Byline

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October Chapter Meeting

By Andi Dunn

In October, our "Truth or Dare" series takes on Social Media, an area some technical communicators have embraced enthusiastically, some view as a necessary evil, and many still wonder, "what's the point?" With studies showing that as many as 75% of Internet users engage in social media, it's a phenomenon that you can't ignore.

The panel will motivate technical communicators to get (more) involved with social media by exploring its importance to our employers/clients, to how we do our jobs, and to how we manage our careers. After brief self-introductions, panelists will comment on various serious and sensational questions on social media. Panelists will see many questions ahead of time, but the moderator will request the audience to provide additional questions during the meeting. The evening should be a lively, laughter-filled, information-rich sharing of knowledge and experience that will help attendees value new ways of communicating with customers, colleagues, and peers.

About the Panelists

- Barbara Bartilson, Global Capability Strategy at Planning at Accenture
- Todd Kelsey, Analytics Manager at Sears Holdings and author of the book "Social Networking Spaces: from Facebook to Twitter and Everything in Between"
- Jean Pickering, President & Social Media Director, The Tektite Group, a social media, internet and technology consulting company in Chicago
- Dianna Wiggins, formerly the Social Knowledge

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September Chapter Meeting Recap

Approximately a dozen members met on Wednesday, September 15 at the Downers Grove Park District Lincoln Center to hear a presentation on the format of this year's Technical Communications Competition. Speakers were Elizabeth Burke and Kim Sikora, competition managers.

This year, STC has changed the competition categories to focus on the function of the information rather than the media. New categories are informational materials, instructional materials, promotional materials, and user support materials. Judging forms have also been redesigned to provide more useful feedback for entrants. Instead of the check boxes, judges will now provide all feedback as narrative.

The meeting was held at the Downers Grove Park District Lincoln Center. Lincoln Center is located near public transportation with plenty of on-site free parking, and offers convenient access to Downers' many watering holes. Administrative Council members provided meeting refreshments. Linda Kelley's brownies were out of this world. Ω

Manager for the YMCA of the USA and Knowledge Sharing Manager at McDonald's Corporation

Meeting Logistics

Date: Thursday, October 14, 6 - 9 p.m.

Register at www.stc-chicago.org (click on "Meetings" then "Meeting Registration"). Cost: $15 Students / $20 Members / $40 Non-members

Location: Parthenon Restaurant

314 S. Halsted St., Chicago, IL 60661

For directions, go to www.theparthenon.com/contact.htm

Amenities: Includes appetizer buffet and soft drinks. Complimentary valet parking is available. Ω

November Meeting Preview

Whether you are a single author or part of a team, managing your content is an important practice that ensures efficiency in your work and accuracy in your documentation. While technical communicators understand the need for and benefits of content management, the cost and complexity of content management systems makes them a hard sell. At the same time, many companies have implemented Microsoft SharePoint. But are you making use of it for your technical communications projects?

Dan Beall of ComponentOne (makers of Doc-to-Help, a help authoring tool) will present "How Microsoft SharePoint Gives You a Realistic Approach to Content Management." After providing an overview of SharePoint, Dan will talk about its use for content management. Although Dan will describe Doc-to-Help's SharePoint integration, Dan's presentation will be applicable to other help authoring tools.

In response to STC Chicago member requests for varying meeting locations, November's meeting will be in Buffalo Grove. Watch for registration details soon.

About Dan Beall

For the past seven years, Dan has acted as Product Manager at ComponentOne. Dan brings over 10 years of experience in both technical writing and software delivery to the Doc-To-Help, DemoWorks, and SharePoint Web Parts product lines. As an evangelist and educator, Dan writes whitepapers, presents at events, and conducts webcasts. Ω

STC Chicago Membership at a Glance

Total Affiliated Members: 183

Associate Fellows: 5

Fellows: 4

Members: 92

Senior Members: 112

Student Members: 14 Ω

STC Membership at a Glance

Total members: 13,263

Members residing in the U.S.: 11,236

Members residing in Canada: 1,206

Members residing elsewhere: 821

Total communities*: 155

*Includes 104 professional chapters, 30 student chapters, and 21 SIGs. Ω

A Friendly Reminder from the STC Chicago Competition Committee

Entries for the 2010 Competition are due on **Friday, October 22nd**. Remember that this year's Competition introduces many changes which can provide improved feedback for your submissions! Now, entries can be submitted under the following categories:

- Instructional
- Informational
- Promotional
- User Support

Four copies of each entry are required. Please refer to www.stc-chicago.org for additional details. Ω

Upcoming STC Webinars

Wednesday, October 20
12:00-1:00 PM CST
Using Focus Groups to Strengthen Technical Communication Practice
Presented by George Hayhoe and James Conklin

Wednesday, October 27
12:00-1:00 PM CST
Have Smartphone, Will Write
Presented by Larry Bonura

Registration Rates: $79 for members; $149 for non-members; $29 for student members. For more info, go the Webinars website http://www.stc.org/edu/seminars.asp. Ω

Upcoming Alliance Meetings

Thursday, October 21
Annual Crackerbarrel | Twelve Presenters, Four Concurrent Sessions
Chicago International Society for Performance Improvement (CISPI). See www.cispi.com for details.

Thursday, October 21
Instructional Design for eLearning: Tips, Tools, and Fun! | Nancy Munro
Chicagoland Chapter of the American Society for Training & Development (CCASTD). See www.ccastd.org for details. Ω

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Time to Renew for 2011

It's time to renew your membership in STC to keep the networking and career advancement you've grown used to.

Basic and Gold dues will remain the same for 2011 as in 2010. For $250, the Basic membership package includes:

- One Chapter membership ($25 value)
- One SIG membership ($10 value)
- Two free archived seminars ($98 value)
- Online version of Technical Communication
- Online version of Intercom
- STC's Notebook blog (open to all for public access)
- Free Basic listing in the STC Buyers' Guide to Products and Services ($100 value)
- 10% discount on select MadCap products and 15% discount on select ComponentOne products
- Advance viewing of jobs posted on the STC Career Center
- Preferred pricing on live web seminars, online certificate courses, Technical Communication Summit, and SUMMIT@aClick

While the Basic package includes community membership, members can opt out when renewing, making the Basic membership $215.

STC is offering two free archived seminars as a new benefit in this year's package. These seminars will be available after January 15, 2011. Members can choose from more than 60 seminars captured at the Technical Communication Summit.

The Gold Membership package is $395 – for a package valued at more than $1,200. Gold membership includes everything in the Basic package (with Chapter and SIG membership), plus:

- Five free live web seminars ($395 value)
- 50% off one online or Summit certificate course ($298 value)
- Free Premium listing in the STC Buyers' Guide to Products and Services ($250 value)
- Free access to the STC Salary Database and spreadsheets ($30 value)

For complete information on all membership categories and to renew, click here (link: www.stc.org/membership). Questions? Contact Julia O'Connor at Julia.oconnor@stc.org or Lloyd Tucker at lloyd.tucker@stc.org.