President's Message

By Phil Hayek

Happy Fall STC Chicago members and supporters! Fall is a great time to get energized and involved with the chapter. A special thanks to everyone who is stepping up to participate in the annual competition, and for volunteering with the Get Real! Interview program. Keep taking advantage of all that STC Chicago has to offer and we'll continue to innovate and provide new and exciting programs and opportunities.

I'd also like to welcome our newly appointed Vice President, Ashley Gordon! I had the pleasure of meeting Ashley at the Summit in May, where we entertained all kinds of ideas to really kick start the chapter and continue to grow the STC Chicago community. In-person gatherings and meetups in the city we all love were top of the list.

Stay tuned and stay active, STC Chicago. Ω

Meet Our New Chapter VP!

Ashley Gordon is a professional technical communicator with experience at both the enterprise and startup level. She currently works at Luma Health, a patient engagement startup that focuses on reducing barriers to accessing healthcare. She joined Luma Health and moved to Chicago in 2021 after spending four years working at a private healthcare software company in Madison, WI.

Ashley specializes in customer-facing instructional and expository content and has also produced promotional and product marketing materials. She has years of experience collaborating across teams to create content that answers users' questions and drives them towards decisions. She also enjoys taking on internal initiatives that promote a company-wide culture of documentation.

Ashley is especially excited to join the STC Chicago board as Vice President. She can't wait to work with the Board to plan new and exciting ways to expand the chapter's footprint in the Windy City. During her undergraduate studies at Oakland University, Ashley was Vice President and then President of Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honors Society. During Ashley's time in Madison, WI, she spent two years as the president of Madison's premier Jewish Young Professionals organization. Ashley is passionate about building community and can't wait to bring this energy to STC Chicago. Ω

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September Webinar with Jack Molisani

After a summer hiatus, STC Chicago resumed its Wednesday Webinar series on September 28 with a presentation by Jack Molisani, titled "Hiring Booms and Mass Resignations and Pre-recession Layoffs, Oh My! How to Score Your Next Position in a Shifting Job Market".

Jack is an STC Fellow and the president of ProSpring Technical Staffing, an employment agency specializing in content professionals, both contract and direct hire (see https://ProspringStaffing.com).   He is also the author of *Be the Captain of Your Career: A New Approach to Career Planning and Advancement*, which hit #5 on Amazon's Career and Resume Best Seller list.

"In the 25 years I've been a professional recruiter, I've seen hiring booms and mass layoffs as economies ebb and flow. However, I've never seen hiring booms, pre-recession layoffs, and mass resignations at the same time," Jack said.

In his presentation, Jack noted that resignations per month have reached 3% of total U.S. employment, and while the unemployment rate for the general U.S. population is 3.7%, among technical professions it fell to 1.7% in July and is near the all-time low of 1.3% recorded in May 2019.

At the same time, many employers, out of fear of an upcoming recession, are reducing discretionary expenses, imposing pre-emptive layoffs, and pressing for a return to in-office work in ways that conflict with many employees' expectations of increased flexibility in the wake of the global pandemic.

In light of this complex environment, Jack offered the following recommendations for anyone looking for a new job:

- When considering whether to work from home, in an office, or in hybrid mode, which is becoming the preferred mode, identify which mode works best for you and pursue opportunities that support that.

- Search for jobs online, wherever you can find listings, but apply through a personal referral whenever possible. (If you do not personally know someone at a target company, use LinkedIn to identify their recruiters and approach them directly.)

- Be findable. Make sure your resume and online profiles show your experience, education, and work tools you have used so that potential employers know what you can do for them.

- When building your resume and online profiles, don't sacrifice usability and readability for graphic design. Clear communication of your skills and experience to potential employers is the priority.

In addition to recruiting, Jack also produces the LavaCon Conference on Content Strategy and Technical Communication Management (see https://LavaCon.org). LavaCon is the first of two current Friends of STC Chicago sponsors of chapter events. Jack invited STC Chicago members and their colleagues to register for this year's conference, scheduled for October 23-26 in New Orleans, using the referral code "CHISTC" for a $200 discount on registration. Ω

Upcoming Chapter Events

Plans for STC Chicago events are in the works and will be announced on the chapter website when details are confirmed.

Meanwhile, check out the monthly Virtual Meetups. The next Virtual Meetups are scheduled for October 13 and November 10. Register by 10:00 AM the day of the meetup. Ω

2022 eLearning Showcase Wrap-Up

We are happy to report that the Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase took place on Tuesday, August 23 after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic! Nearly 225 attendees gathered at Northern Illinois University's Business Conference Center in Naperville for the highly anticipated return of this event.

Attendees shared their enthusiasm for in-person networking and exploring what is new in the field of eLearning. A post-event survey reveals respondents were pleased with the overall experience, including program content, speakers, vendor participation, and venue. (See photos and tweets from this year's event at Twitter.)

The schedule for the day included keynote speaker Megan Torrance and 15 breakout sessions presented by 20 speakers in four time slots. Special Interest Groups (SIGs) were formed to address important topics including The Learning Technologies Landscape, Accessibility, Gamification, Freelancing, and xAPI. By all accounts, the SIG sessions provided an interactive way for attendees to learn from others and share what they know.

STC Chicago's booth in the exhibit area was a place to learn about our organization and to make plans to connect with us in the future. Those who stopped by to chat with chapter members Dan Dornbrook and Linda Jansak could also purchase STC Chicago merchandise and enter a prize drawing. Our end-of-day raffle winner, Kim Tomlinson, received a Fire HD 10 Plus Tablet courtesy of the chapter. Wendi Barlow took home of a variety of STC Chicago branded items as winner of the STC Chicago swag bag.

This year's conference organizers include core team members Hadiya Nuriddin, Lauren Milantoni, James Wallace, and Linda Jansak, who met regularly starting last fall to enlist new volunteers; create volunteer orientation; design the event program; and recruit speakers, sponsors, and exhibitors. Thank you, all, for your dedication to making the eLearning Showcase happen in 2022.

Once the decision was made to hold an in-person event, a whole host of dedicated volunteers worked tirelessly to ensure a great experience for all. Thank you to all who contributed to this year's success! 2022 volunteers include Gina Arinyanontakoon, Francis Bao, Amber Briggs, Liesl Christle, Shenise Cook, Apryl Cox Jackson, Erica Hutchinson, Jessica Kaz, Kandice Kidd, Tamara Lewis, Riche Miller, Christine O'Malley, Sadhana Phreykz, Linda Polinski, Lucy Skalbeck, Alicia Seguin, Rob Sheehan, Natalie Sikes, Kimberly Simmons, Liz Thurman, Himani Trivedi, Victoria Vaccaro, and Toi Walker-Smith. Your work in the run-up to the event and during the conference itself is very much appreciated.

Helpful Links

Here are a few things we would like to share from this year's event:

- Our LinkedIn Group is a place to network work with Showcase attendees, join discussions, share information, and post job leads throughout the year. If you are not yet a member, consider joining the group.

- Sponsors help make this unique event possible each year. We appreciate the generous support of our sponsors and the opportunity to learn about the products and services they offer. Visit sponsor websites by clicking on their logos, which appear on our website.

- Our Twitter and Facebook pages provide elearning updates throughout the year and news about next year's Showcase. Find us online and stay connected to the growing elearning community in Chicago and beyond.

- Program calendars for host organizations ATDChi and STC Chicago are available online. Check out upcoming meetings and join us soon at a networking or educational event. Ω

Competition Deadline is October 15

We're excited to get started on this year's STC Chicago Technical Communication Competition. This is our 51st competition, and we're looking for a lot of diverse entries this year. Will yours be one of them?

Although the name is "competition," each entry is evaluated on its own merit, evaluated against industry standards, and not judged against other entries. This is an opportunity to have other professional technical communicators evaluate your work and provide feedback. Receiving feedback is an important tool for any technical communicator at any level in their career. Receiving recognition for your work is even better and always goes a long way in proving to management teams the importance of what you do.

Now is the time to look at the work you've produced over the past year or so and decide what you are going to enter in the 2022 STC Chicago Technical Communication Competition. The categories for entries are:

- Training Materials
- Informational Materials
- Promotional Materials
- User Support Materials

STC Chicago is accepting entries August 15 through October 15, 2022. The competition entry fees are listed below and must be made online (companies submitting multiple entries can contact us to arrange payment by check).

- Full-Time Students: $25
- STC Chicago Members: $50
- Other STC Members: $75
- Non-STC Members: $100

Who is eligible to enter?
Everyone, STC member or not, is eligible to submit entries to our competition. You can enter work you completed, or you can submit an entry on behalf of a colleague or subordinate (with their permission).4 To submit, go to the Call for Entries page online for the entry form, details, and payment link. We look forward to hearing from you! If you have any questions, please contact us via email to competition@stc-chicago.com
Ω

Volunteer Opportunities

Do you want to support your STC Chicago Chapter this year? Consider getting involved with one of these initiatives!

Competition
The competition committee conducts the annual Chapter-level Technical Communication Competition and works with the Program Manager to organize the awards portion of the annual Chapter Recognition and Awards Banquet. Responsibilities include:

- Soliciting, training, and mentoring judges for the annual competition
- Conducting a training session for new and returning judges
- Assigning judging teams and work with the Entries and Awards Manager to assign entries to teams
- Conducting and overseeing Consensus Judging
- Helping with the planning and organization of the annual Chapter Recognition and Awards Banquet

If you'd like to help with the competition, please contact competition@stc-chicago.com.

Mentoring
The mentoring committee is responsible for the coordinating of the Get Real! interview program. The committee manager coordinates interviews between senior writers and the students or recent graduates from tech comm programs. We're always looking to grow our roster of available interviewees. The more volunteers we have for this service, the fewer interviews you'll have to do yourself. Help us get more volunteers by becoming one today and recruiting your STC Chicago friends! Responsibilities include:

- Conducting an in-person or telephone interview with a student interviewee for 30 to 60 minutes as needed. Students are responsible for coming up with the questions.

If you'd like to be added to our roster of volunteer interviewees and you're a chapter member, please contact interview@stc-chicago.com. Ω

2023 Summit Save the Date

STC is excited to announce that they will hold the 70ᵗʰ Anniversary Summit on May 14-17, 2023, in Atlanta, GA! Be on the lookout for registration opening in late 2022 and Call for Proposals opening on August 15. Ω

Time to Renew Your STC Membership!

Your 2022 STC membership will expire on December 31, 2022. Take action now and renew your membership to continue receiving STC resources and discounts through 2023! If you are newly graduated, retiring, or want to upgrade your membership, please review all our member categories here. Ω

October and November Webinars

Tips and Tricks for Budding Podcasters

Have you ever considered launching your own podcast show, but the idea seems daunting? Like you, I was in a similar situation a couple of years ago. With some planning and support, I managed to launch my own show.

Podcasting is a great opportunity to create content and build your personal brand. However, if you are overwhelmed by the process and unsure about the next steps, then this is the webinar for you. Zohra will share some tips from her playbook to create a successful show and how you can have fun while making it.

Attendee Takeaways:

- Understand the basics of podcasting.
- Discover the benefits of podcasting and building your personal brand.
- Determine resources and infrastructure to record and host your podcast.
- Learn how to make your podcast accessible.
- Determine the audience for your podcast.
- Understand metrics and what they mean.
- Understand whether to monetize or not.

Wednesday, October 19, 2022 – 11:00 to 12:00 PM (Central Time)

Improving Usability in Smartphone Apps: Leveraging Unstructured Feedback and User-Generated Content Can Improve the User's Experience

Have you ever reviewed a product that you bought from Amazon? Liked or shared a comment on social media? Posted in an online discussion forum like Reddit? If so, you've created user-generated content (or UGC).

The rise and proliferation of Web 3.0 technologies has enabled these kinds of interactions, allowing users to benefit from the experiences of other users. As technical communicators, we can also leverage the UGC created through such exchanges to better understand the needs of our audiences in a range of digital contexts.
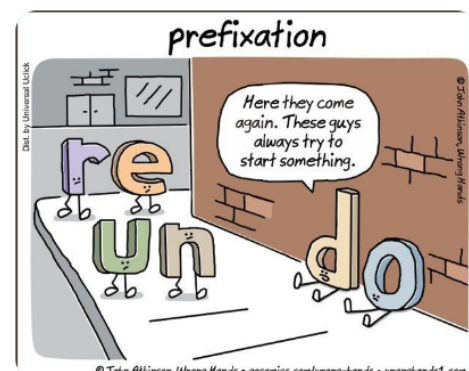
In this session, we focus on how UGC can be used to improve smartphone apps. Using a study on a mobile health app that we conducted, we briefly address two inter-related questions:

- How might UGC be leveraged to improve the usability of apps?
- And how can users be prompted to provide valuable UGC feedback?

Attendee Takeaways:
- Learn four strategies for prompting users to provide more detailed and actionable comments when leaving review comments about smartphone apps.

Wednesday, October 26, 2022 – 11:00 to 12:00 PM Ω

STC Chicago 2022-23 Officers

President – Phil Hayek, *president@stc-chicago.com*
Vice President – Ashley Gordon, *vp@stc-chicago.com*
Secretary – Dan Dornbrook, *secretary@stc-chicago.com*
Treasurer – Rita Hovorka, *treasurer@stc-chicago.com*
Immediate Past President – Pete Wagner, *ipp@stc-chicago.com*

2021-22 Committee Managers

Alliance – Linda Jansak, *chgoalliance@gmail.com*
Bylaws – Becky Hall
Competition – MK Grueneberg and Nancy Shanahan, *competition@stc-chicago.com*
eLearning & Technology Showcase – Linda Jansak, *info@chicacoelearningshowcase.com*
Historian – Bill Leavitt
Byline Newsletter – Sian Mehl
Nominating – Dan Dornbrook, *nominating@stc-chicago.com*
Get Real! Professional Interview Program – *2022-23 manager wanted*, *interview@stc-chicago.com*
Membership Drive – *2022-23 manager wanted*, *membership@stc-chicago.com*
Programs – Dan Dornbrook, *program@stc-chicago.com*
Social Media – Dan Dornbrook
Scholarships – Rita Hovorka, *scholarships@stc-chicago.com*
Sponsorship – *2022-23 manager wanted*, *sponsorship@stc-chicago.com*
Student Outreach – MK Grueneberg
Summit 2023 – Linda Jansak, Adam Evans, Francis Bao, *stc2023@stc-chicago.com*
Webinar Series – *2022-23 manager wanted*, *webinars@stc-chicago.com*
Web/Online – Linda Kelley, *web@stc-chicago.com*

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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