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So You Want To Do Some Email Marketing



Here are some tips I've gathered from the all-powerful Internet and my own experiences and education. If you want to see some proof that other folks out there agree with me, check out articles by Gail Goodman, CEO of Constant Contact. She's written quite a few articles about the do's and don'ts of email marketing. [more](#)

October 9th: Rediscovering Your Inherent Skills

Johann Wolfgang Goethe said, "That which we know, we have first seen." The same applies to our inherent skills. Our inherent skills are permanent, inseparable elements of our character that flow effortlessly from us. This is in contrast to our learned skills, which have been acquired through our life journey. [more](#)



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Editor Corner: STC and LSC Activities

by [Jackie Damrau](#), Managing Editor



This time of year has many STC and LSC activities getting started. For STC, you have the Call for Proposals for the next annual conference. For LSC, we have the annual Competitions and nominations for the Binion Amerson Leadership Award (BALA).

Our September meeting was entertaining with Kathryn Poe and Matt Stringfellow telling us about pigs and chickens, which you'll find a great review written by Marty Vick. Marty is a long-time LSC member who has been absent for a while, yet he's back among us, so I put him to work writing the meeting review.

You'll also find articles in this issue of *Technically Write* about email marketing, taking advantage of an interview, search engine optimization indicators, and a book review on marketing and pricing.

In STC news, you'll want to make sure you don't miss the October 20th deadline for the Call for Proposals for the 2009 STC 56th Annual Technical Summit in Atlanta, Georgia. You'll also read about an STC member, Elizabeth Pohland, a Master's in Tech Comm student at Texas Tech, who is the new *Intercom* editor.

The November issue is looking pretty empty. Your contributions are needed. Write about your experience with your career, a software tool, or the latest book you're reading or have read. Feel free to contribute your articles by sending them to newsletter@stc-dfw.org.

With the monthly meeting changing to the third Thursday of the month, I realized that my newsletter article deadline calendar was not accurate. You'll want to take a look at [2008-2009 Submission Deadlines](#) for the revised dates.

Letters to the Editor

From Paula Robertson, Senior Member:

"Hey gang, great first issue of the year! I see all kinds of "pizzazz"!! Good job, Jackie, on implementing the new and improved Meetings sidebar!"

From Jeanne Foster, Senior Member

"I was spurred on to read the August *Technically Write* when I heard Paula Robertson say that this month's newsletter (or e-zine, really) has lots of pizzazz. Pizzazz is one of those nebulous terms that reminds me of Potter Stewart who purportedly said, "pornography is hard to define, but I know it when I see it." (He later recanted that statement because he felt his view was, according to Wikipedia, "simply untenable.")

"Well, back to pizzazz. It might be hard to define, but I think I know it when I see it, and I agree with Paula—the September edition is chock-full of pizzazz. From our new president's welcome, which boldly tackles the reality of today's economic impact on our chapter, to the September meeting teaser with its helpful sidebar, the September *Technically Write* is right on the mark and pizzazz-ful!"

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Elisa's Milling About: Fall Brings...

by [Elisa Miller](#), 2008-2009 President



Fall is my favorite time of year. I'm always happy when the weather starts to cool down and the days get shorter. When we lived on the East Coast, I really enjoyed the changing of the seasons and the colors of the leaves...then they fell, and we raked and raked.

It seems as though each season brings with it some different kind of work for those of us in STC. In the summer, the Executive Council works very hard to plan a [programming year](#) full of interesting presentations and long-term goals for our chapter. As we move into the Fall, our thoughts turn to Competitions.

LSC Annual Competitions. We ask each of you to look back through the work that you've done for the last 24 months for exemplars of your best work. We hope that you will submit your samples to the LSC's [Annual Competition](#) for review and reward. The Competition process is a win-win for everyone. As a submitter, you get to submit your work to a group of judges who are your peers—who have met certain criteria within their community. As a community, we offer our senior, most experienced members a change to use their expertise in judging the entries. As judges, we get to view the work of others—and I have to say that every time I have participated as a judge—I have learned something in the process. The checklists that we use to judge the entries serve as reminders of all the things that we should think about when we create our work product. Yet, when we are at work, how many of us take the time to review those checklists?



If you haven't done so, please look through your work and see what you can submit and then, just do it.



Boosting Engineering, Science, and Technology (BEST) Competition. Speaking of competitions, the [annual BEST competition](#) is also a Fall feature. Once again, Lone Star STC will be judging the process notebooks prepared by the students. If you are available **Thursday evening, October 23, or Saturday, October 25**, consider participating in this event. The students really appreciate the feedback that we provide. Besides, we always have a great time seeing what the students create.

Fall Holidays. Fall also brings the beginning of football, the end of baseball and one of my favorite holidays, Halloween. I love to see the kids in their costumes. Over the years we've had some really cute kids come by our house. By and large, they are polite and appreciative of the goodies we provide. And we appreciate the time they spend getting ready for the annual candy haul. Fall is a great time for chocolate. It doesn't melt as quickly and is less likely to make a mess. And for a chocoholic like me, it is one more thing to be thankful for. Thanksgiving is coming. Is there something that you are especially thankful for? Maybe it's just the coming of Fall.



[Home > Meetings](#)**October 9th: Rediscovering Your Inherent Skills**by [Kristin Kirkham](#), Program Committee

Johann Wolfgang Goethe said, "That which we know, we have first seen." The same applies to our inherent skills. Our inherent skills are permanent, inseparable elements of our character that flow effortlessly from us. This is in contrast to our learned skills, which have been acquired through our life journey.

On **Thursday, October 9th**, Rich Maggiani from Solari Communication will present "Rediscovering Your Inherent Skills." Rich will integrate story telling, real-life examples, and group work, so you will learn how to rediscover your inherent skills and how to use them daily, both personally and professionally.

With hands-on exercises and rediscovery, Maggiani will take us on a journey to inspire the rediscovery of our inherent skills. From there we can learn new ways to incorporate these inherent skills into our life and even how to apply them at work.

Before our October 9th meeting, Rich has invited the LSC members to complete a short writing exercise, reviewing your past accomplishments and writing brief stories about some of them. These instructions will be sent out in our IPIC* reminder email to members and posted on our Web site. You can sign up for IPIC by visiting our Web site at http://www.stc-dfw.org/pages/mlist_ipic.htm

Rich encourages anyone attending the meeting to complete the exercises provided on our Web site. If you cannot complete the exercise, he encourages you to at least review the steps. Rich invites you to contact him for help, ask questions, or make comments: rich.maggiani@solari.net.

Rich Maggiani, a Communication Consultant, is a member of STC's Board of Directors and an STC Fellow.

We look forward to seeing you all in October. Don't miss out on this enlightening presentation!

*IPIC, which was originally the Internet Professional Interest Committee, is the name of the Lone Star Community's mailing list

**Thursday, October 9, 2008
6:15 to 8:00 p.m.**

**Crowne Plaza Hotel North Dallas-Addison
14315 Midway Road
Addison, Texas
Need [directions!](#)**

[Reserve your seat now!](#)

Dinner (with reservations):*

- \$25 STC members
- \$20 Students with student ID
- \$30 Guests

Program Only Attendance:

- \$7 Students with student ID
- \$12 STC members
- \$15 Guests

Reservations made after Oct. 6:

Dinner: Add \$5 to cost listed above
Program Only (all attendees): \$15



September Meeting Review: Being Barnyard Agile

by Marty Vick, Senior Member

So a question: Will document creation remain a sweep-up operation after the “real” development work is done? Must the writer sourly await the nightstick called product development?



On September 18th, Associate Fellow Kathryn Poe and Engineering Director Matt Stringfellow, both of [DataCert, Inc.](#), offered an alternative way. That way is the use of the Agile software creation framework, a collection of highly flexible development methods. Part of it includes chickens and pigs, but more on that further down.

First, think of how things are typically done. Product development departments use the traditional waterfall approach (with Kathryn at the bottom: lots of stuff coming down—and fast). The engineering team has finished “their” work and now “you” get the whole kit and caboodle. You have one week to create all required user documentation, plus training guides.

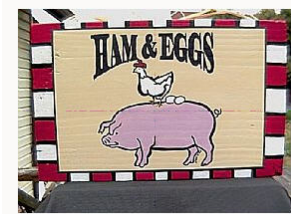
Compare that with one of the main Agile methods, called Scrum. Scrum guides the iterative flow of the work activities across phases through bursts of work called sprints (1-10 days). Sprints focus effort on code for individual product features or increments of work. Each team member rapidly skims work to be done, taking away an ID card naming a task or activity. The team member then completes the task and moves the card to the next appropriate project phase.

The completed activity is a foundation for the next dependent activity that’s likely to be worked on by someone else picking up the card again. With freedom comes responsibility.

In DataCert’s environment, a product owner manages the whole process by using customer requirements (“voice of the customer” in Six Sigma parlance) to define product features. The collection of features makes up a backlog or listing that’s used to define the work. Managing the work is a Scrum Master who is the project champion. He or she communicates the project’s vision and provides all the care and feeding needed by the Scrum team. The team does all the heavy lifting: software development, documentation creation (Kathryn), and quality inspection (Kathryn again).

The upshot is that the technical writer participates at the beginning of the development process, not at the end. The documentation work begins where it should: at the beginning of product development. Kathryn no longer stares grimly upward while a crushing workload comes down. She now canoes along with the team.

So, what about the chickens and pigs metaphor? Pigs are the get-it-done project team members and the product champion. Chickens are stakeholders: all the other folks affected, like users and the business’ management team. Those role names are based on a humorous viewpoint in the Agile community. Check your local search engine for the inside joke.



Working in an Agile Environment: Out From Under the Waterfall

by [James W. Korth](#), Member, PR committee



Can you as a writer remember the last software development project you were regularly consulted on and made an active member of from the beginning? Can you think of a development project involving daily review of goals? How often have you worked with software developers that were actually responsive to documentation needs from the early stages of the project?

If any of these questions caused you to laugh, cry, or want to know if the party doing the asking had simply lost their mind, then you probably have been stuck under the waterfall too many times in your professional life. You are

urged to learn about Agile, a set of software development methodologies that involves early and frequent collaboration with customers and developers, and makes documentation part of the process from the beginning.

Matt Stringfellow and Kathryn Poe were the featured speakers at the September LSC meeting where they presented "Agile 101: What It Is and Why You Care." Matt is the Director of Engineering and Kathryn is a Documentation Specialist at DataCert, Inc., a leader in legal operations management solutions.

The Agile approach enables regular collaboration with the customer, makes the status of each project transparent to all the stakeholders, and is structured to embrace change. But Agile also demands more discipline, instead of less, and requires flexibility from everyone. Agile relies on a Scrum Master (leader) to break a software development project into relatively small cycles or iterations. Planning is minimal, feedback is more immediate yet risks are also lessened.

All stakeholders are involved including the customer, developer management, and last, yet not least, documentation. The Scrum Master decides on the length and objectives of each iteration or Sprint, as referred to in the Agile world. The Sprint is usually two to four weeks in length and targets an achievable, measurable portion of work to which development, quality assurance, and documentation can all contribute. Daily meetings are held where participants stand throughout the meeting to keep the meetings short. Only direct contributors to the project (sometimes called pigs) can speak while users, customers and managers (the chickens) generally do not speak.

With the Agile approach and the Scrum Master in control, a software development project is easier to manage. Problems are identified sooner, rather than later. Progress is visible, yet so is lack of progress, and that's a good thing. The Scrum Master also shields the Scrum Team from unnecessary external contact that reduces productivity. Communication is facilitated and risks are reduced because project completion and feedback loops are shorter as stakeholders are always involved.

With Agile, even though the Sprint is short in duration, there is never really an end date, according to Matt. The work cycles roll from one Sprint to the next. Yet a sense of accomplishment occurs every two weeks where everyone can feel a part of the accomplishment. Kathryn expressed relief that no one imposes on a writer how long a task should take. The bulk of the work is spread evenly across a project and not dumped on documentation at the last minute. For the technical communicator working in an Agile development environment, life out from under the waterfall and in the middle of the daily action is far better.

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Articles

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- [Want to Know What I Did Last Weekend? \(Bill Paine\)](#)
- [Take Advantage of a Defining Moment: Ask Questions \(David Dick\)](#)
- [Search Engine Optimization Indicators \(Heather Steele\)](#)
- [Book Review: The Designer's Guide to Marketing and Pricing \(Louellen Coker\)](#)
- [Adobe Creative Suite 4: It's Coming Soon! \(Louellen Coker\)](#)

FEATURE: So You Want To Do Some Email Marketing

by Heather Steele, Member



Here are some tips I've gathered from the all-powerful Internet and my own experiences and education. If you want to see some proof that other folks out there agree with me, check out articles by [Gail Goodman](#), CEO of Constant Contact. She's written quite a few articles about the do's and don'ts of e-mail marketing.

Deciding Who the Audience Is

The first thing we have to do is set up a good recipient list. The best lists are ones that folks have opted-in to, but a bought list from a reputable source, like [Jigsaw.com](#), is great, too. Now take that recipient list and think about whether you'll need to divide it into multiple lists based on industry, level, interests, and so on. You're going to want to target as narrow an audience as possible in your e-mails so you are more likely to speak directly to the recipients.

Creating the E-mail

Subject Line: It needs to grab the reader's attention, tell them to perform an action, and maybe restrict their time to respond. When readers feel like they will miss out if they don't act quickly, they are more likely to open the e-mail and do what it says.

Header: Just as important as the subject line, the header draws the reader in to actually read the e-mail. Sub-heads are also important. They make skimming the e-mail easier for the reader.

Look and Feel: So, we came up with a great subject line and got the recipients to actually open our e-mail. Great! But now, we need to do something to keep them interested. Text is great, and it's obviously important, but if you send out a word-heavy e-mail with no pretty things to look at, you've just lost the reader. And the graphics have to be good. A nice, clean background is great. Add a slick logo, a nice demo or progression of screenshots and you've got their attention.

The Text: The text is there to do one thing: call the reader to action. Use links with specific anchor text (don't fall into the "Click [here](#)" effect). Using active, rather than passive voice is also important.

- **Unique Value Proposition:** The content of your e-mail should convince the reader that the product/service you have to offer is unique and better than anything they can get elsewhere.
- **Testimonial:** Including a customer quote relevant to the product/service is great.
- **KISS:** Keep it simple, stupid. We've all heard this one. The best way to cut content is to write a draft, read it out loud, cut out what sounds awkward, boring, or confusing. Repeat. You'll be amazed at how quickly you lose 30-50% of the original text.
- **Call to Action:** This is the most important part of the e-mail. It's where we get to tell the customer what to do. It should be close to the top of the e-mail. The link should describe what we want the customer to do, and we should limit the choices of

actions to one or two different links. (The content of the page can have multiple links to your site as well.)

- **Branding:** Branding is a great way to appear professional and organized. It's also a way to communicate our personality and objective. A clean, sleek logo with a matching color scheme that ties into the Web site is ideal.
- **Sending at the Right Time:** Obviously first thing Monday and last thing Friday are out. That e-mail is going in the trash, and quick.
 - For Business-to-Business: Send Tuesday and Wednesday mid-morning or mid-afternoon.
 - For Business-to-Customer: Send early evening during the week and Saturday afternoons.

The Results Are In!

So, we've run the campaign, and gotten our reports back. Let's talk a little about what all of those statistics mean.

Total Recipients: Pretty obvious. It's all the people to whom we sent the e-mail.

Successful Deliveries: These are the e-mails that made it past the spam filters and firewalls and landed in a real, bonafide e-mail inbox.

Bounced E-mails: These e-mails are the ones that didn't make it into someone's inbox. There are generally two reasons for this:

- **Hard Bounce:** It's an undeliverable address. The person closed their account, was fired, moved to Fiji, whatever. Basically this e-mail address is useless and should be removed from the list
- **Soft Bounce:** Usually this means the e-mail account was not available at the time we sent the e-mail. This could mean the server was busy, the account was full, and so on. This could be a good e-mail address, but we're just not sure.

Anything more than a 10% bounce rate and we need to reevaluate our e-mail list. If we keep our bounce rate too high, we can start to look like a spammer and e-mail services will automatically start flagging all our e-mails as spam. That's no good, so we want to ensure that we keep our e-mail list nice and clean.

Total Opens: This is the total times the e-mail was opened, which is really misleading. If one person opens your e-mail 200+ times, you might think you've had an effective campaign, but further investigation will show that what you really had was one person who really liked reading your e-mail over and over.

Recipients Who Opened: This shows who opened the e-mail and how many times they opened it, which is more useful.

Total Unique Opens/Clicks: This shows the number of times the e-mail was opened or a link was clicked with all duplicates removed. So, that person I mentioned earlier who opened the e-mail 200 times now only counts for one open. A good open rate across all industries is about 22%.

Post-Campaign Checklist

- **Bounced E-mails:** Determine how many e-mails bounced and why, then clean up the e-mail list.
- **Unsubscribes:** How many unsubscribe requests did we have? Why are people unsubscribing?
- **Open Rate:** How was the open rate? If it was lower than 20%, rethink the subject line and the time the e-mail was sent.
- **Links:** Did people click like we wanted them to? If not, go back to draft on the e-mail layout and content.
- **If they did click, were leads generated?** If not, work on the Web site content.

- **Longevity:** At what point do people stop clicking and opening? If folks are still clicking a week after the e-mail was sent, a follow-up newsletter may be a good option.
- **Cost:** How much did the campaign cost in effort and resources? Was it worth it? Is it worth it to do it again?

Want to Know What I Did Last Weekend?

by Bill Paine, Member



On Saturday and Sunday, May 3rd and 4th, as part of a company team, I rode a combined 150+ miles over a two-day event, the [SAM'S CLUB MS 150](#). It was an exhilarating adventure, a humbling learning experience, and a personal inspiration.

Who gets the crazy idea to ride on a bicycle 150 miles?

More than 3,000 cyclists touched by a family member or friend with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) had the same crazy idea; they were touched by a belief that riding 150 miles on a bicycle for donations is worthwhile. Our inspiration came from humble selfless spirits, the **Champions Against MS**. The MS Champions are not the riders, but the people diagnosed with MS who are not letting MS stop their lives. Read on!

I wanted to thank you for doing this and riding in my honor. Although I have been blessed with not heavy severe symptoms of M.S. I am starting to feel it as I grow older. I find I write less and type more because I can't hold a pen that well anymore so my hand gets tense. I enclosed pictures of my three gifts from God. I wanted you to see what my driving force is behind not letting this disease defeat me. They are what keeps me going, they are my reason for ignoring the symptoms and pushing on. Let's hope we find a cure before they reach my age.

*Thank you
Melanie*

Enclosed with her letter were photos of her three young girls.

and

I cannot find the words to fully describe my gratitude and appreciation for your kindness! It is incredibly touching to have a group of people ride in honor of a stranger - a truly selfless act. My family and I thank you so very much. I have always known great things come from Texas Others are not as fortunate as I have been. With people like all of you working hard and contributing in any way they can, maybe one day there will be a cure! ... Therefore, I ask that you ride in honor of my daughter, my nieces, and any other children out there who are vulnerable to this disease. They need you even more than I do!! Again, thank you for being the people that you are - very caring, considerate, and giving of yourselves. The world is a better place due to people like you all!!!!

*Very sincerely yours,
Mindy*

Saturday, DAY 1 began with a cold stiff wind. More than 3,000 riders rode from Frisco—north into the wind, slowly climbing in elevation. Wind breakers were zipped tight. Leg warmers were adjusted and readjusted for maximum warmth. At a rest stop, about 30 miles into the ride, I pulled in behind a recumbent bike. As I eased aching legs off my bike, the recumbent rider in front of me sat patiently waiting for his partner. I saw why. His bike was specially modified because he was a paraplegic and was

pedaling with his arms. I forgot about the wind, the cold, forgot about my minor discomforts. Suddenly, the day got bright, warm, and sunny.

With renewed commitment and fervor, I kicked off and averaged 13.8 mph (miles per hour) for the day (much better than the 12 mph I had anticipated). At lunch break in Sanger, I and hundreds of other riders were honored with tears and hugs from a woman confined to a wheelchair with MS. Her complaint? She couldn't hold the blankets necessary for her leg warmth and hug every one of us. Camaraderie was the word of the day. Courtesy was rampant. Throughout the day, I heard rider after rider thanking the police ensuring our safety at intersections and crossings. Was it easy? After 70 miles, cyclist chattering reduced from "Rider passing on your left" to "On your left" until we heard from each other only "Left!" as we rode into the DAY 1 finish at the Texas Motor Speedway.

Sunday, DAY 2, started us earlier and sore. We left the Speedway inspired by shared experiences and stories, and we began conquering our hills. Yesterday's 81 miles were under my belt, and I was cocky. Yes, muscles and parts of my anatomy were sore, but, there I was as part of the first few hundred riders to start. The wind and terrain were more difficult than the first day.

Before the second rest stop, I passed and then was passed by a rider with one arm and his lower right leg in a brace. He was powered by his left side and riding stronger than I. Ever try riding a bike with just one hand? How about one arm and one of your legs in a brace? Forgetting my cockiness, the wind, the hills, and my minor discomforts, I pushed on once again, humbled and inspired.

Towards the end of the ride, just before a rest stop, I stood resting my knee, and I cheered on the riders crawling uphill past me. One petite young lady pulled out next to me and began crying. She didn't believe she had any more in her to give and was ready to quit. We were over 130 combined miles into the ride, less than 20 miles to go. We talked quietly and alone as rider after rider climbed past. We shared aches and pains. We shared the inspirations witnessed. After a while, with tears dried, she climbed back on her bike and kicked off.

At the last rest stop, before the finish, I met up with a rider I knew. She and her husband had trained with our team. She was worn, exhausted, and determined to finish another MS 150 ride. We rested, I with ice and a wrap on my knee, and her gulping fluids and energy bars. We paired up and kicked off together. We rode as a team, her telling me about the terrain ahead and I pulling for her (blocking the wind for her). One encouraging the other as we pushed on! Like Little Blue Engines we told ourselves "We can do this, we can do this." Her courage showed itself many times over in those last 10 miles. Each hill would drain her resources and my knee strength, and we would stop to rest. "We can do this, we can do this." The last MS 150 mile had a steep uphill into Sundance Square in Fort Worth. Unwilling to stop one more time, she rode it with her front tire going flat. She rode it with courage and pride, and she pedaled across the finish line on her own power.

After the finish, my bike put away, hugs given and received, news traded of others finished and not finished, I walked near a small emotional group. Through the rider's tears, with family members surrounding the just finished rider, I heard, "I did it, I did it, I did it..." My young rider friend met on the side of the road was there.

I have two MS scarves I carried with me the entire ride. One is going as a gift to a woman with MS who did not know—I was riding in her honor. The other, signed by an MS Champion, will remain as a memento for me. I believe there are multiple inspirational stories like these for every MS 150 rider on that weekend. These were some of mine that deserve telling and retelling.

Know what I am doing next year? You bet! Come ride with me. Ride to the finish of MS.

Take Advantage of a Defining Moment: Ask Questions

by David Dick, Associate Fellow and Member, Washington, D.C. Chapter



Have you ever been to an employment interview where the interviewer asked, “Do you have any questions?” If you said “no,” then you missed an opportunity to take advantage of a defining moment of your interview. Dalton Hooper writes, in “Getting Yourself Hired Lesson 3: Do You Have Any Questions For Me?”, that the opportunity to ask questions is a precious gift. You should never throw it away. Leveraged to their fullest, the questions you ask can carry more weight than the answers you have given up to that point.

Having passed up opportunities to ask questions during interviews, I decided that it was time to educate myself on the questions that I should ask. I want to make a positive impression of my character and competence—what questions would do just that? Should I ask if Friday is casual day, if I can work from home, and if the company will pay my expenses to attend the annual STC conference? Are those questions deal-breakers?

I posted my question, “What questions should I ask during an interview?” to the Lone Writer e-mail discussion list. Several people replied with questions they considered essential to ask an interviewer. I grouped their questions into the following categories:

- Background of the company
- Documentation management
- Professional development
- Are you qualified?

From the replies I received, I chose 10 questions that will help provide a solid background of the company and the position. This article lists those questions and why they are important to ask.

Background of the Company

Are you pursuing a job (or a pay check) or a place to work? Nick Corcodilos writes in “Pursue Companies, Not Jobs” to look for good companies that are in a business you want to be involved in. If the company has people, a culture, a product line and a future that appeals to you, then investigate it in detail and craft your questions accordingly. Learn as much as you can about the company before the interview. A good place to begin your investigation is the company’s website to learn about services, customers, and corporate culture (for example, About Us).

Some questions you may want to ask the interviewer about the company are:

1. Ed Marshall suggested asking a question or two about who uses their products and for what purpose, who are their main competitors, and what long-term projects they have. These questions emphasize your interest in the company and that you have done some research. It can also be a good lead-in to the next question.
2. Ask the interviewer to explain the project to which you would be assigned and the documentation deadlines. Ed Marshall suggested asking the interviewer to explain how to handle priorities and progress reporting, how to work with subject matter experts and project stakeholders, and the process for work order fulfillment.
3. Ask to see where you would be working. A technical writer wrote to me that she had an interview with a company that provided all the right answers and assured her that their writers were valued members of the company. She asked to see where the writers work. The manager walked her by all the neat cubes and offices to where the writers worked—in one large cube, divided into four triangles, wedged into the corner of the attached warehouse.

4. If you work as a contractor, ask the interviewer the status of the contract. If the interviewer tells you that the contract was recently awarded, you can be confident that the position is stable.

Documentation Management

Whether the company follows ISO 9000 or CMMI, each phase of development requires artifacts (documents) for each phase of the development cycle (specification, architecture, design, implementation, and testing) has a myriad of documents to be written. That said, how will you contribute to the design and delivery of documentation?

Some questions you may want to ask the interviewer about the process to produce and manage publications are:

1. Ask about processes the company employs to ensure quality of documentation such as peer reviews, technical reviews, and usability testing, and how you would participate in those processes. Susan Park wrote to me, "If I were interviewing, I would like to know what processes they use to ensure the quality of documentation (for example, peer reviews, technical reviews, or nothing)."
2. Kris Westrum recommends asking what types of user assistance and tools are used to create embedded help, online help (format types), and books. If you have a background in development of Help solutions or are interested in learning how to develop them, ask the interviewer what opportunities would be possible for you.
3. Susan would ask, "How do current writers gather information? Do they work closely with testers, programmers, trainers, or are they expected just to re-hash specs and not 'bother' other groups?" Sometimes, employers view technical writers as experts in the art of formatting text to page. This question offers you an opportunity to discuss the job description with the interviewer, and verify and clarify your roles and responsibilities.
4. Which leads to the next question, what is good writing? "I like to know what people think of as good writing," Elisa Sawyer wrote to me. "I was once asked, in an interview, what I thought of a specific manual. The people interviewing me wanted someone who could make substantial improvements while preserving the self-esteem of the author, who had good writing skills but did not understand some finer points in handling the material. Apparently I handled the interview with enough tact, and got the job."

Professional development

Generally, you are responsible for your own professional development to keep your skills fresh. Many companies pride themselves on professional development of their staff such as certifications and advanced college degrees. No doubt, you have ambitions to improve your skills and experience. How can the company support you?

1. Kris Westrum recommends asking the interviewer what training opportunities the company offers to enhance your skills, how other writers stay current, and what cross-training opportunities does the company offer that could help you get a better handle on the company and possibly lead to advancement.
2. Ask what career advancement opportunities are available to you, Teresa Trujillo wrote to me. "If they haven't given a lot of thought as to why, or how, someone in this position might advance, you can be assured that it is a dead-end position," she continued. According to Trujillo, a good employer will like the fact that someone is entering the company looking for long-term advancement.

Are you qualified?

The final question to ask will allow the interviewer to close and provide you feedback about your qualifications. According to WikiAnswers, a very good end of interview question would be:

Do you have any concerns that would prevent you from recommending or selecting me for this job? This would give you an opportunity to directly address any concerns that the interviewer might still have.

Final Thoughts

The interview is an opportunity to prove your inquiring mind. Asking well thought-out questions of your own will not only show the interviewer that you are interested in the position and that you were paying attention to the discussion, but also lets you determine whether the job opportunity is a good fit for you.

Recommended Reading

1. Hooper, Dalton. "Getting Yourself Hired Lesson 3: Do You Have Any Questions For Me?" (Available online: www.stc-siliconvalley.org/newsletter/HTML/articles/hooper-lesson-3.htm)
2. Corcodilos, Nick. "Pursue Companies, Not Jobs. Ask the Headhunter, the insider's edge on job search and hiring." (Available online: www.asktheheadhunter.com/hapursuecos.htm)
3. Synergistech Communications. "Questions to Ask about a Company." (Available online: www.synergistech.com/qs-company.shtml)
4. WikiAnswers. "What questions are important to ask at the end of the interview." (Available online: http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_questions_are_important_to_ask_at_the_end_of_the_interview)

Search Engine Optimization Indicators

by Heather Steele, Member

Are you looking to boost your visibility in search results but don't have the time to commit to a full-blown search engine marketing (SEM) campaign? Prioritize your efforts and achieve better results with less time committed to your project.

The January 21st, 2008 meeting of the [DFW Search Engine Marketing Association](#) (DFWSEM) featured a presentation of search engine optimization (SEO) indicators and how effective they are. The DFWSEM board members voted for each indicator on a scale of 1-5, 5 being the most effective and 1 being the least.



The following table shows the averaged results in order of most effective to least.

SEO Indicator	Score
Inbound site links	5
Information architecture	5
Media links	5
On-topic off-site linking	5
SEO friendly design	5
Title element keywords	5
Depth of a site	4.6
Internal site linkage	4.6
html site map page	4.4
Age of domain	4.4
Keyword in first paragraph	4.4
Uniqueness/originality/authority of document	4.4
URL/redirection hygiene	4.4
Anchor text	4.2
Documents located close to the domain root	4.2
Length of domain registration	4.2
Quantity and quality .edu and .gov links	4.2
Steadiness of link growth	4.2
Deep link ratio	4
XML site map	4
Use of blog/RSS feeds/ Fresh content	4
Yahoo directory listing	4
Age of links	3.8
Mention of addresses and phone numbers	3.8
Text weight of entire site	3.8
Uptime of site	3.8
Text weight of page	3.4
Geography of hosting	3.2
Keywords in on page descriptors around a link (cluster text)	3.2
DMOZ directory listing	3
Freshness of links	3
Ranking history for a particular term or phrase	3
Social media bookmarks	3
Business.com listing	2.8
Age of document	2.6
Cleanliness of URL naming structure	2.6
Dedicated or shared hosting	2.6
Limited on-topic reciprocal linking	2.6
Number of domains registered	2.6
Time on page	2.6
Bounce rate	2.4
Clickthrough rate	2.2
Paid search	2

Book Review: The Designer's Guide to Marketing and Pricing

by [Louellen Coker](#), Senior Member

Are you a creative professional that struggles to determine your worth? "The Designer's Guide To Marketing And Pricing: How To Win Clients And What To Charge Them" by Ilise Benum and Peleg Top (founders of www.marketing-mentor.com) provides step-by-step instructions to guide you in making money while doing what you love.

Benum and Top go beyond discussing the basics. They provide worksheets every step of the way, allowing you to get an immediate avenue to starting or improving your business. The clear, straightforward language certainly delivers; and whether you're a new or established entrepreneur, you'll gain the foundation you need to:

- Define your ideal clients and learn how to connect to them.
- Turn contacts into profitable relationships for both parties.
- Determine your hourly rate.
- Create steps to reach your financial goals.
- Create a realistic marketing plan to support your financial goals.
- Use effective marketing tools to achieve your goal.

Benum's book is a must-read for designers and writers. The engaging language draws you in with an underlying optimism that will leave you disappointed if you don't have a pencil in hand to complete the worksheets that begin as early as page 14. Besides providing a list of excellent resources, such as books, Web sites, blogs and magazines, Benum divides the chapters into two key sections and answers the timeless questions that all contractors and consultants ask themselves on a daily basis:

Marketing

- Who is my market?
- How can I find clients and prospects?
- How should I present myself?
- Which marketing tools should I use?
- What should I say in person, on the phone, and online?
- How should I follow up?

Pricing

- How do I manage my money?
- What should I charge?
- How do I talk about money?
- What should be in my proposal?
- What should be in my contract?
- How should I grow my business?

If you're considering starting a business or taking your current business to the next level, you'll want to read this book. Upon reaching the end of the book, you will have a clear idea of the direction in which you can move forward with your business. What's more, you'll be excited to get started!



Adobe Creative Suite 4: It's Coming Soon!

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



Johnny Loiacono, SVP, Creative Solutions Business Unit, calls the launch of Adobe Creative Suite CS4 “the most compelling release in Adobe’s history.” After viewing their product launch broadcast on September 23, 2008, I tend to believe it. Within this hour video (<http://tv.adobe.com/?trackingid=DWZRA#vi+f1556v1715>) on tv.adobe.com, Loiacono and leaders in the video, interactive and web, as well as design industries provide an elevated view of the exciting things that are available in CS4. Assuring his audience that this “is no ‘dot’ release,” Loiacono shared that CS4 is made to help you move between the media with a product that comes in one little box. In this box—released in 19 languages to 178

countries, you’ll find:

- 13 products (all available individually)
- 14 technologies (available in the suite packages)
- 7 services
- 6 suites

And in this compelling hour, it is almost impossible to remain calm. Not only are you going to be able to do some really cool things with the different products, you’re going to be able to do them in record time. For example, Loiacono twirls a 2G stitched image converted to a 3D sphere as quickly as you would if you were holding it in your hands. Granted, I’m sure he had a supercharged computer, but it is still impressive. For this release, Adobe used the efforts of over 1700 work years to streamline the workflow and users can now complete tasks that currently take hours in mere minutes!

Are you excited yet? If this little teaser isn’t enough to entice you, Adobe provides more in-depth feature tours of each of the CS4 products on www.tv.adobe.com.

The only disappointing aspect of the launch is that the product isn’t available just yet. Rumor has it, that CS4 will be available sometime in October, possibly around the 15th. You can, of course, buy early at a variety of outlets and be one of the first to revolutionize your creative world. Upgrade and full license pricing varies based on particular product, suite, or upgrade you desire. Complete information is available at www.adobe.com.

Adobe product box shot(s) reprinted with permission from Adobe Systems Incorporated



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LSC News

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LSC Program Calendar

Date	Topic	Presenter(s)	Description
2008			
Oct. 9 (Date change)	Rediscovering Your Inherent Skills	Rich Maggiani	Rediscover your inherent skills so that you can apply them in your life and in your job. Emerge with renewed vision, focus, and excitement
Nov. 20	Applying the Latest Training Technologies: From Podcasts to Virtual Learning	Mel Haughton Clare Davis	Experiential Learning, what the learners of the future are going to start requiring out of training sessions, and other training methods, such as podcasts, Second Life, and Web 2.0
Dec. 18	SharePoint 101	Russell Wright	
2009			
Jan. 15	Awards Banquet		
Feb. 19	Usability Testing and Analytics: Two Sides of the Same Coin?	Jim Machajewski	Discuss why a user does something and exactly what they do. Understand the challenges and pitfalls of presenting data in a usable format
March 19	The Writer and the SME	Kathryn & Stephen Poe	Ever feel like you and your SME speak different languages? You do! Discover the secrets of Techies, how they think, what they need from you and why they do things as they do
April 16	Gentle Art of Verbal Self Defense for Technical Communication	Arroxane Ullman Elisa Miller Kristin Kirkham	Philosophy of verbal and written communication and preventing it from becoming emotional
May 21	The Secrets of Successful Workplace Writing	Paula LaRocque	Tactics, tricks, and tips on how to improve your already polished writing skills set

LSC Committee Reports

Community Service

by [Kathryn](#) Poe, Associate Fellow and Manager, Community Service



Your community needs your help!

Clothing Drive. The Lone Star Community will be accepting donations of business attire (in good repair) for men and women at our October meeting.

Your clothing will benefit the programs supported by the Family Resource Center of North Texas. Your contribution will allow men and women to dress well for that all-important job interview and while working in their new job.

More information about the Family FRCNT is available at www.frcnt.org.

Help Welcome Denton County Children to their new homes with a new teddy bear or book. On November 7, 2008, children who have been removed from harmful home environments will "officially" become a part of their new home as Denton County conducts its first annual Adoption Day.

If you'd like to be a part of making this a memorable event for these adoptive families please bring a NEW teddy bear or book suitable for ages birth to early teens to the October meeting.

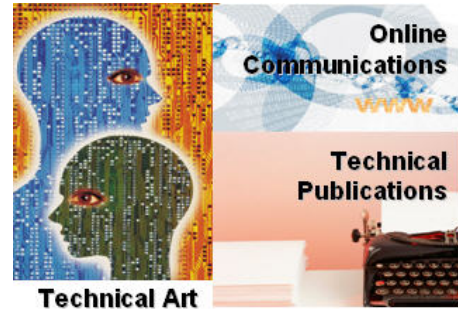


Denton County Adoption Day is a combined community service project of the Denton County Bar Association, CASA, and CPS.

Competitions

by [Jackie Damrau](#), Fellow, and Competitions General Manager

Each fall, the Lone Star Community holds a competition that recognizes excellence in online communication, technical art, and technical publications. Any technical communicator can participate. You do not have to be an STC member. Winners are announced at our annual awards banquet in January. Entries awarded an Excellence or Distinguished (the highest level) are then submitted to the STC International Competition. STC announces the International Competition winners at STC's annual conference in May.



2008-2009 LSC Competition Key Dates

- Entry Deadline - Friday, October 17, 2008
- Judges Training Day - Saturday, November 1, 2008
- Consensus Judging Day - Saturday, December 6, 2008
- Awards Banquet - Thursday, January 15, 2009

Entry Form and Instructions

To enter this year's competition, download the [2008-2009 Competition Entry Form](#) and [Categories for International Competitions](#) instructions and follow the instructions included on the form.

Remember, to be eligible:

**Submit 4 copies of each entry
no later than Friday, October 17, 2008**

Entry fees are:

- \$100 per entry – STC members
- \$125 per entry –non-STC members
- \$25 per entry – Students

Call for Judges

Each competition—Online Communications, Technical Publications, and Technical Art—needs volunteers who will judge the entries.

Interested in judging, see [How to Become a Judge](#).

Contacts:

[Jackie Damrau](#), Competitions Manager

[Diane Mazzarella](#), Online Competitions

[Jackie Damrau](#), Technical Art and Technical Publications

Scholarship Committee

by [DeAndrea Laub](#) and Heather Steele, Scholarship Committee Co-Managers



This has been an exciting month for the Scholarship Committee. Last week I spent the day rounding up donations. Most of the managers I spoke with seemed more than willing to help.

I am predicting the following year to be very successful, as we are hoping for donations from places such as Barnes & Noble, Target, Best Buy, Wal-Mart, Bed Bath and Beyond, Costco, and several national chain restaurants.

I'd like to extend the invitation to all of you who shop to ask the store managers if they'd be willing to donate. You can download a copy of the [donation letter](#) to keep with you during your regular outings.

Fall Scholarship Application deadline: Wednesday, November 5th

Just a reminder, the Fall Scholarship deadline is Wednesday, November 5th. We will be accepting applications for both the Traditional Education Scholarship and the Continuing Education Scholarship. Visit the Scholarships page to find out more about these scholarships.

We need all the help we can get to continue bringing this excellent opportunity to our area students. Continue bringing in donations for our monthly raffle and telling others about our scholarship program!

Thanks to everyone who have helped and will continue helping us make scholarships possible this year!

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 volunteera@stc-dfw.org and let me know where you want to help!

Mentoring Manager and Assistant Manager: Help set up programs for LSC mentors and protégés 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.

Competitions Managers: We're looking for 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.

Competitions Judges: We're looking for Competitions Judges. This job will require about 2-5 hours per week for 4 weeks to review assigned entries. You will be required to attend Judges Training Day on Saturday, November 1, for 2 hours (location not yet identified). Team Leads will be required to attend Consensus Day on Saturday, December 6, for 3-4 hours (location not yet identified) For more information, go to http://www.stc-dfw.org/pages/comp_judge.htm.

LSC Fort Worth Satellite Manager: Do you live in 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.

Member Recognition Committee

by [Mel Haughton](#), Senior Member and LSC Past President



2008 Superstars Announced!

Are you a Superstar? If you earned at least 20 points participating in LSC events in the 2007-2008 year, then you definitely are one!

Each year, from August 1 to June 1, volunteers receive points when they participate in LSC activities. Volunteers who reached twenty points during the 2007-2008 program year received the very special LSC Superstar shirt at the first program meeting, which took place on September 18, 2008.



Back Row (left to right): Mike Hiatt, Chris LaPorte, Jeanne Foster, Kathryn Poe, Louellen Coker, Dale Erickson, Rob Carr-Harris, Elisa Miller

Middle Row: Kristin Kirkham, Jackie Damrau, Kristy Nolan (with shirt for missing Paul Holland)

Front Row: Mel Haughton (model and presenter)

Do you want to be a Superstar? Then get involved! You can't buy this unique shirt. The only way to get the Superstar shirt is to volunteer and earn those points. Contact your volunteer wrangler to learn how you can help.

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

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

Nominate a Bright LSC Star for the BALA!

It's that time of the year again. You have until **November 21** to nominate a special LSC member for the Binion Amerson Leadership Award (BALA).

The BALA recognizes an LSC member for having the qualities that distinguished Binion Amerson, a man who, through sustained contributions to leadership over a period of years, has displayed undaunted enthusiasm and inspired others to participate and excel in the field of technical communication.



Nominating someone is easy. Go to www.stc-dfw.org/pages/awards_Amerson.htm and complete the online form. It only takes a few minutes to recognize those who make a difference in our community.

The 2009 BALA recipient will be announced during the Awards Banquet in January.

Contact me at volunteers@stc-dfw.org if you have any questions.

LSC Membership Minute

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

Welcome back to LSC for the 2008–2009 program year! Your council has a lot of energy, and they've been busy making great plans for you this year. If you haven't already checked out the line-up for this year's programs, visit the LSC Web site and look around.

And as for SIN (Shy, Inactive, or New) SIG, we also have plans for you. Each month, before the regular LSC meeting, we gather for a SIN SIG meeting. All are welcome. You don't have to be shy, inactive, OR new to join us. SIN SIG gives you a chance to get to know a few faces, trade stories, and hear from one of the LSC's "movers and shakers."



SIN SIG 2008-2009 at a Glance. Do you want to know what we have planned for SIN SIG this year? Read on!

- October: Help Desk and SIGs**
Heather Steele and Kathryn Poe will facilitate the meeting on my behalf and talk with you about what the Help Desk has to offer you. They'll also let you in on what's happening with the LSC SIGs.
- November: Volunteering**
Are you thinking about becoming more involved with LSC? Volunteering is a great way to get your feet wet. You can get involved in a small, one-time project, or do a cannonball into the volunteer pool with something more time-consuming. Come hear Susie Fox, LSC Immediate Past-President, talk about what's available.
- December: Nominations and Elections**
Maybe you want to hear what goes into building the slate of officers. Mel Haughton will share the process and give you a chance to ask questions to learn more.
- January: Awards Banquet**
January is our annual awards banquet. SIN SIG takes the month off from SIN SIG.
- February: Joomla!**
Heather Steele and Paul Holland are hard at work rebuilding the LSC Web site with Joomla! In

case you haven't heard, Joomla! is all the rage. Come hear our very own Heather Steele tell you more about it and give you a test drive.

- **March: Conference Time Is Almost Here!**

Kathryn Poe and Kristen Kirkham are veteran conference-goers. They'll be revving their engines in anticipation of the 2009 conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Are you curious about how to get the most out of the conference? Do you want to know what goes on at the conference? Don't miss the March SIN SIG meeting!

- **April: Newsletter News**

Jackie Damrau will tell you our e-newsletter is really an e-zine. It's chock full of great information, articles, and details. Jackie is always looking for writers, and at the April meeting, she'll talk about exactly what she's looking for.

- **May: 2009–2010 Preview**

Kristin Kirkham, the 2009–2010 incoming LSC President, will gather ideas from you and preview the upcoming year. Here's your chance to get in on the ground floor of the planning cycle and let Kristin know how your council can serve you.

I hope to see you at a SIN SIG meeting this year!

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

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 Jim Chambless

Job Title: Communications Manager, Beal Service Corporation

What do you actually do?

I write policies and procedures, and manage a small team of writers as they write new loan servicing procedures. I write and maintain website content. I do community relations and press releases and newspaper ads and media buys, and brochures and mailers and signs. I manage small projects such as annual mailings and big ones such as major system conversions, as well as certain compliance and trademark issues.

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

Facility with word processors, desktop publishers, and graphics/design software are important, but conversely, I find that it's the soft skills—people management, project management, diplomacy, and general experience—that are even more useful. You can always go learn a software package if you need to or are told to. The last hard skill classes I took was a graphic design seminar and a records management symposium.

Do you consider yourself a guru at any particular subject?

Not sure any true guru would label him- or herself as such, but people tend to ask me for input on words, structure, and usage in general and on general organizational issues.

What is the greatest benefit of being an STC member?

For a new member, the networking to meet new contacts and land the first job. For an old member, the networking to see old friends and land that next job.

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

Habit. No, wait...It's the only place aside from work where I know I can go and find other people who are geeky about words.

What positions in LSC and STC have you held?

My work has been all local: Competitions Manager, Parliamentarian, Workshops Manager, Second VP, First VP, President, Past President, Volunteer Coordinator, and several terms as Nominating Committee Chair.

How have you benefited from volunteering?

I gained experience to put on my resume, and the satisfaction of working with a group for a common goal. I learned how to manage big, high-profile projects, got more comfortable speaking in public, and was published regularly in local STC publications.

Advice/Thoughts on STC for Newbies?

How can I get involved and if I do, what's in it for me?

Stand up and say, "Give me something to do," or "I'll run for that office." If you do you'll gain experience you can put on your resume, and the satisfaction of working with a group for a common goal.

How do I meet/recognize senior members?

Stand up and say, "I need to talk to some senior members." Offering a drink or food will help.

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

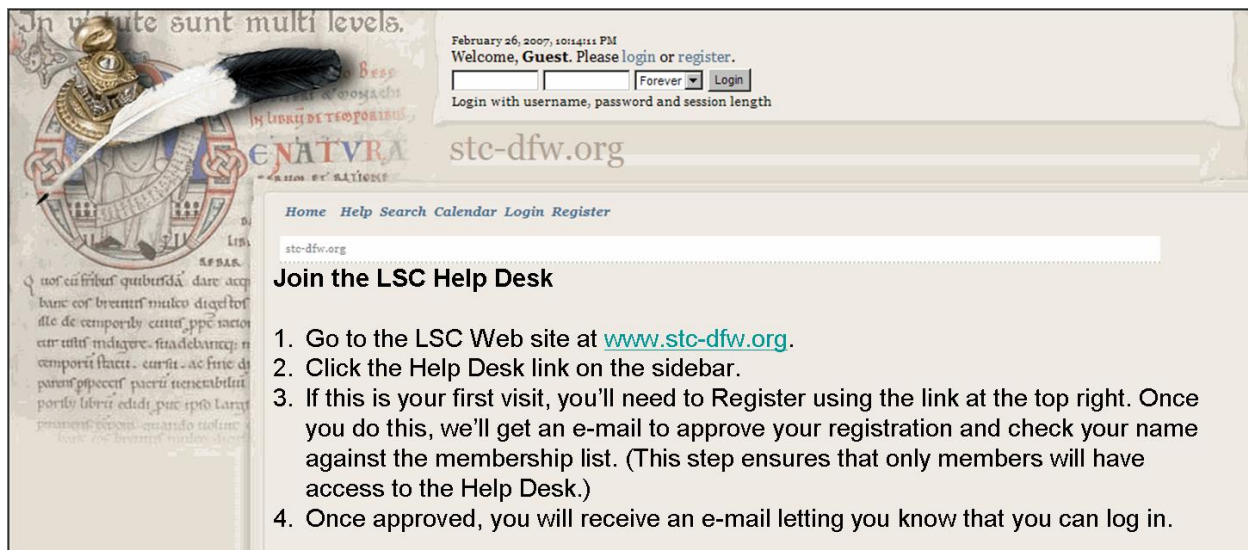
Yes.

Can STC really help me find a job?

Yes. Network contacts within STC directly related to my finding two of the four jobs I've had in the last 12 years.

LSC Help Desk

by [Kathryn Poe](#), Associate Fellow



The screenshot shows the STC website interface. At the top left, there is a decorative header with a quill pen and a circular emblem. The text "In white sunt multi levels." is visible. On the right side, there is a login section with the text "February 26, 2007, 10:14:11 PM Welcome, Guest. Please login or register." and a form with fields for username, password, and session length (Forever). Below the login section, the URL "stc-dfw.org" is displayed. In the center, there is a navigation menu with links: "Home Help Search Calendar Login Register". Below the navigation menu, the text "stc-dfw.org" is repeated. The main content area is titled "Join the LSC Help Desk" and contains a list of four steps:

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

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STC News

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- [2009 STC 56th Annual Conference – Call for Proposals](#)
- [Elizabeth Pohland, New STC Intercom Editor](#)
- [September 2008 Tieline Articles of Interest](#)
- [STC Community Events](#)

2009 STC 56th Annual Conference – Call for Proposals

The Technical Communication Summit, the annual conference of the Society for Technical Communication, will be held **3–6 May 2009**.



To submit a proposal, visit <http://www.softconference.com/subs/stc/2009>.

Elizabeth Pohland, New STC Intercom Editor

The STC Office has selected Elizabeth Pohland to serve as the new editor of *Intercom*. For many years, Pohland, an STC member, served the Folger Shakespeare Library as editor and designer of the scholarly journal *Shakespeare Quarterly*, as consultant to the Folger Magazine (a membership publication), and as contributor to the Folger Website and branding, among multiple other publications and multimedia projects.

Pohland brings to *Intercom* over ten years of extensive experience as an editor, content and production manager, designer, and writer. She introduced usability and readability standards to the Folger's publications, and she has researched new technologies in editorial management software. Her freelance editing includes topics as diverse as Japanese animé, baseball, and memoirs.

"We are especially pleased to have selected an editor with excellent credentials who is also an STC member and understands technical communication," said Susan Burton, STC executive director. "I was also excited to see several candidates mention they were STC members in their resumes."

Pohland received her bachelor's degree in English and French from Hollins University; a master's in English from Virginia Tech University, where she interned with distinguished professor and poet Nikki Giovanni and won an award for her thesis; and is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Technical Communication and Rhetoric from Texas Tech University.

September 2008 Tieline Articles of Interest

- ["So, Why Should You Be a Member of STC, Anyway?" \(John Hedtke\)](#)
- ["Volunteer and Member Recognition" \(Rachel Houghton and Jackie Damrau\)](#)

STC Community Events

October 10–11, 2008

East Tennessee Chapter will host its “Practical Conference on Communication” conference to be held at the Chattanooga hotel and conference center in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This conference focuses on technical communication in a global economy, offers a great opportunity for honing your presentation skills, and networking with other communications professionals.

For more information, visit <http://stc-etc.org/pcoc.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
October 1	Rahul Mehrotra	Printed Books and Online Help Using a Wiki
October 16	Leah Guren	The ABCs of Documentation Usability Testing
October 23	Michael Hughes	Task Support Clusters: A Focused Architecture for Practical User Assistance
October 29	Neil Perlin	WinHelp, WebHelp, DotNet Help...Help!
November 5	Naomi Robbins	How to Avoid Common Graphical Mistakes that Technical Communicators Make

Home > Calendar

The Calendar is taking on a new look. You'll find the Legend at the bottom that explains the color-coding. Check here often for new additions to the calendar as special LSC events such as workshops and Competitions begin gearing up.

Send email to newsletter@stc-dfw.org if you have event additions you'd like to see on the calendar.

September 2008						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October						
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	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December						
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	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January 2009						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February						
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March						
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Legend:

Council Meeting
 Competition Events

Monthly Meeting

Newsletter Article Deadline
 STC Annual Technical Summit

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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.

2008-2009 Submission Deadlines

Issue	Deadline
October 2008	September 7
November	October 19
December	November 30
January 2009	December 28
February	January 25
March	March 1
April	March 29
May	April 19
June	May 31

Newsletter Design and Layout:

Courtesy of University of North Texas, Spring 2007 English 4180 class
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Advertising

- Content must be “camera-ready” in the form of a GIF or JPG file. (**Note:** We do not support animated GIFs or other animation technologies.)
- **Rates:**
 - \$125 one issue
 - \$600 five issues
 - \$900 nine Issues
- **Payment:**
 - Full payment arrangements are due before the ad will appear.
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PO Box 515065
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Inquiries and Requests

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

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Kindly notify the Managing Editor at newsletter@stc-dfw.org 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

Copyrights and Trademarks

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.

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.

Technically Write Staff

Managing Editor: [Jackie Damrau](#)

Editor: **OPEN**

Contributing Editor: **OPEN**

Copyeditors: [Jeanne Foster](#), [Mary McWilliams Johnson](#), [Paula Robertson](#), [Katie Wilson](#),
[Monica Winkelman](#)

Contributors: [Jo Byrd](#), [Louellen Coker](#), [Mel Haughton](#), [Jim Korth](#), [DeAndrea Laub](#)
David Dick, Bill Paine, Heather Steele, Marty Vick

Columnists: [Jeanne Foster](#), [Elisa Miller](#), [Kathryn Poe](#)

Photographers: [Dale Erickson](#)

Photo Editor: [Douglas Dow](#)

Graphics: [Mary McWilliams Johnson](#)

Ex-Officio: [Chapter Officers](#)

LSC Officers

President: [Elisa Miller](#)

1st Vice President: [Kristin Kirkham](#)

2nd Vice President: [Arroxane Ullman](#)

Newsletter Editor: [Jackie Damrau](#)

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

Staff Bios

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, Fellow and past chapter president, 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.

Dale Erickson serves the Lone Star Community as a Technically Write photographer and manager of the IPIIC 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 immediate past 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 past president 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

DeAndrea Laub recently graduated from The University of North Texas, with a B.A. in English, specializing in Technical Communication. She is currently the Marketing Communications and Documentation Manager for layerX Technologies. When DeAndrea is not working, she enjoys reading, and just about any outdoor activity, including camping, going to the lake, and cooking out with her family.

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.)

Kristin Kirkham is currently the lone writer for BearCom, a wireless solutions company in Garland. A recent graduate of Texas Tech University, Kristin received her B.A. in English, with a specialization in Technical Communication. Kristin is the incoming 1st VP for the Lone Star Community. When she isn't writing, Kristin prefers to be water skiing with her friends and family.

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 Miller's career path has been a winding road from journalist to journalism teacher to instructional designer; from webmaster to content strategist to information architect / usability specialist. With degrees in journalism; instructional design and an ABD in information science, she is now the Knowledge Manager for Hitachi Consulting and current President for Lone Star STC.

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

Paul Holland is currently a technical writer for a small communications agency in Cleveland, Ohio but remains active in the LSC community and anticipates returning to Dallas full time very soon. A graduate of Hiram College (B.A. in Communications), he is also a maritime historian and served as a volunteer on the Steamship William G. Mather Museum in Cleveland, Ohio, prior to Dallas.

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."

Arroxane T. Ullman is the Senior Technical Writer at Sundance Digital, a part of Avid. With an MA in Technical Writing, a BS in Liberal Arts, and experience as a US Marine Linguist, Arroxane has a very eclectic background. Aside from being an active member of LSC, she is a Big Sister with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of North Texas and handles public relations for non-profit literary conventions.

Katie Wilson is a Technical Writing graduate student at The University of North Texas (UNT). She works for Institutional Research and Effectiveness at UNT and also volunteers for the *Technically Write* newsletter.

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Technically Wired

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



“STC advances the theory and practice of technical communication across all user abilities and media so that both businesses and customers benefit from safe, appropriate, and effective use of products, information, and services.”

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.

For more information, contact the STC headquarters:

[Society for Technical Communication](#)

901 N. Stuart Street

Suite 904

Arlington, VA 22203-1854