

TechniScribe

Orange County Chapter

The Translation Process, A Quick Glance

By George P. Rimalower, President ISI Translation Services

It used to be that a client would call us, mail us a document for translation, get a quotation, and mail the approval. We would get the translation typed up and completed, then mailed back to the client. The process could take a couple of weeks if we relied on mail. Now, we have fax machines, modems, e-mail, zip drives, word processors, terminology management software, Windows, Macs, keyboards, mice, and yes, paper. Now that the year 2000 is here, we get closer to voice recognition software. So not only has the equipment changed but so has the translation process. I don't believe that our office even has a typewriter anymore, unless it is collecting dust.

It is important for our clients to understand how we work. Sometimes new clients call to ask if we can have the projects, which took six months to develop, ready overnight. After all, can't we just transcribe them into the other language? Our project managers go through a series of specific steps before the translation is completed. Our account executives work with the project managers to analyze all the required specifications to create a complete and comprehensive quotation. After approval, the project managers select a team of subject-specific linguists to translate, edit, develop glossaries and terminology, incorporate client review, format and layout, proof, and output each project.

The terminology manager works with the translators to develop glossaries. Files that are candidates for our terminology management program are then processed. The document is translated; editors review the text for accuracy, consistency, style, grammar, and target-audience appropriateness. Suggestions made through

(Cover story, continued on page 11)

Call for STC Newsletter

Competition Judges

Deadline—January 5, 2000

By Helen Black, Manager
STC Newsletter Competition

Judging in the newsletter competition is one of the most rewarding ways to participate in STC. Plus, judges for this competition will have an opportunity to evaluate some of STC's best chapter, student chapter, and SIG newsletters!

Have you earned an award in an STC newsletter competition? Are you interested in evaluating the design and editorial quality of STC newsletters? Are you available for judging during the month of February?

If you answered "yes" to these questions, the newsletter competition manager would like to hear from you!

Deadline for Applications

Please contact me by January 5, at: hblack@gate.net, (314) 514-7347. I'll send you a "Judge's Information" form by e-mail, which requests information for assigning entries and for recognizing competition judges in the *STC Honors and Awards* brochure!

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Chapter Chat

By Mark Bloom, Chapter President

Welcome to the next century!

What a fantastic time to be alive. The possibilities are endless. What a wonderful time to be a technical communicator. The job market is bursting with opportunity. What a perfect time to reinvent yourself. The industry has so much diversification that you need never be pigeonholed again.

Are you tired of writing the same old user manuals? Are you bored with Windows online help systems? Are you ready for a new challenge?

It's not really that difficult to change. Take a course in user interface design. Schedule an informational interview with a manager of a public relations firm. Buy a graphics program and spend your evenings and weekends playing with it. Buy a good book on JavaScript, C++, HTML, XML, Perl, or even Spanish. Decide that you are going to become a Web page designer.

It's really that simple. Mary Wise, STC president, said at the Region 8 Conference that she became an information designer simply by placing the title after her name. Sure, she had to back it up with research, education, and experience, but she also had to take that first step herself.

As Julia Cameron wrote, "Leap. The net will appear."

You can't change your life or your career until you make the conscious decision that you want things to be different. Once it becomes a priority for you, you'll be surprised how quickly things change. You will start pursuing the activities that will lead you where you want to go. As you learn more and gain new experiences and knowledge, you will start to become what you always dreamed.

I speak from experience. I was once an underpaid technical writer, working for a government agency on projects that didn't matter to anyone but my boss. I did some good work and knew I had more to offer. I knew I wanted to do more stuff online. I knew nothing about the Internet, but I wanted to learn more.

I did. I took the initiative and found online work within the company. I used that experience to build my confidence and my portfolio; then I made the move. I quit that job, moved across the country, and found the job of my dreams. Now I'm a manager, conquering new challenges every month.

You can change your life too, but you must take the first step. Other people can help you once you've made the commitment to yourself, but no one but you can make that commitment. Now is the perfect time. Become the new you. Reinvent yourself for the new millennium.



Overcoming Cultural and Linguistic Barriers

By Robert Courtney

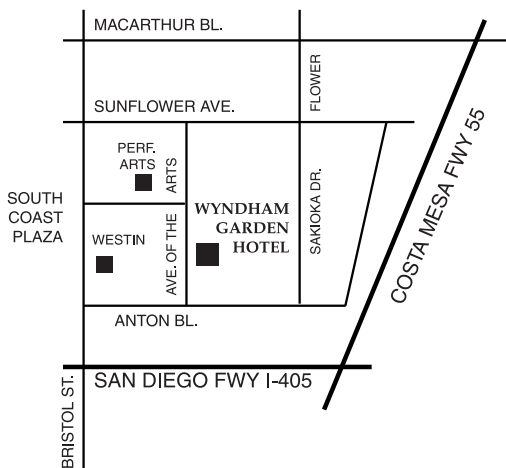
Today's translation process is no longer as simple as it once was. Once upon a time, a client would submit a request to have work translated. It would arrive by mail. Then, a proposal would be submitted to the perspective client for approval. This procedure took time, and in our changing world this procedure has changed to keep up with the times.

Come to our January 18 meeting and hear George Rimalower explain how today's technologies have changed the translation process.

George Rimalower is the founder and president of ISI Translation Services. ISI is internationally recognized for language and cultural support and has been providing translation, localization, and foreign language graphic services since 1982. ISI is a corporate member of the American Translators Association. Contact the company at info@ISITrans.com.

Born in Argentina, George Rimalower grew up in a trilingual home and graduated from UCLA. In addition to managing translation and localization projects, he teaches classes and seminars in cross-cultural communications and diversity training at the University of Chicago, University of New Mexico, Beth Israel Hospital, and CIGNA. He is an active member of STC and a certified Court Interpreter.

See related article submitted by George Rimalower on the cover.



When:

Tuesday, January 18, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Where:

Wyndham Garden Hotel
3350 Avenue of the Arts
Costa Mesa, CA
(714) 751-5100

Cost:

- ◆ Members with reservations, **\$20**
- ◆ Students with reservations, **\$15**
- ◆ Non-members with reservations, **\$22**
- ◆ All walk-ins, **\$30**
- ◆ No-shows billed **\$10**

Reservations:

Reservations are due by 5:00 p.m., Friday, January 14. If you call later, you will be billed the walk-in fee, so make your reservation early.

You can register by any of the following means:

- ◆ Register online at www.ocstc.org/dinres.htm
- ◆ Send e-mail to Jeff Randolph at erandolp@ix.netcom.com
- ◆ Call the OCSTC hotline at (949) 863-7666
- ◆ Call Carolyn Romano at (714) 894-9221. Leave your name, membership status, and phone number.

Directions

From the 405 Freeway: Exit at Bristol. Go north to Anton Boulevard and turn right. Turn left onto Avenue of the Arts (the second signal). The Wyndham Garden Hotel is about one block ahead on the right. Turn into the driveway, and turn left into the parking structure. Parking is free.

From the 55 Freeway: Exit at MacArthur Boulevard, turn left on Flower, then right on Sunflower. Turn left on Avenue of the Arts and proceed one block south. The hotel will be on your left.

Publication Information

The Orange County Chapter of the Society publishes the *TechniScribe* 11 times a year. Articles published in this newsletter may be reprinted in other STC publications if credit is properly given and one copy of the reprint is sent to the *TechniScribe* editor. Rights to articles appearing in *TechniScribe* revert to the author upon publication. Reprinting articles in non-STC publications is subject to the author's approval.

Send articles to:
jille@earthlink.net

Use Word and save files as RTF (Rich-Text Format). This will allow me to read all versions of Word. You can also send an article in the body of an e-mail message.

Subscriptions are available for \$10 per year to members of other chapters.

The deadline for submission is the 10th of the month prior to publication. The editor reserves the right to deny publication of any material. Submissions will be edited for clarity, length, and appropriateness.

Please include a 25-word biography about yourself.

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Circulation: Jeff Randolph

Monthly advertising rates:

1/4 page \$40.00
1/3 page \$45.00
1/2 page \$60.00
full page \$80.00

Printing services provided by Brea Printing, Inc.
(714) 529-7334



About STC

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is the world's largest organization for technical communicators. Its nearly 20,000 members include writers, editors, illustrators, printers, publishers, photographers, educators, and students.

Dues are \$115 per year, plus a one-time enrollment fee. Membership is open to anyone engaged in some phase of technical communication, interested in the arts and sciences of technical communication, and in allied arts and sciences.

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Some Thoughts on Curtailing Words

By David Fredericks

Talk to any wretch in the throes of learning English as a second language. Ask him or her about the maddening pitfalls of our language. The many Spanish speakers among us will say emphatically, "Ingles es muy difıcil!" They're right: English is tough. And one of the difficulties they bemoan is the way we shorten words into contractions and other abbreviated forms. This word shortening can be a minefield—even for native speakers. But it's one of a thousand reasons that English is so powerful. And it's another aspect of communications where we technical writers should be the subject matter experts.

Does anybody doubt that shortening words has many effects invaluable to the professional communicator? Consider contractions and how they can set the tone of communication. "We shall be happy to see you" impresses the hearer differently from "we'll be happy to see you". Both forms are grammatically and stylistically correct, but each evokes a different feeling. The first sounds elevated and formal; the second, natural and friendly. Each form has its place.

When I'm reading instructions with expressions like, "Here's an easier way..." or "Your computer can't do anything until..." or "It's simpler to upgrade..." I sense a bond with the writer. The writer's use of contractions makes the reading friendlier and more human, making my learning task more pleasant. For me, contractions not only make the text more engaging but also they suggest that the information is (based on my experience) more likely to be superior in clarity and presentation. And think about how useful contractions are to advertising copywriters (another hat for some tech writers): "Here's an offer you can't refuse... Don't miss this opportunity... Let's think about the advantages."

Besides contractions, skilled copywriters use every word-shortening technique imaginable: ad(vertise) (tele)phone, exam(ination), spec(ulation) and photo(graph) to name just a few truncated examples.

Another way that copywriters tighten the message is by skillful use of the handy hyphen, a technique that technical writers should imitate. When, for example, a group of related words follows the noun it modifies, such as: "Here is an opportunity *that occurs once in a lifetime*," change it to read, "Here's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." With practice, you can stitch together a hyphenated expression to fit any occasion. Just don't overdo it! Hyphens, though often maligned, are wonderful for reducing clauses and phrases to unit modifiers that precede instead of follow nouns.

Language evolves toward brevity, which stands to reason: The longer people do anything, the more shortcuts they develop. A large and growing chunk of humanity has been speaking and improving English since it veered from West Germanic in the fifth century AD. And hyphens and abbreviations have played an important role in the process. The joining of words, such as: *cross word*, *to day*, and *able to work* first become *cross-word*, *to-day* and *work-able* until, ultimately, these word combinations are written as solids: *crossword*, *today*, and *workable*. And the process of compression continues.

Acronyms employ a wonderful technique for packing lots of information into single syllables. Letter acronyms (also called initialisms) are formed from the first letters of words. They are written without points and are always pronounceable as a single word. Familiar examples are *RAM* (random access memory), *laser* (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation), and *radar* (radar detecting and ranging).

Two non-letter types of acronyms are sometimes used as well: (a) syllabic acronyms, such as *sitcom* (situation comedy), and (b) hybrid of letter and syllabic acronyms, such as *CoSIRA* (Council for Small Industries).

Acronyms serve so well as slogans, mnemonic aids, and shorthand labels that they're overused. Often they become counterproductive—with bureaucratic writing offering many of the worst examples of acronym abuse. And I'm sure we've all muttered, somewhat inaudibly, a few choice expletives at the authors of manuals where every other word is an unfamiliar acronym. As professional communicators, we shouldn't do anything that would slow down the reader.

(Curtailing words, *continued on page 9*)

Membership News

By Dennis Hanrahan

Welcome to the new millennium! I trust you haven't experienced too many Y2K problems. I don't know about you, but I'm having trouble writing dates...starting the year with "20" instead of "19."

We had another outstanding membership growth month in November. Our chapter total is now 462 members, up 19 from the previous month, while Society membership overall has also shown a healthy increase to 23,130. Our goal of 500 members is still within sight this STC year, but recruiting gets tougher early in the calendar year, so it's up to you to make it happen. Just get your nonmember colleagues to attend one meeting. When they see what we have to offer, there's an excellent chance they'll join. Now, for this month's profiles:

Lisa DeCoria joined us in June. She is currently employed at HNC Insurance Solutions (HNCIS) as the supervisor of technical documentation. She supervises a team of technical writers and is responsible for coordinating and implementing the development of online and hardcopy documentation for internal (employees) and external (client) users. She has worked for this company since March 1998.

Lisa has been a technical writer for more than 8 years. The first years of her career were spent supporting environmental safety and health programs for the Department of Energy at the Hanford Nuclear Site in the state of Washington. Additionally, she was involved in corporate proposal work that resulted in winning many contracts. After that, she came to California to document a local medical device manufacturer's quality system for compliance with ISO 9001 and FDA regulations.

Lisa obtained both of her degrees from Washington State University. Her first was a B.A. in Social Sciences in 1988, followed by a B.A. in English in 1991 (with minors in Business Administration and Sociology).

When Lisa first embarked upon her tech writing career, she joined the local STC chapter. However, eventually she had to leave STC due to a lack of time. But now things have changed, and she's reinstated and is looking forward to meeting and networking with other writers. She credits two writers on her team, Tony DiSchino and



Renee Murphy, with setting a good example by actively participating in STC meetings and activities.

A native of Bellingham, Washington, Lisa says she's absolutely bitten by the travel bug. She loves to travel both domestically and internationally. She has also taken up golf this year, and is looking forward to finding some nice courses.

Heather Dinsdale joined us in August. She's been a technical writer at CIM Vision, International, in Long Beach for about a year and a half. CIM develops software for barcode data collection, warehouse management, advanced shipping and labeling, time and attendance, and manufacturing execution solutions.

Previously, at TriTech Educational Services, Heather worked as a courseware developer. She wrote an introductory computer networking course for an Intel certification track and a course on digital hardcopy services for Hewlett Packard. At Prosoft Training.com, she was an instructional designer, working with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to design courses on Internet curriculum. At Futurekids, she was an instructional designer and wrote a computer curriculum teaching elementary children to use computers. She also worked as an editor/writer for trade magazines and edited congressional testimony and NASA space reports.

What Heather likes best about technical writing is the constant learning of new things. She likes tackling new subjects and learning as much as possible about them. She also likes the constant challenge of keeping up to date with all the new software tools in the tech writing field.

Heather, who was born in San Diego, attended Cal State University, Long Beach, where she majored in magazine journalism. She joined STC because she thought it would be a good way to stay current with the industry, network with other writers, and learn from their experiences. She's taken a couple of seminars and met some really nice people already.

Society Level Job Listings

The Society maintains job listings on the Internet. You can download these listings from the Society's Web site located at <http://www.stc-va.org>

Orange County Job Listings

Looking for a job?

Our job listing is entirely online at the OCSTC Web site and is updated weekly. Look for the latest postings every Thursday. For convenience, set your bookmarks or favorites to <http://www.ocstc.org/jobline.htm>.

If you have an inquiry or a job to post, send an e-mail message to Jeff Randolph erandolp@ix.netcom.com

A limited number of printed copies of the Jobline are available at monthly chapter meetings.



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The Choice for Continuing Education and Professional Development

The Education Report

By Kelly Anderson

No professional development courses were offered in December, but this doesn't mean the Education Committee has been lounging around, snacking on leftover Christmas cookies. Instead, we've begun the process of designing a series of RoboHELP courses:

Course I: Introduction to RoboHELP

Course II: Basic RoboHELP Skills

Course III: Applied RoboHELP

Our goal in designing these courses is not only to teach students how to use RoboHELP, but also to provide instruction in how to design effective online help. So far, we've investigated existing reference materials, drafted course outlines, and interviewed our volunteer RoboHELP subject matter experts (SMEs).

Investigating Existing Training Materials

Our Education Committee has a limited number of resources, and since RoboHELP courses and workbooks already exist, we evaluated these materials to determine whether we could simply buy and use them as is.

We found that many resources provide instruction in how to use RoboHELP, but few provide information on how to design online help. Though no course or workbook could be used as is, the materials provided a good starting point for outlining course content.

Outlining Course Content

Using the outline for the Blue Sky RoboHELP training course and Kevin Siegel's workbook, *RoboHELP Classic*, we identified the topics to be covered in each course and the order in which they will be presented. We completed the outlines by adding topics that discuss how to design online help.

Interviewing RoboHELP SMEs

In December we interviewed our volunteer RoboHELP SMEs to glean their experience from using RoboHELP and designing online help, and to learn their solutions for overcoming the concepts or skills that are difficult.

Recruiting Instructional Designers and Instructors

The Education Committee is always looking for helping hands. If you would like to help design or present the RoboHELP training courses, call me at (949) 784-8243 or send me an e-mail at: kanderson@magsoft.com.

ITC SIG Now under New Management

By Carol Luttrell, *International Technical Communications SIG Manager*

The International Technical Communication Special Interest Group (SIG) is now under new management. If members have any international communication issues they would like the SIG to take on as a project, please contact me. I'll see if it is feasible for us to work on it.

We are redesigning our SIG Web site so that it will be a source of valuable information for members. If you know of a Web site or Internet newsgroup that might be of interest to the SIG, please forward the URL to me. I'll look it over.

One of the bigger issues we have is the need for mentors and resources. If members have any specific areas of expertise (e.g., translation, industry-specific, international experience) and would be willing to help other members who have general inquiries, please let me know.

Finally, we would like to restart our newsletter and we need volunteers to work as acquisition editors, copy editors, and contributors. Please have anyone interested in working on this contact me. Thanks very much for your help.

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More Ever Wonder Why's...

Zero scores in tennis are called "love?" In France, where tennis first became popular, a big, round zero on the scoreboard looked like an egg and was called "l'oeuf," which is French for "egg." When tennis was introduced in the US, Americans pronounced it "love."

Ships and aircraft in trouble use "mayday" as their call for help? This comes from the French word *m'aidez* — meaning "help me" — and is pronounced "mayday."

Many coin banks are shaped like pigs? Long ago, dishes and cookware in Europe were made of a dense, orange clay called "pygg." When people save coins in jars made of this clay, the jars became known as "pygg banks." When an English potter misunderstood the word, he made a bank that resembled a pig. And it caught on.

Author unknown

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New Work Rules

Do you ever feel over-worked, over-regulated, under-leisured, and under-benefited? Take heart, this notice was found in the ruins of a London office building. It was dated 1852:

1. This firm has reduced the hours of work, and the clerical staff will now only have to be present between the hours of 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. week-days.

2. Clothing must be of sober nature. The clerical staff will not disport themselves in raiment of bright colors, nor will they wear hose unless in good repair.

3. Overshoes and topcoats may not be worn in the office, but neck scarves and headwear may be worn in inclement weather.

4. A stove is provided for the benefit of the clerical staff. Coal and wood must be kept in the locker. It is recommended that each member of the clerical staff bring four pounds of coal each day during the cold weather.

5. No member of the clerical staff may leave the room without permission from the supervisor.

(see sidebar on next page for more...)



Just Ask Sandi...

About Employment Matters

By Sandi Giles

Hate your job? Frustrated because you really can't tell anyone why? That was the question I posed in my last column and the responses are in.

Let me provide you with a little prologue to my opening. In my role as a technical staffing specialist, I see quite a few resumes each month. For the past few months, the number of resumes I've reviewed seems to have doubled and I've been wondering why. Of course, I ask each applicant with whom I talk why he/she is seeking a job change. For obvious reasons, I rarely hear the truth and that isn't surprising.

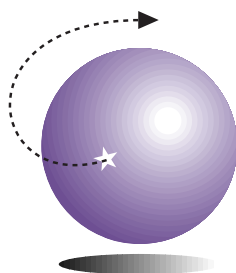
I wish there were some eye-opening surprises in this list, but there aren't. Perhaps at this time of year, people are looking for a fresh start. So, without further ado, here's the list:

Top Ten Reasons

1. I know I can make more money at another company.
2. I want to work with leading-edge tools like FrameMaker and RoboHelp.
3. My employer doesn't appreciate what I do; documentation is thought of as an afterthought. I want to work for a company that "gets it."
4. There is no opportunity for advancement in my current job.
5. I'm always working under impossible deadlines and work a lot of overtime. I'd like to have a life.
6. Overtime is the norm because we don't have sufficient help. I'd like to work for an employer who plans ahead (what a concept) and provides the necessary tools and human resources to produce documentation in a reasonable manner.
7. I would like to be a contractor; I like the idea of being my own boss and having variety.
8. I would like the security and benefits of a permanent position. I never know how long it will be between projects, which is too stressful for me.
9. I'm tired of writing about the same thing.
10. I just moved here.

In closing, I know as well as anyone how important it is to be satisfied with your work and to be happy in your working environment. Many of us spend most of our waking hours working, so we need to make it count.

Good luck to all of you and Happy New Year!



<http://www.write-connection.com>

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Web Site Redesign in 2000

by Elaine Randolph, Immediate Past President

Several times over the past two years, the OCSTC Web site team has talked about redesigning our pages, but we postponed this huge effort so that other work could take place, such as expanding the Employment area, obtaining our own domain name and moving to a new web hosting service, and automating online registration for monthly meetings with Active Server Pages. Now that we are in the new millennium, it's time to get started on a redesign that will better serve the chapter. In keeping with the spirit of usability, the Web team wants to gather information from you before we start our work. As a first step, we'd like to hold two focus groups before the end of February to determine what works and what we need to improve. The groups would critique the current site and look at several prototype designs for the new site.

If you use the OCSTC Web site on a regular basis and would like to participate in a focus group, send an e-mail message to Elaine Randolph at writetrack@compuserve.com. In the subject line, enter the words "Focus Group." I will contact the members who have expressed interest and schedule the meetings. Each group should last no longer than two hours.

(Curtailing Words, *continued from page 4*)

Before we start sprinkling acronyms across the page we must be sure our readers understand them, or define them for them.

Letter acronyms, like verbal weeds, speedily snuff out the expressions whence they came. Because we can pronounce them as words, we tend to lowercase them, throw out the points (if they were ever used), and forget the origins of the first letters. As a result, an acronym soon fully becomes a word, as legitimate as any other. And they enrich our language. Mnemonic acronyms, like NATO and NAFTA, greatly help us fix important events in our minds.

Constructions that do not form a pronounceable word are abbreviations, not acronyms. They have a fascinating history that reaches back to hieroglyphics in ancient Egypt. Modern examples are *AM* for amplitude modulation or *IF* for intermediate frequency or *DTP* for desktop publishing (some style guides insist on periods after each abbreviated word: *A.M.*).

Abbreviations and acronyms in superseding their spelled-out origins are often familiar to readers only in their shortened form. Most readers would surely trip over common expressions like *Anno Domini* (A.D.) and *frequency-modulated radiotelephony* (FM radio).

Few, if any, of the rules about hyphens, acronyms, and abbreviations are absolute. Volumes are written about them, with many experts arguing their preference for one form over another. It takes time, study, and experience for a writer to be confident about his or her own choices and to develop a sense about which form best helps to speed the reader along in a given medium. You certainly want to base your style choices on long, careful observation of superior communicators. I follow the advice of Rudolph Flesch when choosing between Anglicized forms and Latin abbreviations. For example, I usually swap *etc.* with *and so on*; *et. al.* with *and others*; and, *i.e.* with *that is*, except in formal documents.

Many technical writers and publication managers dismiss these subtleties of language as mere window dressing—not worth thinking about (translation: it's their weakness). Their concern is only with skills, application tools, and technical knowledge. But in-depth knowledge of our language is key wherever superior technical writing takes place, which we can all recognize and appreciate the moment we see it. When, how, and why we shorten words does affect the tone, quality, and effectiveness of the information we're trying to convey. The extent of our knowledge on subjects like these add a lot to the professional image of technical writers in general.

In sum, curtailing words is one more useful tool in the ever more unwieldy tool kit of the technical writer.

New Work Rules Continued

6. No talking is allowed during business hours.
7. The craving for tobacco, wine, or spirits is a human weakness, and as such is forbidden to all members of the clerical staff.
8. Now that the hours of business have been drastically reduced, the partaking of food is allowed between 11:30 and noon, but work will not on any account cease!
9. Members of the clerical staff will provide their own pens. A new sharpener is available on application to the supervisor.
10. The supervisor will nominate a senior clerk to be responsible for the cleanliness of the main office and the supervisor's private office. All boys and juniors will report to him 40 minutes before prayers and will remain after closing hours for similar work. Brushes, brooms, scrubbers, and soap are provided by the owners.
11. The owners recognize the generosity of the new labor laws, but will expect a great rise in output of work to compensate for these near Utopian conditions.

Upcoming Regional Events

"Plain Language in Progress" Conference

Host: Plain Language Consultants Network

February 25-27, 2000
Houston, Texas

Program:

Brushing up on fundamentals, Plain Language as a marketing tool

Developing and marketing your Plain Language business

New developments in Plain Language

Economics of Plain Language

Experiences in writing and rewriting regulations in Plain Language

Nova Scotia's Five-Year Plan

Plain Language design in all mediums

Carol Ann Wilson, PLIP
Conference Chair
8902 Sunnywood Dr.
Houston, Texas
77088-3729

(281) 600-6000 phone
(713) 462-7519 fax

Visit <http://plainlanguagenetwork.org/conferenceindex.html>



STC Region 7/8 Pan-Pacific Conference

October 19-21, 2000 Waikiki Beach, Honolulu, Hawaii
www.pan-pacific.org

Hawaii Calling

By Don Child, Senior Member, Aloha Chapter

Do you already have that aloha shirt or muu-muu packed for the STC Regions 7 and 8 Pan-Pacific Conference in Waikiki Beach, Honolulu, Hawaii? Do you find yourself staying up late to watch reruns of *Hawaii Five-0* and wishing it were already October 2000? If so, the next time you watch *Hawaii Five-0*, notice the hotel in the opening shot; it is the Ilikai Hotel, the hotel where the Pan-Pacific conference will be held.

The conference committee is very excited that we were able to reserve this famous Hawaiian landmark. The Ilikai Hotel is situated at the gateway to Waikiki. In one direction you can stroll the length of Waikiki Beach all the way to the famous Diamond Head crater. In the other direction, a short walk takes you to Magic Island (one of Honolulu's most popular local beaches) and the Ala Moana Shopping Center (one of the largest and most cosmopolitan malls in the state).

The Ilikai has excellent conference facilities for the opening and breakout sessions, vendor and job fair exhibits, and hands-on afternoon workshops. The hotel also has a business center, and every guestroom has a data port and cable modem, so you can handle your e-mail traffic and get back to the conference at lightning speed!

Reservation Information

The Ilikai Hotel is not only a great conference venue, it is also a great value. Reserve your hotel room by January 25 and get an ocean-view room for the city-view rate. That is only \$57.50 a night for double occupancy. So download the hotel reservation form from the conference Web site at: www.pan-pacific.org, fax it over by January 25, and make a difference in your career!

If you would like to help produce the conference or have other questions, contact Jack Molisani, our conference chair, at jack@ClarityTechnical.com.

If your company would like to reserve a booth in the job fair or exhibit halls, contact Michelle Maurer at michelle@tecstandards.com.

December Meeting Recap



Technical Writers are the Innovators

By June Lee

Bonni Graham of Manual Labour delivered an engaging and insightful presentation, "Psst! Wanna Buy Some Documentation?" at our December meeting. She introduced several marketing and sales principles and techniques applicable to the technical writing field, so we can create sales strategies customized for our individual situations. Although most technical writers avoid sales presentations for several reasons ranging from introversion to the poor reputation of the term "selling," life is nevertheless brimming with acts of persuasion and negotiation.

Geoffrey Moore developed a technology adoption bell curve comprised of these groups of people: innovators, early adopters, mainstream, mature, and declining market. Technical writers are innovators, who learn about the newest technologies and communicate our knowledge through technical documentation. When preparing your marketing plan, identify the decision-makers, so you can target your marketing plan and sales presentation. You want them to think of you as a colleague who manufactures business-enhancing products—technical documentation.

A market analysis, such as Features, Advantages, and Benefits (FAB), resembles an audience analysis. 1) Consider the features, the facts of the situation. 2) Explain the advantages, the logic of how documentation enhances business. 3) Discuss the benefits, the emotions that make the decision-maker commit.

When developing a sales pitch, spin quality documentation as a solution to common business problems. Benefits of better technical documentation include increased sales and lower technical support costs. When defining your product (the document itself and your services), specify your tasks, boundaries, and skills. When creating a sales presentation, strategically support your points with concrete, well-researched details.

June Lee is a technical/marketing communications writer at Extron Electronics located in Anaheim.

We Have Candidates!



By Elaine Regan,
Manager,
Nominating
Committee

Thanks to the diligence and dedication of the Nominating Committee and the dedication and generosity of our members, we can announce a slate of candidates for the Administrative Council and Nominating Committee for the 2000-2001 season.

The candidates are:

Administrative Council (one-year term)

President:

Mark Bloom (AKA Santa)

VP Programs:

Mary Ann Stacy

VP Membership:

Dennis Hanrahan, and Carla Nierlich

Secretary:

Marge Packman and Howard Goldman

Treasurer:

Anne Stratford and Bill DuBay

Nominating Committee (two-year term)

— Sandi Giles

— Marcia Couey

Thank you everyone, especially our current Administrative Council, who makes our chapter such a vibrant one that we can have a contested election. Our chapter is recognized by other chapters, for our willingness to volunteer and making our chapter one that is highly energetic, and is consistently beneficial to our members.

A special thanks goes out to our candidate members who considered running for office, and to the Nominating Committee members, Dan Dwyer, Chris Seraidaris, Doug Owens, and Sheila Vaughnn.

The election will be held in February 2000. Ballots will be mailed in January and must be postmarked by February 29, 2000.

(Cover Story, continued from page 1)

client review are incorporated when appropriate. Formatting and layout are completed and proofed. Graphic elements are adapted as necessary. Pre-press, proofs, and output are created on film, linotronic paper, or digital file and then checked carefully.

Editor's Corner

By Jill Eisenbach

Hello and Happy New Year!!! There are lots of exciting events taking place right in our own chapter. Have you found your niche yet? Did you find something you can do to give back to our chapter? Think about it, and get involved this year. December certainly was a busy month getting together this newsletter. Keep your eyes on upcoming newsletters, and features: What member is making the news in the musical world? Who submitted Region 8 reports and articles, and what are their comments? Who will be writing the next book review and on what book? Why do we technical writers continue to have the *Unfair Advantage*? And the list goes on. Please continue to send me your articles. I will get them published in a timely manner. I really appreciate your incredible work. Keep those articles coming in. Thank you very much.

Monthly meeting reminders online

Did you know that Mark Bloom sends out monthly e-mail reminders for our upcoming monthly meetings? He is concerned that he does not always have an updated member list. If you do not currently get this e-mail and want to get on the list, please send a note to Mark at: MHBloom@aol.com. He would appreciate it.



After reading Bill Darnall's piece on abbreviations, I thought that the subject needed some elaboration.

Often there is confusion about abbreviated forms. And I thought it might be fun to enlarge the subject a bit and discuss the problems in more detail. I tried to expand the subject matter sufficiently, so it wouldn't appear to be a repeat of the same article.

— David Fredericks, Senior Member, OCSTC

(*Editor's Note:* Please see David Fredericks' article, *Some Thoughts on Curtailing Words*, on page 4.)

These are the reasons that translation vendors are not merely "envelope exchangers." Giving a target language "transcription" means the client needs to give us the time to get the job done right. However complex the projects might be; whatever, whoever, and wherever the target audience is; allowing proper resources (time, space, and money) for translation will allow for success.

Upcoming Regional Events

"WinWriters Online Help Conference"

March 5-9, 2000
San Diego, CA

Program:

Developing a Customized HTML-Based Help Design

Helping Users Navigate a Windows Help System

Upgrading to RoboHELP HTML 2000 for HTML Help

Web Design Workshop

Best Practices for Designing Help with RoboHELP HTML 2000

How to Write Task Oriented Help

Using HomeSite as a Help Authoring Tool

Writing for the Web

Visit [http://](http://www.winwriters.com/)

www.winwriters.com/ohc/workshops.htm

