

Ragged Left

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

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**Volume 19, Number 2
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Meeting Notes

DITA, the Information Architecture for the Future

by Joe Devney

"What is the 'next big thing' in technical communication? What should the people in this room learn about now to keep ahead of the competition?" I asked Andrew Davis at an STC Berkeley chapter meeting earlier this year. Andrew, who founded his own staffing firm, was there to talk about career issues.

"DITA," he answered without hesitation.

DITA (pronounced "ditta") is the Darwin Information Typing Architecture, developed by IBM. Andrew's answer led to our featuring Erik Hennum of IBM, who has been closely involved with DITA, as the guest speaker for the chapter's June meeting.

Hennum explained that this architecture was developed as a way to manage technical publications' content using XML. As documentation sets grow larger and more complex, managing the content in each document becomes more important. Including all possible information in a document is "spamming" the user, he said. But trying to control which information goes where using a tool like Adobe FrameMaker can lead to "spaghetti conditioning," making it difficult to track the content and its variations. The DITA approach—structured information based on XML—tries to get around both of these problems. It adds semantic tagging and meaning to the information, so that topics can more easily be reused.

As with all XML (eXtensible Markup Language), the content is separated from format in DITA. The architecture uses three information types—concept, task, and reference—within a fourth type, topic. Writers concentrate on presenting the information in standalone topics, identified by the type of information they contain. A map manages the relationships between topics for a particular document. When an information architect designs a new document, the guidelines for building the document become rules to be enforced by DITA. For example, the guideline may say that a procedural step must always have a command verb.

DITA, while a very useful tool, is not appropriate for all technical publications departments. It has some technical drawbacks, for one thing. Hennum said that PDF output from DITA is not as good as you might get from HTML+help—but he also said that some contributors to the project are improving that aspect. Also, switching to a DITA approach can be a major project for a pubs department, because it involves new skill sets and new roles. It will also change the way writers work.

The implications of DITA for writers was an important issue for some of the audience members, and took up much of the question-and-answer session at the end of the presentation.

Hennum said that writers moving from an SGML or XML environment would have little problem in adapting. Others may need some adjustment. The writer no longer thinks in terms of formatting, or even of the overall

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STC Headquarters

901 N. Stuart Street #904
Arlington VA 22203-1854
(703) 522-4114
stc@stc.org
fax 703-522-2075

Executive Director: Susan Burton
susan@stc.org

Membership: Mary Kabza
mary@stc.org

STC President

Paula Berger
pres@stc.org

STC Region 8 Director

Beau Cain
ds8@stc.org

Chapter Officers and Volunteers

President: Richard Mateosian
president@stc-berkeley.org

VP Programs: Mary Ann Campbell
programs@stc-berkeley.org

VP Membership: Jim Dexter
membership@stc-berkeley.org

Secretary: Jim Dexter, acting
secretary@stc-berkeley.org

Treasurer: Open
treasurer@stc.berkeley.org

Employment: Caroline Scharf
employment@stc-berkeley.org

Public Relations: Jessica Livingston
publicrelations@stc-berkeley.org

Volunteers: Joe Devney
volunteers@stc-berkeley.org

Ragged Left

P.O. Box 1007
Berkeley CA 94701

Editor: Jennifer Abbott
newsletter@stc-berkeley.org

Other contacts

STC on the Internet: www.stc.org

Chapter Job List: employment@stc-berkeley.org

Address, phone, or email changes:
VP for Membership
membership@stc-berkeley.org

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, via mail or email.

- Send email to membership@stc-berkeley.org
- Send mail to Berkeley STC, PO Box 1007, Berkeley CA 94701-1007

INSURANCE 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. Upcoming annual conference: Minneapolis, May 13-16, 2007. 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
- AccessAbility
- Canadian Issues
- Consulting and Independent Contracting
- Emerging Technologies
- Environmental, Safety, and Health Communication
- Illustrators and Visual Designers
- Information Design and Architecture
- Instructional Design & Learning
- International Technical Communication
- Lone Writer
- Management
- Marketing Communication
- Online
- Policies and Procedures
- Quality and Process Improvement
- Scientific Communication
- Single Sourcing
- Technical Editing
- Usability & User Experience

STC sponsors research grants and scholarships in technical communication.

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. See page 7 for contacts for these chapters. See page 9 for a list of other local organizations in which STC members may be interested.

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 fifteenth of the preceding month.

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flow and organization of a document. Instead, the goal is to write “context-free” topics that can be easily reused. Hennum said that in practice, the context-free topics evolve over time. A writer works in a map for one document to write a topic. When that topic is reused by another writer in a different map, the second writer may need to modify the topic somewhat, so it is meaningful in both the original context and the new one. As this process is repeated, the topic becomes more and more context-free, more easily reused.

One audience member asked how to find content from existing documents that can be reused in a new document. Hennum recommended starting by using the maps created by the information architect. The map will direct you to the parts of each individual document that might have the content you need. The more sophisticated method of finding information for reuse is to use a content management system.

A final question: how does this work in a technical publications department on a day-to-day basis? Hennum said that each writer is assigned a “branch,” some subset of a big product. The writer is given a map for that branch to work from. The information architect creates the maps, both for the document as a whole and for each branch. The document is built up by combining the branches in accordance with the map.

For those who want to explore further, the IBM website is a good place to start (<http://www-128.ibm.com/developerworks/xml/library/x-dita1/>). And the DITA Open Toolkit is available from SourceForge (<http://dita-ot.sourceforge.net/>).

There is also an extensive article called *Subsetting and customizing DITA* at http://www.publishingsmarter.com/pages/teach/subset_dita/SubsetDITA_4000.html

Apple Documentation Highlighted

by Jan Jue

Documentation people “act as advocates for users,” a veteran Apple tech writer told the July meeting of the Berkeley Chapter. Sandy Korzenny, senior manager of Apple Product Documentation (APD), described the documentation process at Apple in her presentation, “Managing documentation under pressure: lessons from Apple Computer.” The APD group produces documentation for most Apple products, ranging from software such as iLife and iWork to hardware such as iPods and servers.

The Apple Product Documentation group is made up of illustrators, editors, graphic designers, project managers, and engineers, all of whom coordinate their efforts with its instructional designers. Two members of the documentation group attended Korzenny’s talk and also contributed their insights on the documentation process.

The APD group, said Korzenny, delivers its documentation through three main methods: onscreen help, PDFs, and print. Onscreen help includes an application’s user interface, help tags and dialog boxes, and help system—the largest part of the documentation for software products. PDFs are files created for help online, and print documentation may consist of user manuals, booklets, or “getting started” pieces. The documentation group primarily uses FileMaker and FrameMaker software to create its materials.

Korzenny cited three internal challenges that her group faces in producing documentation:

- *Rapid development cycles*
It can take about six months for a product to get to market after the documentation group first hears about it. “Confidentiality is a huge thing,” says Korzenny, so work may have to begin with only sketchy knowledge of a product.
- *Last-minute product changes*
The documentation group tries to make transparent the users’



transition from an application's help system to the online help containing the latest information. Once the "Golden Master" has been created, it takes about three weeks to "localize" the information into 27 languages, which adds to the complexity of last-minute changes.

- *Multiple influences on work*
The documentation group often must take into account marketing, legal, engineering, graphic design, localization, product design, packaging, industrial design, and AppleCare support aspects. For example, if marketing were to specify a smaller package, the documentation would have to be modified accordingly, perhaps changed from a printed user's guide to a smaller guide with PDF files.

Korzenny used an iLife '06 case study to "show how we innovate." Apple's new documentation had to be updated to describe changes made since iLife '05, including the major addition of iWeb. "The project goal was to get users to their answer quickly," said Korzenny. They started with iPhoto and then branched out to other products in iLife.

Through a series of eight help prototypes, Korzenny showed how layout, graphics, content, and the hierarchy of links were modified to make Help the "Info Hub" in iLife '06. The evolution of the prototypes showed how sometimes-subtle changes in placement, size, and color could be used to highlight top customer issues, to provide alternative ways to navigate, and to supply user tips and tricks.

Once they had an acceptable prototype, the APD group user-tested it. The users performed eight specified tasks using the help system and then answered questions on accessibility, presentation, and content. All users preferred the new system and found answers faster with it. But, for instance, some users found it confusing to distinguish between help available locally and that offered on Apple's web pages, so the shipping version of iLife '06 highlighted local information vs. Internet information.

Korzenny concluded by discussing the ongoing challenges in the documentation process:

- Getting people to seek help and also finding indirect ways to help them without their having to consciously look for the information.
- Automatically providing users with help related to the issue they're working on ("contextuality").
- Improving search capability, for example, making it possible to use common-sense equivalents rather than narrowly defined terms in searching for help.

Note: During the Q&A period Korzenny said that the recently updated Apple style guide is available on the Web. Each product also has its own style guide. Here's the link to the general style guide: <http://developer.apple.com/documentation/UserExperience/Conceptual/APStyleGuide/AppleStyleGuide2006.pdf>.

Intersection of Design and Communication

*Presentation by Lane Halley,
Cooper Interaction Design*

Report by Jennie Abbott

At the May 10, 2006 Berkeley STC meeting, Lane Halley explained what her job is (arguably a variation on the technical communicator theme) and what process they use at Cooper Interaction Design. At Cooper, small, multi-skilled teams combine the complementary skills of an Interaction Designer and a Design Communicator to develop a product design plan. The separate design team concept is based on the premise that neither users nor builders are best suited to design because the users don't know what can be done and the builders are too close to the code to be objective and open to new approaches.

The Interaction Designer has a concept of the interface, generates and judges ideas, and draws pictures and diagrams. The Design



Communicator guides the process, leads persona creation, tests ideas and helps them to be born, listens actively, focuses on details, and prefers writing.

At Cooper, Halley uses personas to determine an archetype of types of users based on specific behavior. (Dana E. Chisnell also discussed personas in the August 2005 meeting presentation *A New Level of Edit: Usability Evaluation by Channelling Personas.*) Their teams use these personas in their goal-directed, scalable process to develop a written specification. Starting with a specification before starting to build the product gets people off their ideas and onto the shared idea, and from there the plan can get more specific while all can see the implications of changes to the design.

Repeatable process:

- Qualitative research (interviews, literature)
- Modeling (synthesis of gathered information, analyze workflow, work environment)
- Requirements definition (objectives not methods: context scenarios)
- Framework definition (more detailed list of parts, relationship of elements, related tools)
- Design (increasing detail, visual design)
- Development support (ongoing iteration, updating design documents)

Halley also described the process of how they present their design documents to their clients, starting with the process itself, to the user and domain analysis, photos to illustrate and get buy-in before shaping the framework, forms behavior, and visual style guide.

She encouraged tech writers to try incorporating this type of process in our own workplaces and shared some tips on design meeting techniques.

Posture and Power: The Dynamic Use of Your Body at the Computer

Presentation by Ann Grassel

Notes on the presentation to the Berkeley STC by Jennie Abbott, 8/9/06

We all sat up straight in our chairs when Ann started talking about posture and showing us slides of hip bones and ribs and the various muscles that hold us upright. Ergonomics is the study of how the body works, and Ann's session explored how the body can support the work that we do.

The intent of how we sit should be to have the whole body supporting what we do at the computer, not just a few small muscles that can easily strain or squeeze our nerves. We all have heard that one way to avoid repetitive stress injury is to get up and walk around, and Ann expanded on the possibilities of movement by showing us how to position our bodies into sturdy foundations for rotation and movement while working -- and how to lean back and relax in the supportive environment of our chairs when not working. She teased that it's impossible to work and rest simultaneously, so to avoid arm-rests and wrist-rests and foot-rests and instead sit actively while working (typing and mousing). We should sit actively, tilted forward to make the most of our skeletal structure for support, and use our bigger muscles of the front of our bodies to hold us up rather than slouching and making the back muscles do all the work (and straining the neck to look up at the screen).

Which muscle does what?

You need to know which muscles do what so that you can use them deliberately:

The *transversus abdominis* (TA) muscle is like a rubber band around the waist (you should be able feel it when you pull your navel in toward your spine). The oblique (side) abdominal muscles cross and provide a lateral force and counter-balance allowing us

Continued on next page



to move the upper body while keeping the hips stable. Together, you can train these muscles to lengthen your spine and hold you upright. Ann explained how people usually use their *psoas* muscles (which connect from the spine around to the front of the thigh bone) instead of the TA, which in turn pulls on the low back, encouraging it to flatten, which in turn shortens the hamstring, which in turn over-arches the back so the *gluteal* muscles can't work. Tight *psoas* or *piriformis* muscles (the muscle that rotates your leg in its socket, and through which the sciatic nerve goes) can pinch nerves and cause pain, aching, or surrounding tightness. Sitting with your feet tucked under your chair also shortens hamstrings which leads to the back arching so that you decide to use a back support -- which further shortens the hamstring and *psoas* as you sit with supported, over-arched back.

Take control from the *psoas* so all the muscles can "play nice" together: lengthen and decompress the vertebrae to then use all the muscles equally to hold you up--and to move while you work!

How to sit

Set up a posture support system with the base of your spine against the back of the chair as a base for your seated position, so that the seat will support your efforts to lean forward from the hips. Tilt your chair down in front, or use a wedge or towel, to help keep your position actively forward. If the chair is lower, the tendency is to lean back. You should be able to lean your upper body (from the waist) in a circle around the "sit bones" (the base of your pelvis, the bones you sit on).

To get into a good neutral-spine position (and make sitting at your desk a workout), do an upright ab crunch (same as you would do on the floor), rounding the spine and pulling the navel in, then pulling up from the breastbone, lengthening the abdominals and spine, reaching forward and up. From this extension, find neutral (in between rounded and arched). Rest into neutral from length rather than dragging yourself up to neutral from a slouch.

Keep your feet forward, either directly under your knees (so knees bend at a 90-degree angle) or further forward, because if you tuck your feet under your chair, it shortens your ham strings at the back of your legs, which in turn causes the *psoas* muscle to pull on the lower back. You should have some weight on your feet, partly as part of your foundation for sitting up, and partly to remind you where your feet are!

Don't work with your arms resting because that prevents the body from supporting the arm and wrist movement.

To sit back:

1. Lengthen and hold tone and alignment in your middle body as you lean back from the waist.
2. Relax and breathe.

Seated abdominal workout

Practice from the front of your chair, doing "laybacks" or posterior curls: Sit near the front of your chair and slowly round your spine from the tailbone up, drawing in your navel and curving your spine into a tight "C" shape, and then unfurling upright. Repeat a few times and you'll probably feel your abs burning! Easier than going to the gym, and great for your body and posture.

Remember: There is no one correct seated position: You need to move!

Work environment parameters

Your work environment should support you achieving and maintaining a neutral position, where your back is not arched or tucked, but lengthened and working in concert with the other muscles of your core (the middle part of your body, from thighs through ribs).

Your forehead should be at the level of the top of your screen to ensure that you don't strain your neck looking up at the monitor; in addition, that screen position supports your neutral, upright position.

Chairs

Select a chair that you can easily adjust so that height and position encourage forward alignment. If you don't have just the right



chair, you can supplement with a wedge or a folded towel for height and tilt. When you sit, your hips should be just higher than your knees, and the backs of your knees should not touch the front of the chair seat. Your feet should be flat on the floor, definitely not with the toes up, because that pressure ripples through your entire posture counteracting the forward alignment and pushing you back into a slouch.

Chair models change and are expensive, so the most important thing is to know how to adjust your chair. Look for these characteristics:

- Foam seat (if you press your fist into the cushion in the showroom, it should not reach the frame of the chair), but not so soft that there is no support for the pelvic floor when you sit
- Adjustable forward tilt
- Straight back that adjusts forward, drop-down for sacral support, as high as your shoulders (for when you relax back from active work)
- No arms, unless they can move out of the way

Not all expensive, “ergonomic” chairs are equal. You need to inform yourself as a consumer and to know what neutral feels like for your own body so you can select a chair that works for you.

Ann recommends the Soma chair and Hag chair, but still insists that you try them out and choose carefully based on your body's needs.

Mouse

Finger grooves are good; the mouse should not be too small. Track balls are good as long as you move your arm and wrist too (no resting!).

Mouse actively! Hold your hand on the mouse and rotate the upper body while you work.

Keyboard

Ideally, you should have your keyboard at a negative tilt just two inches above your knees. This keeps your hands

forward and down so the body doesn't lean back to have the hands up. Ann advises

against the “90-90” degrees for arms in a seated, typing position because it is not sustainable: our arms get tired and sink down to the wrist-rests or else we compensate with the upper body to keep them elevated. Type from the shoulders, not resting on wrists or arms. [Did she say what to do if we can't have this keyboard position?]

Laptops

Place the screen at the correct height for you, and use an external keyboard and mouse.

Tips

Integrate stretching, breathing, toning, and strengthening programs into everyday activities and discover whether your environment supports the changes you are making in your body.

Keep moving! Even if you are seated for hours, you can move in your chair. Lean from side to side (to remind your muscles what they can do, and keep them interested), sit actively while working and deliberately lean back to relax while reading or thinking.

Breathe! Inhale into your lungs in the upper ribs, into the collar bone and back as well as the diaphragm so that expansion and air supports your posture and dynamic movement.

Don't wait! If any symptoms arise (numbness, pain, etc.) intervene immediately.

Think about maintaining tone and spreading the work out over the whole body.

Anne's website <http://www.thepowerboard.com/> includes an article on posture and power.

Other STC chapters in Northern California

East Bay: <http://www.ebstc.org/>

North Bay: www.stc-northbay.org/

Sacramento: www.stcsacramento.org/

San Francisco: www.stc-sf.org/

Silicon Valley: www.stc-siliconvalley.org/



Outgoing President's Letter

Say Hello

by Joe Devney

Things are changing a bit for STC Berkeley. The annual chapter election brings some new faces to the chapter leadership, those people who work, sometimes behind the scenes, to make the decisions and provide the guidance that help the chapter work.

Richard Mateosian is the new chapter president. Richard has been active in the chapter for a long time, and served two terms as president during the 1990s. He brings a wealth of experience, not only with STC Berkeley, but with STC NorCal, the loose organization of chapters located in Northern California; with the Touchstone competition and last year's technical communication competition sponsored by our chapter; with STC's Management SIG; and with the Gordon Scholarship Fund. He probably also has other items on his STC résumé that I don't know about.

Our new VP for Programs, **Mary Ann Campbell**, is a chapter member we lost for quite a while, as her career took different turns. But she rejoined STC and the Berkeley chapter last year, and I encouraged her to run for office. Mary Ann's background in management and her interest in re-exploring the field of technical communication make her a good fit for the office.

Our other vice-president, VP for Membership **Jim Dexter**, is already a familiar face in the chapter. Jim will be starting his second full term as VP – he took over the position midway through the term a couple of years ago. Jim is also our Webmaster, and has devoted his energies to the chapter in other ways. And like Richard, he is at nearly every chapter meeting, keeping the guest speakers on their toes with audience questions.

Incoming Secretary **Tony Rocco** is a newcomer. He attended a chapter meeting earlier this year, and had a job opening to announce: they needed another tech writer where he worked. As it happened, I took the job, and got to know Tony at the workplace.

I invited him to run for chapter office, and I am pleased that he said yes.

Now a request for you. That is the entire slate, but we have fifth elected office. We still need a chapter Treasurer. This particular office is a bit difficult to fill: we are looking for a "numbers person" in a population of mostly "word people." If you are one of those rare birds, and could take on a position of responsibility within the chapter, please talk to me or to Richard. The current chapter president can always be reached at: president@stc-berkeley.org.

As for me...

You may have noticed that my name is not on the list. After three terms as chapter president, I am stepping down. I will go back to being just a "regular" chapter member, enjoying the company and education at chapter meetings.

My goal for my first term as president was to focus on helping our chapter members find work: I took over the office during the tech downturn. In the second term I reached out to other local writers' organizations, especially the Northern California chapter of the American Medical Writers' Association and the San Francisco chapter of the International Association of Business

Communicators. In my third term I tried to raise the chapter's profile within and outside of STC. I hope I contributed to the success of the chapter in at least one of these ways. The new president will have his own goals, and I ask that you support him in reaching them. And I hope to see you at future chapter meetings.

Announcements

New Editor For Ragged Left

Jennifer Abbott is serving as the new editor for the *Ragged Left*. Jennifer has been working as a technical writer in Alameda since 1997, and her hobbies include travel, websites, singing, and online zines. She welcomes contributions to *Ragged Left* at any time.

Ragged Left editor Jennifer Abbott can be reached at: newsletter@stc-berkeley.org



Incoming President's Letter

Richard Returns to the Helm

Our election is behind us. Last year's elected officers, Joe Devney, Jim Dexter, Valerie Steele, Ben Lukas, and Eunice Malley, were a great team to work with. So were the volunteers who filled appointed positions or helped in other ways, Mary Ann Campbell, Deborah Del Mazo, Jessica Livingston, Jean Lundquist, Kim Rathbun, Tony Rocco, Caroline Scharf, and Linda Urban. I've probably forgotten someone. Please forgive me.

Now we have a new team of volunteers -- some of the same names as before and some new names as well. But we never have enough volunteers. There is so much more that we could do.

I served as president of this chapter for two years in 1995-97. I ran again because the chapter faces new challenges. I know that candidate statements are usually better forgotten after the election, but I wish to reiterate portions of mine:

The new realities of STC and the globalization of our industry are challenges to our chapter. The new president must help our chapter survive those challenges, while preserving the unique personality that we have developed in our 20 years of existence. Meeting our challenges requires good relationships and collaboration with other organizations. Maintaining our personality requires a connection to our past. The connection to our past is important. It gives us an anchor. We have many long time members who have not participated much of late. We surely can use their help.

Our challenges are different from the ones we faced in the past. I know that someone reading this article has faced similar challenges and has good ideas about how to proceed. Come join us. If you want to join the team, please send me email at xrm@pacbell.net.

Other Organizations

American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) of Northern California. Meets periodically at various Bay Area locations. <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. <http://www.asindexing.org/site/chapters.shtml#golden>

Association for Women in Computing, San Francisco Bay Area chapter
<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.
<http://www.nwu.org>

Northern California Science Writers' Association. Quarterly meetings and other events.
<http://www.ncswa.org>



Meetings

Our chapter holds a dinner meeting the second Wednesday of each month at the Shattuck Plaza Hotel, 2086 Allston Way, just west of Shattuck Avenue in Berkeley. The Hotel is across the street from the BART station at Allston and Shattuck.

The advance-order price for dinner and meeting is \$18 for members, \$15 for student members and \$21 for non-members. For those attending the meeting only, the cost is \$12 for members and non-members, \$10 for students. If you do not reserve in advance, dinner may or may not be available, as we order dinner based on the number of reservations.

Meeting Agenda

- 6:00 Check-in, networking, and conversation.
- 6:30 Dinner.
- 7:15 Chapter business and announcements. Anyone can announce jobs that they know about.*
- 7:30 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 Conversation, offline questions for the speaker, follow-up on job announcements
- 9:00 Clear the room. Move conversations to the sidewalk.

* **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.

Berkeley STC Meeting Location and Directions

Give the following address to your favorite mapping program:

2086 Allston Way, Berkeley, CA 94704

By BART

Get off at the downtown Berkeley station (Richmond line). Emerge from the west side of the Downtown Berkeley BART station. Walk south on Shattuck one block to Allston Way and turn right.

By Car

From north of Berkeley on I-80, take the University Avenue exit (east). Turn right on Shattuck Avenue. Allston Way is three blocks south.

From south of Berkeley, take 880 north from San Jose. Continue through Oakland on 880. Follow the highway as it curves sharply to the right (where traffic merges in) and becomes 980. Continue on 980 to Highway 24 (toward Berkeley and Walnut Creek). Take the first exit from 24 (Martin Luther King Jr./51st). Turn right on 51st and make an immediate left onto Shattuck. Proceed north on Shattuck 2.3 miles to downtown Berkeley. Allston Way is immediately before the BART station.

Parking

The nearest lot is on Oxford, between Kitteredged and Allston. Flat rate of \$4.00 for the evening (subject to change -- not under our control).

Street parking is scarce, but free after 6:00 p.m.



Walking to your car or BART?

We can't guarantee you an escort, but we'll try.



Technical Writer Ranks High Among Best Jobs in America

By Patrick Lufkin

Money magazine has ranked technical writer high among the best jobs in America. Of 216 jobs reported on, technical writer ranked 13. Several other technical communication specialties also did well: curriculum developer (18), editor (19), and just plain writer (25).

As vocations go in America, technical writing does very well. The magazine found that 50 percent of technical writers make more than \$57,230 per year and that 5 percent make more than \$95,538. Projected 10 year job growth for the field was 23.22 percent.

Technical writing also did well when given letter grades on the basis of job satisfaction criteria: stress (B), flexibility (B), creativity (B), and difficulty (C).

The job of software engineer topped the list based on strong growth prospects, high average pay (\$80,500) and potential for creativity. College professors placed second, based on a variety of factors including compensation, flexibility, creativity, low number of work hours, and high number of vacation days.

The study was conducted by Money magazine, published by Time Inc., and Salary.com, compensation experts based in Needham, Massachusetts. Starting with data on some 250 job fields from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and salary data from Salary.com, they eliminated job fields with low pay, a small employment base, dangerous work environments, or few openings.

They followed up with online surveys to 26,000 people to rank the remaining job fields based on a number of job satisfaction criteria, including stress levels, flexibility in hours and working environment, creativity, and ease of entry and advancement. Finally the positions were ranked, with double

weight given to compensation and projected growth rates.

The findings were released on the Internet on April 12, and appeared in Money's May issue. Details can be found at CNNMoney, the online home of Money magazine. Go to <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/bestjobs/> and follow the links.

Patrick Lufkin is past-president of the San Francisco STC, and Chair of the Kenneth M. Gordon Scholarship for Technical Communication.