



Instructional Design & Learning

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SIG Manager's Thoughts

by Jane L. Smith

Ahhh! The integrated brain of the technical instructional designer! Some of you may be asking right now, "And what does she mean by that?" Let me illustrate with a bit of personal information.

When I was a kid, I loved to teach in my garage, but I mostly taught Math, rarely English or Spelling or Reading. All the way through school and into high school, I excelled in Math. As a child, I was also very logical and organized, most frequently coming out of my left brain and functioning quite well in the world of analysis and rationality.

When I was 16, however, I was an exchange student to the Netherlands. I came back a different person after learning about another history, another language, another culture, another family, and another very different way of living. My senior year, I barely tolerated the first semester of math and quickly dropped it the second semester to take Cultural Anthropology. I had begun to make decisions and operate more by feel and by what I now know as intuition. I was starting to use the right side of my brain.

Over the course of my life, I've alternately worked out of one or the other sides of my brain. Today I recognize, however, that I regularly work out of both sides of my brain as a matter of course. Sometimes I question whether a conclusion I've come to is based on logic or on a feeling or knowing I have. Mostly, I know it doesn't matter. All that matters is that I'm open to information that comes to me from all directions.

Regardless of how we get there, if we are to be truly effective instructional designers in the technical fields, we must utilize our left-brain to analyze and make sense of the technical content while simultaneously accessing our right brain to tap into our audience and how to effectively and creatively teach that same information. In reality, the bridge between our audience and the technical information is their jobs and the businesses in which they work. If we engage our curiosity about how someone will use the information on their job, we can then integrate our feelings about the people and their jobs with the technical aspects.

As we learn about more businesses and more jobs, we can more readily blend our intuition and our technical knowledge to write more appropriately for our audience, creating more accurate, effective, and engaging business scenarios that truly reach our learners. As we become more comfortable with the integration of our creative and our logical technical sides, we also have more fun as we design and write. That fun and that whole-brained approach come through in our training to help our learners also become more effective on the job and perhaps more whole-brained, too.

How lucky we are when we utilize an integrated brain. It serves us so well!

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A Word from the Editor

by Dave Williams, Newsletter Editor

First of all, I want to thank the Newsletter staff for making my job extremely easy. Whenever it came time to publish the newsletter, copy edit, proofread, offer ideas to improve, they were THE BEST!

As you may be guessing, it is with great sadness that I must leave my position with the IDL SIG as the Newsletter Editor. Honestly, it was my first time as an Editor, so you can imagine I learned quite a bit from all of you. Thanks for sharing your expertise and making my job so easy.

I know that whomever Jane finds to replace me will do an excellent job in providing a quality newsletter that meets the needs of the SIG membership. I'll still be lurking in the background as a SIG member and will offer my support in smaller volunteer efforts as time permits.

You've all been extremely professional, skilled, and dedicated, and I want to thank you for that. And if any of you are interested in taking over the reigns, please contact Jane Smith at jemcomm@sedona.net.

Joy in the learning!
Dave

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eLearning & Content Management: One Can Help the Other

by Bret Freeman

If your organization is thinking about implementing an eLearning initiative and you already have a content management system, you might be surprised by how well the two can complement each other.

eLearning programs are designed to deliver quality learning materials to employees, customers, suppliers, and partners, with the goal of reducing training time while increasing learner development and productivity.

A key component of eLearning is the learning object. A learning object is a "chunk" of instructional material, typically made up of three components:

- A performance goal;
- The necessary learning content to reach that goal (such as text, video, illustrations, presentations, demos, task simulation, etc.); and
- Some form of evaluation to measure whether or not the goal was achieved.

One of the major challenges of eLearning is figuring out how to organize large amounts of content (usually in the form of learning objects), how to keep it updated, and how to deliver it in multiple ways. For example, say you have a new protocol to communicate to your organization. You'll probably need to communicate that information through a presentation, an online reference manual, and maybe an employee memo. How do you share that learning object with all of the necessary tools? The "Shareable Courseware Object Reference Model," or SCORM as most people refer to it, was created as a standard to enable the sharing and reuse of learning objects across channels. SCORM is the XML aspect of eLearning; it allows sharing and reuse across tools.

This is where your content management system will come in handy. Single-source, XML compliant content management systems are especially well suited for helping with eLearning for four reasons. First, because single-source content management systems store information in "chunks", they are ideal for working with learning objects. Granularity is particularly important for eLearning. Developers need to be able to reuse and organize learning objects to create new training materials, and that can be difficult if the learning objects are not stored in a useful way (i.e. if the chunks of information are too big).

Second, content management systems that are XML-aware can help eLearning developers by making it easy to deliver content in multiple formats. Single-source content management systems allow users to store content as a single instance and then deliver it to any media as needed, including PowerPoint, training templates, Web sites, etc. If you would attempt to do this without a single-source content management system, you would end up with multiple versions of each learning object, which would be difficult to manage and risk inaccuracies in your content. A single-source system allows you to work in multiple formats without duplicating your efforts.

Third, good content management systems typically have robust automated workflow capabilities. The workflow can be set up so that when manufacturing develops the technical specs for a new product, the system automatically sends the eLearning department an email to let them know that they need to start producing new training materials. When the writers have created new text for a lesson, the system can also automatically send it to their editors letting them know it is ready for review. Automated workflow can greatly speed up the process of creating new content and ensure that no review and approval step is missed in the process.

Finally, the most compelling way that a single-source content management system can help with eLearning is through enterprise-wide content reuse. Because the system stores all content one time in a centralized repository, an eLearning developer can access content that is created by any part of the enterprise. Examples might include technical information from product developers, marketing materials, previously created training materials – any content that is created within the enterprise and stored in the repository of the content management system. This capability truly puts the full wealth of your organization's information at your eLearning developers' fingertips. Without a content management system, it would be virtually impossible to truly take advantage of all of the information that exists across an entire enterprise.

Whether or not a content management system will meet all of your eLearning needs depends on the size of your initiative. There are two other types of eLearning solutions on the market that may or may not be applicable to your situation. The first is a learning management system. A learning management system is a strategic solution for planning, delivering, and managing all the learning events within an organization – including online, virtual classroom, and instructor-led classrooms. The second is a learning content management system. These systems focus on learning content, giving content developers the means to create new content more efficiently. Like a content management system, a learning content management system allows instructional designers to create reusable chunks of content and makes them available for the creation of new learning experiences. This is much more useful than developing entire courses of very similar material and adapting it to various audiences. Not all learning content management systems are created the same, however. The most useful are structured XML systems because they enjoy the flexibility and compatibility of XML.

It is very possible for a content management system to work in conjunction with both learning management and learning content management systems. Some organizations have found it useful to store and organize their content in the repository of a content management system, but use a learning management system to help manage an eLearning initiative. It is important to note that learning content management systems are designed to only be used within a department; they do not have access to content from other areas of the organization and they cannot share content throughout the enterprise. Content management systems as we have discussed here enable users to share and reuse content enterprise-wide. If your instructional designers are constantly requiring content from other areas of your organization, then using a content management system alone or a content management system in conjunction with a learning management and/or learning content management system is something that you should consider. The only way to know what is best for your organization is by knowing your needs and talking with vendors about how their system can address them. For example, make sure that the vendor you choose has experience with SCORM. With a little extra research, you may be able to take advantage of a system that you already have!

Bret Freeman is Vasont Systems' Sales Engineer for Vasont® Content Management Solutions. Bret has more than ten years of experience in the information management and publishing industry and has delivered numerous presentations and training courses to various groups in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. He has extensive knowledge in content management strategies and complex multilingual outputs.

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Implementing Online Learning: One Company's Experience (Part 2)

by Kim Lambdin

Online learning is not really learning.

How do you overcome the perception that online learning is not really a learning and development activity? That's a difficult question involving more than just evaluating whether or not an e-learning module is well designed, engaging, and appropriately interactive. To try and answer that question, I needed to think about the culture of the company as well as identify the end user better.

Company Culture and Audience

What I over-looked in my haste to implement e-learning, is that my company is a conservative financial services company that will never be leading-edge for anything. It is a stable and very successful company that is also a Government Sponsored Enterprise (GSE). We don't readily embrace change or the latest trends; it is not in our nature or our long history. Combine that culture with an end-user group whose median age is about 43, and I begin to see why they thought e-learning was not a valid learning endeavor.

The users associated online learning with "surfing the Web" and a frivolous use of time. Several of the users confided in me that they were afraid others would see them working through the lessons and be concerned that 'real' work wasn't getting done. After all, my company prides itself on being a high-performance, results-driven organization, so who has time to do online learning at their desks? Managing to complete a few online modules everyday seemed like too much trouble and besides, it wasn't really training. As I discovered, the end-user was more comfortable in a traditional classroom environment, away from work.

Lessons learned

Looking back, I can clearly see why my e-learning implementation results were so abysmal. How do you change perceptions and a company's culture? V-E-R-Y slowly. What I discovered is that you need to start more slowly and do more "PR" work about online learning.

- Start at the grass roots level.
- Work with the employees who embrace e-learning (many have taken online college classes) and make them become advocates for e-learning. Get them talking about the convenience of online learning; it can be done on company time in short 30 minute intervals or it can be done from home.
- Talk to managers about the cost savings e-learning offers.
- Assure employees and their managers that solid principles of adult learning are embedded in the online learning and that many online modules have post-tests to measure an individual's success.
- Start small or start with something simpler. For me that meant introducing WebEx as a self-serve, web-based presentation/conference tool. WebEx has been well received at all levels of the company, providing employees a softer and less intimidating introduction into using web-based tools.

Armed with new insights and a different plan of attack, I hope to have more success with online learning when we upgrade to Windows XP later this year.

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

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Tips & Hints

by Jackie Damrau

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 jdamrau3@airmail.net.

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Member News

by Sylvia Miller, SIG Membership Manager

Our SIG is growing rapidly, and our members are busy giving presentations and preparing for their annual conference presentations. Read on to learn more...

New Members

The IDL SIG has added about 792 members since the last newsletter. You are part of a SIG that's growing by leaps and bounds. In fact, we're the second fastest growing SIG based on percent of growth since June 30, 2004. [Please use this link to see the list of new members and to welcome them to the SIG.](#)

Member Accomplishments

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

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.")

Hail, Hail...From Where Do We All Hail?

When you post a question to the IDL discussion listserv, did you know that you might be drawing from the expertise of professionals in as many as 27 countries?! That's how many countries were represented by our membership as of 1/31/2005. Here's a breakdown of our members by country.

Australia – 5	Benin – 1	Israel – 11	Italy – 2	Japan – 1	South Africa – 1	South Korea – 1
Belgium – 2	Canada – 163	Lithuania – 1	Netherlands – 1	– 1	Sweden – 3	Switzerland – 3
Denmark – 5	Finland – 3	New Zealand – 2	Norway – 1	3	Taiwan – 1	UAE – 1
France – 12	Germany – 11	Portugal – 2	Singapore – 2	USA – 1558	Venezuela – 1	
India – 18						

Judging from our diverse representation, we should have a vast array of experience from which we can draw when posting questions on the listserv! Why not give it a try. You can sign up for the discussion listserv at <http://lists.stc.org/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=stcidlsig-l>. No password is needed. Let me know if you have any problems signing up.

Presenting...!

Member Conni Bille recently presented "Instructional Design as a Career Path" to the STC Philadelphia Metro chapter and again to the Central New Jersey chapter. She had the audience do a skills inventory and then map their skills and development needs to the variety of options within the ID field. They then discussed self-development options and strategies. Member Peter Heikes and colleague Deanne Levander recently presented "Technical Writer to Instructional Designer—Big Leap?" at the University of Wisconsin-Stout student STC chapter.

Award Winners!

Two members of the IDL SIG were recently awarded the Distinguished Chapter Service award by their home chapter in Phoenix. They are Karen Zorn and Jane Smith. According to our "mole," Karen attends nearly every chapter business meeting and most chapter meetings. She's co-manager of the Region 5 Conference committee, and has conducted Framemaker classes for two years for the chapter. Jane is a "passionate supporter of technical communication all over the world." She has published articles in the Intercom, presented numerous times for the Phoenix chapter and at the annual conferences, is co-manager of the Region 5 Conference committee, and, of course, does a terrific job of leading the IDL SIG. Congratulations to these two top-notch members!

Jackie Damrau was recently awarded the Distinguished SIG Service award by the Management SIG for her valiant efforts in spearheading their newsletter, Directives. She will become Immediate Past President of the Lone Star community in May and serves as the IDL SIG's Business Directory Manager.

Congratulations also to Mark Hanigan who has been named an STC Fellow, "For your passionate dedication and contributions to technical communication and training, the Society, and the many individuals whom you have mentored." Congratulations, Mark!

If you have earned the DCS or DSS or other award, or you know of someone in the IDL SIG who earned awards this year, please let me know. Tooting your own horn and being a mole are both perfectly acceptable in this SIG!

Annual Conference Presenters!

The following folks are giving Instructional Design presentations at the Annual Conference in Seattle in May. (Made your reservations yet?)

Jackie Damrau

- Developing a Corporate Style Guide
- Finding Graphics that Tell a Story

Sue Mills:

Pearls of Wisdom for Effective E-Learning

Maggie Haenel:

Teach, Don't Train: Designing Content that Learners Remember

Gene Holden:

Tools of the Trade

Jane Smith:

- Powerful Objectives: The Backbone of Instructional Design
- Conducting the Job Task Analysis, or "Stickie Bingo" for Better Course Design
- Performance Technology: Going Beyond Documentation & Training
- ABCs of Instructional Design (post-conference)
- Expert Evaluation of Training Materials (Jane with Michael Tillmans and Maggie Haenel)

Cindy Currie:

Who Me? How to Turn Your Work into Industry Best Practices

Annette Caneda:

Developing Multimedia Learning

Carolyn Luttrell & Bonnie Swan:

Developing Effective Role Play Exercises

Michael Tillmans:

Serving Information Workers and Knowledge Workers

In addition, three of our members are presenting topics on non-ID subject matter:

Jackie Damrau

- Communications in an Ever-changing World
- Customer Communication

Paul Sinasohn:

Zero-Based Budgeting for Chapters

Jane Smith:

Managing Your Money as an Independent Consultant

Until Next Issue...

Between now and June, please keep me informed of happenings in your professional life that we can note in our next newsletter! Meanwhile, here's a question I'd like you to answer:

What is the subject matter of the training materials you develop? Is it software, soft skills, hardware, gameware, healthcare, nuclear subs, haircare, food handling?

Please send me a few words about your subject matter. It can anything from 2 or 3 words to 2 or 3 sentences. It will be fun to present that in the next newsletter. With so many nationalities represented in our chapter, there is probably a WIDE variety of subject matter. Email me anytime at sylviamiller@woh.rr.com.

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SIG 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:

Newsletter Mailing

We hope by now you all have received your hard copy of our fact sheet and the November newsletter. Thanks to Sylvia Miller, our Membership Manager, for organizing the mailing and making it happen. If you have questions on membership, feel free to contact Sylvia at sylviamiller@woh.rr.com (remember not to let your spellchecker correct woh to who). And thanks to David Williams for the great newsletter.

Re-chartering

Our re-chartering team has worked hard and received some good input from you. I feel energized by the ideas coming from you and from the team. Although we don't have specifics yet, you can look forward to more educational and sharing opportunities for all of us in the coming year. If this SIG can't conduct online learning and sharing opportunities, then who can?!

Conference Activities

Our conference team is hard at work planning our standard conference activities of the luncheon, the business meeting, and various handouts. In addition, this year's welcome on Sunday will feature all communities, and we'll have a table and display at this event. Please stop by to introduce yourself to us. We'd love to meet you!

Our webmaster, Chris Emanuelli (chrisemanuelli@hotmail.com), is putting the conference information on the site. Check out the information [get url from Chris] on:

- IDL Information and Business meeting, Sunday, May 8th, 3:30, where you can meet the leadership team, learn about upcoming events and plans, and provide more input to help us give you what you need.
- IDL SIG tables at the Welcome Reception, Sunday, May 8th, 7:30 – 9:00, again where you can meet members of the leadership team and learn more about the SIG.
- IDL-related sessions (a pdf for your download and use)
- IDL Progression, organized by Karen Baranich (KBARANICH@scana.com) - 4:00, Tuesday, May 10th (also a pdf for your use)
- IDL Tools Panel, organized by Gene Holden (gene@slac.stanford.edu) – 10:30, Wednesday, May 11th
- IDL tables at the SIG luncheon – Tuesday, May 10th, noon

Listserv Manager

We've also just acquired a new listserv manager, Debra Lynne Edwards (dedwards@crsbenin.org) who lives in Benin in West Africa. Over the next few weeks, Debra will be developing listserv policies with an eye towards making the listserv dialogs easier to read, especially for those who get the digest. Welcome, Debra!

Program Managers

As a result of the input you gave us during re-chartering, we will be placing more emphasis on programs. Jennie Achtemichuk (Jenniea@att.net) and Conni Bille (Cmbille@aol.com) have volunteered to work on programs. Thanks Jennie and Conni! Lessons from the Dessert: Resilience, Survival, Success.

TechComm2005

The Instructional Design and Learning SIG is teaming up with the Phoenix Chapter to co-sponsor the conference traditionally known as the Region 5 conference to be held November 11th and 12th in Mesa, Arizona. This conference will have a significant amount of ID-related sessions. We encourage you to submit proposals and make plans to come to Arizona in one of the most enjoyable times of the year. For more information, check out:

http://www.region5conf.com/framesets/region5_Frameset.htm.

This joint cooperation between a SIG and a Chapter is a first in STC. Help us make it a success through your support and participation. If you're interested in volunteering to help in any way, please let Jane Smith (jemcomm@sedona.net) know.

Newsletter Changes

I'd like to publicly thank David Williams for his great work in publishing several great newsletters during his time as editor. At this time, David has decided to pursue other interests and we will be re-organizing the staff. If you're interested in being part of the newsletter team, please contact Jane Smith, jemcomm@sedona.net. Thanks again, David, for getting us off to such a good start!

Scholarship

One result of the re-chartering effort is the recommendation to establish a scholarship for someone in instructional design. Gene Holden has volunteered to organize this effort. Thanks, Gene.

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Society News

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](#).

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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! Reprinted with permission. Society news originally appeared in STC Newsletter, Tieline, July – October 2004 issues. All rights reserved.

Experiencing Technical Communication — This Year's Conference

NOTE: The IDL SIG once again has prepared its own conference roadmap outlining all the sessions that are related instructional design and learning for our members. You can find the roadmap at the end of this issue or on the home page of the IDL Web site at

www.stcsig.org/idl

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

A telephone seminar is much like a large conference call in which the speaker makes a presentation over the phone. As a participant, you simply dial the 800 number from your phone, enter your personal identification number, and you're connected! You then sit back and listen to the presentations and join in the lively Q&A discussion that follows.

Time

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

June 8, 2005 Presenter: William Horton
Adding Interactivity to Online Documents

June 22, 2005 Presenter: Michael Plattner
One World Publishing: Single-source Editing and Translation

July 13, 2005 Presenter: Ann Jennings
Upgrading Your PowerPoint Presentations:
Basics of Organization and Illustration

August 10, 2005 Presenter: William Horton
Visual Fluency Cost

With a telephone seminar, the cost is per site, not per person. Train as many people as your conference room can hold — for one flat rate!

Members: \$99
Non-members: \$149

Sign Up

Email your name, phone number, and the name of the seminar you would like to attend at least 7 days before the event to: stcphoneseminars@wing-group.com.

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Book Reviews: Instructional Design

Reviewed by Michael Tillmans, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Technical Communications, Illinois Institute of Technology

Patricia L. Smith & Tillman J. Ragan John Wiley Publishing, 2005 Third Edition, 400 pages, softcover ISBN: 0-471-39353-3 Cost: \$83.95

How do you balance both sides of your professional life when choosing a new instructional design text? I needed a new text book for the instructional design class I teach to technical communicators, yet as a project manager I also wanted a reference that can be used as a workday guide for the big questions on training projects.

I chose the new edition of Smith and Ragan's Instructional Design to satisfy both needs as it supports a coherent version of cognitive psychology that can be applied to the design of business and school training materials. The twenty-chapter book is organized around the linchpins of instructional design: 1) Analysis and Assessment, 2) Instructional Strategies, and 3) Implementation and Evaluation

Analysis and Assessment focuses on analysis techniques for:

- The learning context (chapter 3)
- The learner (chapter 4)
- The learning task (chapter 5), and
- The assessment of learning (chapter 6)

Woven throughout these analyses is an introduction to the Information Processing approach to problem analysis, beginning with the cognitive mental model and an initial tour of the types of learning as initially introduced by Robert Gagne and more recently adapted by Ruth Colvin Clark. Of particular value are illustrations of information processing analysis for each type of learning, and an explicit demonstration of the pre-requisite analysis.

Ten chapters on Instructional Strategies are the heart of the book, building an 'events of instruction' model for each type of learning, applicable to most any training topic from rote memory needs to intricate problem solving. Separate chapters address:

Declarative Knowledge
Problem Solving
Psychomotor Skills
Concepts

Procedures
Principles
Cognitive Strategy
Attitudes

Many short and extended examples are used to illustrate how the necessary conditions for learning any skill are assembled, sequenced and integrated into an effective lesson or module.

Implementation, Management and Evaluation are addressed in three chapters, and this can be considered the weakest part. This text is NOT:

- A how-to book. This is not a collection of paint-by-numbers implementation techniques which become outdated tomorrow as new software tools come on the market.
- A paean to the development of instructor led or print training materials. The principles discussed are equally applicable to all forms of training and instruction, including web based training in a pure or blended format.
- A workplan for project managers. The contents will help you and staff make intelligent design decisions, thus avoiding rework.
- A handbook for evaluators. The chapter on formative and summative evaluation is very good, but it could easily be extended to make more concrete connections with usability studies, especially for corporate ID practitioners.

Users of prior editions will note important changes to the third edition. New chapters on Implementation and on Management provide useful advice without trying to accomplish too much. Instructors and students will appreciate the online resources which include solutions to exercises and graphics files of all the illustrations in the text.

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Letters to the Editor

Hi! I just read a book review, Rapid Instructional Design: Learning ID fast and Right." I liked the review and looked for a link to an online purchase – none. I'll bet Amazon.com would pay you to add the link!

Sincerely,
Cheryl Bennett

I just joined the IDL SIG and wanted to let you know that the newsletter is great! It has lots of useful information in easy-to-understand small chunks. Keep up the good work!

Denise Nissle,
Project Manager
West Norriton, PA

I was thrilled with this month's newsletter – every topic hit on something I wanted to know. I've just scanned it so far, but I intend to read every word during the upcoming week. Congratulations!!

Karen Conlin
Toronto, Ontario.

Thank you for sending me this wonderful newsletter. It is the first one I have seen. I didn't know that there was a lengthy newsletter as part of my SIG membership.

Wendy Suminski

I thought it had a very clean look to it and I was impressed with the amount of content you had. How wonderful that you have such an active community in your SIG; I know that not all SIGs are terrifically active.

I really liked the photos, which were convenient and interesting for the casual skimmer such as myself. I also thought your About the Newsletter page was very good. I'm still trying to figure out how best to present that type of information on Interface.

Amanda Cross, Amanda Cross
Managing Editor, Interface
Hoosier Chapter STC

I just got the STC IDL SIG Fall newsletter announcement. The newsletter itself looks great and I look forward to reading it. You guys have done a great job! Wow!

Frances Wirth

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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!

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 four times a year in December, March, July, and November. Article submission deadlines are on the 15th of the month (November 15, February 15, June 15, and September 15).

Our next issue is due out in July 2005. Theme: Post-Conference Summary Article deadline is June 15, 2005.

Visit www.stcsig.org/idl/newsletter.shtml 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, or .wpd) to:
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