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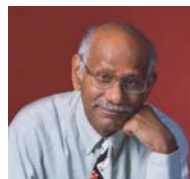
**FEATURE ARTICLE:
The Long and Sometimes Winding
Road to a Writing Career**



Sometimes our career paths are not straight, nor are they always in an upward direction. After one career in finance and another in information technology, I was looking for work that would let me

be creative while drawing on the experiences and knowledge I had gained in nearly thirty years of knocking around (and getting knocked around) the corporate world. [more](#)

**May 8: Secrets of Training Design
with Thiagi**



Do you want instructional design that is not only faster and cheaper, but also better? What do games, fun, and money passed out during training have in common? The answer: Learning and behavior

changes... especially when Sivasailam Thiagarajan—better known as Thiagi—is involved.

Thiagi will speak on May 8th on “Rapid Instructional Design.” Thiagi goes beyond [more](#)

Home > Editor Corner

Editor Corner

by [Jackie Damrau](#), Managing Editor



May is a time to celebrate many things...LSC Officer installation, Mother's Day, and Memorial Day. So to the 2008–2009 LSC Officers, welcome to serving your elected community, all mothers can enjoy a special day with their family, and all our valuable military (active and retired) deserve appreciation for the service they've given us.

As Susie mentions in her final Fox Tales column, the LSC members all deserve a big "thank you" for seeing another membership year come to a close. We've increased our membership, enjoyed many interesting programs, been enticed with great scholarship drawings, and the social networking that we all enjoy each month.

Many of us have found jobs from the networking that takes place at our meetings. You'll read about how Jim Korth found his latest job by selling his technical communication skills. Imagine what happens when we mention the words, Society for Technical Communication, and show samples of our work. I've heard of others getting jobs through our ranks, so enjoy Jim's story.

Our technical columnist, Louellen Coker shares her recent discovery about metadata and how it invades our Microsoft Word documents. She offers some tips on how to remove the pesky telltale signs of sending out more information than originally planned in your Word documents.

Of course, the LSC News and STC News columns provide the usual updates and interesting information from the local and international community perspective.

The biggest thank you that I want to let you all know about is that your participation, readership, and trust in the "Technically Write" staff has earned the LSC community the honor of having earned the

Award of **Distinguished** in the 2007–2008 STC Newsletter Competition

Out of 25 communities, only two received awards of Distinguished (we share this honor with the Orange County Chapter's "TechniScribe"), three Excellences, and 20 Merits.

You'll now have one more "Technically Write" issue to enjoy, which is our summer edition. That issue will have reviews from all your LSC members and officers who are going to be at STC's 55th Annual Technical Summit conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the first week in June.

Until the summer issue, enjoy your time away from us, consider writing an article or reviewing your favorite book or software, or volunteering to help our community provide the services that YOU want.

[Home](#) > [Fox Tales](#)**Fox Tales: How Do You Say Thanks?**

by [Susie Lynn Fox](#), 2007-2008 LSC President



Looking back over the 2007-2008 program year, I'm amazed and awed at all the STC Lone Star Community (LSC) officers, committee managers, committee volunteers, and members, guests, and speakers who have made every aspect of this year possible. I can't help but ask:

- How do you say thanks to LSC volunteers who take time out of their busy schedules and personal lives to pitch in and help elevate the technical communication profession to new heights through education, resources, and networking?
- How do you say thanks to LSC volunteers who work together as teams to plan, coordinate, and provide meetings, programs, workshops, competitions, community events, and written communication that make a difference in the professional lives of their peers?
- How do you say thanks to LSC volunteers who go above and beyond their individual LSC assignments to create an exceptional community that is rich in heritage, active in outreach, and innovative in providing resources that enhance members and develop leaders year after year?

LSC Works Together to Build Organization

When I first volunteered to help with LSC in April 2006, I was told that everyone pitches in and helps each other out. In theory and in practice, this teamwork approach is exactly the way LSC works. We're all continually learning from each other and helping one another, too.

At a recent meeting, a long-time member told me that LSC community meetings are always well organized, appear to be a team effort, and reflect a professional organization. That's the best compliment that any organization could hope for, so I want to share that good news with the volunteers who make LSC happen 24/7.

From my vantage point as president, I'd like to share a list of how some of the LSC stars aligned with each other in 2007-2008 to make LSC shine. And I'd like to say thanks, thanks, and more thanks for all their work this program year.

Programs/Workshops Inform, Educate, and Inspire

- Elisa Miller, First Vice President of Programs
- Heather Steele, Second Vice President and Registration Manager
- Rob Brown, Interim Registration Manager
- Jeanne Foster, Newcomer SIN SIG Manager
- Arroxane Ullman, Program Evaluation Analyst

Web Site Provides One-Stop Shopping for LSC Events

- Webmasters: Paul Holland, Alan Oak, Beth Bailey

Public Relations Notifies Community

- Mike Hiatt, PR Manager
- Volunteers: Jim Korth, Arroxane Ullman

Newsletter Broadcasts News

- Jackie Damrau, Managing Editor
- Volunteers: Jeanne Foster, Mary McWilliams Johnson, Paula Robertson, Monica Winkelman
- All the writers and columnists

IPIC Distribution List Sends Updates

- Dale Erickson, IPIC Editor

Resources Provide Benefits

- Jeanne Foster, Membership Manager
- Job Bank Manager Jan Shelton
- Kathryn Poe, Help Desk Manager
- Ann Balaban, Mentoring Manager
- Jo Byrd, Consulting SIG Manager
- Elisa Miller, Usability SIG Manager
- Mel Haughton, Superstar Coordinator
- Kathryn Poe, Community Service Manager

**Scholarships Aid Students and Professionals**

- Robert Carr Harris, Scholarships Manager

BEST Competition Teaches High School Students

- Volunteers: Kathlyn Auten, Ann Balaban, Georgina Cantoni, Jackie Damrau, Rhonda Harris, Mary McWilliams Johnson

LSC Competitions Set the Bar for Excellence

- Kathryn Poe, Competitions Manager
- Louellen S. Coker, Technical Publications Competitions Manager
- Diane Mazzarella, Online Communication Competitions Manager
- Volunteers: Ann Balaban, Beth Bailey, Kelly Burch, Rob Brown, Jo Byrd, Jackie Damrau, Dale Erickson, Kathryn Goff, Mel Haughton, Mike Hiatt, Darice Lang

Officers Form LSC Foundation

- Susie Lynn Fox, President
- Elisa Miller, First Vice President
- Heather Steele, Second Vice President
- Chris La Porte, Treasurer
- Mike Hiatt, Parliamentarian
- Kristin Kirkham, Current Secretary
- Kristy Nolan, Previous Secretary
- Mel Haughton, Immediate Past President

Past Presidents Share Leadership Knowledge

- Mel Haughton, Immediate Past President
- Past Presidents: Louellen S. Coker, Jackie Damrau, Kathryn Poe, Ann Balaban, Beth Bailey, Jim Chambless

Visionaries Look to the Future

- Mel Haughton, Volunteer Wrangler
- Mel Haughton, Current Nominations Manager
- Jim Chambless, Previous Nominations Manager

So how do you say thanks? I just did, but I'm sure I didn't include everyone. There are too many stars in the LSC sky to count, but you get the idea, I hope.

Now it's your turn to share your appreciation with all the folks that make LSC possible for its members. Say thanks and think about volunteering in the 2008–2009 program year!

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Meetings

Read about:

- [May Meeting: Secrets of Training Design](#)
- [April Meeting Review: No User Left Behind](#)

May Meeting: Secrets of Training Design

by [Jim Korth](#), PR Committee member

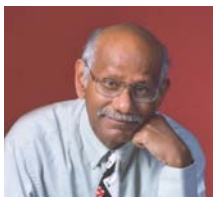
Do you want instructional design that is not only faster and cheaper, but also better? What do games, fun, and money passed out during training have in common? The answer: Learning and behavior changes... especially when Sivasailam Thiagarajan—better known as Thiagi—is involved.

Thiagi will be the featured speaker at the May 8th meeting of the LSC, and the title of his program is “Rapid Instructional Design.” Thiagi goes beyond the standard complaints heard about instructional design by providing a new approach based on his CCCC (Continuous, Creative, Concurrent Co-Design) model, which has been used on both hard- and soft-skill training topics.

Thiagi will explore the following principles in the program:

- Authentic assessment as the core of training
- Open questions and innovative assessment techniques
- Interactive strategies that wrap around different content resources
- Blend of training with performance improvement interventions
- Co-design with learners taking on the roles of trainers and evaluators

Thiagi is known as a prolific and creative designer of games and simulations. His games are considered ingenious, easy to conduct, and provocative of thoughtful discussion. Thiagi's work has been described as being easily adapted to any learning environment. He is an acknowledged master in creating accelerated learning with simulations and games.



Thiagi (shown here) is Director of Research and Development at the Thiagi Group, an organization that helps people accomplish more through interactive strategies for improving performance. Internationally recognized as an expert in human performance technology, Thiagi has lived in three different countries and has consulted in 21 others. Thiagi has twice been president of the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) and has also been the five-time president of the North American Simulation and Gaming Association.

Those interested in discovering how learning can truly be fun are urged to attend Thiagi's walk-the-talk interactive program at the LSC meeting on May 8th.

Details

Thursday, May 8, 2008, 6:15 to 8:00 p.m.

Crowne Plaza Hotel North Dallas-Addison
14315 Midway Road
Addison, Texas

Directions: http://www.stc-dfw.org/pages/meet_monthly.htm#locations

Reservations (Reservations made after 5pm on April 28 are subject to a \$5 penalty)
[Click to register for the meeting now!](#)

Dinner (with reservations):

- \$20 STC members / Students with student ID
- \$25 non-members

Program Only Attendance:

- \$5 STC members / Students with student ID
- \$10 non-members

April Review: No User Left Behind – Wakeman and Bryant Demonstrate Help That Is Helpful

by [Jim Korth](#), PR Committee member

Users constantly complain that they can't find answers to their simple questions. As innocent users begin searching the help file, they get ensnared by needing to select "Related Topic" or "See Also" links. Creating, maintaining and enhancing your document set become costly. Designing online help that is truly effective in delivering answers to varied audiences is a continuing challenge.



Marlowe Wakeman and Marc Bryant were the featured speakers at the April LSC meeting (shown here with Elisa Miller, 1st Vice President and Program Chair). They gave an enlightening presentation on creating help that users will actually use and for which managers will be happy to pay.

In "No User Left Behind: Designing Online Help That Is Helpful," Marlowe and Marc described a recent three-month period in which four projects shipped, including two new projects and two overhauls that included back-end architecture and a user interface. Their goals included reducing the time required to develop their help document, improving the user experience, adding value to the product with a solution-driven document, and providing the same level of detail that the user would expect from a user guide. Their primary tools were ePublisher Pro and MadCap Flare.

How did they start? First, they determined their requirements. Next, they chose their tools, identified their users' needs, organized their information by context, and designed their delivery system. Finally, the design must be tested.

At each step, critical questions must be answered. Do you need to provide printed documentation, and do you need to fit the new design into an existing look and feel that users are accustomed to? Is there an existing tool we need to be aware of? Designing, configuring tools and tweaking processes may take up to a month at the outset.

Regarding tools, what type of product are you documenting and will you need to provide different versions of help? How predictable is your release cycle and will the same group of writers be working on the product from one release to the next?

Think about your users' needs. Who are your typical users, and what are their daily procedures? What are the users' points of pain? Technical support and product management people can help provide answers. What does the user want, and what will the user understand?

Evaluate short-term needs versus long-term needs. Consider layering your information so the user can easily choose and control what to see next. Perform usability tests early in the release cycle.

At the end of their program, Marlowe and Marc left us with some valuable Marlowe Maxims:

- Never forget your team's skills and experience
- Never lose sight of your audience
- Remember that more steps mean more planning.

With these good practices in hand, we can be confident that no user will be left behind.

Articles

Read about:

- [Feature: The Long and Sometimes Winding Road to a Writing Career \(Jim Korth\)](#)
- [Protecting Your Assets in Microsoft Word \(Louellen Coker\)](#)
- [University of Houston-Downtown Graduate Student Survey](#)

FEATURE: The Long and Sometimes Winding Road to a Writing Career

By [Jim Korth](#), Member

Sometimes our career paths are not straight, nor are they always in an upward direction. After one career in finance and another in information technology, I was looking for work that would let me be creative while drawing on the experiences and knowledge I had gained in nearly thirty years of knocking around (and getting knocked around) the corporate world.

In so many different jobs I found myself informally in a position of communications liaison between different groups, either within my company or between my company and an outside organization. No matter my formal job title or responsibilities, everywhere I went, daily business problems arose from inaccurate or insufficient information about products, policies, procedures, and practices. In most instances, the parties responsible for the problem had not adequately considered what the other party needed or how the information should best be delivered.



My interest in Professional Writing...

I got interested in professional writing because I found myself having to do so much of it to make up for problems caused by documentation failures or communication that had been delivered poorly or not at all. When external customers learn to rely more on the rumor mill for product information than they do from the company selling the product, that becomes a problem. When marketing and outside sales people drop even the simplest product information question on to the technical support organization because the product group publishes only garbage, you have a serious issue.

While both situations above are fundamentally management problems, addressing problems like these in the heat of battle usually meant creatively locating, assembling, and transmitting the needed information, usually in a hurry and with minimal help. Most of the time, the needed information did exist, but it wasn't in a condition that could be released. Finally locating a much-needed portion of internal-only chat dialogue between software developers about an obscure bug deep in the operating system kernel can be a huge relief after weeks of pain. But the even harder work may come afterward in editing, organizing, and communicating the information for external distribution.

While interviewing for a new position...

I was interviewing for several positions in 2007 and applied at a law firm for a technical position. In the final interview, I met with the senior partner. Just on a lark, I brought some writing samples with me, including the Neil Perlin article I wrote for "Technically Write" in September. I explained to the senior partner that while I didn't know much about structured authoring or DITA, I had developed an ability to absorb information quickly to a level such that I understood it well enough that I could write about it. Detecting his curiosity, I expanded on my interest in writing and discussed my membership in the Society for Technical Communication.

The senior partner took the article, and several days later, he offered me a job writing patent applications. The job involves quickly getting an understanding of a novel technical idea and then writing about it at an abstract level so that the basic invention and its technical novelty can be understood by a variety of audiences including judges, jurors, patent examiners, and attorneys, sometimes years later. All those painful efforts getting people of one technical level to understand what people of a different technical level were trying to say had paid off.

What I've learned...

I have learned that technical communication is much more than technical writing. It involves listening, asking questions, searching for information, and learning to be resourceful and creative in putting it all together. When it comes time to doing the writing, the hard work is over. Once I have the material in front of me and I understand it and know what needs to be communicated to whom, the writing part comes naturally.

Protecting Your Assets in Microsoft Word

by [Louellen S. Coker](#), Senior Member



If you've emailed a Microsoft Word (or Corel WordPerfect, for that matter) document to anyone, you may have unwittingly sent confidential information to a friend, colleague, or even competitor. You see, when you create and edit a document in these programs, the software creates bits and pieces of information and hides it within your document.

If one chooses to reveal these bits and pieces, or metadata, they'll discover who created, opened, read, printed, deleted information, added information, and where the document was stored as well as how long it took to perform the task on any particular date and time. What is metadata?

Metadata, as defined in Beware the Dangers of Metadata, is "simply described as 'data about data'. Think of it as a hidden level of extra information that is automatically created and embedded in a computer file."

Some metadata is easily viewed (steps shown below). Other metadata is hidden and can be revealed by accident or by using a binary file editor. Both of which are quite possible in any office.

Microsoft indicates that the following metadata is stored in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files:

- User name and computer name
- Comments and tracked changes
- Hidden text, worksheets, data columns, and data rows
- Embedded objects such as Excel worksheets, drawing objects, and pictures
- PivotTable® cache
- Speaker notes

Why does it matter to me?

All the information indicated above is great for productivity and is an important part of a technical communicator's life. In fact, we embrace the ability to collaborate! Document management systems rely extensively on metadata, allowing users to find a relevant document based on who edited it, how it was distributed, keywords, and subject or matter information.

Metadata makes life easy, right? Well, MOSTLY.

As I was researching this article, I found multiple references to blunders made by individuals, governments, and even the United Nations, in which bank account numbers, assassin names, original authors not attributed in a document, smoking guns in memos, and more were revealed. Here is an article

in the Washington Post that has some good examples. I was particularly intrigued by the story of Tony Blair providing Colin Powell a document that had large portions plagiarized—grammar mistakes and all! I’ve spoken with colleagues who had several months worth of documentation seized simply because a team member, who was involved in litigation, had simply opened a file once upon a time. The team lost hours of work and had some tense times making their deadlines.

What can your document’s metadata reveal?

Your document can reveal quite a bit about your work. When I was working on a presentation about metadata, I went fishing in my archives for an older document that would reveal sloppy document management. I opened a file that was used in a collaborative project when working on my Master’s degree eight years ago. I believe the original document was created in Word 2000, but can’t be sure with a cursory review.

Just by a simple selection, I revealed the following information about the document (Figure 1) I created earlier this year.

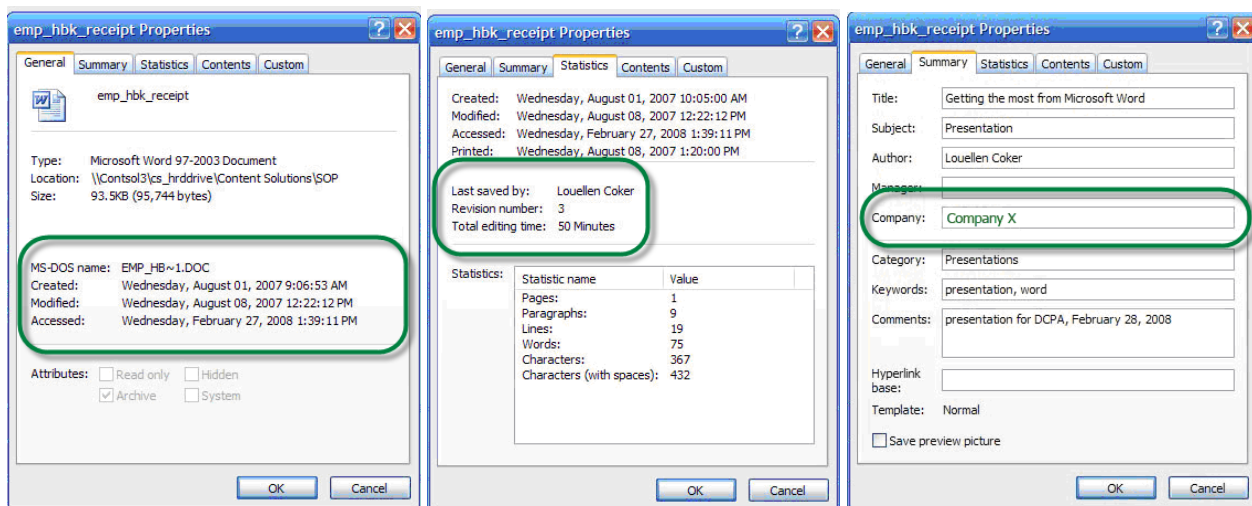
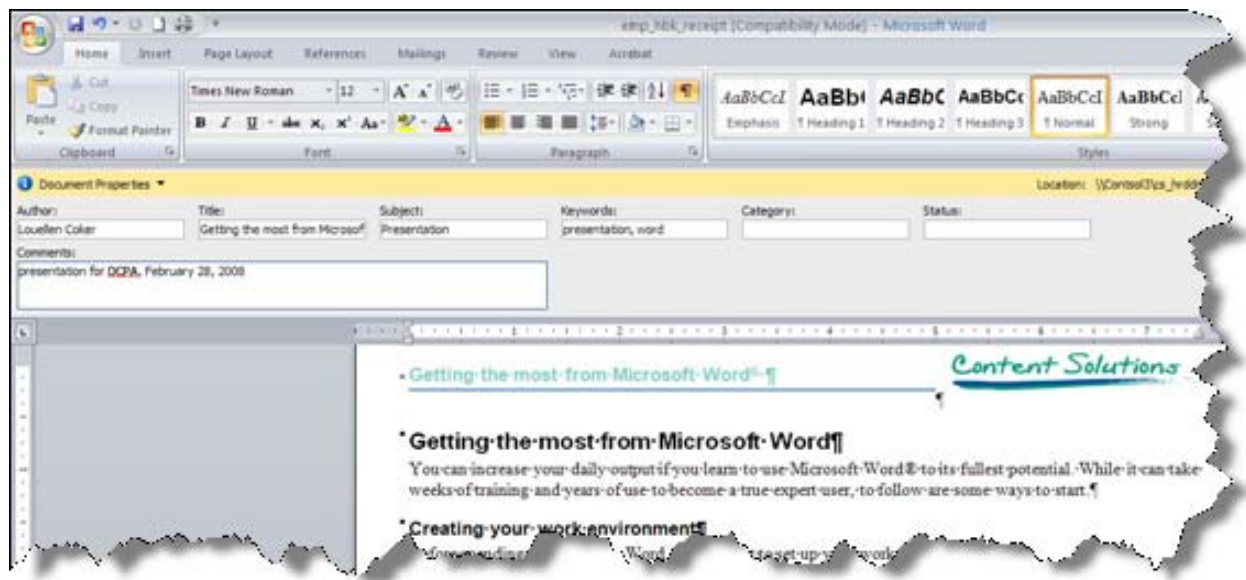


Figure 1: Metadata information in Word 2007 (top) and Word 2003 (bottom).

So, what's interesting about this? I created this document on February 27, 2008, but my metadata says it was created on August 1, 2007. While this was a brand new document, I had opened up an older folder that had my styles already set. Instead of reflecting revision one, it showed that this was the third time I had revised the document. Though I had actually worked on the document for about 10 minutes, I apparently had it open for 50 minutes at the time of the screen capture. The title of the document was even wrong!

For me, the scariest thing I found was on the Summary tab. It says that the company that created the document was Company X. I haven't a clue about that company. To my knowledge/recollection, I've never worked for or collaborated with anyone in that company. When I did a Google search, I couldn't find anything that seemed to fit Company X, nor did any representative with that company have any connection whatsoever to this document. But there it is.... Somehow this document descended from a document (from a document from a document) that was created by a classmate who probably worked for Company X EIGHT years ago!

Not only would this information be embarrassing if a client saw it, I could be opened up to some intellectual property issues if somebody chose to be litigious. Now fortunately, a forensic review of the document's metadata would reveal the truth. But it could be expensive.

It pays to be aware of what your document says about you and to make sure it reveals what you want it to reveal.

How do I reveal my document's metadata?

It's easy, with one click you can reveal your properties.

- Word 2003 or earlier: select **File > Properties**
- Word 2007: select **Office Button > Prepare > Properties**

How can you protect your document's metadata?

Many ways are available for ensuring that your personal or company data stays with you:

- **Turn off Fast Save.** This feature speeds up saving a document by saving only changes made to a document. However, text that you delete from a document may still remain.
- **Remove personal information** from a document when you save it.

In Word 2002 and 2003	In Word 2007
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Click Tools > Options. 2. On the Security tab, under Privacy options, select Remove personal information from file properties on save. 3. Click OK. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Click Office Button > Prepare > Inspect Document. 2. Select Options for inspection. 3. Click Inspect. 4. Select Remove All.

- **Turn off** the Track Changes tool.
- **Use a third-party software** to remove the information.
- **Use a clean template/document** each time.
- **Save the document** as an .rtf, .txt, or .pdf file.

University of Houston-Downtown Graduate Student Survey

by [Janmy Nguyen](#), Graduate Student, University of Houston-Downtown

I am a graduate student in the Department of English at the University of Houston–Downtown under the direction of Dr. Stephanie Turner. I am conducting a research study to help explore any gaps for preparing graduates in their role as professionals in the software documentation/medical communication field in undergraduate technical communication programs at Texas universities.

The goal of my study is to help identify ways to improve technical communication programs to better prepare undergraduates for their role and help them become key contributors to the field. By answering this survey, you will provide valuable information in identifying any gaps in Texas undergraduate technical communication programs as well as ways to help prepare students as professional software documentation specialists/medical communicators.

If you are involved in the hiring process of technical communicators in software documentation or medical writing in Texas, I am requesting your participation in my study by answering a quick survey:

- **Software Documentation survey:**
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=rAKG2vnW5HYg0f8FArMydw_3d_3d
- **Medical Writing/Communication survey:**
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qK_2fdf0GxPw5ISrUVwIDCzA_3d_3d

The survey is about 5–10 minutes. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalties. The results of the research study may be published, but your name will not be used.

Contact me at jnguyen255@yahoo.com if you have any questions concerning the research study.

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LSC News

Read about:

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 - [LSC Elections: Your 2008–2009 Officers \(Mel Haughton, Jim Chambless\)](#)
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 - [Scholarship Committee: April Prize Winners \(Robert Carr Harris\)](#)
 - [Volunteer Committee: Want to help a little? \(Mel Haughton\)](#)
 - [Mentor Program: Why Mentoring Matters \(Ann Balaban\)](#)
- [LSC Membership Minute](#)
- [Human Factors with Kathryn Poe](#)
- [LSC Help Desk](#)
- [LSC SIG News](#)
- [Lone Star Job Bank](#)
- [STC Texas Chapters](#)
- [Educational & Networking Opportunities](#)

LSC Notes and Committee Reports

LSC Elections: Your 2008–2009 Officers

by [Mel Haughton](#) and [Jim Chambless](#), 2008 Nominating Committee

Your 2008–2009 LSC Administrative Council was voted in during the April meeting. You'll be seeing and hearing from these individuals real soon.



Elisa Miller
President



Kristen Kirkham
1st Vice President



Arroxane Ullman
2nd Vice President



Mike Hiatt
Parliamentarian



Chris LaPorte
Treasurer

**PHOTO NOT
AVAILABLE**

Rob Brown
Secretary

Join us at the May meeting as we install these LSC members to their positions.

Member Recognition Committee: Are You a Superstar?

by [Mel Haughton](#), LSC immediate past president



Do you like making a difference and stepping up to help? Do you need a few more samples for your portfolio? Do you want to work on your networking skills? How about get your head around a new piece of software?

If you answered **yes** to any of these questions, then dive in and start volunteering today. You'll be on your way to becoming a Superstar!

You automatically receive points each time you participate in LSC activities. Points are based upon the activity and its point values and are listed in the table below.

LSC Activity	Points
Attend a monthly meeting	1
Attend a council meeting	1
Volunteer at an event	2
Contribute to a community service effort	1
Judge competitions	3
Contribute an article to newsletter	1
Bring a guest to meeting	1
Be a mentor	5
Present at an STC event (Local, regional, or international)	2
Speak to a student group about Technical Communication and STC	2
Convince a guest to join	5

Our Volunteer Wrangler will keep score from August 1, 2007 to June 1, 2008. Collect a total of 20 points to become an LSC Superstar. All Superstars will be recognized at the September 2008 meeting.

So, start volunteering today and become a Superstar and become part of the Superstar team. Winners receive a unique LSC Superstar shirt. The only way to get this shirt is to get involved and earn those points.

Send an e-mail to volunteers@stc-dfw.org to learn more about volunteer opportunities.

Scholarship Committee – Member Wins National Conference Registration

by Robert Carr Harris, Scholarship Committee Manager



At the **April meeting**, the Lone Star Community held its last door prize drawing of the program year. Three STC members went home with great door prizes, from sponsors including Yankee Candle, Barnes and Noble, and The Body Shop. One particularly lucky member won registration to this year's STC National Summit, which will be held in Philadelphia from June 2 through June 4. This wonderful prize was donated by the LSC administrative council.

The following three were the meeting's lucky prize recipients:

- **Kathryn Poe**, who won a Spa Wisdom body care gift box from The Body Shop, as well as a stationery set and time capsule kit from Barnes and Noble.
- **Carolyn Moore**, who won a summer-themed photo album from Barnes and Noble, and a summer candle gift basket from Yankee Candle.
- **Linda Klein**, who was the grand prize winner of the registration to the national conference. She said, "I'm psyched about going to the conference, I wouldn't have been able to go if I hadn't won this prize."

Linda overcame great odds as many members and guest help contribute to our most successful door prize drawing to date. All the proceeds go to the LSC scholarship fund.

At our **May meeting**, we will hold a small silent auction as our final fund raising event of the season. Bring your checkbooks and a generous spirit.

Visit the Scholarship page on the community Web site at www.stc-dfw.org for more information on the scholarships that LSC offers.

Volunteer Committee: Want to help a little?

by [Mel Haughton](#), LSC Volunteer Wrangler

Do you want to get involved, learn new skills, network, and make a difference? It's your time to shine! Take a look at our current openings and let me know where you fit in! Just email me at <mailto:mhaughton@gmail.com> and let me know where you want to help!

Industry Researcher: Want to help us update the list of companies who hire technical writers in the DFW area? This is a great opportunity for you to find out who is hiring and make contacts in the industry. This job requires about 8 hours of your time. This is a one-time job.

Assistant Treasurer: Want to help our Treasurer, Chris LaPorte, keep track of LSC's finances? This job requires about 5 hours of your time every month, and you'll learn a lot about Quicken and Excel.

Public Relations Assistant Manager: Work with our Public Relations Manager to write and distribute press releases. This job requires about 3-5 hours of your time every month.

Mentoring Manager and Assistant Manager: Help set up programs for LSC mentors and protégées so they can share knowledge, bond with new members in our community, and avoid common mistakes. This job requires about 3 hours of your time every month.

Scholarship Manager and Assistant Manager: Get the word out to students in our area about scholarship and learning opportunities, and help raise money for the LSC Scholarship Fund. This job requires about 3-5 hours of your time every month.

Competitions Managers: We're looking for Online, Technical Publications and Technical Art Competitions Managers and Co-Managers. This job will require about 8 hours of your time monthly from October 2008 through January 2009. Several positions are available. You'll help judge and organize the yearly LSC Competitions. For more information, go to http://www.stc-dfw.org/pages/comp_main.htm.

LSC Fort Worth Satellite Manager: Do you live and Ft. Worth and want to get a group together in your neck of the woods? This job requires about 3 hours of your time every month, and you'll help set up meetings in Ft. Worth.

Mentor Committee: Why Mentoring Matters

by [Ann Balaban](#), Associate Fellow and Manager, Mentoring Committee

STC is always looking for new leaders. One way to locate and retain our next generation of leaders is by mentoring.

Mentoring can help STC develop new leaders while enhancing your career development and improving your technical knowledge. Besides all these great benefits, it really improves your self-esteem! The mentor's growth occurs right along with the protégé's.

The purpose for mentoring is to encourage growth of a less experienced person in their profession and within STC. Your experiences learning about and working with others qualifies you to be a mentor. If you had a mentor when you were starting out, imagine what a difference it would have made—if only I knew then what I know now! This is your chance to share your experiences, your enthusiasm for your work, and your interests with someone just starting out in technical communication.

In a mentoring relationship, the mentor and protégé:

- Identify objectives, goals, and development needs
- Define and establish a plan to accomplish goals
- Meet regularly in person, by phone, or through e-mail to review and evaluate progress

Mentoring is all-inclusive—no one is excluded who wants to participate. You do not have to be a student to be a protégé. Whether you are new to technical communication—just starting out or making a career change—or you have been a technical communicator for awhile and need guidance to jump-start your career, you can be a part of the mentoring program. Success is based on what you want to do. A mentor can suggest methods for advancement, recommend books and other resources, and offer résumé assistance and career guidance. As a protégé, you have requirements to fulfill, too. You should ask questions, listen and be open to suggestions, and keep the lines of communication open.

The STC Lone Star community is continually looking for mentors and people who need mentors. This is a wonderful program that benefits all involved.

Resources:

1. About.com: www.about.com
2. The Mentoring Leadership & Resource Network: www.mentors.com
3. The Resources Agency Mentor Program
4. Catheryn Mason and Elizabeth Bailey, "Benefits and Pitfalls of Mentoring," STC 2005 Annual Conference Proceedings.

LSC Membership Minute

by [Jeanne Foster](#), Manager, Membership and SIN SIG

This past month, the LSC admin council members had the pleasure of meeting Chicago Membership Chair Kelly Oja. Kelly contacted us to find out if there were any LSC activities planned during his stay in Dallas for training. As it turned out, he was just in time to attend the monthly admin council meeting. It was a great opportunity to exchange ideas and get to know a little about our northern colleagues' chapter. Kelly followed up his visit with an e-mail in which he said:

"On behalf of STC Chicago, if any Lone Star chapter member is going to be in Chicago, please have them contact us, and I am sure at least one CAC member can get together with them." – Kelly Oja, Membership Chair, STC Chicago chapter

You can visit the STC Chicago chapter Web site at <http://www.stc-chicago.org>.



New Member Spotlight: This month we have ten new members and one transfer-in. One of our new members is actually a returning member, **Joni Taylor**. Joni currently works at Zale Corporation, but her last day there was April 30th, so she is actively looking for her next technical communication opportunity.

Joni tells me she was an active member in LSC from 1998–2001, and she let her membership lapse during all the turmoil in 2001. Joni says, "I enjoyed being in STC because I met a lot of really nice, absolutely brilliant people, and I learned a lot about technical writing, software tools, and life in general. I'm sure the same will be true of my experience with Lone Star STC this time as well!"

Linda Klein is another of our new members. She currently works at the corporate office of Eljer, Inc. (a major manufacturer and distributor of plumbing fixtures), located in Addison. Linda originally came to STC as a student member by way of Richland Community College. That's where she completed a Technical Writing Certificate in 2002. Linda says, "The knowledge and certificate I attained from Richland assisted me in getting a promotion to Product Manager that same year." Now she uses her technical communication skills in her day-to-day work writing product bulletins, installation instructions, and training materials. Linda uses QuarkXpress, Illustrator, and Photoshop to create product specification, repair parts documents and price books for Eljer. You might have seen Linda at our monthly LSC meetings this year. She began attending again in the fall, and recently rejoined. Congratulations, Linda, on winning the April meeting's door prize for the 55th STC Annual Technical Summit! I know you are looking forward to attending the conference in June along with many other LSC members.

Besides Joni and Linda, please also welcome the following new and returning members:

- Amy Koetter
- Clarence Lott
- Eric Lyke
- Paul OKelly
- Stephan Sondregger
- Diana Thomas
- Jennifer Turner
- Thuy Vu
- Rachel Warner

Welcome to LSC!



SIN SIG (Shy, Inactive, and New). Join us! The Shy, Inactive, and New Special Interest Group (SIN SIG) meeting is open to all our members. This informal gathering is a great way to network before the meeting and learn more about our community. All are welcome! At the April meeting, Kathryn Poe met with us to share a little about her experiences at the annual STC conferences.

Plan Ahead. On the evening of our final LSC meeting of the program year (May 8th), SIN SIG will gather at 5:45 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Dallas-Addison. This month, we extend a special invitation to all who have attended SIN SIG this year. Please come and help us plan for the 2008–2009 program year. We'll also have time to get to know each other and talk about topics of general interest.

Change or Upgrade Your Membership. Upgrade your STC membership (from "Limited" or "E-membership" to "Classic") or add communities or SIGs to your existing membership.

- Mail or fax a completed STC Membership Change/Upgrade Form to the STC office.
- Download and print the form: http://www.stc.org/PDF_Files/memberApp2006.pdf

We Miss You! Please help us find Rebecca Carr, who is listed in the “undeliverable addresses” category of the monthly STC membership report. If you have contact information for this member, e-mail me at membership@stc-dfw.org.

Human Factors

by [Kathryn Poe](#), Associate Fellow

Welcome to the Human Factors column. My intent is to talk with some of our senior members and officers so you can get to know them and they can share with you. LSC has a plethora of folks who have been in technical communications for some time. We have seen major changes in technology, expectations, and direction since we started and here is our chance to communicate some of that to you. As I like to tell the newbies I meet, if I can keep you from stepping in a few of the potholes I have found, it is worth the effort.



By way of exposition, I will ask one of our veteran LSC members the same questions each month and her or his answers will appear right here. Please feel free to send your ideas and comments to me at kpoe@ursaminorservices.com to make this information more useful to you.

+++++

Getting to Know Darice Lang

Job Title: Manager, Online Communication



What do you actually do?

Analyze development tasks and their impact on our current documentation, make changes, document new features (2-3 a release), organize reviews, Q/A documentation, CM changes, generate CDs of final software product. My documentation is provided as Windows help files (in the process of converting all to HTMLhelp) and as PDF versions of that help. I'm currently the lone writer for the company.

What hard skills have you found most useful and how do you continue to cultivate those skills?

- The ability to work on multiple projects at one time.
- Manage by documenting the tasks done and that still need to be done.
- Lists, lists, lists ☺

Do you consider yourself a guru at any particular subject?

Windows help files and RoboHelp

What is the greatest benefit of being an STC member?

- Ability to access training on topics specific to technical writing.
- Ability to meet folks who deal with the same issues and tools that you work with every day.
- Through SIGs, ability to request answers to specific questions in your specialty - even if you only need a reminder.
- Ability to have someone who understands what you do. 😊

Why have you stuck around so long? What's kept you here?

As the years have gone by, STC has provided me with news regarding new technologies and suggested changes in process. Even if I did not need the information at the time, it has always been valuable to have further down the road.

What positions in LSC and STC have you held?

None but I judge competition entries each year.

How have you benefited from volunteering?

I have done several presentations at the local and international level. Through these I've shared my ideas and picked up ideas from others on how to refine my processes even further.

Advice/Thoughts on STC for Newbies?**How can I get involved and if I do, what's in it for me?**

Attend meetings and/or join a SIG. You'll get out of STC what you put into it. If a volunteer opportunity comes up that is of interest to you, jump right in.

- **Meetings**, even on topics you don't think you'll be interested in can provide background to help you. Even if you don't implement someone else's whole solutions, portions can help you simplify your day-to-day tasks.
- **SIGs** provide a wealth of information on topics more specific to your specific job. Setting up a separate folder where SIG e-mails are sent can help you manage the traffic, or you can subscribe to get a daily message with that day's messages.

How do I meet/recognize senior members?

If you attend meetings, you'll start recognizing folks who regularly attend. Not all will be senior members, but if the same folks speak up and provide feedback, you can be pretty sure that you've spotted one! Also at local conferences, many of the presenters are senior members. When in doubt, ask.

Do senior members/council members really want to talk to me?

Always! 😊

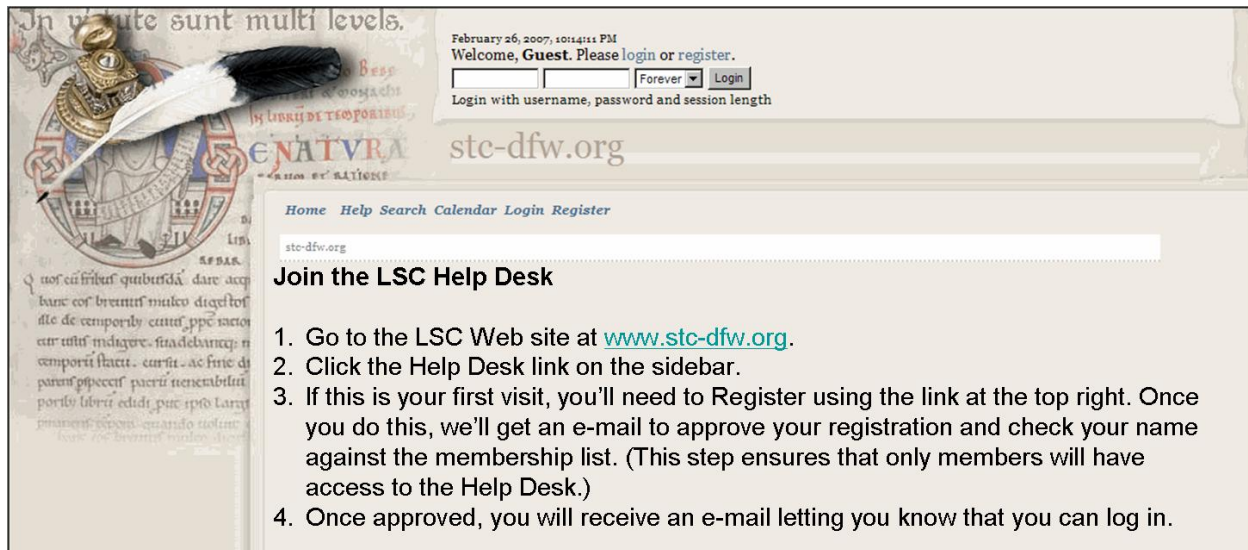
Folks who are just starting out have fresh new ideas of how to look at information. Talking with new members helps the rest of us get out of the "We've always done it this way" rut. We can also provide information about methods/processes we have tried that didn't work, and why we think it didn't.

Can STC really help me find a job?

Yes. I know several folks that have gotten a job through STC or STC contacts. I've been lucky. In 29 years of technical writing I've only had three jobs. With each, I have found a new position before I left (or was asked to leave) my current position.

LSC Help Desk

by [Kathryn Poe](#), Associate Fellow



February 26, 2007, 10:14:11 PM
Welcome, **Guest**. Please [login](#) or [register](#).
Login with username, password and session length

[Home](#) [Help](#) [Search](#) [Calendar](#) [Login](#) [Register](#)

stc-dfw.org

Join the LSC Help Desk

1. Go to the LSC Web site at www.stc-dfw.org.
2. Click the Help Desk link on the sidebar.
3. If this is your first visit, you'll need to Register using the link at the top right. Once you do this, we'll get an e-mail to approve your registration and check your name against the membership list. (This step ensures that only members will have access to the Help Desk.)
4. Once approved, you will receive an e-mail letting you know that you can log in.

LSC SIG News

Independents and Networking

by [Jo Byrd](#), CIC SIG Manager

Working in the consulting/contracting arena requires an extensive network if we're to be successful or if we want to enjoy more or less continuous employment. Sadly, we all need to expand our network.

Send e-mail to jbyrd@byrdwrites.com for more information.

Lone Star Job Bank



Lone Star's [Job Bank](#) is online at the LSC Web site, listing local employment opportunities. The Job Bank is updated as jobs are submitted.

If you're looking for work, or wish to post a position, visit the Web site and follow the instructions.

The international [STC Web site](#) maintains nationwide job listings, along with some international opportunities.

STC Texas Communities

Links to Texas STC resources:

STC Communities in Texas

[Alamo](#)
[Austin](#)
[Houston](#)

[Alamo Tech Line](#)
[Austin Newsletter/Blog](#)
[Dateline Houston](#)

STC Student Communities in Texas

[College Station \(TAMU\)](#)
[Texas Tech University \(TTU\)](#)

[Events](#)

Educational and Networking Opportunities

Organization	Day	Place
North Texas PC Users Group (NTPCUG)	Third Saturday	King of Glory Lutheran Church
DFW Usability Professionals' Association (UPA) E-mail: dfwupa@yahoo.com	Third Tuesday	varies
Dallas Association of Women in Computing	First Thursday	Crowne Plaza, Addison
North Texas Adobe Captivate User Group E-mail: Walt Stewart	Third Tuesday	varies

Other Regional Area Events

AMWA Southwest Hosts 2008 Medical Communications Conference

The American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) Southwest Chapter will hold its 2008 Medical Communications Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, on **Friday, June 6, 2008**. Students, postdoctoral/clinical fellows, clinicians, researchers, and other members of the medical and scientific community are invited to attend the conference at Tulane University Health Sciences Center.



The conference will feature the following workshops:

- Basic Grammar I
- Elements of Medical Terminology
- Statistics for Medical Writers and Editors
- Advanced Writing

David Hood, Senior Healthcare Policy Analyst of the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, will give a plenary lecture entitled, "Reforming Louisiana's Healthcare System: Strategies for Change."

For more information, please visit www.amwasouthwest.org/Events or contact Angela Lorio at alorio@amwasouthwest.org or (504) 328-3348. Registration deadline is **May 16, 2008**. Book before **May 5** to receive a special discounted hotel rate.

AMWA is a national organization of more than 5,000 writers, editors and other professionals in medicine and science. The association has regional chapters throughout the United States and Canada, with members in 26 countries. The Southwest Chapter includes more than 250 members in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico and is very active in the education and professional enrichment of members and nonmembers alike.

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STC News

Read about:

- [STC 2008 Elections: Your International Officers Announced](#)
- [STC Technical Communication Summit – Early Bird Registration Extended](#)
- [STC Community Events](#)

Did you see Jackie Damrau's article (co-authored with Mary Jo Stark, Rocky Mountain STC), "Preventing Leadership Burnout," in the April 2008 STC *Tieline*. If not, you'll definitely want to read this article.

Go to: <http://www.stc-cdx.org/tieline/2008/04>

STC 2008 Elections: Your International Officers Announced

In the STC elections, 12.67% of the eligible membership voted for its 2008–2009 officers. Out of the 1,134 votes cast, 57 were paper ballots. Your elected officers for this next year are:

Office	STC Officers
President	Mark Clifford
1st Vice President	Cindy Currie
2nd Vice President	Michael A. Hughes
Secretary	Char James-Tanny
Treasurer	W. C. Wiese
Directors (3-year terms):	Judith M. Herr
	Rich Maggiani
	Lisa Pappas
Directors (1-year terms):	Hillary Hart
	Rob B. Hanna
Nominating Committee	Carolyn Kelley Klinger
	Thea Teich

STC 55th Annual Technical Communication Summit

Daily Sessions & Times Now Available. For those going to the conference, you can begin planning your schedules now. The sessions for Monday through Wednesday of the conference are available by going to **Sessions > Search** and selecting the day. You can then build your personal conference scheduler for enhancing your technical communication skills and knowledge. Visit STC's Conference Web site at <http://www.stc.org/55thConf/index.asp> for the latest program information.



Registration is still be accepted by visiting <https://access.stc.org/iMISPublic/Core/Events/Events.aspx>

Lodging. The conference attendees and exhibitors are encouraged to make hotel reservations at the STC's official conference, the **Philadelphia Marriott Downtown**, conveniently connected to the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Single room is \$218 (USD) per day plus tax; double room is \$228 (USD) per day plus tax; additional people in the room are \$20 (USD) each. Call 800-266-9432 or go online to www.stc.org/55thConf/hotel/index.asp.

Other STC Community Events

May 1, 2008

Instructional Design and Learning (IDL) SIG will present a Web seminar on “Don’t Let Your Work Become a Commodity” presented by Michael Harvey from the SAS Institute.

For more information, visit www.stcidlsig.org/jmla.

June 1 – 4, 2008

Technical Communication Summit — STC's 55th Annual Conference will be held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

For more information, visit www.stc.org/55thConf/index.asp.

STC Live Web Seminar Schedule

For more information or to register for this seminar, visit <https://access.stc.org/iMISPublic/Core/Events/Events.aspx>.


Date	Presenter	Topic
May 15	Sharon Burton	Doing More with Less: Using Topic-based Content Development
May 28	Fred Wersan	Writing Your Own Tools and Utilities
June 25	Cheryl Morrison Susan Ledford	Decreasing Document Size and Increasing Document Usability
July 16	Nicky Bleiel	Cool Tools for Tech Writers for Less Than \$100
August 13	Nicky Bleiel	Wikis and Knowledge Management
November 5	Naomi Robbins	How to Avoid Common Graphical Mistakes that Technical Communicators Make

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May 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:15pm LSC Council	2 Time: Event	3 Time: Event
4 Time: Event	5 Time: Event	6 Time: Event	7 Time: Event	8 5:45pm LSC Meeting	9 Time: Event	10 Time: Event
11 Time: Event	12 Time: Event	13 Time: Event	14 Newsletter Articles due	15 Time: Event	16 Time: Event	17 Time: Event
18 Time: Event	19 Time: Event	20 Time: Event	21 Time: Event	22 Time: Event	23 Time: Event	24 Time: Event
25 Time: Event	26 Time: Event	27 Time: Event	28 Time: Event	29 Time: Event	30 Time: Event	31 Time: Event

June 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<p style="text-align: right;">5</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">6</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">7</p> <p>Time: Event</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">8</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">9</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">10</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">11</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">12</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">13</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">14</p> <p>Time: Event</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">15</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">16</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">17</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">18</p> <p>Newsletter Articles due</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">19</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">20</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">21</p> <p>Time: Event</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">22</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">23</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">24</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">25</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">26</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">27</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">28</p> <p>Time: Event</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">29</p> <p>Time: Event</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">30</p> <p>Time: Event</p>					

July 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Time: Event	2 Time: Event	3 Time: Event	4 Time: Event	5 Time: Event
6 Time: Event	7 Time: Event	8 Time: Event	9 Time: Event	10 Time: Event	11 Time: Event	12 Time: Event
13 Time: Event	14 Time: Event	15 Time: Event	16 19 Newsletter Articles due	17 Time: Event	18 Time: Event	19 Time: Event
20 Time: Event	21 Time: Event	22 Time: Event	23 Time: Event	24 Time: Event	25 Time: Event	26 Time: Event
27 Time: Event	28 Time: Event	29 Time: Event	30 Time: Event	31 Time: Event		

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About TW

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About *Technically Write*

Published monthly from September through May, "Technically Write" is the official newsletter of the STC Lone Star community. It is produced by, for, and about the members, associates, and friends of the STC Lone Star Community.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors, and are not necessarily those of the STC nor the STC Lone Star community. Neither the STC nor the STC Lone Star community endorses products or services, but may, as part of our educational activities, allow their mention in articles and notices.

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For specific file path information, contact the Managing Editor at e-mail: newsletter@stc-dfw.org. Kindly notify the Managing Editor through e-mail when electronic reprints are published, or send a copy of publications containing reprinted versions to the Managing Editor at the address below.

Mailing Address:

Technically Write
P.O. Box 515065
Dallas, TX 75251-5065

Advertising

Advertising is available in Technically Write in an advertising section. If you have Web-ready (the 21st century equivalent of "camera-ready") content in the form of a GIF or JPG file, we can include it, if it is 432 pixels (6 inches) wide or less. (Anything larger will be resampled.) It will be placed in an advertising section on its own page. It will NOT be a "banner" ad. The rate for one issue is US \$125. Discounts apply as follows:

	Single Issue	Five Issue Package	Nine Issue Package (Full Volume)
Price	\$125	\$600 (\$120/issue)	\$900 (\$100/issue)
Discount	\$0	\$25	\$225

We do not support animated GIFs or other animation technologies at this time.

Payment

Payment can be made by check, money order, or purchase order made payable to Lone Star STC. PayPal[®] is also available. Full payment arrangements are due before the ad runs. The payment address is:

Mailing Address:

Lone Star STC
PO Box 515065
Dallas, TX 75251-5065
Attn: Treasurer, Newsletter Ad

Terms of Service

STC Lone Star community reserves the right to refuse ads.

Inquiries and Requests

Contact the Managing Editor at e-mail: newsletter@stc-dfw.org for more information.

Copyright and Trademark

This newsletter invites writers to submit articles they wish to be considered for publication. Note: By submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to this newsletter to run the article and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. Copyright is held by the writer. In your cover letter, please let the editor know if this article has run elsewhere, and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications.

Some articles might refer to companies or products whose names are covered by trademark or registered trademark. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Reference to a specific product does not constitute an endorsement of the product by the LSC or STC.

Newsletter Design and Layout:

Courtesy of University of North Texas, Spring 2007 English 4180 class
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Submit to *Technically Write*

Technically Write is pleased to accept contributions from community members and student members on a wide variety of topics, including (but not limited to):

- Evaluations of tools, software, trade publications, and the like
- Lessons learned, tips, advice for the newbie
- Testimonials regarding the value of STC to the member
- Sharing STC Conference insights
- Bios of STC members
- News of charitable undertakings by members, whether or not they involve trade skills.

Technically Write is published on the first Thursday of each month (September through May).

The editorial team retains and exercises the right to edit submitted and requested material for clarity, length, and appropriateness.

Contributions to *Technically Write*

- Must be submitted no later than the deadlines listed below.
E-mail: newsletter@stc-dfw.org.
- Are best submitted in Word format, or in the text of an e-mail message.
- Have no length limit, but need to be written with online presentation in mind.
- May have accompanying graphics in GIF or JPG format. Editors reserve the right to resample, crop, or exclude images if necessary.
- Should also include a short (25-word) biography of the author.

Author Guidelines

In case you haven't noticed, *Technically Write* is an online magazine, or e-zine. From Kurt Ament to Strunk and White, e-zine savvy people have this advice:

- Write short sentences.
- Make short paragraphs, 3 to 5 sentences at the most.
- Do not use semicolons (;). They are an excuse to lengthen sentences.
- Aim for no more than 500 to 700 words of content. If you desire to write a longer piece, please subdivide it with subheads, so that it can be serialized.
- Use our Style Guide when writing your articles.

2007-2008 Submission Deadlines

Deadlines for article submissions for this year are:

Issue	Deadline
September	August 21
October	September 18
November	October 23
December	November 20
January	December 18
February	January 22
March	February 19
April	March 19
May	April 16
June	May 14

Technically Write Staff

Managing Editor: [Jackie Damrau](#)

Editor: **OPEN**

Contributing Editor: **OPEN**

Copyeditors: [Jeanne Foster](#)

[Alan Oak](#)

[Mary McWilliams Johnson](#)

[Paula Robertson](#)

Contributors: Robert Carr Harris, [Ann Balaban](#), [Jo Byrd](#), [Jeanne Foster](#), [Mel Haughton](#), [Mike Hiatt](#), [Paul Holland](#), [Jim Korth](#), [Elisa Miller](#)

Columnists: [Louellen Coker](#), [Susie Lynn Fox](#), [Alan Oak](#), [Kathryn Poe](#)

Photographers: [Dale Erickson](#)

Photo Editor: [Douglas Dow](#)

Graphics: [Mary McWilliams Johnson](#)

Ex-Officio: [Chapter Officers](#)

LSC Officers

President: [Susie Lynn Fox](#)

1st Vice President: [Elisa Miller](#)

2nd Vice President: [Heather Steele](#)

Newsletter Editor: [Jackie Damrau](#)

Visit the [LSC Web site](#) for a complete list of community contacts.

Staff Bios

Ann Balaban, a former LSC president (1996-97), has produced award-winning documentation at Texas Instruments (TI) for many years. Recently, high-quality documentation was cited as a significant factor in obtaining new business at TI.

Jo Byrd survived through two degrees and a job from hell before she discovered she didn't want to be a librarian and after several additional missteps to find technical writing. A member of STC since 1992 and CIC SIG Manager since 1995, Jo helps others as she was helped early on.

Louellen S. Coker, owner of Content Solutions, a certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE), is a past president of the Lone Star Community and is also a member of the CIC, Lone Writers and Marketing SIGs. When not at her computer, you can find her training for that next marathon or sailing with her husband.

Jackie Damrau works at T-Mobile USA. She has more than 26 years of combined experience in technical writing and instructional design. Besides supporting STC activities through LSC and two national SIGs, Jackie enjoys going to the movies and reading classic literature, Irish/Scottish/English historical romance novels, or time-travel romance novels.

Doug Dow has been a member of the Lone Star Chapter since 1990, when he transferred from the Boston chapter. He has served in various capacities, including competition judge, chair of the Community Service Committee, and five years as newsletter Managing Editor. His interests outside of the cubicle include T'ai Chi, swing dancing, and honking on one of his many saxophones.

Dale Erickson serves the Lone Star Community as a Technically Write photographer and manager of the IPIC mailing list. He has been an STC member since 1982 and holds the rank of Fellow. Dale is senior technical writer at One Network Enterprises in Dallas.

Jeanne Foster is a lone writer for Jasper Design Automation, a privately-held electronic design automation (EDA) company headquartered in Mountain View, California. Besides technical communications, her varied career includes everything from government service to early childhood and elementary education. Jeanne is a recipient of the LSC 2007 Distinguished Community Service Award. She has volunteered as Region 5 Conference Registration manager and LSC Hospitality manager, and she is currently the Membership chair and SIN SIG manager. Beyond LSC volunteer opportunities, Jeanne enjoys beach vacations, dining at fine restaurants, and light-hearted banter with her colleagues.

Susie Lynn Fox, a Lone Star member since 2003, is serving as the 2007-2008 President of LSC. She enjoys the great learning opportunities and fun at the local meetings and national conferences. Susie is a senior technical writer at American Airlines, Inc.

Melissa (Mel) Haughton is an Instructional Designer and Project Coordinator for MLink Technologies in Lewisville, TX. She has a Master's degree in Technical Writing from the University of North Texas. Mel is the immediate past president and volunteer wrangler of the Lone Star Community.

Mike Hiatt is a former journalist who owned his own newspaper at one time before realizing surviving in Dallas required a bigger paycheck. Mike's father, a technical writer for 30 years, prompted his move into technical communications. He started as a proposal writer (responding to customer requests for proposals, not grant writing) before moving into the technical publications department at a small Dallas telecommunications company. Mike has primarily documented software writing user guides and help files

Mary McWilliams Johnson is a retired technical writer and Web designer. Check out her Web site: GraphicsByMary.com: <http://www.graphicsbymary.com>. (The SuperConnect site no longer exists.)

Jim Korth has worked in technical communications and support for twelve years with Microsoft, Compaq, and IBM. He holds technical certifications from Microsoft, Novell, and ITIL. Jim previously worked in banking at Citigroup and holds a B.S. Degree in Accounting from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Elisa Kaplan Miller took a checkered path to her current position as User Experience Architect at Perot Systems. She's been a journalist, trainer, college professor, editor, analyst, and usability lab manager. She spends her free time as LSC membership manager, trying to expand the view of what STC thinks of as technical communication professionals.

Alan Oak is majoring in English–Professional Writing at Ellis College of the New York Institute of Technology to train for a new career in technical communication. His prior career experience is in information technology. Alan is looking forward to paying work as a technical communicator after his 2008 graduation. Currently, he is serving as Web master of the Lone Star Community's Web site.

Kathryn Poe, Associate Fellow and past chapter president, is a self-proclaimed Knowledge Wrangler. She is currently enlightening minds in the financial sector.

Paula Robertson's Technical Communication career comprises twelve years as writer and editor of software and hardware documentation for domestic and international clients in transportation, telecommunications, and other industries. A previous career in computer graphics rounds out her skills as a "full-service" editor. As a Senior Member of STC, Paula has learned the value of the term and the practice of "networking."

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A proof-of-concept experiment in 1996, Technically Wired took the content of Technically Write and combined it with the graphical potential of the Web. Three issues were produced until the Internet Professional Interest Committee (IPIC)—as SIGs were known then—decided it was too intensive an effort for one person.

Links and e-mail addresses in these issues have been disabled, since they're likely to be extinct.

September 1996 October 1996 November 1996

STC Mission Statement

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STC is an individual membership organization dedicated to advancing the arts and sciences of technical communication. It is the largest organization of its type in the world. Its 18,000 members include technical writers and editors, content developers, documentation specialists, technical illustrators, instructional designers, academics, information architects, usability and human factors professionals, visual designers, Web designers and developers, and translators - anyone whose work makes technical information available to those who need it.

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