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# Ragged Left

The newsletter for the Berkeley Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication

July/August 2010  
Volume 23, Number 4

## Editor's Notes

### Submission Deadlines

The regular schedule is to post the PDF the first week of every even-numbered month (it's a bi-monthly newsletter), so I need content the last week of January, March, May, July, September, and November to publish the first week of February, April, June, August, October, and December.

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## President's Notes

by Richard Mateosian

Having apparently weathered the financial storm, STC is moving forward. Here at the local level, finances are a little tighter, but most things haven't changed much. All the local chapters are meeting as usual, and attendance is on the rise. Our chapter has had a long string of interesting presenters, and the ones coming up should be just as good.

The Touchstone competition will be starting again next month. Watch [stc-touchstone.org](http://stc-touchstone.org) for details. The process and schedule should be little changed from last year, but we may be able to incorporate some of the changes happening at the Society level. Jackie Damrau has been leading an effort to update the processes, categories, and criteria at that level.

The STC annual conference (the Summit) will be in Sacramento next May, so there will be many opportunities to help with planning peripheral activities. We can show off our Bay Area by welcoming visitors and helping them make best use of their limited time here.

If you missed this year's Summit, STC has made presentations and recordings available as Summit@aClick ([www.softconference.com/stc](http://www.softconference.com/stc)). Our chapter has purchased access, so if there is something you'd like to see, please [send me email](#), and we'll arrange it.

Early in this century -- it seems so long ago -- STC determined that our system of electing director-sponsors to represent different regions of the world was not compatible with our 501(c)(3) tax status. Now we elect directors at large, but this leaves chapters without a direct voice on the STC Board of Directors. After several false starts, STC has come up with a way to address this problem: the Community Affairs Council (CAC). Hoping that this is not just another soon-to-be-forgotten acronym, I have agreed to serve on the CAC. Let me know if you have ideas about how the Society can help our chapter meet local needs more effectively.

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### July 2010 Meeting Notes

## Focus On the User and the Rest Follows: Developing Personas to Improve Your Content

Presentation by Joan Lasselle and Jana Humphreys, both of Lasselle-Ramsay, Inc.

Notes by Carole Baden

The concept of using personas to improve software design was first described by Alan Cooper in *The Inmates are Running the Asylum* (1999). At the July meeting

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Technical communication is the bridge between those who create ideas and those who use them. Conveying scientific and technical information clearly, precisely, and accurately is an essential occupation in all sectors of business and government.

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) has members worldwide. Its members include writers and editors, artists and illustrators, photographers and audiovisual specialists, managers and supervisors, educators and students, employees and consultants.

STC strives to:

- Advance the theory and practice of technical communication
- Promote awareness of trends and technology in technical communication
- Aid the educational and professional development of its members

### Membership

Membership is open to everyone. Classic membership is \$145/year with an additional \$15 enrollment fee. STC also offers Limited, E-Membership, and Student Membership options. To receive additional information and an application form, email [membership@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:membership@stc-berkeley.org)

### Insurance

of the Berkeley STC Chapter, Joan Lasselle and Jana Humphreys engaged their audience in a discussion of how technical communicators can apply this concept of the archetypal user to enhance the value of their content. As Joan pointed out, "you can't connect with customers unless you know who they are."

Their presentation began with a partner exercise. One person in each pair held up a paper-cutout mask with the caption, "You don't know Jack," printed on the front (a hint that understanding the user is not an easy proposition!) and a brief phrase describing one user characteristic. Without speaking to our partner, we were supposed to guess the answer to five questions about the user. Needless to say, not many of us guessed correctly.

What was the lesson of this exercise? It is easy to make incorrect assumptions about what your customers need unless you go out and talk to them. The entire field of technical communication is moving toward a focus on customer advocacy (and most of us would describe themselves as user advocates). Therefore, it is vitally important to identify the needs of our content users.

Joan described the content system that we, as technical communicators, connect with in our work. There are three components of the system:

- Content strategy (business case and user requirements)
- Content and learning (technical documentation)
- Content infrastructure (processes, standards, and workflow)

As technical communicators, "we spend a lot of time in the middle," (in the content and learning area) focusing on the development of materials. However, to meaningfully engage users in their learning process and throughout the content cycle, we need a system that begins with a well-developed content strategy. The development of personas can support this goal.

### What is a persona?

A persona is a composite of a real group of users who meet specified criteria. It goes beyond a demographic description to define a number of characteristics for each user, including:

- Job responsibilities
- Previous training
- Anxieties
- Problem-solving approach and dominant learning style
- Work environment
- Obstacles to achieving proficiency

(These last two items are often one and the same.)

A persona does not exist in isolation. Jana provided an example from her own team's work: "Tom," the persona representing sales personnel for a medical device company. Tom has professional interactions with a whole chain of other personas, including a harried medical technician, an impatient cardiologist, and an off-site technical support person.

There are five steps for developing a persona:

1. **Identify the business opportunity you want to pursue or the problem you are trying to solve, such as quality, customer service, or productivity.** Of course, lowering cost is often a key factor as well.
2. **Identify your customers.** You will likely discover a whole chain of interrelated roles ("your customers have customers.")
3. **Build your research tools.** The work at this stage, in relative order, includes:
  - a. Develop your research questions.
  - b. Design surveys and/or focus groups.
  - c. Conduct structured interviews – the crucial piece in this process.
  - d. Conduct task analyses of the users' work and proficiencies.

Members of STC can apply for health, disability, and other insurance at STC group rates. For more information, contact STC office at stc@stc.org or (703) 522-4114.

## Worldwide activities

STC's annual conference brings together more than 2,000 technical communicators from around the world for educational programs, seminars, and workshops conducted by experts in the field. **Annual conference: Sacramento, CA, May 15-18, 2011.** In addition the STC sponsors many regional conferences, which feature the same sorts of programs, seminars, and workshops on a more intimate scale. STC sponsors international and regional competitions in all aspects of technical communication. STC Special Interest Groups (SIGs) bring together members with common experiences and interests to share their skills and knowledge. STC SIGs include:

- Academic
- Lone Writer
- AccessAbility
- Management
- Canadian Issues
- Marketing Communication
- Consulting and Independent Contracting
- Online
- Emerging Technologies
- Policies and Procedures
- Environmental, Safety, and Health Communication
- Quality and Process Improvement
- Illustrators and Visual Designers
- Scientific Communication
- Information Design and Architecture
- Single Sourcing
- Instructional Design & Learning
- Technical Editing
- International Technical Communication
- Usability & User Experience

STC sponsors research grants and scholarships in technical communication.

e. Create user scenario(s), which help describe a typical work day and reveal how people work together.

4. **Analyze your findings.** Develop charts and graphs to help reveal relationships.
5. **Build the persona(s).** Write up your description of this archetypal user, which will include:
  - Defining characteristics, as detailed above.
  - A representative quote (culled from the structured interviews).
  - A photograph to help make the persona seem more "real."

Throughout the process, you will need to make sure that your goal -- the problem that you are trying to solve -- continually informs your work. Personas will look very different depending on the type of organizations commissioning them and their reason for needing them.

There are a number of factors that can ensure a successful persona development process during this phase.

- **Enlist a project lead who has good research and data analysis skills.** The persona development process is, after all, a research project.
- **Control the scope.** Make sure the problem is clearly defined and the sample size is appropriate. A persona will include about 7-10 representative employees or customers.
- **Hire a researcher who is outside the company being studied, if possible.** This will help avoid bias and ensure that the people being interviewed will "open up" and provide useful answers to questions.
- **Ask questions that are open-ended, but not too open.** Interviews can easily become unfocused and discursive; it is essential to keep the research questions in mind at all times. One hour is a good length for an interview.
- **Ask the same question more than once.** Repeating the same question with different language may elicit nuances in the second (and third) response that can reveal a more complete picture of interviewee's situation.
- **Record your observations (audio and/or video).** This helps you avoid the distraction of having to take notes during interviews and worksite observation. Be sure to get permission from your customers up front.

The process for developing personas is generally the same, no matter what the size of the company. Successful projects can be conducted with just one researcher. In fact, having one person conducting most of the project work will help avoid confusion and contradictory results.

## Why should you develop personas?

After an illuminating discussion of the process for creating personas, Joan and Jana concluded by sharing some key benefits of this work.

*The process of developing personas can reveal relationships that lead to more informed design decisions.* In the process of creating "Tom," the sales rep, it was discovered that Tom was training "Vicki," the medical technician, in the proper operation of a medical device sold by the company. Keeping in mind the client's original goal, that Vicki obtain proficiency in using the device, the team made a recommendation for an alternative training model -- a computer simulation for Vicki to practice on.

*Researching personas can eliminate redundancies in the content development process.* During the research process, you may find that one group of target users is "doing just fine," while another needs more support. Persona studies can also reveal similarities in user needs across disciplines or workplace roles, leading to more efficient documentation development.

*Accessing the "power of personas" can positively influence decision makers.* Having access to "a name, a face, and a voice" for an archetypal user helps business executives see the impact of their decisions. This perspective can predispose them to say "yes" to the team's recommendations in a way that a generic report might not.

STC publishes the quarterly journal *Technical Communication*, the newsletter *Intercom*, and other periodicals, reference materials, manuals, anthologies, standards, and booklets.

Formed in 1953, STC has today become the largest professional society in the world dedicated to advancing the theory and practice of technical communication.

### Local activities

The six northern California chapters of STC conduct a variety of individual and joint activities. These and a list of other local organizations in which STC members may be interested are included in the *Ragged Left*.

### Subscriptions

This newsletter is free to members of the Berkeley chapter.

### Advertising rates

The *Ragged Left* is not accepting advertising at this time.

### Submissions

*Ragged Left* publishes original articles and illustrations. We edit them to meet our needs. You retain copyright but grant every STC publication royalty-free permission to reproduce the article or illustration in print or any other medium. Please talk with the editor for details of how to submit articles and illustrations.

The deadline for unsolicited submissions is the last Friday of odd-numbered months.

Other STC publications are hereby granted permission to reprint articles from *Ragged Left*, provided such reprints credit the author and the specific *Ragged Left* issue, and a copy of any publication containing such a reprint is sent to the *Ragged Left* editor.

**Joan Lasselle** is the founder and President of Lasselle-Ramsay, Inc. Since 1982 Lasselle-Ramsay has helped global 1000 companies to get control of their new product or service content and deliver superior customer experience through content infrastructures. Lasselle-Ramsay has worked with industry leading companies such as Hewlett-Packard, Cisco Systems, Boston Scientific, and Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. Joan is a senior member of STC, ISPI, a past board member of CMPros, and a regular contributor at industry conferences.

**Jana Humphreys** works with clients to design targeted learning and content solutions. Since 1992 she has worked on hundreds of curriculum design, custom training development, and technical documentation projects for a variety of organizations in the banking, finance, insurance, biotech, medical device, high-tech, and retail industries. Jana earned a Master's degree in Education/Instructional Technology from San Jose State University and is a past board member for the Silicon Valley Chapter of ISPI.

To learn more about Lasselle-Ramsay, Inc., please visit their website at <http://www.lr.com/>

**Carole Baden** is in the process of completing the *Professional Sequence in Technical Communication at the UC Berkeley Extension*. Her current focus is on developing online help; other projects have included documentation for a workplace wiki and for institutional policies and procedures. She strives to maintain a keen editorial eye and a user advocacy perspective.

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### Web usability column

## Why this is all so difficult

by Eric Hughes

I recently received a call from a friend who was exiting a meeting with some marketing staff at a large, publicly-held bank. It seems the meeting, which was ostensibly to discuss search optimization issues, had deteriorated into a discussion about FLASH. Apparently the bank had recently upgraded some sort of documentation system masquerading as a content management system that really was a vehicle for gratuitous, unusable technologies mostly made of FLASH. My friend wanted my opinion on whether FLASH is still as bad as I've (and others) have always said it is. I said that it was, is and always will be, and that I think it is nothing more than an annuity plan for developers.

"Ask them what they plan to use it for, and then research the alternatives -- you can turn this into new business!" I said. "But that will never work," said he. "They have too much sweat equity into this thing already, and therefore it would be untenable for them to junk it." Hmmm... so the decision about whether to keep this piece of software has little to do with usability, little to do with whether it works, and little to do with how much it costs to maintain. Do I own stock in this bank??

Clearly, the right thing to do is to get rid of this software. It costs too much, is too hard to find good developers for, and provides crummy usability to both the users and their audience. But the decision on this is difficult, not just because of the technology and what it does or doesn't do, but because of the way it impacts business process. New vendors would have to be evaluated and found; appropriate training would need to be designed; senior managers would have to be convinced; budgets defined and tracked; IT people would have to be consulted -- yikes -- it's enough to make your head hurt.

Then my friend and I talked about Facebook; especially their recent privacy policy faux pas. He was frustrated by Facebook's inability not only to create a privacy policy that makes sense, but their inability to communicate it and make it usable online once it was created. On the other end of the phone, I nodded my head, pursed my lips and finally blurted out: "but wait, you don't get it. Facebook is doing this on purpose. They know exactly what they are doing, and are just pushing the envelope. Because they are a private company and have no effective competition or moral turpitude, they can do whatever they want whenever they want to whomever has signed up for their service. They throw privacy policy against the wall, and leave whatever sticks. They make it complex and iterative because they know few will read it, fewer still will understand it, and those who are really concerned about privacy will never sign up or have

already left." Again, it isn't about privacy policy, or even how the policy is communicated, it is about process; a process so difficult that 500 million people just shrug their shoulders and move on.

It is neither the message nor the medium. Both drive process, and that is what counts. Learn how to manage that, and you will be employed forever.

*Eric Hughes* has been an STC member since 2004. Things that don't work the way they should drive him crazy. You can reach him at [hugheseearthur@gmail.com](mailto:hugheseearthur@gmail.com) or <http://www.twitter.com/hughese>

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## Between the covers column

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# Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us

Review by Melody Brumis

**Book:** [Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us](#) by Daniel Pink, ©2009, Riverhead Books, A member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc., New York.

## Introduction

What gets you going in the morning? I'm motivated by the sheer joy of taking the [Vallejo Baylink Ferry](#) to work. Adrienne Tange, my business partner, is motivated by practicing her horse Val for an upcoming [Arabian Horse Association](#) competition. *Drive* provides a new way of looking at motivation for individuals, organizations, and families.

*Drive* begins with a challenge for us to test our forecasting powers. In 1995, two encyclopedias are being developed. The first encyclopedia, backed by the premiere software company, is well-funded and expert-written. It will be available on CD-ROMs and later online. The second encyclopedia, with no company backing, is being created by "tens of thousands of people who write and edit articles for fun." It will exist online, and be free – anyone can use it.

"In 2010," the book goes on to say, "one of these encyclopedias will be the largest and most popular in the world and the other will be defunct. Which is which?"

If you guessed the second encyclopedia, the one written by hobbyists – yes, [Wikipedia](#), you're right. What motivated (and still motivates) these hobbyists? *Drive* discusses this as it describes the evolution of what it calls the Motivation 3.0 operating system. Microsoft pulled the plug on the first encyclopedia, [Encarta](#), its CD and online version.

## Motivation 1.0

*Drive* goes on to give a brief history of motivation. Like computers, it says, societies have operating systems. In the early days, fifty-thousand years ago, the Motivation 1.0 operating system was all about survival. Later, as people began to form more complex societies, a second drive, "to seek reward and avoid punishment" was developed.

## Motivation 2.0

The Motivation 2.0 operating system is used by many individuals, organizations and families. On a recent project, we were told to complete a set of procedures in two weeks or else. The unsaid words were that we would be punished by an early end to our contract. While this did not happen, the threat (punishment) was the motivating factor. On the other hand, we were also motivated by the almighty dollar or our billable hours.

*Drive* describes seven reasons why Motivation 2.0 doesn't work.

Carrots and Sticks: *The Seven Deadly Flaws*

1. They can extinguish intrinsic motivation.
2. They can diminish performance.



3. They can crush creativity.
4. They can crowd out good behavior.
5. They can encourage cheating, shortcuts, and unethical behavior.
6. They can become addictive.
7. They can foster short-term thinking.

An example of number six is giving a child an allowance for doing chores. Because the child is being paid to do chores, he may refuse to do work without being paid. He doesn't learn that being part of a family means pitching in. Instead, and here's where the addictive part comes in, he will expect to get paid more allowance for everything he does.

### Motivation 3.0

*Drive* discusses many of the free thinkers who preceded the Motivation 3.0 operating system. Several of them were familiar to me. One example is Meyer Friedman, a San Francisco cardiologist, who discovered that people with certain personality traits were more likely to develop heart disease. The personality traits were "excessive competition drive, aggressiveness, impatience, and a harrying sense of time urgency." In the late 50's, Friedman with Dr. Ray Rosenman dubbed individuals with these personality traits as Type A. In contrast to Type A was a calmer, yet equally driven soul dubbed as Type B.

Friedman describes what motivates a Type B individual. "He may also have a considerable amount of 'drive," but its character is such that it seems to steady him, give confidence and security to him, rather than to goad, irritate, and infuriate, as with the Type A man." Fifty years later, what drives the Type A individual versus the Type B individual is being discussed as the Motivation 3.0 operating system is developed.

What is Motivation 3.0? What I got from *Drive* is that it's more of a self-motivation. *Drive* discusses extrinsic (or outward) motivation versus intrinsic (inward) motivation. Intrinsic motivation, discussed in great detail in *Drive*, is a precursor to Motivation 3.0.

Components of Motivation 3.0 include the following:

- Autonomy
- Mastery
- Purpose

#### Autonomy

*Drive* gives many examples of autonomy. One is the results-only work environment (ROWE). An example of a company that uses ROWE is the online shoe retailer [Zappos.com](http://Zappos.com) (now part of [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)). "Zappos doesn't monitor its customer service employees' call times or require them to use scripts. The reps handle calls the way they want. Their job is to serve the customer well; how they do it is up to them." Personally I enjoy having autonomy over my work. I don't always have it but when I do I thrive!

#### Mastery

*Drive* talks about Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi who's famous for coming up with the concept of flow. "In flow, people lived so deeply in the moment, and felt so utterly in control, that their sense of time, place, and even self melted away." I am often "in the flow" when I am writing. I can get "in the flow" writing a book review or a procedure. I just need to be creating something. I like the feeling so much that I'll write for hours. Often, I have to be called to go to bed in the wee hours because I've lost all sense of time or what time it is.

Being "in the flow", *Drive* goes on to say, is being engaged. And, being engaged with your work, self-creations, or family is another precursor to Motivation 3.0. You wake up in the morning and that's what you want to do. "In addition, a study of 11,000 industry scientists and working at companies in the United States found that the desire for intellectual challenge – that is, the urge to master something new and engaging – was the best predictor of productivity."

## Purpose

*Drive* describes purpose as when people are motivated by "a cause larger than themselves." One group of people looking for a higher purpose is the baby boomers. *Drive* says that in 2006 the first of the baby boomers turned 60. At 60, it said, people reflect on their own mortality. From there, they realize that they may have another 25 years to go. Many of them decide to use this time to do something meaningful. Along with baby boomers, their sons and daughters – known as Generation Y, millennials, or the echo boomers – are also looking for meaning in their work, self-creations, and families.

*Drive* gives examples of "socially responsible companies" that draw people in. One example is [TOMS](#) an online shoe store. "It offers hip, canvas, flat-soled shoes. But every time TOMS sells a pair of shoes to you, me, or your next-door neighbor, it gives away another pair of new shoes to a child in a developing country." While we all might like TOMS shoes, even more, those of us looking for purpose like their social consciousness.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, I learned a lot reading this book. I learned that my company's biggest client was mired in Motivation 2.0. I cannot change this company, but in the future I can look for companies -- like Google -- using Motivation 3.0. I can use what I learned to motivate my company, self-creations, and family. *Drive* makes this easy by providing a toolkit at the end of the book. The toolkit provides ways to motivate everyone in your life. It also provides a reading list, advice from business gurus, and a body fitness plan.

*Melody Brumis is a Senior Member of the Society for Technical Communication (STC). She has recently started a small business, Write on Time Solutions. Her column, Write on Time: Small Business Success, appears in the East Bay STC Chapter's Devil Mountain View. If you have comments on this book review, please write Melody at [mbrumis@aol.com](mailto:mbrumis@aol.com).*

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# Meetings

Our chapter holds a dinner meeting the second Wednesday of each month. In addition to listing upcoming meetings, this section includes:

- [Meeting/Dinner prices](#)
- [Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Location and Directions](#)

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## Upcoming Meetings

### STC Executive Director Kathryn Burton - Rockridge, August 17

On Tuesday evening, August 17, STC executive director Kathryn Burton will be in the Bay Area, meeting socially with interested technical communicators. Leaders from all Northern California chapters will be there. The meeting space, near the Rockridge BART station, is limited by fire department regulations, but we can take a few more reservations. If you are interested in attending, send email to Richard Mateosian ([xrmxrm@gmail.com](mailto:xrmxrm@gmail.com)).

### In the Trenches with DITA

Presentation by Mysti Berry, Ben Colborn, and Tom Idleman

**Wednesday, August 11, 2010, 6-9:30pm**

Highlands Country Club  
110 Hiller Drive, Oakland, California

### Program

We hear a lot about structured authoring and DITA (Darwin Information Typing Architecture) these days, and there are plenty of webinars and conference presentations that talk about the benefits that can come from shifting content into DITA--opportunities for content reuse, lower costs for translation, conditional processing, automatic linking, improved consistency and usability, and more.

But what's it like for writers who actually works with DITA on a day-to-day basis? Is it much different from the way they worked before? Is it hard to make the shift? Are they glad they did? Have their jobs changed?

This month at Berkeley STC we will hear from a panel of writers who work with DITA on a regular basis to author documentation and training content. They will tell us what that's like from the writer's perspective, when DITA is fully integrated into the workflow.

Bring your questions and join us for this insider look at DITA.

## Speakers

**Mysti Berry** has been a technical writer for 20 years and is presently a Lead Technical Writer at Salesforce.com. She has been working with the DITA OpenToolkit for the last five years, including having survived a FrameMaker-to-DITA conversion, and the tardy adoption of a content/information model. Salesforce.com creates context-sensitive help, developer guides, implementation and tip guides, quick reference guides, and release notes using DITA. Their deliverable types include HTML, PDF, and eBooks. They also create videos, guided tours, and now comic books with non-DITA tools. Mysti has taught at UC Berkeley Extension, and holds a B.A. in Linguistics from UCSC and an MFA from University of San Francisco. She has won multiple awards for her technical writing and screenplay and fiction, and served as STC Touchstone judge.

**Ben Colborn** is a Courseware Development Lead for Citrix Education. At Citrix, courseware developers use DITA to create instructor-led training (PDF and PPT) and eLearning (HTML and Flash interactions in SCORM). In addition to developing training material for Citrix virtualization technologies, Ben works to improve course quality and simplify internal development processes. Before joining Citrix Education, he taught academic and professional writing at the college level and worked as a Unix system administrator at Sun Microsystems. He holds a B.A. in English from the University of Idaho and an M.A. in TESOL from San José State University.

**Tom Idleman** has been working with DITA for 7 years, both as a technical writer and a course developer. As a senior technical writer at IBM and FICO, he has written a wide range of documentation in DITA using mainly Epic Editor and XMetaL. As a course developer for Lasselle-Ramsay, he delivered a 4-hour training session on XMetaL and DITA at DocTrain East 2008, a full-day training session on XMetaL and DITA for Intel Corporation, and developed the XSMART DITA CMS training program for Cisco Systems.

## Technical Communicators and Their Role in Stopping Brain Drain

Presentation by Gina Gotsill and Ken Ball

**Wednesday, September 8, 2010, 6-9:30pm**

Highlands Country Club  
110 Hiller Drive, Oakland, California

### Program

Interviewing is a big part of what technical communications do on the job. Technical communicators interview SMEs, users, and others, and then package what they learn to help people work more effectively. While interviewing skills are important to documentation, training, and project management, they can also play a major role in helping organizations capture and transfer knowledge as Baby Boomers move toward retirement.

During this talk, Ken Ball and Gina Gotsill will explore how technical communicators can use their interviewing skills to draw out valuable knowledge



as longtime workers begin to step away. The content technical communicators create from these interviews can benefit organizations in the following ways:

- Maintain business continuity
- Create documentation of processes and procedures that reside in people's heads
- Promote knowledge sharing and collaboration

Ball and Gotsill will also provide an overview of the three primary generations in the workplace: Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y, and their learning preferences. Their research has shown that understanding the audience is an important first step to creating a knowledge retention program that makes sense. They will also touch on several different kinds of knowledge—explicit, implicit, and tacit, and the best ways to capture this knowledge for the organization.

At the end of this session, attendees will have a better understanding of:

- The three primary generations in the workforce and their learning preferences
- Explicit, implicit, and tacit knowledge
- Methods for gaining buy-in from staff
- The benefits of documenting knowledge
- Methods for capturing knowledge, including documentation, communities of practice, mentoring, and storytelling

### Speakers

**Gina Gotsill** is a Gen X writer with degrees in journalism from San Francisco State University and University of California, Berkeley. She is also a fellow of the Poynter Institute, a journalism think tank based in St. Petersburg, Florida. Ms. Gotsill has covered a wide range of business topics that include keeping Boomer skills in the workplace, teaching finance to non-finance professionals, and growth and change in urban and suburban business districts.

**Ken Ball** is a Boomer and has been closely following aging in the workplace with curiosity for years. At TechProse, the consulting firm where he does business development, Ken tracks knowledge and content management, including training and documentation, for major U.S. clients. He has more than 30 years of experience in corporate sales and marketing, including years in the book publishing business, working for IDG Books, publishers of the *...For Dummies* computer and general reference books. He has a B.S. in Marketing-Speech Communications from Bradley University.

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## Meeting/Dinner Prices

### Advance Reservations

Reserved on the [Chapter's website](#) by the day prior to meeting.

#### Meeting and dinner

- Members: \$10
- Non-members: \$18
- Student members: \$10

#### Program only

- Members: \$5
- Non-STC-Members: \$15
- Students: \$5

### At the door (no reservation)

#### Meeting and dinner

- Members: \$15
- Non-members: \$21
- Student members: \$15

Note: If you do not reserve dinner in advance, dinner may or may not be available on a walk-in basis. We order dinner for the number of reservations plus a few walk-ins.

### Program only

- Members: \$10
- Non-STC-Members: \$15
- Students: \$10

### Special cost notes

- Non-members are always welcome to STC meetings at the non-member rates.
- All members of the San Francisco Chapter of the IABC are welcome to register for Berkeley STC General Meetings at the member price by midnight on the day before the meeting.

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## Meeting Agenda

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6:00-7:00pm	Check-in, networking, conversation, and dinner.
7:00 -7:15pm	Chapter business, announcements, and introductions. Anyone can announce jobs that they know about.*
7:15 - 8:30pm	Formal program. Usually we have a speaker or panel of speakers on a topic related to the business or technology of technical communication.
8:30 - 9pm	Conversation, offline questions for the speaker, follow-up on job announcements
9:00	Clear the room. Move conversations to the sidewalk.

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\* **Attendees**, please announce open positions, and bring job listings for distribution.

**Recruiters** are welcome to attend meetings, place literature on a designated table, and talk with attendees one-on-one during the informal parts of the meeting. We ask them not to announce specific jobs during the formal announcement period, but they are free to stand up and identify themselves.

Similarly, we ask anyone else with commercial announcements to confine themselves to calling attention to the availability of literature on the designated table.

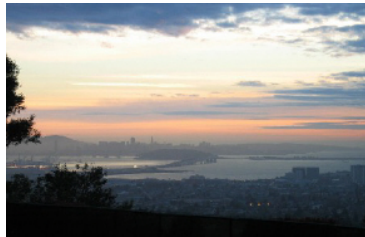
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## Berkeley STC Meeting Location and Directions

**Highlands Country Club**  
**110 Hiller Drive**  
**Oakland, California**

Information at <http://www.stc-berkeley.org/MonthlyMeeting/directions.shtml>

**Note:** If you need a ride from BART, contact Richard Mateosian (President@stc-berkeley.org) at least one day prior to the meeting.



View from the Highlands Country Club  
Photo courtesy of Rhonda Bracey

## STC News

Increase your network and net worth—join STC today!

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) advances the theory and practice of technical communication across all user abilities and all media. For more information about STC, send an e-mail to [stc@stc.org](mailto:stc@stc.org) or visit [www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org).

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## Chapter News

### Leadership Positions Available

We are looking to fill several leadership positions! Contact Richard Mateosian if you are interested. See <http://www.stc-berkeley.org/VolunteerOpportunities/volunteer.shtml> for a list of open positions.

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## Regional STC News

T. R. Girill gave a talk to our chapter in December (see write-up in the Jan/Feb 2010 *Ragged Left*) on some literacy outreach activities.

A year-long usage analysis of the underlying (web-based) material for that work is now up on the East Bay STC site at [http://www.ebstc.org/newsletter/0310/Article\\_4.htm](http://www.ebstc.org/newsletter/0310/Article_4.htm).

T. R. Girill  
STC Fellow  
[trg@llnl.gov](mailto:trg@llnl.gov)  
[trgirill@acm.org](mailto:trgirill@acm.org)

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## Other STC chapters in Northern California

East Bay: [www.ebstc.org](http://www.ebstc.org)

North Bay: [www.stc-northbay.org](http://www.stc-northbay.org)

Sacramento: [www.stcsacramento.org](http://www.stcsacramento.org)

San Francisco: [www.stc-sf.org](http://www.stc-sf.org)

Silicon Valley: [www.stc-siliconvalley.org](http://www.stc-siliconvalley.org)

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## Other Organizations

American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) of Northern California. Meets periodically at various Bay Area locations. [www.amwancal.org](http://www.amwancal.org)

American Society for Training and Development, Mount Diablo Chapter. Meets monthly in Danville. <http://mtdiablostd.org/>.

American Society of Indexers, Golden Gate Chapter.  
[www.asindexing.org/site/chapters.shtml#golden](http://www.asindexing.org/site/chapters.shtml#golden)

Association for Women in Computing, San Francisco Bay Area chapter — [www.awc-sf.org/](http://www.awc-sf.org/)

International Association of Business Communicators, San Francisco chapter. A network of professionals committed to improving the effectiveness of organizations through strategic interactive and integrated business communication management — <http://sf.iabc.com/>

National Writers Union (UAW). A labor union for freelance writers of all genres. — [www.nwu.org](http://www.nwu.org)

Northern California Science Writers' Association. Quarterly meetings & other events.  
[www.ncswa.org](http://www.ncswa.org)

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## Events

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### Usability Bootcamp 2010

#### August 19-20, 2010 - Perfetti Media's 2-day Workshop

Perfetti Media created the Usability Bootcamp to share proven techniques to improve your user research, usability testing, and design evaluation skills.

You'll learn how to:

- Plan and conduct interviews with users in their environment. You'll see how to observe critical details about your users that just isn't possible with other techniques.
- Develop user personas from your user research. We will walk you through a proven and easy-to-learn method for developing personas.
- Create a fully working paper mock-up of any proposed design, which you can use to collect usability data through usability testing.
- Take advantage of advanced usability methods only practiced by the most experienced design teams. Among the techniques you'll learn about: 5 second page tests, comprehension tests, catalog-based tests, surrogate testing, and inherent value tests.
- Conduct remote research with users. We will share the most effective techniques for conducting usability tests remotely.
- Recruit the right users. You'll see simple techniques for writing a good screening questionnaire that quickly identifies the perfect participants.
- Write tasks that get you the answers you want. You'll review examples of both good and poor scenarios.
- Become a better facilitator. You'll learn proven techniques for keeping the participants relaxed while they share their frustrations and delights with the design.
- Analyze the test results. You'll see how to decide what to report and how it can best help your particular audience, whether it's senior management or members of the technical staff.

Learn more at [PerfettiMedia.com](http://PerfettiMedia.com)

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### WritersUA: Call for speakers and peer showcase presenters

#### The Conference for Software User Assistance March 13-16, 2011, Long Beach, CA

In preparation for the 2011 Conference, WritersUA is looking for user assistance professionals interested in sharing their expertise. There are opportunities to present a session and also to demonstrate your work in the Peer Showcase. This is a great chance for you to share the stage with some of the brightest lights in technical communication and software development. Thank you for participating in the 2010 event in Seattle. We hope to see you in Long Beach!

Call for Speakers: <http://www.writersua.com/conference/callspkr.htm>

Call for Peer Showcase Presenters: <http://www.writersua.com/conference/callpeer.htm>

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The Ragged Left is published six times a year (every other month).