



## President’s Message

By Pete Wagner

With year’s end just around the corner and the holiday season upon us, we have much to be thankful for. While our events are still virtual, we are slowly turning the corner as 2022 holds the promise of an in-person STC Summit in Rosemont May 15-18. Many thanks to all that have volunteered to help out, including Linda Jansak, Adam Evans and Francis Bao, who have stepped up to manage the 2022 STC Chicago Summit committee. They’ll need a lot of volunteer support to properly roll out the red carpet to our colleagues from across the country and the world next May. I’m confident of getting the same level of support that we enjoyed when we hosted the last Chicago-area national conference in 2012.

Chapter events in the meantime remain virtual, and I am thankful for the technology that allows many of us to continue working from the home office and attend the virtual events which now have become the norm. We had a great turnout for the structured authoring workshop in November, and as usual we will wrap up the calendar year with another edition of the always entertaining Lightning Talks on Tuesday, December 14.

On behalf of the STC Chicago Administrative Council, I’d like to extend holiday wishes to all and best wishes for a healthy New Year! Looking forward to a great second half program year in 2022. Ω

## Member News

### New Copresco Press Installed for Fast Turnaround and On-Time Delivery

Copresco is upgrading its digital fleet with a second Konica-Minolta 6136P press to meet increased production

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demands and guarantees for fast turnaround and on-time delivery.

The twin of the 6136P that was installed in late 2020 meets the same standards for Copresco’s high volume production and provides exceptional black & white print reproduction.

The press offers inline saddle stitching for up to 80-page booklets and can handle multiple paper stocks and weights. Precise tone controls allow the creation of halftone curves on the fly. “This is a feature normally only found on full color presses, but required by Copresco for our unparalleled monochrome work,” Johnson added. Ω


 The logo features the word "Virtual" in a red, slanted font with a white outline, positioned above the words "Chapter Meeting" in a blue, handwritten-style font.

## December: Virtual Holiday Party with Lightning Talks

Join us on Tuesday, December 14, at 7 p.m. for our second annual STC Chicago Virtual Holiday Party, using the interactive video features of GoToMeeting as we have for our webinars and our online networking events. (We will trust you to mute yourselves—or not!—for barking dogs.)

As tradition demands, we will once again have Lightning Talks, mini presentations of 20 slides in five minutes on either serious or light topics. The tricky part is that the slides advance automatically, whether the speaker is ready or not! Lightning talks are an exercise in speaker brevity and concentration, and often a lot of laughter ensues.

We will have several presenters, and one brave speaker will do a Ninja Lightning Talk, with a slide deck they will not see until they start to speak!

Check our [Website](#) for details and a registration link. If you are interested in giving a Lightning Talk, please send your idea to [program@stcchicago.org](mailto:program@stcchicago.org). We hope to see—and hear—you online as we send yet another tumultuous year packing! Ω

## October Recap: Structured Authoring Workshop

Dozens of Chicago Chapter members and guests attended a Structured Authoring Workshop on Wednesday, October 27, presented by Chapter President Pete Wagner.

Pete was the CCMS Power User at Siemens in Buffalo Grove for many years and later worked as a consultant at Dakota Systems Inc., a Chicago company that helps organizations implement structured authoring, content management, and publishing solutions. He is currently a senior technical communicator at Litera Microsystems in Chicago, looking to implement a structured authoring solution for current and future document content.

The workshop provided an overview of structured authoring and its principles, which apply to the authoring process regardless of the authoring software or component content management system (CCMS) used. However, the discussion included mentions of tools and systems used in many workplaces, as well as methodologies such as the Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA), and how they apply the principles discussed.

Key principles discussed were reuse (the ability to write information once and reuse it many times), repurposing (the ability to generate output in multiple formats from content stored as a single format), and translation (the gains in process efficiency from translating modules of content rather than entire documents, which are one of the main business selling points of structured authoring).

The workshop also focused on the concept of topic-based authoring, in which content is developed in modules that each cover a specific subject with a defined purpose and can stand on their own rather than requiring a specific context to be understood. Creation of topic-based content is essential to applying the principles of reuse and repurposing of content through any content management system.

The principles were then illustrated with real-life examples, and the resources provided to registrants after the workshop included the real-life examples of application of the principles.

One key conclusion of the presentation was that the biggest challenges to structured authoring are not structural but cultural: The loss of control over content format enables writers to focus on the content they are creating, but that change of focus can be disorienting to writers and the teams with which they work.

The presentation and the resources provided to registrants included links to a variety of sources for more detailed information about real-world applications of the principles.

Anyone with questions is welcome to contact Pete at [president@stc-chicago.com](mailto:president@stc-chicago.com). Ω

## November Meeting Recap: Virtual Scavenger Hunt

The Chicago Chapter gathered online on Thursday, November 18, for a virtual scavenger hunt, in which participants competed to answer to riddles presented in real time, using the interactive features of our GoToMeeting platform.

The event was adapted from an online event at a member's workplace where co-workers connected across the miles were asked to find items in their homes and show them on screen as answers to the riddles. In the workplace version, the first person to show the correct item on screen for each riddle won the point for answering that riddle.

To accommodate mobility issues, our participants entered the answer to each riddle in the online chat window, and the first correct answer to each riddle received the point. The winning participant, who submitted the most correct answers, also received the most points for entering each correct answer first and will receive a \$25 electronic Amazon gift card.

The reading and answering of the riddles generated much laughter and conversation, especially when the correctness of some answers required discussion about the definition of the riddle—a field day for a group of technical writers!

In addition, the event finished within an hour, and feedback from participants was that the shorter time works well for online events, so the chapter will keep this in mind for future virtual meetings. Ω



## December: “Putting the I in AI: Using AI to Fix Your Content”

Speaker: Val Swisher  
December 15, 2021

With each passing year, Artificial Intelligence takes on a larger role in our daily lives. AI engines are being employed by all sorts of firms, in a variety of industries. At the heart of an AI system is a Natural Language Processing (NLP) engine. The understanding of text is one of the most challenging – and most important – aspects of AI. In this session, we will explore how NLP works and how AI engines use NLP to make sense of the written world.

In this session you will learn how an AI system is configured and trained, how AI uses NLP, and how NLPs work. Ω

## January: “Spinning Words into Gold: Helping Managers Recognize Your Value”

Speaker: MK Grueneberg  
Joint session with STC Editing SIG  
January 12, 2022

After I was told outright that I could not get my next promotion for several years because the budget needed to go to the Developers, I spent the next four months proving my worth. In the end, I not only convinced a Dev Manager to spend his promotion budget on a technical communicator, but I landed a double promotion. If you're not willing to take a back seat to the Developers and you're ready to prove the value you bring to the team, then come join my session. I'm happy to share my secret with you!

In this session, you will learn how to prove the value they bring to the team and get what they deserve. Ω

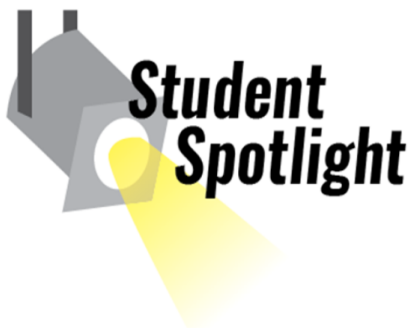
## February: “Quiet Leadership: Influencing Change Without Being the Loudest Person in the Room”

Speaker: Stacey King Gordon

Our profession tends to attract introverts and quieter folks, who prefer to influence with their pens more than their voices. In fast-moving companies, it’s easy to feel like our point of view is getting trampled, disregarded, and forgotten by our non-content colleagues as they try to out-talk each other.

In this session, Stacey Gordon shares how to drive meaningful change and influence others without shouting into the maelstrom of loud voices. Stacey draws on her background as a content strategy manager at Google and Facebook, and her time as a consultant, to share strategies for socializing ideas, advocating for the right things, and implementing lasting change — without pushing ourselves too far out of our introvert comfort zones.

Watch the STC Chicago website for full details and registration information. [Ω](#)



## The Research Communication Problem

By Anika Wilen

Student, University of Illinois Chicago

In the research field, communicating your work and findings is the only way to move forward and make scientific advancements. Whether it is through verbal presentation or written papers, communicating research legitimizes the scientific process and ultimately contributes to research’s primary goal—deepening

understanding through reproducible, scientific methods.

However, there is a major problem in the research field: research findings and results are often not adequately shared (Puniewska, 2014). Technological challenges (creating sharable content, converting research materials into a digital format), a lack of reward and incentive, and a lack of ethical focus on sharing information in the community contribute to this problem (Soranno et al., 2014). Many researchers do not take the time to make their information publicly available after publication; their data is hidden behind a paywall for a specific journal (Soranno et al., 2014). Because of this “sharing” issue, findings are not put in context of other results and there is a serious lack of content that compares, contrasts, and optimizes the research on specific topics. The creation of technical and synthesized content that is easily read, publicly available, and usable as a reference would be of ample help to researchers.

This problem appears in everything from biology, psychology, and mathematics to chemistry and physics. A notable example lies in Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) research. AD is the most common form of dementia and is considered a neurodegenerative disease and a tauopathy (Iqbal et al., 2010). Today, AD is a global epidemic—in America alone, over 6.2 million people currently have Alzheimer’s (Alzheimer’s Association, 2021). Tau protein is a microtubule-associated protein (MAP) and it usually stabilizes parts of neurons (Chang et al., 2018). Sometimes, tau protein can become altered and become pathogenic tau (Chang et al., 2018). Accumulation of pathogenic tau can lead to AD onset and progression (Chang et al., 2018). One way scientists are looking to develop cures and therapeutics for AD is by targeting molecules and compounds that regulate tau protein’s accumulation, movement, and properties (tau protein regulators).

However, due to the large variety of tau protein regulators that have been identified and a lack of organization and comparison of research results, research into regulators is in danger of becoming

unfocused. Considering tau protein regulator research's possibility of leading to a cure for AD or new medicines for patients, time and optimization of resources is of the essence. Without comparison of research done on different tau protein regulators, researchers will be unaware of the most lucrative regulators, the best place to put their resources, and where to research to get closer to a cure. A detailed, succinct review of the state of knowledge around tau protein regulators would work to fix this issue.

In many ways, the tau protein regulator case mimics technical communication problems throughout the research field. In many circumstances there is a large variety of research being done into certain topics, but a lack of communication with the sole purpose of putting research into context of itself. Comparing sources, creating databases, writing articles with easily navigable sections that can help prioritize research subjects—all of these aspects of creating a highly usable technical document would benefit the research field greatly and help to optimize scientific research towards the next breakthrough. Ω

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## October Webinar in Review

The authors of the following articles are students in the Professional Writing Certificate Program at the College of DuPage.

### Get That Interview! How to Beat the Dreaded ATS

By Sheri Potter

Student, College of DuPage

The October webinar was presented by Jack Molisani of ProSpring Staffing. The first thing that was discussed was describing Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). These are used to accept, store, and submit applications. Mobile changed that and people could easily apply with swipe of finger. Companies were receiving too many applications from people not qualified. Now they use Artificial Intelligence to weed out unqualified applicants. They compare your resume to the job requirements and duties to see if you match. Only top 5% or so are seen by a real person.

It is recommended that you avoid an ATS if possible. It's a million times more effective to use someone in your personal network. You can create connections by joining related groups to volunteer and network. Even better, run for an office in the group or speak at a conference. Another idea is to expand your social media network (LinkedIn and Facebook). Look for groups and participate in them. Let your network know you are looking for work and monitor your network to see who is hiring. A lot of jobs are filled without ever posting the opening. They are filled through a network. Additionally, a lot of recruiters have their email address listed on LinkedIn. This is an easy way to reach out to them. Even if you must apply online, you will then have a person who will watch out for your resume after you've email them. If you don't have job experience to list on LinkedIn, volunteer in the field and use that. Be so visible in your industry that people want to hire you. You are not applying for a job; they are applying for you!

You should only apply for jobs through an ATS as a last resort. When doing this, make your resume look as much as possible like the job posting. Your title on the resume in current and previous jobs must match the job title exactly. Make sure your resume shows you match the job requirements using their wording. There are websites that will compare your resume to job postings to let you know how you score. If you don't have the requirement, write what you have done that is similar using the exact words they use. For example, if they are looking for "x", write "I have experience with y, which is similar to x". It is also important to know that Artificial Intelligence can't read tables, text boxes, icons, graphics, headers or footers.

I had no idea that companies use Artificial Intelligence to weed out applications on an ATS. I can now appreciate the work that we did in class to our cover letters and resumes. By using the keyword evidence exercise, we can add those phrases that will be picked up by the ATS. Also, I have always known building connections was important, but that value has increased in my eyes after this webinar. I currently use LinkedIn, but my approach will be a bit different in the future to help build those connections. Ω

### STC Webinar with Jack Molisani: ATS

*By Jakub Hajduczenia*

*Student, College of DuPage*

The webinar I attended in October was presented by Jack Molisani and the main topic of the lecture was Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). Before this webinar, I had never heard the term ATS but after, I felt more prepared to face job applications and know what to beware of in the future. Jack went over what an ATS was, how to avoid it, and what to do if you have no other option but to use one.

An ATSs are the websites where companies post job ads and people can apply for these jobs online. ATSs use AI to match up users looking for employment with certain

jobs on the site that it thinks they qualify for. After a match is made, the company then goes over the resumes posted by the users and determines who will be hired. But as it turns out, Jack told us that most if not all the resumes submitted by users are never even read by a real person, they're read by the AI. It goes through and tries to find specific keywords that will determine whether to label you as a potential hire or take you off the list entirely. Obviously, this is not a great system. Many people who could get the job on the spot in person, could be completely ignored by the ATS. Therefore, Jack encourages us to not use ATSs, but instead find different ways to apply for jobs in person.

Because ATSs are so common now it might be hard for a lot of people to avoid them. But Jack says the best thing to do is to build connections. This can be done many ways such as volunteering or other activities that get you in touch with people in the business you are seeking employment in. Through these connections you'll be able to easily ask to be referred for an interview and have a possible advantage in getting the job as well. And even if you don't make these connections, you can ask employees you don't even know to refer you. Jack mentioned that some companies give bonuses to employees who refer qualified people for interviews, so you could use that to your advantage.

If you cannot avoid an ATS then just be sure consider a few things. Jack tells us that the AI in these systems is really picky and strict. Try to only use keywords that will appeal to the specific job you want to apply to. Jack says: "Speak like a cave person". If you have too much in your descriptions, the AI might not like that. Sometimes there could be problems if you are over-qualified for a job too.

I'm very glad that I attended this webinar. Jack was a great speaker, and I gained a whole new perspective on job application sites, and I now feel well prepared on what I should do in the future when applying for a job. I'll take Jack's advice and avoid ATSs for now. Ω

## Student Writing Contest Winners

Some of our STC Chicago members recently paid a visit to York High School students via Zoom for our fifth annual Tech Comm Panel. We thought you'd like to hear about it from the students, so we held a contest for the best summary article. The article on this page, by students Isabel Kachappilly, Abigail Madsen, and Katharine Svehla, is the winning article. They are High School Seniors, taking an honors class in technical writing, with dual credit at College of DuPage. In addition to their article being published here in *Byline*, they will also receive a Certificate of Achievement from the chapter. Congratulations, Isabel, Abigail, and Katharine!

## Members of the STC share the importance of usability

*By Isabel Kachappilly, Abigail Madsen, and Katharine Svehla  
York High School Students*

A group of members from the Society for Technical Communication (STC) virtually visited York High School students taking a Technical Writing course through the College of Dupage. In the past, panel members visited York in person; however, due to COVID-19 guidelines, they decided to speak with students over Zoom.

The group consisted of Adam Evans, MaryKay Grueneberg, Linda Kelley, and Lynne Williamson. These members had various educational backgrounds and career positions which influence their impact within the technical writing industry. Gruenberg works as a User Assistance Development Architect at SAP and has almost 40 years of experience in technical communication. She explained the significance of usability testing.

"Usability is extremely important because the people that designed the software or whatever it is that they will release, they have [an idea] in their head how they are expecting it to work and how people will use it," Gruenberg said. "But that doesn't mean that's how people are going to use it. So, the usability testing comes in where we play the role of the end user."

Usability refers to the quality of a user's experience when interacting with products, like websites. Usability is about effectiveness, efficiency and the overall engagement of the user. Evans, Senior Technical Documentation Manager at Strata Design Technology, explained some steps to approaching usability testing as a user.

"Whenever testing usability, you're really just making sure that the website is as easy to use as possible and everything is where a user would expect it to be," Evans said. "So, when we participate in usability testing, we're always looking for if the user is not able to accomplish a task? [Is it] because it's designed poorly, or because the words aren't there to help them get where they need to go?"

When one first opens a new website, the first thing they notice is text. While text is one of the most important aspects of a website, it can create a bad experience for the user. Williamson works as a Senior Technical Writer and Team Lead at SAP Fieldglass, a software company. She explained the biggest issues she notices when first viewing a website.

"The biggest problem that I encounter is that wall of text and I can't find the information I'm looking for," Williamson said. "The information that's there may not be geared towards me. It's maybe too high level, or it's too simple. And then, I get annoyed because there's so much information there for a newbie. So, it's that whole accessibility factor. I can't necessarily find what I'm looking for quickly."

Students in the York's technical writing class are currently participating in a group project where they must test usability on a specific website and write a recommendation report regarding the flaws the site contains. Many students have expressed how usability will help them in their academic future.

"[Usability] is widely applicable for our future," senior Eric Moskal said. "We're going to college next year and we're going to have a career eventually and testing usability will help us see what's not usable."

Testing usability is becoming an increasingly relevant conversation topic in schools, workplaces, and even at home. Kelley, Senior Information Developer at Synergex, offered insight on how testing usability puts us in the shoes of the user.

"Sometimes you think something works and is intuitive," Kelley said. "And then if you watch a user actually try to use it, you realize you can see the things that they're struggling with. [Usability testing] really lets you see things that you didn't think of. We're always surprised at what a user tries to do or doesn't think to do that we thought was obvious but it's just not." Ω

# Society News



## Renew Your STC Membership

STC's 2022 membership season is open! As a technical communicator, you know the value of being a member and we want to invite you to **renew your membership** now to continue receiving STC resources and discounts through 2022! Your current 2021 membership is valid through **31 December 2021**. If you are newly graduated, retiring, or want to upgrade your membership, please review all our member categories **here**.

Looking for something more long-term in your membership? Consider becoming a **sustaining member!** This membership is perfect for those who wish to pledge their support to the technical communication profession by making a 15-year membership commitment. Ω

## New Member Meet-ups

Join STC for informal, live meet-ups specifically meant to be a space for new TechComm professionals and those new to the Society to network and ask questions about STC, member benefits, and how to use your membership to your advantage. Bring your questions and ideas and attend one session or all! Registration is not required, attendance is free, and all STC members are invited to join us!

### Upcoming New Member Meet-Ups:

Monday, December 13 | 12:00 PM ET

Friday, December 17 | 3:00 PM ET

Monday, January 10 | 12:00 PM ET

Friday, January 14 | 3:00 PM ET Ω

## December Webinar

### Disrupting the Content Experience for Your Users

Three masons were laying bricks. During their break, a passerby asked each one, "What are you up to?"

One mason replied, "I'm building a wall."

Another replied, "I'm building a room."

But the third replied, "I'm building a castle!"

When you create content for your users, do you have the castle in mind? Do your users see the castle? How do you know? It doesn't matter if you use DITA or if it's all in XML. If your content is not getting read, then all the effort you put into creating it isn't much use - that is where you need to cause a disruption. Because if you do what you always do, you may not get what you have always got!

At the end of the day, a customer does not use a product feature it for one of these reasons:

- They aren't informed about it.
- They are informed but choose not to use the information anyway.

In this webinar, we'll show you how to solve the first part of the problem, in half the time. And we'll show you how you can check this too. And that's only the tip of the iceberg.

This webinar is sponsored by Whatfix and free for all STC members.

**Wednesday, December 8, 2021**

**12:00 PM EDT Ω**

## January Webinar

### Rethinking Scientific Research Communication

Have you ever walked away from a research poster, scientific article, or academic seminar more confused by a topic than when you started or arrived? This presentation considers Mike Morrison's Poster 2.0 strategy, scientific project websites, and audio podcasts as unique communication forms that could help with knowledge sharing within academic, scientific, and research communities.

**Wednesday, January 12, 2022**

**1:00 – 2:00 PM EDT Ω**



## STC Chicago 2021-22 Officers

**President** – Pete Wagner, [president@stc-chicago.com](mailto:president@stc-chicago.com)  
**Vice President** – tbd, [vp@stc-chicago.com](mailto:vp@stc-chicago.com)  
**Secretary** – Dan Dornbrook, [secretary@stc-chicago.com](mailto:secretary@stc-chicago.com)  
**Treasurer** – Francis Bao, [treasurer@stc-chicago.com](mailto:treasurer@stc-chicago.com)  
**Immediate Past President** – Rita Hovorka, [ipp@stc-chicago.com](mailto:ipp@stc-chicago.com)

## 2021-22 Committee Managers

**Alliance** – Linda Jansak  
**Bylaws** – Becky Hall  
**Competition** – MK Grueneberg and Nancy Shanahan, [competition@stc-chicago.com](mailto:competition@stc-chicago.com)  
**eLearning & Technology Showcase** – Linda Jansak  
**Historian** – Bill Leavitt  
**Byline Newsletter** – Sian Mehl  
**Nominating** – Dan Dornbrook, [nominating@stc-chicago.com](mailto:nominating@stc-chicago.com)  
**Get Real! Professional Interview Program** – \*2021-22 manager wanted\*, [interview@stc-chicago.com](mailto:interview@stc-chicago.com)  
**Membership Drive** – \*2021-22 manager wanted\*, [membership@stc-chicago.com](mailto:membership@stc-chicago.com)  
**Programs** – Dan Dornbrook, [program@stc-chicago.com](mailto:program@stc-chicago.com)  
**Social Media** – Dan Dornbrook  
**Scholarships** – Rita Hovorka, [scholarships@stc-chicago.com](mailto:scholarships@stc-chicago.com)  
**Sponsorship** – \*2021-22 manager wanted\*, [sponsorship@stc-chicago.com](mailto:sponsorship@stc-chicago.com)  
**Student Outreach** – MK Grueneberg  
**Summit 2022** – Linda Jansak, Adam Evans, Francis Bao, [stc2022@stc-chicago.com](mailto:stc2022@stc-chicago.com)  
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## Byline

Byline is a bi-monthly publication of the STC Chicago chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC), a non-profit membership organization serving the needs of technical communication professionals.

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

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