Let’s Get Technical: Documenting APIs

Have you ever had to document an application program interface or API? Does the idea make you shudder? Fear not, help is at hand. Jim Bisso, president of Bitzone, LLC in Richmond, California, will help make it all okay with his presentation at the April STC meeting, “When I Grow Up I Want To Document APIs.”

Francy y u nev t d es suject, an APIs a set r unmes, p rct ts, and ts r wilegs twa r tacs. A g d API all ws prgmaust wite prgmaus. Dat will fnsistnt wth f olng envoient. T ey fnsure dat tll prgmaus sngse cme. API wll fnd smilar user fntcne eign t s r users t hmwew prgmaus.

Mr. Bisso’s talk will examine how to approach the task of documenting this strange new creature. You’ll learn who your audience is, how to write API documentation, how to interview your information source, and other tips. He’ll share online and print resources for writing API documentation.

Mr. Bisso has an extensive background in teaching, both through Bitzone’s training programs and at the university level at UC Berkeley, San Jose State, Berkeley, and Mills College. As a member of Berkeley STC, he gave a well-received talk on this subject to the East Bay chapter and at the STC Bay Area.

Please join us Wednesday, April 11th, to learn more about this vital area of the technical writing trade. Meeting details are on page 2. You can reserve your seat at www.stc-berkeley.org.

STC Conference Breezes Into Chicago

STC’s 48th annual conference is happening in Chicago on May 13-16. STC’s annual conference is the largest conference in the world that focuses on the arts and sciences of technical communication. The conference includes more than 250 educational presentations. It offers opportunities to view vendor displays, hear about research findings, and see award-winning entries from STC’s technical communication competitions.


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About the STC

NICA IONs.The STC has grown from a small organization to a large professional society with chapters across the United States. It currently has more than 20,000 members worldwide, with 200 chapters and 110,000 members. The society is committed to promoting the theory and practice of technical communication, and to advancing the profession through education, networking, and research.

Membership

Membership is open to everyone, including students, teachers, professionals, and volunteers. Membership dues are $10 per year, with an additional $25 for students. Members receive a subscription to the society's newsletter, STC News, and access to the society's website, www.stc-berkeley.org.

Submissions

Ragged Left is a publication of the STC-Berkeley chapter. It accepts original articles and reprints of articles published in other STC publications. Articles should be between 1,000 and 2,000 words in length, and should be submitted in Microsoft Word format. Articles should be submitted electronically to membership@stc-berkeley.org.

Advertising Rates

STC-Berkeley Chapter Meeting Details

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 11.

St. Mary's Restaurant serves S. C. Berkeley members and friends. The meeting begins at 6:30 PM with networking and conversation, followed by dinner at 7:15 PM. Members and non-members are welcome.

Fix Your Résumé

STC-Berkeley offers free résumé reviews by people who have experience in technical writing and related fields. Reviews are available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, contact Madeleine Adkins at 510-891-3953 or madok@stc-berkeley.org.
Chapter Elections Near

Keep an eye out for the upcoming Berkeley Chapter elections ballots. Chapter officers decide the direction our chapter takes for the coming year: speakers, meeting locations, and how we spend our money. Ballots and instructions for voting will appear on the chapter Web site; votes will be counted at the May chapter meeting.

Candidates are: President—Kathryn Munn; Treasurer—Susan Marchionna; VP of Programs—Ruth Wright; VP of Membership—Paul Sinasohn—all running unopposed. The two candidates running for Chapter Secretary have submitted the following:

Candidate Statements for Secretary

DAVID MCCOARD

I am running for Secretary because I would like to become more active and develop relationships in the Chapter. This is a position in which I feel I can contribute my experience.

For eight years (1985-92) I took minutes of one and a half-day meetings of a regional church board and one of its committees and printed them for distribution. For thirteen years (1988-2000) I also took and published minutes of monthly board meetings of a local food pantry, and for four years (1997-2000) did the same for a local church committee. In all cases, members gave positive feedback on the quality and usefulness of these minutes.

JOSEPH RYSHPAN

As a member of the Berkeley chapter for the past two years, I am familiar with its operations. I helped Richard Mateosian wrap up the work on this year's Touchstone competition.

My 16 years as a professional writer and editor have given me extensive experience in many aspects of writing and editing, including business correspondence and the taking and transcription of careful notes. I am fully versed in the tools I would have to use as Secretary, such as Framemaker and Word.

If elected, I will present effective and useful content in a timely manner. I will also ensure that the chapter has competent and effective leadership in its Secretary.

New Biotech Column Debuting Next Month

by Ruth A. Wright

Want to invest in a biotech that manufactures monoclonal antibodies but you don't have the slightest idea what those are? Re-evaluating whether you want to immunize your children against childhood illnesses and wondering what the current opinions are on the issue? What do local biotech companies consider to be their baseline hiring requirements? This is an open invitation for questions and information related to these and other issues. I will answer your questions and send them out to the group. If I don't know the answer, I will find it.

I will answer your questions and send them out to the group. If I don't know the answer, I will find it.

The Ragged Left. Please forward to Ruth@stc-berkeley.org.

Shaping Effective Online Content

STC SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18TH, 2001
6:00 P.M.: NETWORKING AND SELF-SERVE HORS D'OEUVRES
7:00 P.M.: PROGRAM

All websites have content. Badly written content will lower your site's usefulness and may even lose users. But good content can give your site an edge over the competition. How can you go about developing content that will prove effective in web design, writing and editing? What tools should you use and when? What is the best way to manage your content? What is your site's baseline hiring requirements? These and more questions will be answered in this packed-with-information session.

Brenda Kienan is a principal in Tauber Kienan Associates, a consulting firm that specializes in content strategy, development and management. She has written 12 books, including Managing Your E-Commerce Business, Webmastering for Dummies, and Small Business Solutions for E-Commerce. She has produced feature content or provided services for CNET, WebReview, Work.com, E*Trade, and others. Brenda shares her expertise as a frequent speaker and has appeared at the Stanford Conference on E-Commerce as well as the Ragan Technology for Communicators Conference.

This presentation is based on her ongoing classes in content strategy, development and management at U.C. Berkeley extension and in San Francisco State University's Multimedia Studies program.

Meeting Location: London Wine Bar, downstairs
415 Sansome Street, Downtown San Francisco
STC members: $10; Non-members: $12; Students: $8
Details: http://www.stc-sf.org
Next Meeting:
Wednesday
April 11
Let’s Get Technical—
Documenting APIs
WITH JIM BISSO
Meal reservations required by Monday, April 9.
See page 2 for costs and meeting details.
RSVP online: Credit cards accepted at
STC-Bernkeley.org
Silver Dragon Chinese Restaurant:
835 Webster Street (at 8th) in Oakland
Dinner 6:30 - 7:30
Announcements and Program 7:30 - 9:00
Please do not call the restaurant!

STC-Berkeley Meeting Directions

From north of Oakland: Take the I-880 North. Merge onto the I-580 East ramp towards downtown Oakland. Merge onto I-980 W. Take the 18th street exit towards 14th street. Merge onto Brush St. Turn left onto 17th St. Turn right onto San Pablo Ave. Turn slight right onto City Hall Plaza. Turn left onto 14th St/International Dr. Turn right onto Webster St. and proceed to 8th & Webster.

From south of Oakland: Take I-880 north from San Jose through Oakland. Take the Oak Street exit towards Lakeside Dr. Turn right onto Oak St. Turn left onto 8th St. Turn right onto Harrison St. Turn left onto 10th St. Turn left onto Webster St.

From San Francisco: Take the Bay Bridge towards Oakland (1-80 East). At the end of the bridge, take the I-580 East ramp towards downtown Oakland (CA-24)/Hayward-Stockton. Merge onto I-580 E. Take I-980 West ramp towards downtown Oakland. Merge onto I-980 W. Take the 18th street exit towards 14th street. Merge onto Brush St. Turn left onto 17th St. Turn right onto San Pablo Ave. Turn slight right onto City Hall Plaza. Turn left onto 14th St/International Dr. Turn right onto Webster St.

From far East Bay: Take Highway 24 west through Caldecott Tunnel. Highway 24 west becomes I-980 west. Take the 18th street exit towards 14th street. Merge onto Brush St. Turn left onto 17th St. Turn right onto San Pablo Ave. Turn slight right onto City Hall Plaza. Turn left onto 14th St/International Dr. Turn right onto Webster St. and proceed to 8th & Webster.

Join us in our New Meeting Location in Oakland

By BART: Exit the 12th Street Oakland station. Walk south for two blocks, to Webster St. Turn right and walk west to 835 Webster St.