

XML in the Real World

By Barbara Shank, *Senior Member, Rochester Chapter*

XML is revolutionizing the way we do business. It is breaking down the barriers of communication between applications. XML, an extensible markup language, is a language that separates content from format. All documents contain structured information both content (words, pictures, etc.) and an indication of what role that content plays. For example, content in a section heading has a different meaning from content in a footnote.

XML is the mechanism to identify structures in a document. The XML specification defines a standard way to add markup to documents.

Some of the benefits of XML include:

- ◆ Enables long-term reuse of data, with no lock-in to proprietary tools
- ◆ Enables media-independent electronic publishing
- ◆ Allows people to display information the way they want it, with style sheet control
- ◆ Provides the underpinnings of the Semantic Web, enabling a whole new level of information interchange
- ◆ Encourages industries to define platform-independent protocols for the exchange of data, including electronic commerce
- ◆ Increases the reliability of data transfer because processes are automated
- ◆ Saves corporate money by enabling the appropriate use of off-the-shelf tools
- ◆ Saves training and development costs by having a single format for a wide range of uses

XML is playing an increasing role in our everyday lives. It is changing the way we do business today. It is simplifying the communication between and across platforms, it allows users to pick the tools of their choice, and it allows for media-independent publishing of information products.

For more information about XML visit the following web sites:

WC3 Extensible Markup Language (XML)
<http://www.w3.org/XML/>

Rochester SGML/XML User Group. www.RNYSXUG.com 



Barbara Shank

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CNY STC Meeting Notice

November

Topic: Portfolio Workshop

Date: Friday, November 21st, 2003

Time: 10-1p.m.

Location: SUNYIT, Donovan Hall Room G238, the Macintosh Laboratory

Program: Workshop on designing and creating the front end to an online portfolio using a Flash "splash" page and Acrobat PDF.

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December

Topic: Tour The Image Press

Date: Thursday, December 18th, 2003

Time: 6:00 -7:00 p.m

Location: 2221 Erie Blvd. East Syracuse, NY 13224

Program: Tour of The Image Press and then an informal holiday network gathering at Bennigan's.

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and articles for the January/February
issue. Submit letters and articles via email
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Pending election results

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Society for Technical Communication

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STC Mission Statement:

Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical Communication. 2003 - 50th Year of STC

Outgoing President's Message On Overcoming Obstacles

It's truly been a pleasure being president of this chapter for the last two years. We've had some wonderful programs under past Program Manager Douglas Eaton and many more to look forward to under new Program Manager Timothy Voorheis. As many of you know I was involved in a car accident (as a passenger) last December, which nearly took my life. Through it all, in my weeks in intensive care and later in my eight weeks in rehabilitation there were chapter members visiting and sending cards and keeping up my spirits. It was a tribute to the talents, efforts, and resilience of the rest of the executive board, in particular Vice President Veronika Freeman and then Program Manager Douglas Eaton, that my misfortunes had little impact on chapter activities.

Interestingly, it was while I was still in a wheelchair and an inpatient resident at Sitron Rehabilitation Center in New Hartford that I took on my first professional job – as judge in the STC International Art Competition. I reviewed boxes of entries by laying them before me on my bed and tapping in my judging reviews on a laptop computer. That effort convinced me that I was getting well not just physically, but mentally as well.

This is an exciting period for our chapter. Our membership has stayed steady at about 61 members at time when STC overall is losing members. Our financial status is strong, with a cash balance of \$4,058 as of Oct. 15. We have a new slate of officers, including a new president and program manager. The need for a professional organization is as critical as ever as companies in our area both reorganize and downsize. According to the September/October Intercom, networking is the number one way to find jobs in a tight market (see "Viral Networking"). We are restarting our newsletter, revamping our Web site, creating a chapter freelancers' guide, and rejuvenating our meeting schedule with a mix of workshops, presentations, product reviews, and a mini-conference.

I'm happy to be a part of that program by running a workshop on designing a CD-based portfolio on November 21 from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. We'll be in a Macintosh Lab, but whether you work in the Apple or PC environment the commands and program are virtually identical.

I will remain active in the chapter as it continues to evolve and wish only the very best for our new slate.

Russell L. Kahn, Ph.D.

Chair, Communication, State University of NY Institute of Technology

Don't Let Your Membership Lapse

It's not too late to renew your membership. If you did not renew your membership online in October, you will receive the printed dues renewal invoice in late November. Payments must be received by January 1, 2004.

The rates for 2004 dues are as follows:

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| Regular members | \$140.00 |
| Students members | \$56.00 |

Please renew your membership. Your dues provide your locale chapter with funds to offer you workshops, speakers, the newsletter, and networking opportunities.

If you have questions, please contact the membership department at membership@stc.org.

President's Message

As the new president of the ACNY Chapter of STC, I want to thank all those dedicated volunteers who have kept the chapter alive. I want us to continue to build on the foundation the past members and volunteers have built. How can we build on the foundation?



Roberta J. Alderman

For me, I plan to improve communication among the members, revive the newsletter, PrintQueue, hold executive board meetings, provide members with updated information about STC events at the regional and national level via print or online. Like past chapter presidents, I will work with the executive board to create a long-term vision plan, budget and program. However, I cannot accomplish these goals alone. I need your help. Your involvement is vital to the growth of our chapter. I need you to volunteer to give presentations, communicate to the leadership what programs, workshops, seminars, and services you want from your chapter, attend meetings, and recruit new members. I have an open door policy. I want to hear from you about what information and services you want our chapter to provide our members. Contact me at raldermn@twcny.rr.com with suggestions.


Roberta J. Alderman
President, Central New York Chapter 

Editors' Message PrintQueue is Alive and Well!

We have revived PrintQueue! After a long absence, PrintQueue is being published again. Teresa and I have teamed-up to bring you a quality newsletter that is informative and educational. Our goal is to bring you the latest information about the tools technical communicators use, networking opportunities, member's biographies and updates on the chapter's activities.

PrintQueue will be published bimonthly and mailed to you. In addition, PrintQueue will be on the chapter's web site, www.cnystc.org, in pdf format for you to view and print.

We want PrintQueue to be your newsletter. We need your feedback about topics you want covered, and we would like you to submit articles for publication.

Roberta J. Alderman and Teresa Washburn
Co-Editors of PrintQueue 

Scholarships for Technical Communication

STC is offering four scholarships for the 2004-2005 academic year. Each scholarship is worth \$1,000, paid directly to the school attended.

STC awards scholarships to students who are enrolled full-time in undergraduate or graduate technical communication programs and studying for an academic or commercial career in technical communication.


Technical communication includes graphical and online information presentation as well as written and oral communication. It may include "smart programs" or expert systems development, in which the candidate's concern is the presentation of information rather than computer programming. It does not include ordinary journalism, general broadcasting, or fine arts.

Applicants need not be STC members or American citizens. They must be enrolled in a full-time technical communication program and have completed one year of postsecondary education before fall 2003. Students completing an undergraduate degree are eligible to apply for their first year of graduate school.

To apply, students must submit a completed application package, including a description of their accomplishments and goals. The package must be received by February 16, 2004.

Students can obtain application information from their department chairs, the STC Web site (www.stc.org), or the STC office in Arlington, Virginia, or they can contact Lenore S. Ridgway at the address below.

Lenore S. Ridgway
19 Johnston Avenue
Kingston, NY 12401
(845) 339-4927
stcleer@cs.com

Society for Technical Communication
Attn: Scholarships
901 N. Stuart St., Suite 904
Arlington, VA 22203-1822
(703) 522-4114
stc@stc.org 

Member Spotlight: R. Douglas Eaton

By Teresa Washburn

I had the great fortune of sitting down with Central New York's STC chapter member Doug Eaton. He was gracious enough to drive out to Baldwinsville after working in Syracuse at his current placement, Sensis Corporation.



R. Douglas Eaton

Q: How long have you been a member of STC?

Doug: Ten years. I joined because I wanted another professional organization to join with more of a Technical Writer slant.

Q: You've been both a "captive" employee and a contractor. Which do you prefer?

Doug: I prefer being a contractor – why? Because I can arrive for work barefoot and shirtless. But seriously, it is a lifestyle choice.

Q: Are you a native of Central NY?

Doug: Yes – I love Central New York. I grew up in Cato – and live there now. I love to be outdoors and Central New York enables me to do the things I love – gardening, biking, hiking, and cross country skiing.

Q: Do you have any tips for fellow Central New York STC Contractors looking for their next placement?

Doug: Be sincere. It helps if you have a proven track record. Buy a high speed modem; it will pay for itself with the time you save.

What has been invaluable for me, and still is, is being an *active* member of STC. As an active member in the chapter I was able to demonstrate competence to potential clients.

Something else that recently helped me – I was invited to do a presentation on what I did for KPMG, which is one of the largest accounting firms in the world. I spent days on the presentation, and when I presented it to the company, they hired me on the spot. Think of everything you do as preparation for your next gig.

Q: What is your educational background?

Doug: I have a M.S. in English Education.

Q: What is your dream job?

Doug: I have my dream job right now. I love being a writer – I feel like I'm essentially being paid for practicing what I love to do.

Q: Why should people get involved with the chapter?

Doug: Members can build credibility and exposure that they otherwise may not get. That exposure and credibility can lead to job opportunities. My current contract with Sensis came as a direct result of the impressions I made as an active member in STC.

Q: What is your favorite time in Central NY?

Doug: I love all the seasons. I couldn't possibly choose. Watching the flowers push up in the Spring, picking tomatoes in the summer, walking in the woods when the leaves are changing, and cross country skiing when the snow is so cold that it looks like prisms reflecting light... it's all amazing.

Q: Are you planning on attending the next STC Conference in Baltimore in May?

Doug: It isn't feasible for me to attend. If I were a salaried employee I would ask my company to send me – and I encourage those that are salaried to ask their companies to send them.

Q: Where would you like to see the Chapter go in the next year?

Doug: I would love to see attendance improve – I would like to see attendance double at regular meetings. That is an aggressive, but reasonable goal.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to share about yourself that I haven't asked?

Doug: I couldn't have anything written about my career without acknowledging two people: Sally Cutler and Anne Coffey. Sally and Anne are two people that are largely responsible for where I am today in my career. I can't thank them enough for their guidance and giving me the chance to grow as a writer while working at Word-Wrights Incorporated. They are both very special people. [www](#)

In Memory of James G. Hamlett

By Russell L. Kahn, *Senior Member, Central New York Chapter*

It is with great sadness that I note here the passing of a chapter leader and friend, James Hamlett. Jim was on the executive board of the Central New York chapter and over the years provided kind direction and thoughtful observations about the chapter of which he was a member from its earliest days.


Jim was an active member of our executive board who always made suggestions in his kind and collected manner. A true gentlemen and scholar who made only constructive comments, he strongly encouraged me to hold the chapter together when it met hard times and nearly dissolved. He believed intensely in the value of the chapter in central New York and he did what he could to help it regroup.

Jim died as a result of complications from diabetes, an ailment I never knew he had. He never mentioned it, which was just like Jim. He never liked to draw attention to himself. I also did not know, until I attended his funeral, that he was a World War II veteran and a member of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge—such was Jim’s modesty.

In 1992 Jim was named an STC fellow, the highest honor that the Society can bestow on its members, for his service and dedication to the profession of technical writing and the organization. His interest in technical writing stemmed from his career as an engineer. In 1955 he joined General Electric as an engineer-writer, and he retired from the company in 1990 as an electrical engineer. Born in Utica, he graduated from Utica Free Academy and Empire State College, State University of New York, in Saratoga Springs. In 1985 he received an M.B.A. from City College in Seattle.

At his side at the end, as she was so often in life, was his companion, Mary Sabin, also a long-time chapter member and executive board associate. (Her e-mail is Mclsabin@aol.com.) Jim is survived by a daughter, Jacqueline Dzierzawski, of Rochester, and a brother, Franklin, of Utica.


I believe the Central New York chapter will long remember and respect the memory of this devoted, honest, and kind fellow.

Contributions: American Diabetes Association, 356 N. Midler Ave., Syracuse NY 13206. 

Call for Proposals for spectrum 2004

The Rochester chapter of the Society for Technical Communication has issued a call for proposals for **spectrum 2004**. The conference will take place Friday, March 26, 2004 at the RIT Inn and Conference Center in Rochester, New York.

spectrum 2004 is the leading forum for technical communication practitioners in Western New York. For 44 years, spectrum has provided an opportunity for information exchange, skills updating, and professional networking.

For more information, visit the Rochester chapter web site at <http://www.stcrochester.org>. 


Book Review

by Roberta J. Alderman, *President, Central New York Chapter*

*Macromedia Dreamweaver MX
HOT Hands-On Training*

by Garo Green and Abigail Rudner



This book is truly a “hands-on training” guide. The book is clearly written with sharp and accurate graphics and the enclosed CD is full of excellent examples. There are directions for using Dreamweaver for both Windows and Mac platforms. The book covers many of the fundamentals of web design beyond basic HTML code. Useful tools like modifying page properties, META Tags, and Cascading Style Sheets are included. The book shows how to create templates and libraries using Dreamweaver, tricks and tips about behaviors, and how to edit images in Fireworks MX from within Dreamweaver MX. I highly recommend this recently published book for your personal reference library. 

Director-Sponsor’s Corner

The director-sponsor is a member of the board of the Society, elected by all the members in one region. The director-sponsor acts as a liaison between the members in the region and the Society, and as a mentor and coach for chapter leaders.

We are in Region 1 and Jon Baker, senior member in the Boston Chapter, is our director-sponsor. You may contact Jon at baker_johathan@emc.com. 

Market Yourself in the 2004 CNY-STC Member Directory!

By Veronika Freeman, *Vice President, Central New York Chapter*

We are hard at work preparing the first ever CNY-STC Member Directory! I know some of you are asking, “What can a membership directory do for me?” There are several answers to that question depending on your current situation.

“I’m currently unemployed.”

A) You need this more than anyone! It’s a tough job market out there. How many times have you been overlooked for a position because someone knew somebody who referred someone? Let the directory be another “someone” for you—let it be a testament to your skills and an “in” with those who are hiring.

B) Do you really need another reason?

“I’m already employed.”

A) If this is the case, does your employer pay for your membership to STC? Several companies have recently eliminated this perk. You can use the directory to demonstrate the benefits of STC membership: there are great networking opportunities available, it’s a possible source of employees or freelancers, and it’s a method of public relations for the company—they’ll see their name in print.

B) Are you happy in your job? Or would you like to learn about new opportunities/challenges? The copies of the directory will be distributed to chapter members, friends, and employers—as well as published on the web—in order to increase visibility of our members’ skills. I was recently offered a position as a freelancer simply because my name was listed in the directory of the Mohawk Valley Ad Club. I’m sure that this can happen for you as well; you may get inquiries for your services because you’re listed with a professional organization like STC.

“I’m a freelancer/consultant.”

A) Our member directory will be a great marketing tool for you! Where else can you get *free advertising*? Place your contact information in the “Alpha Member Listing” with a brief list of your skills.

B) We are including a “Freelance/Consultant” section, which is categorized by skill. This gives the recipients a quick reference guide to who specializes in what areas;

make it easy for them to find you. You can place your name under two categories *for free*.

Possible categories of freelance work include: Graphic Design & Layout, Logo Design, Online Documentation, Web Design, Photography, Writing, Editing and Public Speaking. If your skill set is not represented here, please let us know. We want to represent you as accurately and beneficially as possible.

We will also have an “Advertising” section—you can place an ad expanding upon your areas of expertise.

Ad costs are:

¼ page...(3.5 W x 2 H).....\$15

½ page...(3.5 W x 4.5 H)...\$20

1 page... (3.5 W x 10 H).....\$30

With the purchase of any ad you can also list your name under two additional areas of expertise in the “Freelance/Consultant” section.

“I’m not interested in changing jobs.”

A) Congratulations on finding your niche. But this directory will have lots of useful information for you too. This will be a handy reference guide containing information about our organization. We are including the bylaws, the board members/directors’ biographies with pictures, and information about how to join the listserv.

B) Know all this stuff already? Great! But, we are also including a list of useful web sites for people in various fields of technical communication, a list created by your fellow STC members. Please share your favorite sites of interest with others, and if you have a personal web site with useful information regarding Technical Communication issues let us know.

“I want to be in the directory! What do I do?”

Complete the online form on our web site (www.cnystc.org) and email it to dotcalm@consultant.com, or request a printed copy of the form to be mailed to you by calling Veronika at 315-793-2025.


All information is optional—only list what you want published. You can list more than one set of information. For example, if you work for a business you could list them as your STC contact information, but if you also do contract work you may want to have a personal email address or phone number for people to contact you for freelance employment. If you wish certain information to

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Market Yourself in the 2004 CNY-STC Member Directory! *Continued from page 6*

be in print but not on the web site please make this clear.

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Name | E-mail address |
| Employer | Areas of expertise |
| Title | Software expertise |
| Business phone | Software expertise |
| What types of contract/freelance work do you do (if applicable) | |

We plan to distribute the directory in January 2004, please send your information to Veronika by November 21, 2003. Please contact Veronika before submitting an ad. 

Portfolio Workshop, *Continued from page 1*

The workshop will be run by Russell Kahn, Chair of the Communication department at SUNY Institute of Technology (SUNYIT), and Christie Brower, Marketing Director at GPO Federal Credit Union in New Hartford and a recent graduate from SUNYIT. Her online portfolio with a Flash splash page can be seen at www.sunyit.edu/~browerc/index.html

Participants will learn how to design and lay out a portfolio, how to create a simple animated front page to their site and how to create links to their work. We will also discuss how to convert your work to Adobe PDF for use in a portfolio. No knowledge of Flash or Acrobat is required.


Reserve your spot with a \$20 advance payment in the form of a check or money order to STC CNY. No credit cards. Fee will be refunded to those who attend the workshop (to avoid no-shows). **No refunds if you do not attend**, however you may have someone attend in your place. The workshop is open to anyone on a first-come-first-served basis. There is only room for 18 participants. Please note that while the workshop is being held in a Mac lab, the programs covered transfer seamlessly to the Windows environment. No Mac experience required.

Mail payment to:

Attention: Russell Kahn, Arts and Science Department
SUNY Institute of Technology
PO Box 3050
Utica, NY 13504-3050

Directions:

From the New York State Thruway - Take exit 31. Follow signs to Route 790. Take 790 to Routes 8/12 north. Take the Institute of Technology (Mulaney Road) exit. Bear right off exit and another immediate right down 8/12 (Horatio Street). Bear right at the college entrance.


From the South: Take Route 12 north. Take Routes 8/12 north. Take the Institute of Technology (Mulaney Road) exit. 

Tour The Image Press, *Continued from page 1*

Chris Arnone, President, will host the tour of The Image Press. The Image Press is a digital pre-press service bureau offering electronic pre-press, digital photography, large format output, vehicle wraps, and point-of-purchase/banner/large display services. Following the tour, we'll enjoy an informal holiday networking gathering at Bennigan's 2841 Erie Blvd. East, Syracuse.

Directions

From the New York State Thruway - Take exit number 35 toward RT-298/ Syracuse/ East Syracuse. Enter next roundabout and take 2nd exit onto NY-298 W. Enter next roundabout and take 1st exit onto CR-70 N. Turn left onto Molloy Rd E/ CR-69. Turn left onto Florida Rd S. Turn right onto Boulevard ST.

From the South - Merge onto I-81 N. Merge onto Brewerton RD/ US-11 S via exit number 26 toward Mattydale. Turn slight left onto LeMoyne AVE/ CR-219 S. Turn left onto Boulevard ST. 

Meeting Notes

Date: October 16, 2003

Speaker: Barbara Shank

Topic: XML in the Real World

The October meeting was a success! We had 12 attendees and a lively discussion about XML. Many questions were raised about implementing XML and how it affects technical communicators in the workplace. The group has asked for a follow-up meeting with a demonstration of XML and more information about the tools used to implement XML. Information about the follow-up meeting will be posted on the www.cnystc.org site as soon as the details have been finalized.

Here is a suggested list of reference books about XML:

Content Management for Dynamic Web Delivery by JoAnn T Hackos

DocBook: The Definitive Guide by Norman Walsh and Leonard Mueller

Managing Enterprise Content: A Unified Content Strategy by Ann Rockley

Professional XML Meta Data by Kal Ahmed, Danny Ayers, Mark Birbeck, Jay Cousins, David Dods, Josh Lubell, Miloslav Nic, Daniel Rivers-Moore, Anderw Watt Robert Wordern, Ann Wrightson

XML Bible 2nd Edition by Elliotte Rusty Harold

XML A Manager's Guide by Kevin Dick 

CNY Job Queue

Employers, please send notices of job openings to our employment manager.


Members, ask our employment manager to email announcements of job openings. Visit the www.stc.org and <http://www.cnystc.org/employment.htm> sites for online job posting or articles.

Contact our employment manager, Teresa Washburn, teresa_washburn@yahoo.com. 

Network Queue

Rochester Chapter STC. Contact Judy Shenouda, jesheno@aol.com, for information about meetings. Or visit the web site <http://www.stcrochester.org/>.


Rochester SGML/XML User Group. For locations and dates, visit www.RNYSXUG.com.

Central New York Chapter of ASTD. For locations and dates, visit <http://cnyastd.org/> 


CNY STC *PrintQueue*

108 Green Apple Lane
Minoa, NY 13116

STC's 51st Annual Conference

STC's 51st Annual conference will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, May 9-12, 2004. For more information, please visit www.stc.org/conferences.asp. 

Rochester Chapter STC 45th Annual Conference

Rochester Chapter STC 45th annual Conference *spectrum* **2004** will be held in Rochester, New York, March 26, 2004, at the RIT Inn and Conference Center. For more information, please visit <http://www.stcrochester.org/> 

Educational Opportunities

STC Telephone Seminars Schedule

December 10, 2003

Adding Panache to Your Procedures

Presenter: Leah Guren

January 14, 2004

Effective Web Sites: Structure, Navigation, and Graphics

Presenter: Jean-luc Doumont

More details about the seminars are available on the STC Web site at www.stc.org/seminars.asp 