

# Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

## President's Message

*By Elizabeth Burke*

Fall! It's my favorite season. I feel re-energized and I feel traditions tugging at my thoughts. I was speaking with a colleague recently and she echoed the same sentiments. We both acknowledged that it stems from our school days. Fall signaling the start of a new school year and the upcoming holidays spent with family and friends.

We still have those opportunities no matter what our age. Many of us continue to attend classes whether through college or professional organizations. In addition, STC Chicago offers a number of programs and annual events for our membership.

Our 2011 program year is off to a great start, with many new topics, as well as familiar speakers. We're incorporating several webinars to offer our programs to more of our members who may not be able to meet in the evenings. We're also looking for a broader range of meeting locations so that attendees have easier access after work. As always, we are offering our annual Technical Communication competition, a very exciting and traditional event.

You'll see many articles on the upcoming Summit hosted in the Chicago Rosemont area in 2012, but don't get the impression that there is little available to you until the Summit.

Yes, our chapter is supporting the Summit and working hard in preparation for the annual event. It's an exciting time, made even more so for us as it is being held in our area next year. However, our committees are working equally hard to offer our membership beneficial and interesting events leading up to the time of the Summit. Think of the Summit in our backyard as a reflection of our ongoing annual activities.

If you have not attended one of our programs yet this year or you have not submitted an entry in our annual competition, don't delay. Get involved and join in the activities. STC Chicago is here to benefit you and support your needs in your profession. Not only do you have the opportunity to explore new trends in business, but you'll also have a good time.

Don't wait until the Summit next May to get involved. Get together with your local chapter friends at one of our upcoming programs or events. Not only are you likely to learn something new, you'll have a good time networking with your local group of friends. Ω

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## Annual STC Chicago Technical Communication Competition

*By Elizabeth Burke*

There is still time to enter our annual competition. There are many benefits to entering this exciting event. A three-person panel of your peers reviews your entry. The panel of judges offers comments from a fresh point of view on the purpose, design, usability, media, writing, and overall impression conveyed by your entry.

Categories for submission include Informational, Instructional, Promotional, and User Support Materials. Different from in years past, the delivery modality is not a consideration. You have the flexibility to submit materials in a variety of formats including eLearning modules, websites, artwork, print-based documents, online help systems, audio materials...however your product is delivered to your audience.

The STC Chicago competition is open to everyone who produces technical communication. You do not need to be a member of STC or STC Chicago. You can enter work as an individual or on behalf of a colleague, subordinate, or your company.

Entries are being accepted through Friday, November 4th. For additional details, see our website at [www.stc-chicago.org](http://www.stc-chicago.org).

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## Readers Write In

*By Kim Sikora*

Due to a glitch with our e-mail system, responses to the last issue's Readers Write In question were not available.

This issue's question: Which fall activity do you look forward to most each year?

Submit a 2-3 sentence response and your name and response could be published in a future issue. Even better, one lucky submitter will receive free registration to the October 20th presentation, *Job Hunting Secrets that May Surprise You*, with Jack Molisani.

Submit responses to [stcbyline@gmail.com](mailto:stcbyline@gmail.com) by October 14th to be entered in the drawing! AC members are ineligible for the drawing but are still encouraged to respond.

## Calling All Judges

*By Cheri Noble*

The STC Chicago 2011-2012 Competition begins in a few short weeks and we are inviting members and non-members to participate in this year's judging experience. No previous judging experience is necessary. The final day to sign up to be a judge is Friday, November 4th, 2011.

We are looking for Chapter members and non-members, experienced technical communicators interested in the experience of judging. Gain insight and experience in what others are doing in the industry. Look at something besides your own work. Explore the standards and ideas of other technical communicators. Get ideas about how you can change the look of your product. Work with a team to see how others interpret and view the same entry.

Judging begins on November 12th with a brief judge's orientation meeting. All judges will meet in Oak Brook to go over their roles, review how to use the judging form, meet team members and receive entries to evaluate. The final evaluations and group recommendations are due no later than January 7th, 2011 at the same location in Oak Brook.

You can work off-site, in your home, or at work; you can be creative as long as you use care with the entries. Winning entries advance to the International competition.

The same forms and processes STC International implemented last year are being used again this year. Judges complete a structured form for every entry, evaluating each entry on its own merit. Comments, constructive or complimentary, are added for each statement on the form. This structure allows each judge to evaluate the entries consistently. After each judge has completed his or her evaluations, groups of judges work as teams to determine the appropriate award, if any, for the entries.

Previous judges have consistently commented on the value of this experience to their own work.

Click [here](#) to sign up to volunteer to be a judge for the 2011-2012 Competition.

## Chapter Members Learn about Content Reuse Strategies

*By MaryKay Grueneberg*

Twenty STC Chicago members and five non-members gathered at Charlie's Charhouse in Elk Grove Village on August 25th to hear Lisa Pietrangeli and Bryan Lynn of Thirty-Six Software speak on a dual topic: "Optimizing Content Reuse in Unstructured and Structured Authoring Environments" and "How to Build a Business Case: Selling your ideas to your company." This hot topic was extremely informative and well-received by all who attended.

Some of the questions that were answered for attendees included: Why is content reuse important to my company? How does technology affect content reuse optimization? How do different authoring methods impact technology options? What technical options are available for writing teams working in these unique environments? What is the best way to maximize reuse? How do I help make sure that my company's brand and message are consistent worldwide? How do I determine ROI and present the idea to my company? Ω

## First Webinar of the Program Year a Success

*By MaryKay Grueneberg*

Our first Webinar of the program year, "SmartDocs: Content Management and Content Reuse in Microsoft Word," was a great success.

The free lunch-hour Webinar was a SmartDocs demo presented by Lisa Pietrangeli, Director of Client Solutions and Bryan Lynn, Director of Technology at ThirtySix Software. Twenty-eight STC Chicago members attended this great session and provided wonderful feedback both about the speakers and about the product demonstration. Ω

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## STC Chicago and STC Rochester Host Joint Webinar

*By MaryKay Grueneberg*

On September 28th, STC Chicago joined forces with STC Rochester to offer a Webinar that was open to both Chapters as well as a number of other Chapters from around the country. The lunch-hour Webinar was focused on "Selecting the right technology to support your content reuse strategy," presented by Lisa Pietrangeli, STC Rochester Co-VP and Director of Client Solutions at ThirtySix Software.

The session was a perfect wrap-up to STC Chicago's August Webinar and August Chapter meeting, which both looked at different aspects of content reuse in structured and unstructured environments. Fourteen STC members attended this great session. Ω



## Upcoming Programs and Events with STC Chicago

*By MaryKay Grueneberg*

Each of our monthly Chapter meetings offers an interesting and informative presentation on a current topic of interest to technical communicators and also allows time for networking with others in the field. For full details and meeting registrations, see our website at [stc-chicago.org](http://stc-chicago.org).

### **Job Hunting Secrets that May Surprise You** October 20 (new date!) Presentation Meeting 6:30pm check-in, program begins at 7pm. Olive Garden, Downers Grove

Presented by Jack Molisani of ProSpring Staffing  
Cost is \$20 members, \$30 non-members, \$15 students  
(full dinner with unlimited soup or salad, breadsticks, and soft drinks included)

2011 is showing an uptick in job posting as companies come out of recession mode, but with so many people still looking for work, the competition for jobs is at an all-time high. However, there ARE actions you can take to move to the front of the line when applying for a new position.

Whether you are unemployed and looking for a job or are employed but looking to move up or move out, don't miss our October 20 meeting!

### **Write More, Write Less: Embracing the value of crafted words and images** November 17 Presentation Meeting 6:30pm check-in, program begins at 7pm. Location TBD

Presented by Joe Welinske of WritersUA  
Cost is \$20 members, \$30 non-members, \$15 students  
(dinner and soft drinks included)

While the word "content" is a good shorthand for words, audio, and images, it unfortunately can move us farther away from the core competency of developing good information.

The theme of this presentation is that documentation teams often spend too little time writing well and too much time writing little-used information.

Research and professional observation suggest that not enough time is being put into crafting text to be exactly right for a particular context. And writing resources for doing "agile" user assistance would be more readily available if writers would prioritize topic writing based on user need.

"Writing more" while "writing less" can result in better utility for users and can reduce the need and load on the overall documentation development process and content management. Technical Communicators of all backgrounds will benefit from this thought-provoking presentation. Ω

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## Interview Preparation and Techniques Workshop

*By Elizabeth Burke*

On Saturday, November 5th, STC Chicago is offering a workshop to help you prepare and practice for job interviews. This workshop covers three distinct aspects related to interviews: resume preparation, work samples, and interviewing skills.

Representatives from The CARA Group will be sharing information and techniques to prepare for job interviews. The information will cover what should be included in your resume as well as how to present work samples. The CARA representatives will also walk you through techniques to use for different interviewing scenarios including on-site, phone, and video interviews. You will also have the opportunity to review your resume and work samples using job aids created for this workshop.

Reserve Saturday, November 5 for our fall workshop on interview preparation and watch our website for details. Ω



November Chapter Meeting Bronze Sponsor



## Adobe's Tech Comm Suite a Hit with Technical Communicators

*By MaryKay Grueneberg*

On September 22nd, at the Siemens offices in Buffalo Grove, 33 technical communicators had a chance to see the new features and functionality of the Adobe Tech Comm Suite. Dustin Vaughn gave a very informative and educational presentation, demonstrating the powerful suite of products which included FrameMaker, RoboHelp, Captivate, Photoshop, and Acrobat. A good time was had by all.

Congratulations to Brad Schubring, the drawing winner. Brad won a free license to the full Adobe Tech Comm Suite 3.5, with a retail value of \$1,900! Thank you, Adobe!



STC Chicago wishes to thank Interpro Translation Solutions for being Silver sponsors for the September Chapter meeting and Siemens Industry, Inc. for graciously donating the meeting space. Ω

## Nielsen Professional Organization Day

*By Chris Hester*

On Wednesday, September 14th, The Nielsen Company held a special networking event for its employees, particularly those within its Product Engineering group. The purpose of the event was to expose employees to local professional organizations that can help them further their professional development goals and enhance their networks. STC Chicago was invited to participate, and as representatives of the chapter, Elizabeth Burke and I met Nielsen employees, talked about the field of technical communication, its role in an organization, and the role of STC in an individual's career.

About 90 people attended the event, and Nielsen provided each person with a passport that had to be stamped at each organization's station. Since completed passports were entered in a drawing for an Apple iPad®, we talked with a lot of people! The other organizations that participated were:

Association of Information Technology Professionals  
Project Management Institute  
Toastmasters  
Professional Association for SQL Server (SQL Server User Group)  
Association for Computing Machinery  
Quality Assurance Association  
The Data Warehouse Institute  
Illinois Cognos Users Group  
Network of Executive Women  
Alliance for Women in Media Ω



September Chapter Meeting Silver Sponsor

## 2012 Summit Plans in Progress at STC Chicago

*By Bill Leavitt and Linda Jansak*

2012 Summit planning continues here in Chicago. This month, we are researching tours to offer to STC members who attend the conference next May. Possible day trips include a non-game-day tour of Wrigley Field. We are also considering tours of the Botanic Gardens, Goose Island Brewery, Second City, and others. Among the possibilities are Chicago-themed tours with stops at popular jazz and blues clubs, architectural tours, and custom walking tours that feature Chicago's Loop and Magnificent Mile.

We continue to promote the event in print and online. Look for Mary Sojoodi-Whalen's article on Rosemont nightlife, restaurants and other entertainment in the November issue of *Intercom*.

Check our website for more information in November, when we will hold a networking event at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare for the Host Committee. At that time, we will conduct a tour of the hotel to help familiarize committee members with the venue.

The 2012 Summit is a great opportunity to become involved in the community. If you would like to volunteer to help – either in planning networking activities or event execution next May – please let us know. If you are already a member of the Chicago Host Committee, check your email soon for status updates and other news. To become a member of the committee, contact [stc2012@stc-chicago.org](mailto:stc2012@stc-chicago.org).

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## Chicago's eLearning Community Finds Fertile Ground Here at Home

*By Linda Jansak*

When you make your living in the digital world, the challenge may be to find the best networking environment, the most exciting, cutting-edge technologies, and the most fertile start-up community in which to grow your tech comm skill sets. Attendees of the Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase have demonstrated – ever since the inaugural eLearning Showcase in 2008 – a willingness to do just that.

At the Union League Club of Chicago this August, Showcase organizers welcomed 325 attendees, including nearly 40 speakers and 20 sponsor/exhibitors. The program included two keynote speakers and six conference tracks consisting of 24 educational sessions in all. Now in its fourth consecutive year, this popular conference has attracted a devoted following in Chicago and beyond. As a result, conference organizers have had to seek a new venue each year in order to accommodate the growing interest in this event.

If you haven't had an opportunity to attend the eLearning Showcase in the past, consider attending next year. The Showcase is typically held during the second or third week in August. The location has always been Chicago's Loop.

Do you need more information before you put this conference on your to-do list? For this year's session descriptions, speaker bios, presentation slides, and photos, visit [www.chicagoelearningshowcase.com](http://www.chicagoelearningshowcase.com). We hope to see you at future events! Ω



## Byline

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**STC mission statement:** Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.

**News guidelines:** Send articles to Byline at [byline@stc-chicago.org](mailto:byline@stc-chicago.org). Preferred format is a MS Word® document file via e-mail. We reserve the right to edit for style and space.

**Advertising:** We encourage advertising that follows STC guidelines and promotes services to STC Chicago members.

Half page (7.5"x4.5"): \$300 (1 issue)

Whole page (7.5"x9"): \$500 (1 issue).

Discounts for multiple issues. For details, go to our web site at [www.stc-chicago.org](http://www.stc-chicago.org) and click on *Byline Advertising*.

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## STC Chicago Membership at a Glance

Total Affiliated Members: 135

Associate Fellows: 4

Fellows: 5

Members: 31

Senior Members: 87

Student Members: 8 Ω

## STC Chicago Chapter Leaders 2011–2012

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