Ezines and Other Things

by Kit Brown

Many companies and organizations are moving their publications online to save costs, and in some cases, out of concern for the environment. Other advantages include timeliness of information, the ease of updating the information, the ability to search for information, and the ability to link to other, related information. **Read more.**

- **Thinking Globally, Teaching Locally**

Tracking Technology Trends: An Online Approach

As technology changes and more companies extend their reaches internationally, it's vital to teach students how to conduct market research using the Web. This article provides some research resources, as well as some exercises instructors can assign their students. **Read more.**

- **Tools and Technology**

PDF for Less

Until recently, Adobe had the monopoly on the PDF market. Read about some interesting (and cheaper) alternatives. **Read more.**

- **Workplace**

Security for Peace of Mind

Identity theft, "creepers", corporate espionage, and other crimes are making the news regularly. Find out some simple steps you can take to protect yourself and your company. **Read more.**

- **Writing and Editing**

Bonding Agents for Unit Modifiers

Leaving out the connecting words in a phrase or using long noun strings can confuse your readers and cause misunderstanding of the concept you are trying to communicate. Brad uses the analogy of a suitcase or portmanteau to illustrate the need for connecting words. **Read more.**
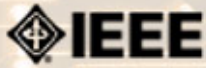
Newsletter

Feature Article

Ezines and Other Things

by Kit Brown

Many companies and organizations are moving their publications online to save costs, and in some cases, out of concern for the environment. Other advantages include timeliness of information, the ease of updating the information, the ability to search for information, and the ability to link to other, related information.

With ezines, there is little delay between finishing the article and publishing it. Unlike the print world, where you must provide the final copy days or weeks ahead of the publication, ezines can be tweaked and edited in real-time.

Found an error in the article you've just published? No problem. Simply make the correction and repost the file. Need to add some breaking news? Easy. Just write the article, update the contents links, and post the file.

You can also use a search engine to find information in an ezine that relates to the topic you are interested in. This capability can significantly reduce research time by instantly providing a great deal of information.

Ezines and other online documentation also enable you to easily cater to multiple audiences by allowing you to structure the information for different levels and categories of users.

The disadvantages to ezines include the following:

- The user reads significantly more slowly, and has lower comprehension online than when reading printed materials.

- If the ezine is formatted as a multi-column PDF, it will be virtually impossible to read online.

- Some users may not have adequate knowledge or equipment to access your ezine.

- Some users may not like receiving an email notification about the latest issue, or may be concerned about SPAM.

However, with proper planning, you can address each of these issues:

- Design the layout so that the articles are shorter, the ezine does not go the full width of the screen, and the text appears in a single column. Add subheads to help guide the user through the information. If you have a long article, you may want to include hyperlinks back to the top of the page or to other pages.

- Identify users who may not have the access or knowledge to obtain the ezine, determine whether it is important to reach these members, and identify an alternative delivery method. For example, we have approximately 170 members for whom we do not have email addresses. They will receive a postcard with instructions on how to subscribe to the newsletter online, and if they do not have Internet access, they will be instructed how to receive their copy of the newsletter.

- Provide opt-in and opt-out options for subscribers. Using an automated list manager enables you to let the user

manage his or her own account and decide how or whether to receive the publication. The list manager for IEEE-PCS is **www.verticalresponse.com.** We are working on getting the opt-in and opt-out pages set up for you, with links from the IEEE-PCS site.

Ezines can provide additional opportunities for communicating with your customers, users, or members. The advantages of cost-effectiveness, timeliness, ease of modification, and searchability make ezines well worth the initial investment of design and time.

Newsletter
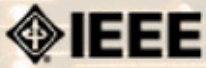
Workplace

Security for Peace of Mind

by Brenda HuettNer

They say things come in threes (good things or bad things, depending on your outlook). I recently read "The Art of Deception" by Kevin Mitnick, which describes how very easily the author was able to infiltrate companies, computers, and even our government through what he calls "social engineering." This was right around the time the Blaster worm was hitting everyone so hard. Then, the very next day, an article appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* about the new trend of "creepers"—people who walk into offices in broad daylight and walk out with company assets like laptop computers or other electronics. Clearly, there are people out there who want what we have, and we all need to be aware of security issues.

Some companies have security departments, but not all of them. Some companies give employees security training, but not all of them. As an employee, I'm ultimately responsible not just for the work I'm tasked with, but also for all of the resources the company gives me to use. I've developed a short list of things that help me take steps toward better security.

Data Security

- Make backups. Often. Even if your company automatically backs up the servers, this probably won't help you any if you have files stored on your local drive. A power outage can wipe out a whole day's worth of work—a sudden drive failure can do much worse.

- Make your password difficult to guess—how many of you use your kid's names, or family pet, or some string that has to do with a birthday? The best passwords have both letters and numbers, and also at least one special character (like !, @, #, or $).

- Change your password regularly.

- Don't use the same password for all your logins—if security on one is compromised, they're all vulnerable.

- Don't write your passwords down. I know, this seems obvious, but there are lots of people who write their passwords on sticky notes and post them on their monitors because they don't want to forget.

- Don't leave your system if you are logged in. Logging out takes what, 10 seconds? But if you are logged in, it takes less than that for someone walking by to steal company information—or possibly even your own personal information that might be on your hard drive.

Physical Security

- If your company issues badges, wear yours in the building, but remove it when you're out at lunch or traveling. Did you see "Catch Me If You Can?" Once the 'hero' saw what the badge was supposed to look like, he was able to duplicate it and convince everyone he was an employee.

- If you see someone you don't recognize in your area, say something. "May I help you?" works—or "Are you new

here?" If the person IS there for a legitimate reason, they'll be glad for your help. If the person is there for nefarious purposes, just knowing that you're on top of things might prevent them from stealing your company's goods.

- Doors are locked for a reason. Don't prop them open just for convenience.

- If you have easy-to-carry, expensive equipment laying around, make sure that you secure it before leaving, even if you're just going down the hall or out for a quick bite. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that 62% of corporate security officers surveyed experienced at least one laptop theft in 2002. Other popular targets include cell phones, digital cameras, and the old standby, purses.

Awareness

The message can't be reinforced enough: do not give out your login name or password. You'd be amazed at how many people will hand out their passwords just because someone asks! And though I'm not advocating that we all become paranoid, remember that there are, in fact, some people who are out to get you—or at least your stuff.

Brenda Huettner is owner and principal of P-N Designs, Inc., a technical communications consulting company. She writes articles and teaches workshops on management, usability, and technical writing. Brenda has several books in print, including *Career Tactics for Technical Communicators*. She belongs to IEEE/PCS, the Society for Technical Communication, the Usability Professionals Association, and the Tucson Computer Society.

Newsletter
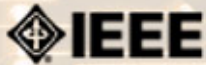
Tools and Technology

PDFs for Less

by Brenda Huettner

You probably already know how to use Adobe Acrobat Reader for electronically distributed PDF (Portable Document Format) files. PDF is a unique platform-independent file type, originally created by Adobe engineers.

John Warnock, one of Adobe's founders, wrote: 'Imagine being able to send full text and graphics documents (newspapers, magazine articles, technical manuals etc.) over electronic mail distribution networks. These documents could be viewed on any machine and any selected document could be printed locally. This capability would truly change the way information is managed.'

For a great summary of the history of PDF, see the following site:

http://www.prepressure.com/pdf/history/history01.htm

For a long time, the only way to create PDF files was to purchase the Acrobat software from Adobe (**http://www.adobe. com**). In addition to simply converting files to PDF, you can make fillable forms and active links and choose from a variety of navigation tools. The Adobe Acrobat software continues to grow and to add features. It is also, however, growing in size, resource requirements, and cost.

A number of alternatives to Acrobat now exist that may suit your needs, particularly if you're simply creating a file for someone else to read. The following products are samples of what's available. You may have others you like; you may find that these products don't meet all of your needs. But, the products generally have a free download so you can try them out, and for many people, the bottom line justifies the functionality trade-offs.

Note: The following are in order alphabetically, and the inclusion here does not imply an endorsement of the products.

activePDF Composer $79 **http://www.activepdf.com/products/desktopproducts/composer/overview.cfm**
activePDF Composer is a desktop PDF converter that enables users to easily create and disseminate PDF files.

ePublisher Plus $69
http://www.epublisherplus.com/
PEERNET ePublisherPlus converts to and from PDF, and lets you combine documents from different applications into one PDF file. ePublisherPlus also has tools for page organization and annotation, preview and printing capabilities, and exporting features.

pdf995 free (with ads) or $9.95 (without ads)
http://pdf995.com/download.html
pdf995 helps you to create PDF files by selecting the "print" command from any application. Pdf995 supports network file

saving, fast user switching on XP, Citrix/Terminal Server, custom page sizes and large format printing. The free versions of the pdf995 printer driver and Converter display a sponsor page in your web browser each time you run the software; the paid version does not.

Win2PDF $35
http://www.win2pdf.com/

Win2PDF creates PDF files from any Windows NT, Windows 2000, or Windows XP application. It installs as a Windows print driver, so you just need to print from any application to create a PDF file.

Brenda Huettner is owner and principal of P-N Designs, Inc., a technical communications consulting company. She writes articles and teaches workshops on management, usability, and technical writing. Brenda has several books in print, including *Career Tactics for Technical Communicators*. She belongs to IEEE/PCS, the Society for Technical Communication, the Usability Professionals Association, and the Tucson Computer Society.
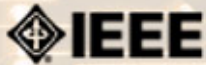
Writing and Editing

Bonding Agents for Unit Modifiers

by Brad connatser

The number-one problem with technical prose is its density. Technical people like to stack technical words one on top another, creating a stack known as a portmanteau, which means "a large leather suitcase that opens into two hinged compartments." When writers create such jam-packed word "suitcases", they squeeze out the little words that help the reader understand the relationship between words—little words such as "of," "in," and "for." These little words are called function words, and they include connectives (prepositional phrases), articles, helping verbs, and the "to" in infinitives, all of which are very important for fluid reading.

Subject-matter experts (SMEs), such as the engineers I work with, are economical, always worried about budgets. However, "fewer words" does not always translate into "easier to read." In an effort to condense a text, SMEs often create portmanteaus. Here's a before-and-after example to illustrate the point:

Before
Power quality event signature recognition may lead to early warning of incipient equipment failure modes.

(Function words: may, to, of: total = 3)

After
The ability to recognize the signatures of power quality events may lead to an early-warning system for predicting the incipient failure of equipment.

(Function words: The, to, the, of, may, to, an, for, the, of: total = 10)

Function words convey the relationships between content words (nouns, adjectives, and verbs). Without function words, the reader struggles to determine those relationships. Function words are important to comprehension because of something called phrase collapsing.

You may have heard of "the magic number 7, plus or minus 2." It's the reason that pundits recommend that procedures contain fewer than 10 steps. A man named George Miller reviewed many experiments on short-term memory and found an interesting common thread. Most of these experiments indicated a limit of 7 chunks of information, on average, that our short-term memories are able to keep in an active state (The Psychological Review, 1956, vol. 63, pp. 81–97). Although Miller's assertions are subject to debate, we can agree, in principle, that there is a limit to what we can retain in short-term memory when we concentrate and try to remember things. However, when we read, our goal is not to memorize but to make sense. Therefore, we have to leave a room for processing in our short-term memories.

For example, when we encounter the portmanteau "on-site mechanical fabrication detailed electrical interconnections," we have six terms to deal with—six seemingly unrelated terms. So we stop reading and start trying to decipher the cipher. However, when we include the function words, we enable short-term memory to collapse phrases into chunks of meaning.

For example, if we re-write our example as "detailed diagram of electrical interconnects for on-site fabrication equipment"—as inelegant as it sounds—we end up with one manageable chunk of meaning. "Detailed diagram" collapses to form one chunk (A), which combines with "electrical interconnects" to form a chunk of meaning (A+B). "On-site fabrication equipment" collapses to form a chunk (C), which combines with (A+B) to form one main chunk ([A+B]+C).

What is really important to remember is the role of the function words, notated above by the plus character (+), in phrase collapsing. Without function words, we cannot readily collapse phrases because we have no phrases to collapse, only a portmanteau that we must rummage through to create some sort of meaning—we will more likely skip this unpacking than go through it.

Not All Stacks Are Bad

All sorts of phrases exist in our linguistic world. Noun phrases, verbal phrases, prepositional phrases, absolute phrases, subordinate phrases—any "sequence of grammatically related words without a subject and a predicate." Sometimes a short phrase of two or more words can jointly modify a linguistic element—such as a noun or another phrase—without requiring the words to be "unpacked." However, these short adjectival phrases, called unit modifiers, must be bonded together so the reader can understand the relationship between a unit modifier and the linguistic element that it modifies.

The following sections discuss methods for marking a unit modifier for the reader. These methods, which I call bonding agents, communicate to the reader that certain words should be interpreted as one unit of meaning (thus the phrase unit modifier). Bonding agents include hyphenation, capitalization, italics, quotation marks, and convention.

Hyphenation

Hyphenation is a thorn in the collective side of technical communicators. Writers and editors must frequently confront the quandary of whether or not to hyphenate, often with dubious results. Most SMEs do not consider hyphenation in word strings, assuming that readers are smart enough to figure out the relationship between words. However, when the reader starts figuring things out, he or she stops reading. Furthermore, without hyphens or some other sort of bonding agent to guide the reader to the correct interpretation of a string of nouns and adjectives, a string of words can frustrate the reader, turning him or her into a critic of the author.

Here is an example to illustrate the point: "The man eating fish was caught just offshore." Here, the omission of the hyphen between man and eating creates an ambiguity. Did the man who was eating fish get caught? Or did a fish that eats men get caught? Hyphenation (man-eating) removes all ambiguity by properly tying together all members of the unit modifier (man and eating). In the same vein, a "dry cleaning agent" is Ajax, whereas a "dry-cleaning agent" is benzene. "Small business woman" is a derogatory term, whereas "small-business woman" is a respectful one. "European history teacher" is a teacher of history who is a European, whereas "European-history teacher" is a teacher of European history. These are all simple examples of common unit modifiers. It is the uncommon unit modifier to which technical communicators must give due attention. The intended meaning of "European history teacher" can be readily figured, but a unit modifier with which the reader is unfamiliar is likely to cause misreading, unless the elements of the modifier are properly bonded.

Capitalization

Capitalization provides another way to indicate membership in a unit. For example, proper names are capitalized, and this treatment bonds the elements of a name. For example, "the James Joyce way" contains two proper names (a first name and last name) that jointly modify way. Here's another example: "International Monetary Fund partners." The initial capitalized letters in the proper name "International Monetary Fund" bond the elements of the unit modifier.

Italics

The italic typeface is also useful for bonding elements. For example, this treatment can be used with foreign phrases, where hyphenation would violate common usage. One example is the phrase *in situ*, which is generally not hyphenated, but can be joined by the bonding force of italics. Another use for bonding a unit modifier through italics is when the modifier is emphasized. For example, consider the following:

He had that *holy cow!* look on his face.

Here, "holy cow!" is an emphasized unit modifier that modifies the word look.

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks can be used to bond a direct quote that modifies a linguistic element or what are called nonce terms, terms that are used on only one occasion. Newly coined terms are often put in quotation marks. For example, "a 'no surprises' culture" contains a unit modifier bonded by quotation marks that indicate "these two words work together." In the next example, the impulse to hyphenate may be too great, but the quotation marks, a strong bonding agent, work just as well: This Program targets smaller "hard to reach" producers with production rates of 6,000 barrels of oil per day or less. However, quotation marks can also indicate sarcasm or disbelief, depending on the context and tone.
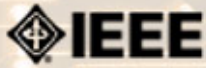
Convention

Specialized discourse is another term for jargon. Within the jargon of a particular industry—such as electrical engineering— the common treatment of terms used in written discourse establishes a convention. Any violation of such a convention tells the reader that the author is "not one of us." In my line of work, one such convention is the treatment of the phrase "power quality." This term is never hyphenated, even when it is used as a unit modifier, such as "power quality troubleshooting." In this particular specialized discourse, the two words that make up the term—power and quality—are recognized as belonging together by convention.

Conclusion: Playing with Strings

As technical writers and editors, we can clarify the relationship between words in a string by unpacking them or by indicating their unified purpose (unit modification) by using a bonding agent. In the best of circumstances, we have enough time and budget to untangle the tangles of words, but sometimes we have to settle for simple indication, such as hyphenation. The point here is to avoid overkill. If the elements of a unit modifier are already treated with capitalization, italics, or quotation marks, there is no need to hyphenate.

Brad Connatser managed a publications department for an engineering firm for nearly 12 years. He holds degrees in engineering technology and English. In a previous career, he taught technical writing, creative writing, English composition, rhetoric, and journalism at Temple University and Maryville College. His research includes applying cognitive psychology to technical communication.

Newsletter

Society News: Events

B'Gorra! 'Tis Time to Register for the IPPC Conference

by IPPC 2005 Conference Committee

The IPPC conference is being held in lovely Limerick, Ireland on 10-13 July 2005.

Register Now

IEEE Professional Communication Society invites you to register now to attend IPCC 2005. Link directly to the registration page: **https://www.iccbookings.com/ipcc/registration.php**

See Featured Speakers

Dr. Reinhard Schäler, a noted localization expert, will deliver the keynote address. A number of outstanding invited speakers are on the program, together with more than a hundred others whose presentation proposals passed the selection process. You will see a broader range of communication-related topics than ever before at IPCC!

See the conference program preview (**http://ieeepcs.org/limerick/conference.htm**).

A list of all the presenters and their affiliations will be posted on the web site this week.

Meet International Colleagues

The presenters are from all over the world, and represent a broad cross-section of engineers, managers, professional communicators, practitioners and academics. IEEE Engineering Management Society, INTECOM, ATTW, CPTSC, tekom, and others will be represented.

Become a Sponsor

Want to sponsor or co-sponsor the conference to draw attention to your company's services and products, or to your university's academic offerings? Link to **http://ieeepcs.org/limerick/conference.htm#sponsors**.

Make Your Travel Plans

Shannon Airport is an easy destination from anywhere! Ireland is a beautiful, hospitable country to visit!

Limerick Travel will be happy to help you discover it. Here's their link: **http://www.letsgotravel.ie/**.
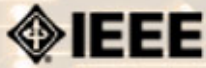
Newsletter

Society News: Members

There is a lot of information about members this month:

- **2005 Senior Members Announced**

- **Alias the AdCom**

- **Emily Sopensky Featured in an Institute Article**

- **IEEE President Visits India**

- **September Conference Pictures**

2005 Senior Members Announced

Congratulations to these Professional Communication Society members who achieved IEEE Senior Member status in 2004:

REGIONS 1-6 (U.S.)
Donald D. Button (3 Atlanta)
Helen M. Grady (3 Central Georgia)
Michael K. Hobish (6 Montana)
Julia M. Williams (4 Central Indiana)

REGION 7 (Canada)
Anne E. Parker (Winnipeg)
Wayne A. Timm (North Saskatchewan)

REGION 8
Michael J. Maytum (U.K. & Rep. Ireland)
P Rune H. Perrson (Sweden)
Aleksandar Szabo (Croatia)

REGION 9
Luis Vargas (Chile)

REGION 10
Thomas Orr (Sendai, Japan)
Prashant Rao (Delhi, India)

If you have 10 years or more of professional communication experience you can apply for IEEE Senior Member status. The forms are available on the Web: **http://www.ieee.org/organizations/rab/md/smforms.htm**. For more information or help in completing the forms, contact PCS.

Alias the AdCom

by Rudy Joenk

The administrative committee (AdCom) invites comment from PCS members about any of the society's activities. All the AdCom members have an electronic alias at the IEEE that automatically forwards e-mail to the member's actual electronic address.

You can address the whole AdCom at adcom-pcs AT ieee DOT org (replace the AT with @ and the DOT with .), or any of the members individually at the addresses listed in the table. The year in parentheses marks the end of the member's term. This list appears in the first Newsletter issue each year.

If you would like to obtain (or update) an alias of your own, go to the **IEEE Web page**, and follow the procedure there (you will need your IEEE Web account ID, or your member number if you haven't established a Web account).

Name	Term Year	Email address (stylized to prevent SPAM)
Deborah Bosley	2007	dsbosley AT ieee.org
Ed Clark	2007	e.clark AT ieee.org
Marjorie Davis	2006	mtdavis AT ieee.org
Jeffrey Douglas	2005	jeffrey.n.douglas AT ieee.org
Jean-luc Doumont	2007	jl.doumont AT ieee.org
Roger Grice	2005	ragrice AT ieee.org
Mark Haselkorn	2006	m.haselkorn AT ieee.org
George Hayhoe	2005	g.hayhoe AT ieee.org
Robert Krull	2006	krullr AT ieee.org
Luke Maki	2007	luke.maki AT ieee.org
Beth Moeller	2005	b.w.moeller AT ieee.org
Thomas Orr	2005	t-orr AT ieee.org
Steven Robinson	2007	ser72 AT ieee.org
Kirk St.Amant	2006	sainta AT ieee.org
Michaël Steehouder	2006	steehouder AT ieee.org
Sherry Steward	2006	ssteward AT ieee.org
Julia Williams	2005	juliawilliams AT ieee.org
Muriel Zimmerman	2007	m.zimmerman AT ieee.org

In addition, Paula Lowe is assistant treasurer, and Kim Campbell, k.s.campbell AT ieee.org, and Kit Brown, pcsnews.editor AT ieee.org, are society editors.

Members are always welcome at AdCom meetings. See the meeting schedule, located on the PCS web site, **http://www. ieeepcs.org/activities_adcom.php**.

Emily Sopensky Featured in Institute Article

by luke maki

In case you missed it, our own Emily Sopensky was featured in an Institute article!

To read the article , go to **http://www.theinstitute.ieee.org** and click the article titled "Members Help Build Bridges to

Policymakers".

IEEE President Visits PCS Chapter in Madras, India

by rudy joenk

The IEEE president, Mr. W. Cleon Anderson, visited India on 16 January 2005, where he was presented with a memento by S. S. Narayanan, chairman of the IEEE-CS& PCS Madras Chapter at Chennai.

September PCS Conference Pictures

by Luke maki

Lest you forget the fun you had at the September Conference, here are some pictures:

- George Hayhoe with Best Paper Award winners Jason Hill, Helen Constantinides, and Victoria Mikelenis **View**

- George Hayhoe and Bill Horton **View**

- Jake Burkey, winner of the Rudolph J. Joenk, Jr. Award for Best Paper in the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication , with none other than Rudolph J. Joenk, Jr.! Co-Author William Kuechler was unable to attend. **View**

- President Eduardo (Ed) Clark presenting the Emily K. Schlesinger Award, for Distinguished Service to the Professional Communication Society, Immediate Past President Beth Beth Weise Moeller **View**

- General Conference Chair Bernadette Longo presenting the Alfred N. Goldsmith Award for Distinguished Contributions to Engineering Communication to John Carroll **View**

- At the Awards Banquet: Stephanie Rosenbaum, Kim Sydow Campbell, and Beth Weise Moeller. In background

President Ed Clark speaks with Jean-luc Doumont. **View**

Society News

Award Nominations Due 12 February 2005
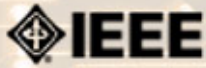
by Robert krull

The IEEE Professional Communication Society invites its members to offer nominations for two of its annual awards. The **Alfred N. Goldsmith Award** recognizes distinguished contributions to engineering communication. John M. Carroll and William Horton were the winners for 2004 and 2003, respectively. The **Ronald S. Blicq Award** recognizes distinguished contributions to technical communication education. Thomas E. Pearsall was the winner in 2004; Daniel Jones was the winner in 2003.

If you would like to submit a nomination for either award, please send a 1-2 page description of the nominee, including the name, address and a summary description of the nominee's accomplishments to **Robert Krull**, PCS Awards chair.

Nominations will close on **12 February 2005.**

The AdCom, the administrative committee of the PCS, will select a winner from among those nominated.

Society News

New IEEE PCS Regional Representatives

by thomas Orr

One of the accomplishments of IEEE PCS in 2004 was the establishment of a Regional Activities Committee and the appointment of Regional Representatives to improve communication and promote professional activities at local and regional levels. To date, representatives for seven regions have been selected, with more appointments planned for 2005 to fill the remaining positions on the Committee.

In this article, we'd like to introduce our new representatives as well as solicit applications for the remaining positions.

IEEE PCS Regional Activities Committee Chair:

Thomas Orr

Thomas Orr is a Professor in the Center for Language Research in the School of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of Aizu in Japan, where he researches and teaches the academic and workplace English of computing and related fields. He has taught English to native and nonnative speakers in the United States and Japan for over 20 years, has published and/or presented over 100 papers, and regularly provides reviews or consulting for several academic societies and institutions. In addition to his duties as Chair of the Regional Activities Committee, he also serves as an Associate Editor for the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication.

IEEE PCS Region 1 Representatives (Northeastern USA):

Luke Maki
Jeffrey Douglas

Luke Maki is a Senior Network Designer at The Boeing Company. He chairs an enterprise-wide technical group of cross-organizational representatives that reviews and approves agreements for network architecture, design, deployment, maintenance, and product selection. These responsibilities provide much opportunity for him to work with professional communication. Luke is also the focal point for the network organization to achieve ISO-9001 certification, and to ensure compliance with the
Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOx).

An IEEE Senior Member, Luke is the PCS VP and Meetings Chair as he enters his third term as a member of the Administrative Committee. As a liaison from the PCS, he also recently completed a two-year chairmanship of the IEEE-USA CCIP, one of several technology policy committees.

Jeffrey Douglas is a radar systems engineer with Lockheed Martin. His job includes radar signal processing, data analysis, and the integration and testing of developmental signal processors. In support of these tasks, he generates system requirements, test procedures and plans, and data analysis reports, and he presents data analysis results to high-level

customers.

Jeffrey has been the chair of the Philadelphia Section PCS Chapter since 2004. Jeffrey has a BS in Electrical Engineering from Bucknell University and a MS in Systems Engineering from the University of Pennsylvania.

Note: We are currently seeking applicants for this position to replace Luke and Jeffrey who have kindly agreed to fill this position temporarily until a new representative can be appointed.

IEEE PCS Region 2 Representative (Eastern USA):

Valorie King

Valorie King is a software systems engineer currently serving as an Information Technology (IT) and Information Management (IM) Policy Analyst for a cabinet-level Chief Information Officer (U.S. Government). Her responsibilities include writing,
interpreting, and providing guidance for both federal and departmental level IT and IM policies. Her primary area of specialization is electronic government, the World Wide Web, and Web-related technologies.

She has over 25 years experience in both industry and government as a project manager, technology consultant, software engineer, technical writer, and small business owner. Valorie is a Senior Member of the IEEE and holds industry certifications as a project manager (PMP), an information systems security professional (CISSP), and a Chief Information Officer (CIO).

IEEE PCS Region 3 Representative (Southeastern USA):

Sean Haynes

IN 1991, **Sean A. R. Haynes** graduated from Northeastern University in Boston with a BS in Electrical Engineering. As a co-op student at Northeastern, he worked as a software tester and developer for General Electric Automated Systems Department in Burlington, MA. After graduation, he obtained a job with General Dynamics Electric Boat Division in Newport, RI as Systems Tester on the Trident Submarine Program.

In 1993, he started his master's study at the University of Massachusetts in Dartmouth, MA, but relocated to Charlottesville, VA, in 1994 to start a job with Avionics Specialties, Inc., where he worked as Software Developer on embedded avionics software. Sean continued his master's study at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and graduated in 1996 with a Masters of Engineering in Electrical Engineering.

In 1998, he started work at Litton Marine Systems, now Northrop Grumman Sperry Marine, in Charlottesville, VA, where he is now a Principal Engineer working on the Sperry Military Integrated Bridge System.

PCS Region 4 Representative (Central USA)

We are currently seeking applicants for this region.

PCS Region 5 Representative (Southwestern USA):
Chona Shumate

Chona Shumate is senior manager of the technical publications group at Cymer, Inc. in San Diego, CA. She manages a

team of content developers, information designers, and graphic artists. She has been with Cymer for eight years, producing technical documentation for excimer lasers, which are used in the photolithography process in
silicon wafer fabrication plants. She holds a BA in English and an MA in Professional and Technical Communication and Rhetoric.

PCS Region 6 Representative (Western USA):
J. Catherine Craft

J. Catherine Craft is a technical writer from Utah. Her career as an information systems analyst and writer spans many industries, including military and defense, computer simulation, geographic information systems, and data communications networks. Catherine currently manages documentation projects for storage products at Novell, Inc. She also leads open source authoring, peer reviews, and other departmental committees.

She teaches part-time at the University of Phoenix Online in the MS in Computer Information Systems program. Her specialties are network technologies and design. Catherine holds an MS from the University of Southern California in Systems Management with a certification in Information Systems.

PCS Region 7 Representative (Canada):

We are currently seeking applicants for this position.

PCS Region 8A Representative (Europe):
Margaretha Eriksson

Margaretha Eriksson, BSc, MScEE, is a systems engineering manager, professional translator, and technical writer at Irbis Konsult AB, Stockholm, Sweden. She has worked for IBM translating OS and software, as well as for other major companies, such as Oracle, JDEdwards, HP, SAP, Kodak, and Vodafone. She has also translated electronic and engineering terms of Eurodicautom and term databases into Swedish.

Margaretha has done technical writing for Ericsson and the Swedish Defense, and has lectured at Stockholm University in the courses called Professional Skills for Translators and IT-Tools for Translators. She designed these courses based on her own experience. She is a member of STC (Nordic) and SFÖ. Her present activities include information security and product lifecycle management, which safeguard products for future development.

PCS Region 8B Representative (Africa and Middle East):
Ahmed Zobaa

Ahmed Faheem Zobaa (M'01-SM'04) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical Power & Machines, as Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University. He is an Editorial Board member for the *Electric Power Components & Systems Journal* and the *International Journal of Computational Intelligence*. He is an Editor for *IEEE Power Engineering Letters* and *IEEE Transactions on Energy Conversion*. Also, he is an Associate Editor for *IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics*, *International Journal of Power and Energy Systems*, *International Journal on Modeling and Simulation*, and *Neurocomputing Journal*.

Ahmed is a member of the IEEE Power Engineering, Industry Applications, Industrial Electronics, and Power Electronics Societies; the Institution of Electrical Engineers; the International Association of Science and Technology for Development, and the International Solar Energy Society.

PCS Region 9 Representative (Latin America):

We are currently seeking applicants for this position.

PCS Region 10 Representative (Asia and Pacific):

We are currently seeking applicants for this position.

Currently, the Regional Representatives are setting up regional elists and researching regional needs. Members with ideas or requests for PCS activities in their region should contact their Regional Representative.
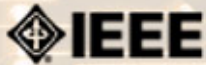
Society News

New Electronic Submission Requirements for Proceedings

by Kim campbell

To optimize online usage of IEEE conference proceedings, IEEE has implemented new requirements for the electronic submission of proceedings in PDF format. These requirements, first established in 2002, are mandatory for all sponsored and co-sponsored 2005 conferences. As of the second quarter of 2005, files that do not comply with the PDF requirements will incur production charges (this applies to all conferences held in 2005 and beyond).

To help all IEEE conferences develop compatible files, a new online tool called IEEE PDF eXpress is freely available. IEEE PDF eXpress can convert files to the correct specifications from a number of different publishing platforms, or can verify the correct formatting of existing PDFs. The IEEE PDF eXpress tool is customized for each conference requesting its use. Conferences are encouraged to register for IEEE PDF eXpress by contacting The **TAB Proceedings team**.

You can find further information on how to prepare and submit compatible PDFs at the Conference Publications Center web site: **http://www.ieee.org/portal/pages/pubs/confpubcenter/instructions.html.**
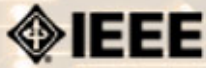
Society News

Amendments to PCS Constitution and Bylaws

by George Hayhoe

At its October 2004 meeting, the PCS administrative committee approved amendments to the society's constitution and bylaws. These amendments expand the number of ex- officio members of the AdCom to include the editors of the society's publications and the Webmaster. The amendments also clarify eligibility for candidacy and for voting on society officers.

The amendments have been reviewed and approved by the IEEE Technical Activities Board (TAB). The amendment to the Constitution becomes effective on 31 March 2005 unless 5% of PCS members with an IEEE member grade or higher object in writing to the TAB secretary. The bylaws amendment became effective upon TAB approval.

The amendments to article 4, section 1 of the PCS constitution and to Article 5, section A of the PCS bylaws adds the editors of the Transactions and Newsletter, and the Webmaster as ex-officio members of the AdCom.

The amendment to Article 4, section 3 of the PCS constitution **replaces**

"The following Society officers are elected by AdCom members-at-large for one-year terms (beginning 1 January) from among AdCom members-at-large with an IEEE Member grade or above serving during those terms:

- President
- Vice president"

with

"The president and vice president are elected by AdCom members-at-large for one-year terms (1 January to 31 December). Only those who will be AdCom members-at-large during that year are eligible to stand for election to these offices, and only AdCom members-at-large at the time of the election are eligible to vote in the election of president and vice president."

Any PCS member with an IEEE member grade or higher who objects to the change in the PCS constitution described here should send that objection in writing to the following person:

Mary Ward-Callan, Director
IEEE Technical Activities
P.O. Box 1331
Piscataway, NJ 08855-1331, USA

Letters of objection must be postmarked no later than 28 February 2005.
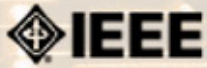
Reviews

Web Site Review: www.webmonkey.com
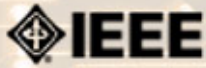
by kit brown

The Webmonkey site (**www.webmonkey.com**) is chock full of great advice for anyone who is building a web site. The site is organized based on skill level: beginner, builder, or master, as well as having topical links to a library and to quick reference information. From the home page, you can also read articles by various web development gurus, all of which are written in a light, casual tone.

While the number of colloquialisms may make it somewhat difficult for non-native English speakers to understand some of the overviews, once you get into the core information, the prose becomes more typically technical (though still accessible).

Like *Wired* magazine, the site developers show a penchant for bright colors: orange, chartreuse, and so on. While my 40-yr old eyes find those color combinations somewhat distracting and loud, others may find them attractive.

If you are interested in web design or development, I highly recommend visiting this site.

President's Column

Dawns a New Day

by Eduardo H. Clark

In my previous column on the last issue of the printed newsletter, I exhorted PCS members to join the Web era with my hopes that the new electronic newsletter is enthusiastically received. Since then I have received a couple of emails and a comment from another society president, who is PCS member, lamenting the "loss" of the newsletter.
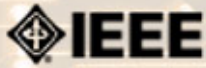
Well, let me reassure you, the news about the demise of the PCS newsletter was greatly exaggerated. It is alive and well and joining the Web era with its new electronic format. You will still find the great articles and society news. You will just be getting your news in a more opportune and environmentally conscious manner. The electronic format will allow you to more easily search the information in each issue. You will also be able to store your copy on your computer or even archive the issues on a CD. You will not have a stack of printed issues collecting dust and competing for space with the plethora of other printed materials that you probably receive on a regular basis.

If with all that said, you still miss the printed copy, go ahead and print the newsletter on your printer. You will not hurt my feelings, just the trees. You can then take the articles with you on your next trip to read and highlight while you wait for your flight.

New Editor

I would like to take this opportunity to formally introduce our new editor: Kit Brown. I happen to have known her since 1989, when we both worked for Texas Instruments. She brings a cheerful and upbeat style to the newsletter, as well as her extensive expertise in publications and technical documentation. Please give her the same enthusiastic support that Rudy Joenk enjoyed over the years. From the PCS leadership, she has my commitment to enjoy editorial freedom to address the needs of PCS members as she sees fit. Let her know what type of articles you would like to see, and feel free to praise her for those items that you find to your liking and of use in your practice as an engineer or technical communicator.

Editor's Column

A New Era Begins

by Kit brown

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the online PCS Newsletter! It has been an interesting undertaking to change not only the frequency of publication, but the distribution method and the size as well.

You will notice some other changes:

- shorter articles
- new columnists
- more emphasis on issues related to internationalization and working with multicultural teams

Our goal is to provide useful information in an accessible, easy-to-read format. Shortly, we will be sending you a survey so that we can identify and better meet your needs. We look forward to hearing from you.

As with any major transition, some team members have chosen to move on to other challenges, while new team members have joined.

Rudy Joenk, the previous editor, has been instrumental in easing the transition, providing countless tidbits of information, connecting me with people I need to know in order to manage the newsletter, and generally providing insight, humor, and encouragement.

Beth Moeller, George Hayhoe, Kirk St. Amant, Ed Clark, and Luke Maki have also been especially helpful in the transition.

Michael Brady (Floccinaucinihilipilification), Peter and Cheryl Reimold (Tools of the Trade), and Ronald J. Nelson (Masters of Style) have chosen not to continue their regular columns, though we hope they will continue to contribute their expertise to the Society.

Beth Moeller (Net Notes), Professor Grammar, Jean-Luc Duomont (Ask the Expert), Kirk St. Amant (Thinking Globally, Teaching Locally), as well as the Editor's and the President's column will continue. We are looking for someone to take over the Tools and Technology column, so if you are interested, please contact **Kit Brown** .

Each month, we will have an article or two around a particular theme. This month, the theme is "Electronic Publications" in honor of our debut. The feature article, *Ezines and Other Things*, discusses how to build an effective ezine.

We will also have book reviews and web site reviews, so if you've read something interesting or found a useful web site, write a short review and send it in.
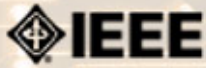
Tidbits are interesting factoids that don't fit in any of the other categories. They are sometimes amusing, sometimes thought-

provoking, and relatively short. Contributions are welcome and encouraged.

In the Article Submission Guidelines, you will find a mini-style guide, as well as a list of proposed themes for each month. If there is something you would like to see in the newsletter, please contact Kit at **pcsnews.editor@ieee.org**.

Future issues will contain Member Profiles. These profiles are intended to help us connect with other members of our virtual community, so if you know anyone who is doing something unusual or interesting in the field of professional communication, please contact Kit at **pcsnews.editor@ieee.org**.

Thinking Globally, Teaching Locally

Tracking Technology Trends: An Online Approach

by Kirk St. Amant

As technologies change, employees must adjust work habits and skill sets to address these developments. In the case of international markets, such adaptation can be tricky, for cultural groups can use technologies in unexpected ways. From an educational perspective, students can benefit from resources and activities that examine how technology trends affect professional practices.

Resources for Teaching

The following web sites contain effective and current information on international technology trends. The online nature of these resources allows students to access them easily and quickly from the classroom or from home. These sites also allow students to search for specific topics, and some allow users to register to receive updates on marketplace trends.

eMarketer (online at **www.emarketer.com**)

The eMarketer web site examines trends related to online media and wireless communication technologies. It contains free-access "eNews" briefs on technology developments and marketplace trends, and users can search the eNews database, as well as register to receive free daily updates on technology trends. There are also in-depth market studies, or eReports that require payment for access. Users can, however, freely review eReport abstracts that provide condensed information on technology trends.

ClickZNetwork (**www.clickz.com**)

This online news magazine examines marketing trends related to high-tech products. It provides news updates on high-tech developments and contains recent statistics on technology use, including data on online access in different nations. Individuals can search the magazine's database or register to receive free email updates of recent technology news.

Outsourcing Center (**www.outsourcing-center.com**)

This site provides excellent information on outsourcing, and it is an effective resource for introducing students to outsourcing concepts. Users can review articles in the site's Outsourcing Journal, or use the sites "Focus Area" to review trends related to certain industries (e.g., financial services), specific processes (e.g., information technology), geographic regions (e.g., Asia), or current developments (e.g., best practices). The site also allows users to access "Research Papers" and "Executive Briefings" on a range of outsourcing topics. While some items are free (mainly journal articles), others require payment for use.

Sample Exercise #1

Once students are familiar with these web sites, instructors can use different exercises to introduce ideas about international technology markets. In one exercise, students would assume the role of employees working for a high-tech company (e.g., Nokia) that manufactures a particular technology product (e.g., cell phones), and they would need to determine which nations would be good prospective markets for that particular product. Students would then use the eMarketer and the ClickZNetwork sites to research different technical requirements and consumer interest in order to gain an understanding of

prospective international markets.

After students identify consumer bases, they would brainstorm how international outsourcing activities might help with the placement of that product into a particular market. (Some researches consider this potential for international product placement to be an important benefit of international outsourcing.) Students could review materials on the Outsourcing Center web site to examine different outsourcing trends, and use that information for creating an in-class presentation on the following topics:

- Which overseas markets will be important ones for their product

- How international outsourcing can help with the placement of that product into a particular culture

Sample Exercise #2

In this exercise, the instructor would tell students that their employer wants to expand product sales into a particular nation, and students would need to do research to determine if that nation would be a good market for the related product. The eMarketer and ClickZNetwork sites could provide information on the technical capabilities and interest of the related nation. The Outsourcing Center site could provide insight on how outsourcing workers could help introduce that product into the related culture. Again, students would present their findings as oral reports, and classmates could discuss if such a business approach seems to be a practical one.

The global marketplace is complex, and individuals who understand its workings will have an edge in tomorrow's workplace. By using online resources and educational activities, instructors can provide students with a basic knowledge of such complexities. In so doing, instructors help students hone the critical thinking and the research skills essential to future career success.

Kirk St.Amant is an Assistant Professor with the Department of English at Texas Tech University.
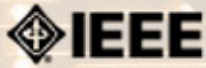
Tidbits

Google Launches Service for Academics

Quoted From EduPage, 14 november 2004

Google this week launched a service directed at academics and scientists looking for scholarly material. Google Scholar is the product of cooperation between Google and a number of academic publishers, including the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and the Online Computer Library Center. The service provides access to peer-reviewed papers, books, and technical reports, as well as information about locating scholarly work that is available at libraries but not online.

Google's Anurag Acharya, who directed development of the new service, noted that the company benefited from and grew out of an academic environment and said that Google Scholar "is one of the ways we can give back to the community." Acharya said the service would give universal access to academic and scientific literature from around the world. Initially, the service will not include text advertisements with search results, though company officials said such ads will likely be added later. New York Times, 18 November 2004 (registration req'd) **http://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/18/ technology/18google.html**

Professional Communicators in the News

by Brenda Huettner

The *Wall Street Journal* reported on a study by The National Commission on Writing that found that businesses are spending $3.1 billion a year trying to teach employees to write clearly. The original report, actually published in September 2004, is entitled *Writing: A Ticket to Work...Or a Ticket Out* and can be downloaded from **http://www.writingcommission. org/**. The National Commission on Writing also issued the report, *The Neglected "R": The Need for a Writing Revolution,* in April 2003, arguing that writing has been shortchanged in the school reform movement, despite the best efforts of many educators.

Also from the *Wall Street Journal* and picked up by other newspapers around the country, Jessica Mintz wrote an article decrying the lack of clear instructions for assembling toys and furniture. "Writing easy-to-use instructions is more important than ever now that the globalization of the toy industry requires translations into multiple languages," says one quoted expert. Sound familiar? You can check out the full article either in the subscription-based *Wall Street Journal* archives (**www.wsj.com**) or as reprinted by the *Seacoast Herald* (New Hampshire) at **http://www.seacoastonline. com/2004news/12242004/biz_nati/55627.htm**.