and involve as many members as possible.

To that end, we organized these teams:

- Newsletter Team, managed by David Williams, to coordinate the newsletter including obtaining articles and information, and publishing the newsletter,
- Web Site Team, managed by Matt van Sickle with Chris Emanuelli as primary technical guru who has been doing it all so far. Thanks, Chris! And Welcome, Matt!
- Conference Committee, headed by Karen Baranich, to coordinate SIG sessions and SIG activities at the conference, including a luncheon, SIG table materials, give-aways, business meeting, and any other activities decided by the team or suggested by members.
- Online Forum, headed up by Michelle Didier, who has finished her Master's degree and has returned to the SIG leadership. Thanks, Michelle!
- Membership Committee, headed up by Sylvia Miller, who is responsible for sending welcome letters and maintaining membership information including obtaining member news for the website and newsletter.

Some of these folks may be contacting you directly or via the listserv to obtain help for their teams. After reading your input, we realize that we need to be more specific, so expect to see lists of skills and specific help that we can use to keep the SIG information flowing and growing. If you want to contact any of these people to volunteer your services and ideas, use the links provided.

Thanks again to all of you who gave us feedback and thanks, in advance, to those of you who are willing to contribute your ideas and time. We appreciate you!

Jane Smith

P.S. A quick note. At my request, STC will be adding the job title, "instructional designer" to their membership form. Please be sure to select it if it applies. It will give us some good data for moving forward, and we want to be sure to have enough select it to keep it on the form. Thanks.

Intercom Online

The new Intercom Online is now available on the STC Web site! See STC's Web site at www.stc.org/intercom.

STC: 2004 Technical Communicator Salary Survey

STC's 2004 Technical Communicator Salary Survey is now available at the [STC Web site](http://www.stc.org). The survey breaks down salary information by levels of experience, levels of education, gender, and ZIP Code/postal code for STC members in the U.S. and Canada.

This year, for the first time, the survey form was sent to STC members all over the world. Two countries outside of North America—Israel and India—produced enough responses to be statistically significant. Salary information about those countries has been included in the survey results.

To access the survey, you'll need to log onto the members-only section of the STC Web site (www.stc.org/salarySurvey.asp) using your member number and password. Your member number appears on your STC membership card and just above your address on the mailing label of Intercom. Password help is available on the login screen.

New Membership Categories, Rates, and Renewal Deadlines

STC is introducing new membership categories this fall. The new categories vary in price and give members the option of joining multiple STC communities (chapters and SIGs). Membership dues have not been increased.

Printed dues renewal invoices will be mailed in late November to all members who do not renew their memberships online at the [STC Web site](http://www.stc.org).

For membership dues, STC accepts checks in U.S. dollars or Canadian equivalent, and American Express, MasterCard, and VISA payments. Dues payments must be received by January 1, 2005. (A grace period extends to February 28, 2005.) Note that only members who have paid their dues by February 28, 2005, will be eligible to vote in the STC election.

The renewal invoices for 2005 allow members to choose one of four new individual membership categories approved by the STC board of directors. (See the [September 2004 Tieline](#) for more information.)

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

STC offers several opportunities to learn and improve your knowledge in technical communication and instructional design. Check out some of these opportunities to update your skill set, have fun, and increase your earning potential!

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Experiencing Technical Communication — Next Year's Conference

It's an exciting time for technical communicators! We're at the convergence of two important trends for our profession.

The first looks inward at transforming STC to respond effectively to changes in technology, business, and professional roles. Each of these changes brings a challenge to learn new skills, to communicate our value, and to understand the role of communications in the ever-changing business environment.

The second springs from an increasing focus on user experience as part of the design and development process. Communication is a critical element of this work, whether the focus is on technical documentation, Web sites, software interfaces, or wireless applications, to name just a few. As we look outwards, STC members have much to share with—and to learn from—those whose skills overlap with ours. Whatever our titles, our goals are often similar: a usable, useful, and effective information-based product.

Be part of STC's transformation and help make the 52nd Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, an event that can't be missed. For more details, visit www.stc.org/conference.asp.



STC Telephone Seminars

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TIME

All seminars are held from 1:00 - 2.30 pm US Eastern Time

UPCOMING SESSIONS

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Jan 12, 2005 Presenter: John Hedtke

[Preemptive Project Planning](#)

Jan 26, 2005 Presenter: Tom White

[A Pound of Salt, A Pint of Blood – Getting the Most Out of Your Contractors to Ensure Project Success](#)

Feb 2, 2005 Presenter: Ann Jennings

[Sentence Diagramming](#)

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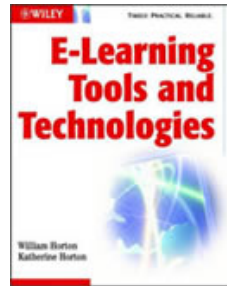
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BOOK REVIEWS

E-Learning Tools and Technologies

Reviewed by Tony Chu



William and Katherine Horton
Indianapolis, IN: Wiley Publishing,
2003

First Edition, 574 pages, softcover
ISBN: 0-471-44458-8

Cost: \$40

This book is exactly what its subtitle says: "A consumer's guide for trainers, teachers,

educators, and instructional designers." It's a great place to start if you're in the uncomfortable position of having to make decisions about implementing e-learning — especially if you're under pressure to get it right the first time and if you feel that you don't know enough about:

- the technology
- the available tools and vendors
- what to look for
- how to approach the project

COMPREHENSIVE EXPERT CONTENT

A great deal of experience and care has gone into the planning, organization, and execution of this book. William Horton, a well-known expert on online training and information strategies, created the ASTD e-learning series of books in 2001 and 2002. This new book is collaboration with Katherine Horton, the other half of "William Horton Consulting, Inc."

The Horton's walk their readers through e-learning and its many components. They explain basic terminology and cover the field in enormous breadth while trying to keep a reasonable limit on the depth. They cover all stages of the e-learning cycle: planning, creating, offering, and using. This is extremely practical information: the book is a one-stop kick-start for anyone entering the field. Throughout, the Horton's remind readers that the fundamental goal is good training—something that is easily forgotten in the race to use sexy technology.

CONTENT ORGANIZATION

The book begins with an overview and some level-setting background, and then examines the marketplace by separating tools into three categories:

- tools that access e-learning
- tools that offer e-learning
- tools that create e-learning

One chapter is devoted to each functional piece of the e-learning puzzle (media players, collaboration tools, learning management systems, course authoring tools, test generation/assessment tools, etc.). Each chapter covers:

- what the type of tool does
- how it works
- what products are available
- key features to look for and questions to ask
- next steps and related/alternative approaches

Although the product descriptions are not as detailed as a true "Consumer Reports" analysis (there's no table of side-by-side positive/negative comparisons among products), the Horton's do provide a brief description for each major product (key features, cost), and a list of other vendors to investigate.

In addition to the section and chapter structure, the book uses other techniques to help keep all the topics straight. Conceptual frameworks are used to explain where each type of tool fits into the overall picture. Screen captures from actual software are plentiful. (If you've ever wondered what a Learning Management System does or how it differs from a Learning Content Management System, it helps to see a bit of a guided tour!) Most importantly, the book is written in a clear and lucid style, with touches of humor. The occasional "rants" and editorial opinions are usually presented as sidebars, so as not to directly interfere with the facts.

CAVEATS

If I could change anything about the book, I would shorten some of the introductory chapters. Understandably, the authors assume minimal technical knowledge because they want to reach a heterogeneous audience. And I do buy their argument that you need to know basic concepts about networks and servers, not because you need to set them up, but because you need to dialogue with those who do, and be aware of the potential (or limitations) of what is already in place. On the other hand, I expect that most

readers don't really need a review of basic PC components or an explanation of what browsers do. This is only a minor comment, but you should be aware that the introductory material takes up about one fifth of the book.

How long the book's content will remain current is another minor concern, given the speed with which the e-learning landscape changes as technology evolves and new products emerge. The authors end their book by looking into the future and discussing trends, and their last sentence acknowledges that "this is only the first edition of this book." Fortunately, the book is also supported by a Web site, which is advertised to contain the latest information along with useful forms and spreadsheets.

CONCLUSION

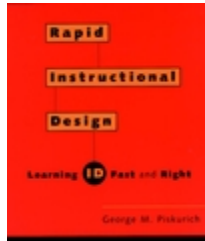
Organizations often struggle to use e-learning effectively. With so many options available, it's easy to over-analyze, become baffled, or make unsuccessful choices. E-Learning is by no means a panacea: you can spend lots of money and still produce bad training. You might buy a tool suite that constrains you to a single instructional model or theory. Or you might be avoiding e-learning altogether because it seems elusive and costly, with an unclear return on investment. In my case, I was looking for an expert overview that covered a lot of ground about the e-learning field, technology, and marketplace. If you're in the same boat, I highly recommend this book.



Tony Chu is a technical communicator with extensive experience as a corporate trainer, training manager, and consultant. He has designed and delivered training for both technical and non-technical topics. You can contact him at chuhouse@sympatico.ca.

Rapid Instructional Design: Learning ID Fast and Right

Reviewed by Mike Tillmans, PhD.



George M. Piskurich
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer,
2000
320 pages, softcover
ISBN: 0-7879-6051-9
Cost: \$40

Thirty years ago instructional design (ID) was simpler. You came from one of two schools of thought: media design or educational psychology. The fusion of these competing ideas over time gave us emphasis in training, project management, consulting skills and now human performance technology.

Dr. Piskurich's recent book is a good example of the media development and project management lines of thought, and will be very useful for trainers who need to understand, if not implement, a training development process. (For learning theory, you might wish to consult *Instructional Design* by Smith and Ragan or *The Conditions of Learning: Training Applications* by Gagne and Medsker.)

Given the needs of most training groups today, the book's message is very appealing: Get it done fast and get it done right! The author's method of delivering this advice is to encourage the use of practical checklists and technology to speed up the process.

The ID process is divided into six stages, and suggestions for speed and quality are provided for each. Dr. Piskurich's corresponding rules for good instructional design are:

1. **Preplanning:** Know that what you are going to do is important for your organization.
2. **Analysis:** Know that the content you are going to provide is what your trainees need to learn.
3. **Design:** Know that the way you plan to present the content is the most time-, cost-, and learning-effective way for your trainees and your organization.
4. **Development:** Know that the training materials and methods you are going to use in presenting the content to your trainees are the best ones for your training situation.
5. **Implementation:** Do it right!

6. **Evaluation:** Know that what you did was what your organization needed, and that it did some good.

The shortcuts Piskurich provides number near 50. Here are a few of the better examples he explains:

- Interviewing upper management to determine needs (but not specific needs)
- Deciding early if training is the solution to the performance problem
- Calculating training costs for ROI
- Using electronic bulletin boards in place of live focus groups
- Validating existing documented procedures, rather than writing your own
- Designing only for your majority audience and letting instructors individualize for their particular audience
- Using competency analysis for hiring decisions and employee development
- Replacing training with job aids
- Evaluating only what you need to evaluate

Piskurich recommends and provides checklists that instructional designers can use to assist them with each step of the design process. He also includes useful checklists that help designers:

- Identify the most effective method for delivering training (for example, instructor-led or self-instruction)
- Create document templates
- Select appropriate evaluation choices

Throughout the book, the author also refers to excellent resources that are practical and easily accessible for the reader who needs additional information about the topic discussed.

Rapid Instructional Design is recommended for any instructional designer who needs to work faster, whether beginner or experienced veteran. It is a practical look at how we work, and how we can be better.



Mike Tillmans has extensive project management, training development and process analysis experience in business and education. He currently teaches ID, KM and online design at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago. You can contact him at tillmans@iit.edu or visit his web site at www.iit.edu/~com535.

YOUR LETTERS

Were there articles that you found helpful? Is IDeAL: Design for Learning serving your needs? Is there an article or feature that you would like to see in the future?

Share your thoughts about the newsletter or give us your suggestions on how we can improve the newsletter by sending your letters to Williams.210@nd.edu.

There were no letters this edition. Your input is important, so please don't hesitate to send us your letters!

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

How do I contribute to the newsletter? How often is the newsletter published? What's the mission of the Instructional Design & Learning SIG? Find out this and more in this section!

About the Newsletter

IDeAL: Design for Learning is published for members of the Instructional Design and Learning (IDL) SIG of the Society for Technical Communication.

It is published three times a year in the spring (mid-March), summer (mid-July), and fall (mid-November). Article submission deadlines are: February 5, June 5, and October 5.

**Our next issue is due out in March 2005.
Article deadline is February 5, 2005.**

Visit www.stcsig.org/idl/newsletter.shtml for the complete edition and to access the newsletter archives.

Article & Contributing Guidelines

We encourage you to submit for consideration content of interest to those who do instructional design or wish to learn more about this field

CONTENT

Content should relate to instructional design and learning. This includes:

- Short tips or hints
- Book, software, or technology reviews
- Feature articles
- Member news

- IDL SIG & STC News
- Employment information
- Learning opportunities such as courses, conferences, workshops, or events

LENGTH

Articles can range from 25 words to approximately 1000 words. If your article is particularly lengthy, consider breaking it into smaller submissions (i.e., part 1, part 2, etc.) that we could publish in successive issues.

To assist in writing your article, here are just a few tips to keep in mind:

WRITING STYLE

- Write in a clear, informal style.
- Use the active voice.
- Avoid gender-specific language.
- Use jargon or acronyms sparingly. (Include definitions if you do use jargon or acronyms.)
- Use headings and subheadings effectively to guide the reader.
- Include reference citations or a bibliography at the end of each article documenting the sources quoted or used.

FORMATTING AND GRAPHICS

- Avoid underlining unless text is a hyperlink.
- Use bold-face to set headings and sub-headings apart.
- Submit graphics as a separate file. (Please include instructions as to where the graphic should appear.)

LEGAL AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Include a reprint permission statement, if article was previously published.
- Include a brief bio of yourself of up to 50 words.
- Verify that the item (book or software) is available for purchase when submitting a book or software review.
- Before submitting Technical Communication book reviews, indicate in which issue the review appeared e.g., published in the February 2003 issue of Technical Communication. (We cannot accept any reviews that have not yet been published in Technical Communication.)
- Verify that Web site links and resources (for example, PDF files) referenced in your article exist at the time you submit the article.

EDITORIAL LICENSE

The editorial staff reserves the right to edit a submission or break a submission into successive parts for publication where deemed necessary.

WHERE TO SUBMIT ARTICLE

Send your articles in electronic format (.doc, .rtf, .wpd, or body of email) to:

David Williams, Editor (williams.210@nd.edu)

You can also send articles to:

David Williams
1058 Portage Ave., #4
South Bend, IN 46616

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GIVE US FEEDBACK

Thanks for taking a moment to give us feedback!

- We want to ensure that the newsletter is serving your needs. If you have suggestions on how we can improve the newsletter, please send your suggestions to williams.210@nd.edu.
- We welcome letters to the editor, which we will share with readers in our newsletter. If you want to share your thoughts about the newsletter, please send your letter to the [Editor](#).

STC Mission

The mission of the Society of Technical Communication is to create and support a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.

IDL SIG Mission and Leadership

The mission of the IDL SIG is to help STC members identify and develop knowledge and practical skills for designing, developing, and implementing technical instruction in electronic and traditional classroom settings. The SIG strives to promote sound design practices, provide information, and educate about instructional theory and research.

The leadership team includes:

SIG Manager: [Jane Smith](#)
SIG Membership Manager: [Sylvia Miller](#)
Web Site Manager: [Matt Van Sickle](#)
Newsletter Editor: [David Williams](#)
Business Directory Coordinator: [Jackie Damrau](#)
Conference Committee Coordinator: [Karen Baranich](#)
Online Forum Coordinator: [Michele Didier](#)

[Participate in a Survey on Web-based Training](#)
Contribute to the body of knowledge about those who work with WBTL.

[The Complete Development Cycle](#)
Jack Butler shares with us his quick reference guide to developing instruction. You'll find this in the newly added [Tips and Hints](#) section.

[Member News](#)
Get to know some of your fellow IDL SIG Members and learn about their accomplishments. After all, isn't that what networking is all about? You'll find this and more in the newly added [Member News](#) section.

[E-Learning Tools & Technologies](#)
Tony Chu reviews William and Katherine Horton's comprehensive book on the subject.

[Implementing Online Learning: One Company's Experience](#)
Kim Lambdin embarks on a three-part series recounting her experiences implementing a self-paced online learning program.

Here are just a few things you'll find in this edition of *Ideal: Design for Learning*:



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