



# IDeal: Design for Learning

Newsletter of the Instructional Design & Learning SIG

<http://www.stcidlsig.org>

## SIG MANAGER'S THOUGHTS *by Jackie Damrau, SIG Manager*



Hello everyone!

Winter is about over! I can't wait for spring to arrive. For those of you who are in the snowier parts of the world, I'm sure you can't wait to see the snow go away and then see the

wonderful greenery and flora pop up around you. For those of us in the more desert-like areas, we are waiting for the sun and what little greenery we have to come so we can plan those outdoor activities.

Planning is the name here. Your SIG leadership team has started planning the rest of this year. Here's a bit of what we've been up to:

- **Programs Committee:** You'll shortly hear about, if you haven't seen already, the wonderful monthly Web seminars that your Programs committee has scheduled from February through May.
- **Conference Committee:** They'll begin shortly preparing for conference as more preliminary details are released. We do know that we'll have our annual progression session with a host of SIG members sharing their expertise with you. Jane Smith is moderating the Training Manual Evaluation session again, which you'll hear more about as well. Karen Baranich, our Conference Coordinator, will be seeking volunteers to help with the myriad tasks of conference from hosting at the Welcome Reception table

to mingling and attracting members to join our SIG to helping me plan for our SIG Business Meeting. Stay tuned for more information about the Philly conference.

- **Elections:** We will be starting up the elections committee. Anyone who has an interest in running for an elected position of Assistant SIG Manager or Treasurer, send email to [drgreece@windstream.net](mailto:drgreece@windstream.net).
- **Volunteer Positions Available:** We are looking for a Volunteers Manager to reach out and get more members involved in helping the leadership team continue providing you with services that you find of interest. We also have smaller roles open on these committees: Programs, Newsletter, Web, and Community Outreach. Send an email to [jdamrau3@airmail.net](mailto:jdamrau3@airmail.net) if you have an interest in serving as a volunteer. I'll definitely find a place for you and your talents.

So as you begin getting spring fever, think about the SIG. It takes contributions from you, our members, for us to know what to provide you with. Without your input, we can only strive to provide you with what "we" think you want. Make an investment by letting us know if we are or are not meeting your needs by emailing myself at [jdamrau3@airmail.net](mailto:jdamrau3@airmail.net); Karen Baranich, Assistant SIG Manager, at [kbaranich@scana.com](mailto:kbaranich@scana.com); or Jeanette Rogers ([treasurer@stcidlsig.org](mailto:treasurer@stcidlsig.org)).

Enjoy!

*Jackie*



by [Robert Hershenow](#)

Learning: that's what it's all about. The world's best learning event for technical communicators will be upon us before we

know it, and the excitement is building. The STC holds its 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Technical Communications Summit on June 1-4 in Philadelphia, and registration is open. Get a head start on page 16 where Karen Baranich writes about this year's IDL SIG Progression and we provide links to Conference-related Web sites.

Our feature article by Saul Carliner addresses planning, hosting, and evaluating meetings. Often meetings are the bane of corporate life, but they don't have to be. Saul shares his extensive experience on how to meet with style for success.

IDL SIG Programs Manager Nina Murdock has put together a great schedule of Web seminars. Read about them on pages 17 and 18, and sign up early!

Also in this issue: A discussion call review, SIG Member News, and the scoop on our SIG Scholarships for which we are now accepting applications.

Please enjoy this newsletter, and I hope to see you in Philadelphia!

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**Publication Policy**

We encourage letters, articles, book reviews, and other items for publication. Articles can include up to 1,000 words. Picture formats: JPGs, GIFs, PNGs; Text format: Word, RTF, or ASCII. Send items to Robert Hershenow at [newsletter@stcidlsig.org](mailto:newsletter@stcidlsig.org)

**Advertising Policy**

We encourage advertising as long as it follows the STC guidelines and promotes services to the Instructional Design & Learning SIG members. Ad sizes and rates are:

- Half page (7.5x4.5): \$75 (1 issue); \$225 (4 issues)
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SIG Newsletter Archives: <http://www.stcidlsig.org>

SIG E-mail List: Open to all members. For information click [here](#)

**SIG Mission Statement**

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.

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## FEATURE ARTICLE:

# How to Organize Educational Meetings for Community and Professional Organizations

By Saul Carliner, Fellow, Montreal Chapter

*Editor's note: This article was published in the November 2007 issue of Tieline, the STC leaders' newsletter. These tips were originally published in the STC Chapter Handbook.*

Successful meetings are the end result of a careful planning process. To successfully organize an educational meeting for a community or professional organization, you need to:

- Plan the meeting agenda
- Invite and coach the speaker(s)
- Reserve the meeting location and catering
- Prepare promotional materials for the meeting
- Confirm meeting arrangements
- Host the meeting
- Evaluate the meeting
- Write thank-you letters

The following sections provide insights into each of these steps.

## 1. Plan the Meeting Agenda

A typical meeting should include the following elements, shown in Figure 1:

**Networking.** The networking part of the meeting should give people an opportunity to meet and speak with one another. Longtime members often find one another and spend their time catching up. New members and guests generally feel left out of such moments. Some ways to facilitate networking are to:

*Figure 1. Key components of a monthly educational meeting.*

### Sample Meeting Agenda:

6:00 Open meeting with chapter business  
 6:05 Tip of the month  
 6:10 Icebreaker and dinner  
 7:00 Introduce speaker  
 7:02 Speaker begins  
 8:00 Hand out evaluations  
 8:03 Thank speaker  
 8:05 Announce next meeting and adjourn

- Begin with a brief discussion of chapter business and a Tip of the Month. A formal beginning gives leaders an opportunity to facilitate introductions instead of leaving people to make the lonelier (and often unsuccessful) effort to do so on their own. The Tip of the Month is presented by a chapter member and lasts no more than five minutes. It should be a how-to, with an example, and may also include a brief (one-page) handout. Before the meeting, ask a few members to serve as hosts.

- They should introduce themselves to new people, strike up a conversation, and introduce new people to others.
- Hold an icebreaker during the formal introduction to get people to network.
- Designate a networking person.

Some organizations include a meal as part of the networking session.

*Chapter business.* Limit chapter business to the most important topics and try to limit announcements to five minutes. Topics appropriate for chapter business include:

- Upcoming meetings
- Upcoming competition deadlines
- Upcoming special events, such as conferences and workshops
- Upcoming elections
- References to announcements in the newsletter
- Informational content

Informational content is the heart of the meeting and may include:

- *Introduction of the speaker.* The presenter should be the person on the program committee who planned the meeting.
- *Presentation and questions.* In most chapters, these last for about an hour.
- *Wrap-up,* which includes: (1) a meeting evaluation (ask participants to complete the evaluation forms), (2) a formal thank-you to the speaker (which might also include a gift), and (3) a reminder of the next meeting.

## 2. Invite and Coach the Speaker(s)

After choosing a meeting topic and format, invite a speaker who can address the topic competently. When you invite a speaker, remember to:

1. Identify the topic (and specific aspect of the topic) that you would like the speaker to address. (Although some program planners are sheepish about this, most speakers actually appreciate receiving such direction.)

2. State the date, time, and location of the meeting (if the location is already known).

3. State your expectations. Make sure that the speaker is aware that:

- The session should be interactive, with a limited lecture component (after a day of work, lecturing puts people to sleep).
- The presentation should cover information from a wide variety of sources, rather than just one company or project.
- The presentation should be tailored to the audience's needs. The best way to ensure this is by providing speakers with information on the background of the audience.
- STC does not permit selling from the podium.

4. Ask for a session description, bio, and brief outline. Ask speakers if they mind your feedback on these materials so that they might better tailor their presentation to the needs of members. Make sure you tell them when you need these materials.

5. Ask the speaker about audiovisual needs.

Afterwards, send a letter confirming the presentation and providing tips and techniques for success [See an example letter on pages 6 and 7].

### **3. Reserve the Meeting Location and Catering**

If your chapter does not have a regular meeting location, you need to find one. To find a meeting room, ask members if they can host meetings at their workplace. If not, find a restaurant with a private meeting room. Usually, a restaurant will expect you to have a meal in conjunction with a meeting. To defray the cost of meals, you will probably need to charge for meetings. Find out the payment policy of the restaurant—whether the restaurant will provide separate checks for each person or if you will be responsible for collecting and paying for each meal in full.

Your meeting location should have:

- Sufficient chairs to seat everyone who attends. Seating should not have obstructed views.
- Adequate audiovisual equipment (verify specific needs with the speaker). At a minimum, the location should have (1) a podium, (2) a microphone, and (3) a screen. Ideally, the location would also provide an LCD projector. Corporate facilities usually do but public facilities either do not have one or charge for rental.

(Note: some chapters have access to their own audiovisual equipment and you need to make sure that someone is definitely going to bring the equipment to each meeting.)

If your chapter provides meals or snacks with its meetings, you will also need to arrange for catering. Make sure that catering is provided within the budget you have established. (Believe it or not, the local grocery store often provides food at extremely reasonable rates.)

### **4. Prepare Promotional Materials for the Meeting**

Meetings must be publicized a minimum of sixty days in advance. Use a standard format to announce meetings and send these announcements to your chapter's newsletter editor, webmaster, and public relations manager. The newsletter editor and webmaster publish the information for STC members. The public relations manager sends the information to local newspapers and magazines (important for drawing nonmembers).

A meeting announcement should provide the following information:

- Title
- Speaker
- Date
- Location
- Meeting fees
- Name and number to contact for more information

### Example of a Confirmation Letter Sent to a Speaker

March 1, 2007  
Michael Williams  
Any Corporation  
P. O. Box 44  
Atlanta, Georgia 30000

Dear Michael:

Thank you for accepting the invitation to speak on CD-ROM printing for large service documentation libraries at the June 2007 meeting of the Atlanta chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC). Your session is scheduled:

Monday, June 4  
6:00 PM  
Dun and Bradstreet Software Building

To guide you in preparing the presentation, I have attached a quick fact sheet about STC/Atlanta members and their preferences for conference presentations. To give you an overview of the conference, I have also included a list of other presentations on the program.

To help me better understand what you plan to present, would you please send me a brief outline of the presentation, a 75-word description, and a 75-word bio about you by March 19? The information is needed for publicity materials that are scheduled for mailing in the next couple of weeks. I can also provide feedback on the outline to make sure it meets the needs of STC/Atlanta members.

To help you prepare your presentation, I have included a list of tips.

As a speaker, you are our guest for the meeting. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me. I would be glad to review your session outlines, visuals, and handouts to let you know how the audience might react to them.

Thanks, again, Michael, for accepting the invitation. I look forward to working with you.

Best regards,

Lilly Harper, Program Manager  
STC/Atlanta

### Example: page 1 of a Confirmation Letter

**The Organization to Whom You're Speaking****About the Society for Technical Communication**

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is the world's largest professional organization for people involved in communicating technical information. This includes technical writers, editors, and illustrators and their managers as well as consultants, researchers, educators, and students in the field. The Society promotes the profession through its chapters, publications, meetings, conferences, competitions, and research programs.

**About STC Meetings**

Our meetings focus on current developments in technical communication and related fields through interactive, workshop-like sessions and lively panel discussions. Our monthly meetings are more like a training course than an academic conference. Please prepare instructional and informational materials; do not prepare a formal paper.

**Membership Job Profiles**

Nearly all working members have some responsibility for developing one or more of these types of publications: user documentation (the overwhelming majority of work in this field), policies and procedures, proposals, marketing collateral, training materials (usually self-study), and scientific reports. Most of the members are writers, although several are team leaders and managers.

Many members will work on one project for several months, although others work on several smaller projects simultaneously. They are increasingly writing online documents, but printed documents are still a large business and many members have not yet written online information. Atlanta members tend to work for high tech firms, although some members work in academia.

About 1/4 of our local members are independent contractors. Typical employers include Unisys, IBM, Hayes, DCA, Southern Bell, and Lanier. Employment is growing in environmental firms, although that still represents a small part of our work. The conference also attracts STC members from Alabama, Tennessee, and the Carolinas.

Another group of members is students who are trying to break into the field. Southern Tech has a large master's program in the field, with 80 students. Mercer University at Macon also started a program recently. These students tend to be in their 30s. Some are attending school to change professions, others attend for "certification" for their current jobs. (No official certification of technical communicators exists.)

**Preferred Presentation Formats**

Practical—Members prefer information they can immediately apply on the job. Members do appreciate well-researched and cited information, but practicality is the overriding concern.

Interactive—Should be about 1/3 to 1/2 lecture, 1/3 to 1/2 hands-on exercises to practice the skills presented in the workshop.

Mixed level—Members like intermediate and advanced presentations. However, the actual experience level of your audience varies widely, so do include basic information. Label it as such and tell your audience that you are providing it because of the varying levels of experience and it can be a refresher for more experienced members.

Coordinated handouts and visuals—these are most successful when they are not exact duplicates of one another (in other words, the handouts are not necessarily an exact copy of the visuals but rather, coordinate with them).

Mail the announcement to:

- Chapter newsletters (your own and of chapters within easy driving distance)
- Local business papers
- Newsletters of related societies (such as the Association for Computing Machinery, ACM; American Society for Training and Development, ASTD; Council of Biology Editors, CBE; Canadian Society for Training and Development, CSTD; Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, IEEE; International Society for Performance Improvement, ISPI; and Usability Professionals' Association, UPA).

Figure 2 shows an example of a meeting announcement.

## 5. Confirm Meeting Arrangements

About four to six weeks before the scheduled meeting and, again, two weeks before the meeting, confirm the following arrangements by telephone:

- Speaker
- Room
- Catering arrangements

## 6. Host the Meeting

As the host of the meeting, you are responsible for:

- Providing signs directing visitors from the entrance of the building to the meeting room, especially if the meeting room is not visible when people enter.
- Making sure someone is at the entrance to the meeting room to greet people, sign in members, and collect money (if needed). Make sure you have a sign-in sheet. This

*Figure 2. Example of a meeting announcement.*

### **Society for Technical Communication Schedules a Contractors and Consultants Roundtable**

**What?** The issues abound:

- Techniques for marketing independent practices
- How tax laws affect independents
- Ethical issues independents face
- Business trends affecting independents in the years ahead
- Business planning for independents

Explore the answers to these and related sessions in a special Progression on contracting and consulting. Each table is facilitated by an experienced independent consultant, including some from outside our field.

**When?**

April 9, 2007  
6:00–9:00 PM

**Where?**

Hilton Inn and Towers  
2334 Smith Avenue

Take I-8855 to the Smith Avenue exit (exit 10). At the end of the exit ramp, go west approximately 1/2 mile to Smith Avenue. The Hilton will be immediately to your left.

**For More Information**

Call Lyndsey Chin, Program Manager, at +1 404-555-9987.

not only lets you know which members attended, but can provide a means of keeping in touch with nonmembers. Provide a space for nonmembers (that is—potential new members) to record their address and telephone numbers so that the chapter membership manager can follow up with them (often, this manager is also responsible for greeting people).

If someone is collecting money, you need to provide him or her with a money-box and receipt forms (often, the chapter treasurer assumes this responsibility).

- Meeting the speaker and introducing him or her to the audience.
- Arranging for and presenting a gift to the speaker (usually an item that shows the community's appreciation for the presentation, such as a coffee mug, T-shirt, or gift certificate to a bookstore).
- Collecting meeting evaluations.

### **7. Evaluate the Meeting**

After the presentation and before people leave, ask participants to complete a meeting evaluation. Meeting evaluations explore the following issues:

- Relevance of the topic
- Quality of the speaker
- Value of the meeting
- Effectiveness of meeting location
- Satisfaction with catering

The evaluation helps you determine the audience reaction to the meeting. Use this information to determine how well you are meeting members' needs, how you might better meet their needs in the future, and whether to use this speaker and topic again.

Tally the results of the survey and provide them to the chapter administrative council and the speaker. If the responses are negative, you might consider providing any helpful feedback to the speaker.

Also, keep a yearlong tally so that you can see which aspects of your meetings are successful and which ones need work. In the following year, the program committee can work on improving those areas that received poor evaluations from members.

See an example of a meeting evaluation form on page 11.

### **8. Write Thank-you Letters**

Within ten working days of the meeting, write a thank-you note to the speaker. Do so in addition to providing a speaker gift. The note should be personal, mentioning something unique about the presentation. The thank-you note should also include the evaluations.

In addition, write a thank-you note to the volunteers who contributed to the meeting behind the scenes, such as the committee member who greeted people at the door or a volunteer who helped to organize the room.

Last, if you use a donated facility (such as the meeting room in a company), make sure that you write a thank-you note to the organization that donated the meeting space.

Why should you write these thank-you notes?

Thank you are two of the rarest words volunteers and room donors hear—and among the words they want to hear the most. A thank-you note tells people that their work was appreciated and that they made a difference to the organization—and is the only “pay” volunteers and room donors receive for their efforts. But how often do we let

an implied thank you do the job of a formal one? Unfortunately, volunteers and room donors are not mind readers; they don't always know when we appreciate their work. Without a formal thank you, many speakers feel their work is unappreciated and unnoticed.

A thank-you note should be personal, indicating that you really noticed the speaker's work. Consider the following points when writing:

- *Avoid form letters.* While better than no thank you at all, a form letter—especially one created with mail merge—says that you are too busy to notice individual contributions. Those individual contributions are what volunteers want to be noticed for (and in this case, you only have a few people to thank anyway).
- *Be specific.* Mention something that would only apply to the person, such as a point made in her presentation or something you appreciated about working with her. For example, if you are writing a thank-you letter to a speaker, mention more than just the ratings that members gave on their meeting evaluation forms. You might mention something that you appreciated about working with her or something specific you learned in the presentation.

*Figure 3. Example of a thank-you note.*

April 12, 2007

Joel Gendelman, Senior Partner

Future Technologies

7606 Pomelo Drive, Suite 100

Forest Hills, CA 91304

Dear Joel,

"Good session." "Good info." "Do it again."  
"Practical, real life." "Excellent. Thanks." The participants in the Contractors and Consultants Roundtable at the April 9 Society for Technical Communication meeting say it all! But I thought I'd add my compliments and thanks to theirs.

I appreciated your presenting a roundtable on marketing a consulting practice at the session. Observing the interaction among participants and the overall comments, your presentation was outstanding.

The best compliment that I heard about the session was word of mouth; the next day at work, someone was asking about some aspect of contracting. Another participant replied, "You should have gone to the Contractors and Consultants Roundtable."

Thanks, again, for your hard work on this session and congratulations on a job well done.

Best regards,

Lyndsey Chin

Program Manager

*[Saul Carliner](#) is an internationally known expert on e-learning, information design, and technical communication.*

## Sample Feedback Form

### Please Provide Your Feedback

#### Qualitative Feedback

In one word, describe this presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the most valuable thing you learned in this presentation?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Least valuable? \_\_\_\_\_

The best thing about this presentation was: \_\_\_\_\_

If you were to change one thing about this presentation, it would be:  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Quantitative Feedback

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), please evaluate the following:

1. Your knowledge of the subject before this presentation

1 2 3 4 5

2. After

1 2 3 4 5

3. Applicability of this presentation to your job

1 2 3 4 5

4. How likely you are to use this information on the job

1 2 3 4 5

5. Overall value of this presentation

1 2 3 4 5

6. Convenience of the meeting facilities

1 2 3 4 5

7. Conduciveness of the facilities to a meeting

1 2 3 4 5

8. Food

1 2 3 4 5

#### Demographics

How did you hear about this meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you an STC member? Yes/No

How many years have you been working in the field? \_\_\_\_\_

## Discussion Call Review

### 'Ware in the World

*By William Huscher*

The Ware in the World Web seminar was aimed towards training professionals who are tasked with maintaining and/or managing training environments, and who also might be inundated with both hardware and software issues.

Developing, maintaining, and working with training environments is often a daunting task for just about any organization no matter the size or industry. But what if your company is making great strides quarter by quarter, year by year? Will training goals follow suit? Is the technology you are using nimble enough to keep up with the changes? Rob Brown touched on this very subject.

Using Virtual Environments to develop and deploy training was the topic of discussion on November 30th's Web seminar. Rob Brown, the principal of RDB Consulting, held an interactive discussion on what virtual training environments look like and also provided advise on performance support solutions for rapidly emerging, technology driven companies. "A virtual training environment should be configured only once", says Brown. Naturally, it all boiled down to improving course reliability, saving on costs and reducing setup time.

Brown founded RDB Consulting in 2001 to focus on developing product training and communications solutions for technology-driven companies. Several years as a journalist honed his reporting and writing skills and led to a successful career in training and communications for large high-tech and engineering companies. Before founding RDB Consulting, Rob was an Accenture Consultant in their Change Management practice for more than four years.

## We'd Like Your Input!

### Thought Leader Interviews

From time to time we publish interviews with leaders and innovators in the field of Instructional Design, and we invite these people based on input from our membership. Who would you like to hear from? Let us know.

### Articles

Most of our articles are written by members... why not you? One of the best things about our SIG community is that we can all benefit from each other's experience.

### Tips and Hints

There's more than one way to do just about anything, and maybe your way is the next big thing. Or maybe it's just better than my way. Got a favorite process that saves you time every day? Why not share it?

### Letters to the Editor

How do you like the IDeaL newsletter? How could we make it better? Was there an article or feature you enjoyed (or didn't)? Tell us about it!

Send your comments, requests, or opinions to [newsletter@stcidlsig.org](mailto:newsletter@stcidlsig.org).

## STC Mission

The Society for Technical Communication advances the theory and practice of technical communication across all user abilities and media.



**Welcome to our new members** who joined us over the past few months. You'll find the list of new members on page 19 of this

newsletter. We hope to be reading about you in this column very soon!

Send your news to Kim Rosenlof and Katherine Baboulis, our Membership managers, at [membership@stcidlsig.org](mailto:membership@stcidlsig.org)

**Wanda L. Worley**, Ph.D., Associate Chair, Department of Design & Communication Technology for the Purdue School of Engineering and Technology, co-authored a new textbook currently available for use by other programs. *Technical Writing: The Fundamentals* by Wanda L. Worley & Rebecca Fitterling, was published in late 2007 by Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

**Sherry Shadday**, a full-time courseware developer and editor for Southwest Research Institute in Layton, Utah, graduated on December 14, 2007 from Utah State University with a Master of Science in English with emphasis on Professional and Technical Communication. Her final grade point average was 3.97.

**Kelly Norton**, a technical writer/process designer for the Biomedical division of the American Red Cross, graduated in December 2007 from North Carolina State University with a Master of Education in Training and Development.

**Kim Lambdin Hosler**, a senior member of the Rocky Mountain chapter, has been accepted into the Educational Technology doctoral program at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in Greeley, Colorado. In her second semester at UNC, Kim says her dissertation will focus on "researching some aspect of the

relationships between technical communication and instructional design." Besides being a full-time student, Kim continues teaching part time at the University of Denver's University College and the Metropolitan State College of Denver. Kim invites you to contact her about her research at: [kasran@comcast.net](mailto:kasran@comcast.net)

**James J. Goldsmith**, a Capability Development Solution Planner for Accenture in St. Charles, Illinois, was recently promoted to Senior Manager for Accenture's Capability Development group. Jim works with technical communicators and instructional designers on numerous development projects covering a wide range of topics and in many formats. In his new role, Jim supervises a team of five managers who have daily oversight of these projects. This promotion caps Jim's 11-year career at Accenture in which he has served in a variety of training and development roles.

**Bill Collins**, an STC member for nearly 15 years has been notified by the STC Associate Fellows committee that he will be named as an Associate Fellow at the upcoming STC Conference in Philadelphia. A Communication Specialist for DuPont's IT group, Bill is a member of STC's Philadelphia Metro Chapter, and was one-time manager of STC's Indexing SIG (when there was such a thing). He is also a copy editor for *IDeaL: Design For Learning*. Congratulations, Bill!

IDL SIG Manager **Jackie Damrau** completed her certification for AIIM Information Organization & Access Practitioner. The IOP program covers concepts and technologies for enterprise search, content inventory and classification, categorization and clustering, fact and entity extraction, taxonomy creation and management, information presentation, and information governance.

## Scholarship News

### IDL SIG Scholarship Offering

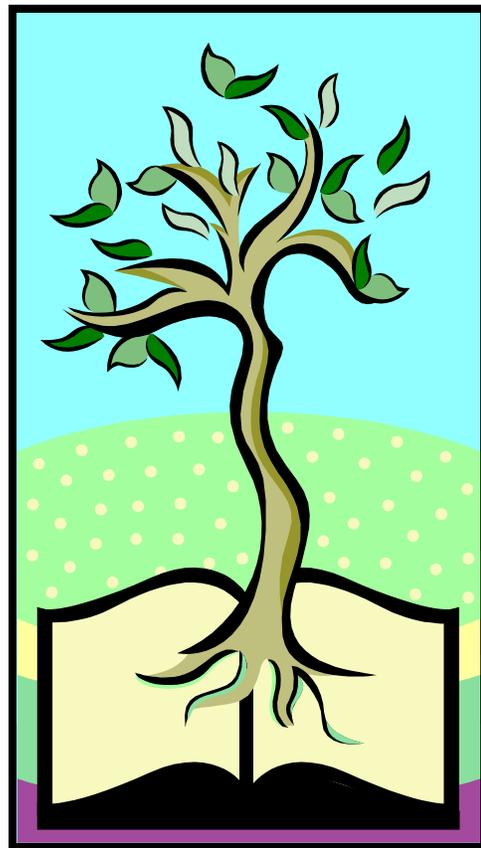
For the third consecutive year, the IDL SIG is offering a scholarship—two, in fact: one undergraduate and one graduate. These scholarships were created to assist students who are pursuing an undergraduate degree, graduate degree, or certificate in the area of Instructional Design. Students applying for this scholarship are expected to be able to demonstrate their focus on topics related to Instructional Design through their academic studies, current jobs, graduate or certification program, or special projects.

The IDL SIG scholarship awards are \$500 each (undergraduate and graduate) and are wholly funded by the IDL SIG. The award may be used for registration fees, books, or attendance at the STC annual conference in Philadelphia, PA. Applicants who choose to use the scholarship to attend the STC conference will have the opportunity to present their work to Instructional Designers.

The IDL SIG Scholarship Committee evaluates applicants' academic records and potential for contributing to the Instructional Design profession. To be eligible for a scholarship, you must be:

- Enrolled in a graduate degree, undergraduate degree, or certification program in the Instructional Design field.
- Pursuing a career as an Instructional Designer.

The IDL SIG is now accepting applications for the 2008 scholarships. To learn more about the requirements and download the application form, go to <http://www.stcidlsig.org> and click on *Scholarships*. The deadline for submission is March 21, 2008. Winners will be notified in early April 2008. All winners and honorable mentions will be published in the IDL SIG quarterly newsletter. Please direct questions to Ginnifer Mastarone at [gmasta2@uic.edu](mailto:gmasta2@uic.edu) or Sylvia Miller at [sylviaamiller@woh.rr.com](mailto:sylviaamiller@woh.rr.com).





*By Cynthia  
Silversides*

News from our Manager, Jackie Damrau: Community Achievement Awards are on target for this year. Current leadership team members have been asked about their intentions for serving another year. Our SIG members are welcome to contact Jackie about opportunities to join the team or shadow elected positions: [jdamrau3@airmail.net](mailto:jdamrau3@airmail.net).

Volunteers are needed for the STC 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Technical Communication Summit in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania this June. Contact Karen if you are interested in this excellent opportunity to get involved! [kbaranich@scana.com](mailto:kbaranich@scana.com). [See the next page for more on the Philadelphia Conference, including the IDL SIG's progression on Innovative Instructional Design Practices.]

The Treasurer's Report shows our current balance is approximately \$9,133.00, as of January, 2008. Also reported, income from our November discussion call is \$153.00, and income from our October Web seminar is \$634.00. If you have questions about this report, send an email to Jeanette Rogers: [treasurer@stcidlsig.org](mailto:treasurer@stcidlsig.org).

iMIS, the new membership database, is now online. Direct any Membership questions to Kim / Katherine: [membership@stcidlsig.org](mailto:membership@stcidlsig.org).

A SIG survey is being developed which we will post to our Web site in early March, 2008. If you have any input for our surveys, contact Ann Gordon: <mailto:programs@stcidlsig.org>.

Program development for Web seminars and Discussion Calls for the next four months are underway. Visit our Web site, [www.stcidlsig.org](http://www.stcidlsig.org), for program information. Or email Nina Murdock: [programs@stcidlsig.org](mailto:programs@stcidlsig.org).

Newsletter Articles Wanted! Contact Robert Hershenow about submissions: [newsletter@stcidlsig.org](mailto:newsletter@stcidlsig.org).

The IDL administrative team has approved two scholarships in the amount of \$500.00 each for this year: one for a graduate student and the other for an undergraduate student. Our goal next year is to increase both scholarships to \$1000.00 each. Sylvia has been busy recruiting scholarship judges. For additional scholarship information, send an email to Sylvia Miller / Ginnifer Mastarone: [scholarships@stcidlsig.org](mailto:scholarships@stcidlsig.org).

Check-out our Web site periodically for SIG news and information on our conference in Philly! Web site information, email Chris Emanuelli: [webmaster@stcidlsig.org](mailto:webmaster@stcidlsig.org).

Your ideas and involvement are always welcome! Drop us a line:

Jackie Damrau, SIG Manager:  
[manager@stcidlsig.org](mailto:manager@stcidlsig.org)

Karen Baranich, Asst. SIG Manager:  
[kbaranich@scana.com](mailto:kbaranich@scana.com)



*The 55<sup>th</sup> Technical Communication Summit will be held June 1-4, 2008 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Opportunities include certificate programs, education sessions, keynote speakers and the best networking of the year. Early registration discounts apply until March 17; register or find out more on the [STC web site](#).*

*Tom Barnett, Manager of the STC Illustrators and Visual Designers SIG, has put together another great [site](http://stc-annex.com/travel/philadelphia.htm) (<http://stc-annex.com/travel/philadelphia.htm>) with information about Philadelphia and the conference.*

### Join the IDL SIG in Philadelphia!

*Summit – 1. The highest point, apex, peak. 2. The highest degree of status or achievement. 3. The highest level of officials.*

Join old and new friends at the 2008 STC Technical Communication Summit in Philadelphia, PA, on June 1-4. Then, plan to connect with other IDL SIG members at one or more of the planned events.

I'm excited about the topics on our progression. Our theme this year is *Innovative Instructional Design Practices*. The Instructional Design & Learning SIG brings the experiences of its members to you by providing a progression that hits the heights of the latest topics in innovative instructional design. Would you like a preview of the session highlights? Here are a few.

- Learn how to develop movies to view on mobile devices
- Identify different parts of a person's behavior, and questions you can use within your company to analyze needs
- Learn four steps to measure quality in online training
- Learn how to build training following the CMMI methodology
- Learn how to build training sessions for podcast delivery
- Observe how Oracle UPK fits into the assessment framework

Also plan to submit your training documents for review during the SIG-sponsored evaluation session. If you paid a consultant to review your materials, the cost would be hundreds of dollars, but the SIG offers this service free at the conference. Sometimes you get what you pay for – but not this time – we offer great value at no cost. The number of submissions doubles every year, and participants find the discussions lively and helpful.

Other SIG events at the conference are still in the planning phase. Look for more information in our next newsletter. Please contact me if you would like further information or if you would be available to help with any events.

Karen Baranich  
[kbaranich@scana.com](mailto:kbaranich@scana.com)



## IDL SIG Live Web Seminar

COOL TOOLS FOR TECH.WRITERS, \$100 OR LESS!

Technical Communicators produce more than just content for manuals and electronic media. They often are required to create and edit graphics, develop wikis, and manage knowledge bases, source controlled material, and set up backup and bug tracking systems. So, as drivers of these tools, you are almost always directly involved with the decision process.

**TIP!** Don't just purchase the latest version, or the flashiest tool, or even the most expensive!

Searching for the right tool for your profession (or organization) can get complicated by the version, not just by price or brand. For instance, there are a number of factors to consider: the functionality (flexibility) of the tool(s), the price, the reputation of the vendor (customer service), the level of users' sophistication and integration with existing systems are all key factors. But sifting through all these factors can be a burden to the bottom line.

Whether you're a novice or seasoned technical communicator, you will want to know what's best for you at the best price. Nicky Bleiel will discuss and demonstrate a number of low-cost (and free!) tools that you can employ and implement as a best business practice.

Some of the topics she'll discuss include:

- Graphic / screen capture creation and editing
- Icon creation and editing
- Building a wiki/knowledge management system
- Create special font characters

- Creating text-to-speech audio files for use in demonstration files
- Automated file backup
- Podcasting
- Source control
- Bug tracking

Nicky Bleiel is a Senior Information Developer at ComponentOne, the premier provider of the widest range of tools and solutions for Microsoft® Windows, Web-based, and Mobile application developers, Help authors who write and develop Help systems, and support centers who use Web and e-mail self-service solutions. She has been a Technical Communicator for more than twelve years with experience writing software products for the media sales, industrial automation, simulation, and pharmacy industries. She has also been a speaker / presenter at various STC events on the International, local, and regional levels.

Bleiel has served in various high-level posts at STC, and is currently a Director-At-Large.

**NOTE:** A handout with Web links will be provided for session attendees.

Web Seminar Details:

Panelist: Nicky Bleiel

Date: **Thursday, February 28th**

Start Time: 11:00 am (Eastern)  
8:00 am (Pacific)

Duration: 90 minutes

Cost: \$65 SIG member (**code: f4t6y3d3**);  
\$75 non-SIG member (PayPal only)

Registration: Go to:

<http://www.stcidlsig.org>

## 2008 STC IDL SIG

### Web Seminar Schedule

Programs Manager Nina Murdock has lined up an impressive series of Web seminars for the next few months:

#### **February**

Nicky Bleiel, ComponentOne -  
'Cool Tools for Under \$100'  
(see the previous page)

#### **March**

RJ Jacquez, Adobe -  
Title TBD - "About Captivate"

#### **April**

Neil Perlin, Hyper/Word Services -  
Title TBD - "Advanced applications for  
Captivate and other movie-related  
tools"

#### **May**

Michael Harvey, SAS Institute - 'Don't  
Let Your Work Become a Commodity'  
(catered for our instructional design  
and e-Learning audience)

Register on the [IDL SIG Web site](#).

More seminars are in the works! We'll  
provide more information as it becomes  
available, so check the Web site and  
keep an eye on your inbox.

### The STC Academic Database

To assist those interested in pursuing a  
career in technical communication, STC  
provides a database of academic  
programs worldwide:

<http://stc.org/edu/academicDatabase01.asp>



### Intercom Online

The February issue of Intercom features two articles of direct interest to Instructional Designers: *Building Quality into Online Training* by Susan Codone and *Keep Your Course on Target* by Saul Carliner. Also addressed are localization, structured FrameMaker, making the most of meetings, and more. Read it [here](#).



## New STC IDL SIG Members – September, October, November, December 2007

Jennifer	Accovelli	June	Fish	Scott	Lindstrom	David	Reamer
Megan	Allen	Karla	Gabel	Brona	Little	Beverly	Reynolds
Stephanie	Allyn	Mike	Gerber	Anne	Livesey-Husak	Daniel	Riechers
Gabriele	Amersbach	Cassandra	Graybeal	Giles	Loftin	Patrick	Roebuck
Anita	Ammaiappan	Suzanne	Greenberg	Katie	Lucas	Bridget	Ruetenik
Margaret	Andersen	Mindi	Hamilton-Novasio	Yvette	Maddox	Lech	Rzedzicki
Danielle	Archibald	Brenda	Harakas	Garet	Marling	Stephanie	Sanford
Liliana	Arnillas	Cynthia	Harmon	Patti	McCarthy	Heather	Sanguins
Thomas	Ates	Derek	Harmon	Robert	Moore	Fran	Scher
Susan	Beelman	Elizabeth	Holena	Eileen	Morrow	Roland	Schmeling
Shira	Behiri	Sharon	Humphrey	Steven	Moser	Thomas	Schroeder
Shira	Bettinger	Freda	Husic	Omar	Muhammad	Lydias	Shuster
Jennifer	Bitticks	Ann-Marie	Jackson	Shannon	Murphy	David	Slovak
Doug	Bolin	Laura	Jaffrey	Hannah	Murrow	Strom	Snyder
Steve	Chorny	Maria	Jahn	Melanie	Nance	James	Stewart
J	Christensen	Mike	Jasper	Rod	Nowakowski	Katarzyna	Talecka
Gayle	Conley	Darin	Jensen	Rebecca	O'Connell	Ruidi	Tan
April	Cooper	Carol	John	Joseph	Osborne	George	Thompson
Katherine	Craft	Bonnie	Jones	Shalini	Pallat	Viviane	Trubey
Sue	Deering	Mary	Jones	Jerrie	Paniri	Carol	Van Kirk
Christine	Delaney	Elaine	Jordan	Janice	Parker	Dorothea	White
R.	Donato	Isao	Kato	Sherry	Pebworth	Alexis	Williams
Chad	Driesbach	Carrie	King	Tracy	Pham	Katie	Wilson
Judy	Edmonds	Ghita	Langstedt	Lina	Piao	Harrison	Withers
Molly	Eichar	Mark	Lattery	Sudakshina	Piercy	David	Wright
Julie	Elander	Michele	Lee	Sonja	Powell	Zareen	Zaffar
Randal	Ellwood	Yina	Li	Pat	Provinske	Martin	Zumholz
Eric	Falkjar	Elizabeth	Lind	Sharon	Quarterman		