

# PrintQueue

Member Newsletter of the Central New York Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication

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## 42nd Annual Rochester Chapter Conference

The 42nd annual conference of the Rochester Chapter, *Spectrum 2001*, will be held on March 23 at the Marriott Thruway. The theme is "E-Learning, E-Commerce, Egads!" Keynote speaker is Dr. Diane Gayeski, Professor of Organizational Communication, Learning and Design at Ithaca College, where she has been on the faculty since 1979, teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses in communications and training management and new technologies. Diane is also principal of Gayeski Analytics, through which she helps clients to measure and manage their communication and learning assets and systems, and adopt new strategies and technologies for communicating with employees and customers.

Diane's presentation, *Capturing Mindshare: How to Measure and Manage Your Organization's Information Assets*, draws on her recent client projects and her most recent book, *Managing the Communication Function: Capturing Mindshare for Organizational Performance*, published by the International Society of Business Communicators ([www.iabc.com](http://www.iabc.com)).

In today's world of information overload, "mindshare"-your portion of employees' and customers' attention and commitment-is probably your organization's most important asset. Diane Gayeski will show you how leading organizations are measuring and managing their information systems to provide maximum return on investment of both money and time, and how the role of technical communicators can expand to meet this challenge.

A highlight of *Spectrum* each year is the presentation of the Rochester Technical Publications Competition awards. Several members of the CNY Chapter won awards this year. Congratulations to: Cathy Smith, Doug Eaton, Richard Inch, Laurie Caraher, Marcia Poulsen, and David Daly!

**Correction:** Last month's newsletter erroneously listed Sandy Ouderkirk as the professor teaching April's Digital Photography Workshop at SUNY IT. Russell Kahn will be instructing the class, and the credentials listed belong to him.

## From Buzzword to Success With Knowledge Management

This month's chapter meeting will address how companies have implemented Knowledge Management and how can you get involved.

Stephen Goodfellow's presentation is based on real life case studies of what worked and what didn't work in companies around the world. Gain the advantage of hearing the lessons learned by others before beginning -or continuing your initiative.

In this program, participants will learn

- How to other organizations have benefited from KM
- Key success factors to harnessing the knowledge in your organization
- Some of the steps, tools used, and roles in a KM initiative

Stephen Goodfellow is President of Access Systems, Inc., an independent consultancy in Knowledge Management and a developer of educational tools in the field. Steve is currently working with clients such as Corning Incorporated, where he is the lead consultant on this global technology firm's Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning project and Compaq Computer, where he has developed training programs for their global consulting force on Knowledge Management, Customer Relationship Management and e-Commerce.

Steve has presented at several international conferences including E-Commerce World, the KM Leadership Summit, KM Expo, the Association of Information and Image Mgt (AIIM) conference and other events. He is also a writer for KM World Magazine, E-commerce World, and InfoPro magazine and he will be teaching a graduate level course in Knowledge Management this fall at Syracuse University.

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This newsletter invites writers to submit articles that 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.

Submit letters and articles to the Editor via E-mail.  
Deadline: 1st day of the month of publication.

To broadcast CNY Job leads to CNY STC's  
ListServ via E-mail:

cnstc-l@stc.org  
CNY STC Website Job Listings:  
www.stc.org/region1/cny/jobs.htm  
To post jobs, contact  
Colleen Williams  
colleen@zlink.net

All CNY STC meetings are free and take place at INFICON in East Syracuse, from 6PM TO 8:00PM on the third Wednesday of the month\*. Meeting room phone: 315-434-2512

(\* Except for October Southern Tier and April SUNY IT meetings)

Please refer to our website for a map of the area surrounding Inficon.

## President's Message - by Richard Inch Transforming Our Newsletter

Were I to rank the most important tools available to our chapter, our newsletter would be the most important. (Following closely behind is our chapter website, then our chapter listserv). Our newsletter is the one chapter information vehicle that all members receive. Meeting notices, administrative council goings on, information regarding members and a myriad of other chapter information are routinely placed in our newsletter. Our newsletter editor publishes eight newsletters a year; each month that a regular chapter meeting is held a chapter newsletter is published.

Anyone who has published a newsletter for any organization knows that this is a difficult task. Getting information in a timely manner takes patience and excellent interpersonal skills. Finding articles that may be of interest to all readers is a never-ending search. Doing the computer work necessary to develop the final copy is always more time consuming than was originally expected. Finding a member to volunteer to take on these tasks is difficult, but not impossible. Many people find this process interesting and rewarding--enough so that they are willing to volunteer to be a newsletter editor.

Once the newsletter is created, it must be taken someplace for duplication, then it must be packaged (folded or stuffed in an envelope), then taken to the post office for "stamping" and mailing. These tasks most people consider drudgery. It is very difficult to find someone who is willing to do this work, and often makes excellent candidates not volunteer to be newsletter editors. It is this drudgery that I want to do away with.

I want to shift our newsletter from postal service delivery to e-mail delivery. The scenario is simple. An e-mail would be sent to you. In that e-mail would be a link to a newsletter.pdf which resides on the chapter website. Upon selecting the link in the e-mail, Acrobat Reader would open and the newsletter would be displayed. It could be read online, or it could be printed to hard copy. You would have to have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. However, if you routinely use the internet, Acrobat Reader is probably already installed on your computer. If not, it can be easily--and freely--downloaded and installed from www.adobe.com.

What do you think? Send your comments and questions to me (phone 315.434.2507 or e-mail rinch@inficon.com). Unless someone points out a major fallacy in shifting from paper delivery to electronic delivery, you'll receive your March PrintQueue via e-mail.



## True Colors:

### Color Theory Applied to Web Design

by Tipton Zeh, Student, SUNY IT

As technical communicators, our job is provide information in a form that is clear and palatable. How we use color can affect both clarity and user comfort. If we understand some of the basics of color theory, it will be easier for us to produce an end product that is useful and easy to enjoy.

Color, when used well, subtly supports and enhances technical communication. While color cannot save a bad design, or make up for wrong information, it can make a difference in the overall effect your product has on the user.

Good color use can draw the observer in, whether the color is intended to convey excitement, friendliness, or a professional command of technical information. Good color design puts the user at ease, backing up the site's purpose without taking over.

If we are attempting to design sites that attract and retain viewers, and we have managed to provide both clear information and easy navigation, then taking the further step to enhance the site with color is a worthwhile endeavor. It's easier to do an outstanding job if we understand why certain colors work well together, and how to create the desired effect in the site's design.

Wassily Kandinsky, a famous abstract painter and designer tells us succinctly why color makes a difference, "Color is a power which directly influences the soul."

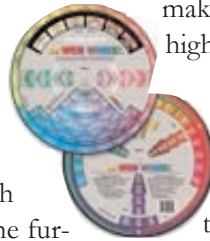
Jill Morton, internationally known color consultant, agrees with Kandinsky, writing in an article, *Color Matters*, on her web-site, "Color plays a vitally important role in the world in which we live. Color can sway thinking, change actions, and cause reactions. It can irritate or soothe your eyes, raise your blood pressure or suppress your appetite. Color sends a subliminal message, one which plays a critical role in success or failure."

Color can sometimes communicate in surprising ways. It's especially important to be aware of the pitfalls when designing a global website. Jill Morton provides an example where lack of research had nearly disastrous results, although the color problem in this case wasn't a website, but a theme park: "A significant example of failure is the initial design of EuroDisney's signs. The colors were intended to rival Coca Cola's red, but the final selection, vast amounts of purple, was a tragic mistake. Purple symbolizes death and the crucifixion in Catholic Europe." It's not surprising that visitors thought

the signs were morbid. How did this happen? The CEO liked purple. Personal preference and "avant-garde" tactics frequently cause color disasters. When the wrong color is used on a web site, the damage extends to a global audience. Morton goes on to point out that most cultures view blue in a positive light, so it is generally a safe color choice.

The color wheel is a tool designers can use to help them choose appropriate colors, both in print and on the web. It is set up by design, starting with the primary colors of red, blue and yellow, listing their complements (the secondary colors of green, orange and violet) directly across from them, and placing the analogous (tertiary) colors next to them.

Complementary colors are found opposite each other on the color wheel. They provide high color contrast, so they often make a good choice for the web. However, sometimes the high contrast makes print hard to read.



Split complementary colors are three colors that form an isosceles triangle (two sides and two angles are equal) on the color wheel. Each of the three colors pointed to by the three corners of the triangle make up the combination. While still a high contrast mixture, it is slightly more subdued than the complementary pair.

Analogous colors are generally made up of 3 or more colors, each one adjacent to the next on the color wheel. It provides a very harmonious, low-contrast look. If more contrast is needed, it can be added by using white.

In addition to different color combinations, the color wheel is split in half. Each of these halves possesses unique characteristics that a designer can use to his/her advantage.

Cool colors consist of shades of blue, green, and violet. They recede in the picture plane. They are technological, with a no-nonsense, business-like appearance. Warm colors, consisting of shades of red, yellow, and orange (with a few shades of yellow-green and red-violet), advance in the picture plane. They portray a friendly appearance, and are good for non-profit sites, children's sites, or any website that seeks to create a warm and inviting atmosphere.

The color wheel is a helpful design tool, allowing the user to quickly form combinations that suit his/her needs. The intent of the site should be evaluated carefully before choosing the color dynamics.

## From Your Region 1 Director - Sponsor, Kitty Aughey

The winter STC Board of Directors meeting was held in San Diego, California, USA, on 18-20 January 2001. The temperature stayed in the mid-sixties and I enjoyed it to the maximum...sunshine does make you feel great! The STC Board report is below but I would like to add that Region 1 had 13 Distinguished Chapter Service Awards approved, Jane Aronovitch from Toronto and Nan Fritz from Boston were elected as Associate Fellows, and Deborah Sauer from Boston was elected a Fellow!

### Actions Taken at the Meeting:

- Formation of three new chapters was approved, bringing the total number of chapters worldwide to 153 (120 regular chapters and 33 student chapters):
  - § Australia chapter, with a \$350 USD start-up grant (Region 5).
  - § Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute student chapter (Troy, New York, USA), with a \$150 USD start-up grant (Region 1).
  - § Hill Country student chapter (San Marcos, Texas, USA), with a \$150 USD start-up grant (Region 5).
- The following appointments to Society-level committees were approved: Kathryn M. Poe (Manager, STC Public Relations Competition Committee) and Paula Stanzioni (Manager, Education & Research Special Interest Group).
- Fiscal year 2001 income and expenses as of 31 October 2000 were reviewed and approved. Income and expenses are well within budget. STC will be returning about two-thirds of a million dollars to chapters to support their fiscal year 2001 programs and activities.
- A merit grant of \$3,000 USD was awarded to the Mercer University student chapter to build its scholarship fund.

- A research grant of \$10,000 USD was awarded to Eva R. Brumberger for a study entitled The Rhetoric of Typography: A Study Investigating Typeface Personality and Its Impact on the Reading Process.

### Other Items of Interest:

**New STC logo.** A graphic tool kit and templates for STC materials will be made available to chapters (presidents, newsletter editors, and webmasters), Society-level committees, and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and placed on the STC Web site in March. These tools will help guide groups in implementing the new look. Work is underway to redesign the STC Web site. Watch for the first official use of the new logo in the Preliminary Annual Conference Program - out soon!

**Elections.** This year, the balloting process will include an option to vote online. The 2001 election material will contain information necessary to ensure secure online voting. Voting online will be optional - members may still choose to vote by mail.



**Membership.** STC continues to grow at a steady rate, and membership now stands at 23,553. Total membership is projected to reach 26,000 by the end of March. Current distribution of membership: U.S. 87.2%, Canada 8.6%, other countries 4.1%. STC's annualized 10-year growth rate is 4.6%, with growth rates as follows: U.S. 3.9%, Canada 10.8%, other countries 11.7% (the greatest area of growth).

**Membership directory.** The STC membership directory has been placed online. It allows members to search by

members' first and last names. The results display the member's name, address, phone, fax, e-mail, chapter, grade, and date joined.

**Annual Conference.** Preparations for the 48th Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois, USA, in May 2001 are well underway. The conference program committee reviewed nearly 400 proposals and selected about 440 speakers for 256 sessions. About 41 booths have already been contracted for the vendor exhibit.

### Technical Communication journal.

Abstracts and PDFs of the 1996 and 1997 issues have now been posted on the Technical Communication Online Web site. Recommendations from usability studies performed by graduate students at Mercer University have been incorporated in the Web site. Check it out!

**STC governance.** This year, the STC Board of Directors is conducting a series of workshops at its regular meetings to evaluate governance. This activity is an outgrowth of STC's new mission statement: "Designing the future of technical communication." What model of governance would be most effective in leading STC into that future? Aspects being evaluated include the structure of representation, the way that decisions are made, the balance of volunteer and office staff workloads, and communication patterns. A clear picture of leadership has dominated the workshops: one that focuses on trends, vision, strategy, and best practices; that embraces outside influences; that concentrates on setting policy rather than on operational details. A concluding workshop in May will set short-term and long-term goals for meeting those objectives.