

**ATTW****BULLETIN**

## MESSAGE FROM THE ATTW PRESIDENT: On Transitions

*Bill Karis, Clarkson University*

In October 2001, I was fortunate to be an invited speaker at the annual Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication conference. I took that occasion to speak about some of the generational changes or "transitions" that I'd seen during my career. In part, I wanted to remind my audience that these important transitions are always occurring and constantly re-shaping our field, however unconscious we might be of them in our day-to-day routines.

That evening, I also challenged the audience to look for opportunities to assist the next generation of scholars to find ways and opportunities to contribute to the profession. While I believe that is occurring within CPTSC, I'm particularly pleased to note that it is also evident in our own organization, perhaps most obviously in our newest collection of ATTW Members-at-Large: Brent Faber (Clarkson University), Bill Hart-Davidson (Michigan State University), and Michelle Simmons (Miami University). I'm excited and confident that these folks and others will continue and expand upon the good work that others have begun.

At the same time, I want you all to know that ATTW is blessed to have an extraordinary and experienced "backstage crew" in people like our Treasurer, Ann Blakeslee (Eastern Michigan University), our Secretary, Brenda Sims (University of North Texas) and our primary fundraiser for the annual conference, Teresa Hunt (Northern Michigan University). They and others in organizational roles provide invaluable service to ATTW members.

You can expect to see some other transitions on the horizon. An *ad hoc* committee has been studying and

Call for Proposals

**ATTW**  
**2006 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22-CHICAGO, IL**

***Conference Theme:***  
***Technology as Text***

Proposals Due: October 28, 2005

Submit proposals for regular sessions via the ATTW website at <http://www.attw.org>.

*(see p. 4 for more information)*

will soon be offering suggestions to the executive committee about an updated and revised ATTW website. Also, our membership committee chair, Sean Williams (Clemson University) has, at my request, been exploring some additional strategies for boosting our membership.

In closing, I encourage you to join us in Chicago for our 2006 annual conference. It will provide us important opportunities to converse and share ideas about our organization's and the field's future. I wish you all the best for a successful academic year - see you in Chicago.

## Web-based translators in the tech comm classroom: What use are they?

Lee Tesdell, Minnesota State University Mankato

What should I do? As an instructor of technical communication at a public university, I am faced with a challenge: I know that I have a professional obligation to introduce my students to international technical communication in general and to localization/translation specifically. On the other hand, many of my students have minimal language study experience, minimal concern with the rest of the world, and have not traveled much outside of the U. S.

We are nevertheless charged with preparing our students for jobs in the international technical communication workforce. What Susan Hackett writes about the software industry applies to other technical communication workplaces as well, "As more and more companies expand to global markets, software professionals need to know how to work with translators and how to write for audiences that are non-native speakers of English." (See <http://www.epictrends.com/resources/localization/Think%20globally.shtml>)

What can we teach our students that helps prepare them for the international technical communication workplace? One excellent suggestion, as Maylath has written about, is to teach our technical communication students how to prepare documents for translation (Maylath and Thrush, 1997). Certainly this is one excellent suggestion. Moreover, preparing students to understand the rhetorical underpinnings of localization is equally important.

Clearly poor localization can lead to serious mistakes in cross-cultural communication. For example, in an audio news clip from Iraq I heard US troops playing a taped set of instructions to Iraqi civilians. The voice was that of an Egyptian woman speaking in her Egyptian dialect. Typically classical Arabic spoken by a male voice is the preferred form of Arabic in such situations. Since Cairo is the "Hollywood" of the Arab world, most Arab television viewers associate the Egyptian dialect with sitcoms and movies. The US forces in that instance had based critical communication with the Iraqi civilians on a faulty localization strategy.

What tools are available to us? Weiss (in Lovitt and Goswami, 1999) writes that we instructors should harness the resource of international students on our campuses. Indeed, I am on a campus of 14,000 students with more than 500 international students from 71 countries. I have worked with students from Nepal, Somalia, Pakistan, Malaysia, China, Palestine, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. I have invited international students in my courses to help

my students to understand localization issues. In addition we have US students studying languages. We offer undergraduate minors in French, German, and Spanish. In addition, courses in Swedish and Norwegian are available.

I have taken some students on a field trip to a translation/localization firm to hear their professionals describe the process they follow to localize technical documents. But this is not practical every semester.

What does the Internet offer us? Laura K. Lawless, a professional French instructor and translator, describes web-based online translators as teaching tools for meeting student needs more effectively in her project description "Online Translation—French Class Project" (See <http://french.about.com/od/teachingresources/a/autotranslation.htm>.)

To get feedback on the use of web-based translating software from a language teacher, I turned to a colleague and asked him to do the following:

- Choose a sentence in English. Use each of the five translators above to first translate it into French.

*Note:* The following is the English sentence that my colleague used to test each of the web-based translators:

"If a business doubles its production without increasing its production costs proportionally, there is economy of scale because the per-unit production cost has decreased."

Correct translation:

« Si une entreprise double sa production sans augmenter proportionnellement ses coûts de production, il y a économie d'échelle parce que le coût de production unitaire a diminué. »

- Then back-translate the text into English using the same five translators.
- Make a table in which you enter the original text, the translation, and the back-translated text.
- Make brief comments on each translator and rank them according to accuracy.

My colleague had this reaction: "All the machine-generated translations contain errors in syntax, vocabulary, and article usage. The most serious vocabulary error is the use of "affaires" (the correct translation of "business" as an abstract concept) rather

than “une entreprise” (a business or a company). In addition, all the translators misplaced the adverb “proportionnellement” and failed to render the adjective “per-unit” correctly. Similarly, all the translators failed to omit the article (as required idiomatically) in their rendering of “there is economy of scale”). The paralink.com site had the best syntax and grammar and would have been ranked best overall had it used “coût de production” instead of “prix de production” – a surprising, very basic vocabulary error.”

He went on to explain, “On the other hand, accuracy of verb choice (doubler, augmente, diminuer) was very good in all the translations, as was translation of the technical term ‘economy of scale.’”

He also uses web-based translators in his classes: “Use of on-line translators is a topic we discuss in my Business French class. We do a translation-retranslation exercise similar to this one using a 500-word newspaper article. My caveat to the students is always this: on-line translators are most useful for referencing vocabulary but always produce syntax and grammar errors of varying severity. Therefore they should never be used as the sole source of translation. Ironically, machine translators are most useful to those who already have an advanced knowledge of the foreign language and the ability to detect (and correct) errors in syntax and grammar.”

While we know that web-based translators are of questionable accuracy, they may nevertheless be useful as teaching tools for technical communication students. When used in conjunction with human translators in technical communication assignments, web-based translators can help undergraduate students with little exposure to translation/localization of technical documents to understand some of the issues in international technical communication. I also have learned that “learning by doing” is often an effective pedagogical style. The following is an exercise that I have been assigning to my students for at least five years.

### Bilingual instruction assignment

*To the student:* You will use online translators for this exercise. You will also work face-to-face with a human translator.

- Use these web-based translators:

<http://world.altavista.com/>  
<http://translation2.paralink.com/>  
[http://www.worldlingo.com/products\\_services/worldlingo\\_translator.html](http://www.worldlingo.com/products_services/worldlingo_translator.html)  
<http://www.freetranslation.com/>  
<http://www.systransoft.com/>

- Take the “Numbered Steps” text from your *Instruction Sheet* assignment (*Note:* This is an assignment students have previously completed) and translate it into a

language you have studied. Choose a language for which you can find a colleague who can help you complete the assignment. Try to work with a native speaker of that language. Use each of the five web-based translators.

- Back-translate the text into English. Make a table in which you enter the original text, the translation, and the back-translated text.
- Then write a 200-word response to this exercise in which you discuss your procedure, your comparison of each of the translators (rank them from best to worst), and the evaluation by a person who reads that language. Research the type of technology that the web-based translator uses to translate and include that in your report. Include the name and email address of the international partner that you worked with.

Based on my years of experience with students completing my bilingual instruction assignment, their feedback and my own observations, and the observations of other professionals such as my colleague who teaches French, I conclude that these outcomes are possible: (1) despite their inaccuracy, online translators are useful in the technical communication classroom, (2) students learn that web-based translators are useful only if used in appropriate settings, and (3) web-based translators help expose students to issues in the international technical communication workplace.

A note of thanks to Dr. Bowles of Iowa State University’s Department of Foreign Language and Literature for his insights into web-based translators.

### Suggested Readings

Bond, Francis, *Toward a Science of Machine Translation*, <<http://utrecht.elsnet.org/roadmap/docs/tmi2002-bond.pdf>>

Gikandi, David, *Online Translation Services and How to Choose the Right One*, <<http://www.4hb.com/communicate/0260onlinetranschose.html>>

Hoft, Nancy, *International Technical Communication: How to export information about high technology*, 1995. See chapter 8 on Translation.

Hutchins, John, *Machine translation (computer-based translation)*, <<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/WJHutchins/>>

Lu, Xiaofe, *Machine Translation, Linguistics 384* <<http://www.ling.ohio-state.edu/~xflu/384/slides/mt-slides-4up.pdf>>

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## Call for Papers

### *Association of Teachers of Technical Writing 9th Annual Conference*

Proposals due: October 28, 2005

Wednesday, March 22, 2006, 8:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
In conjunction with the 2006 CCCC Annual Convention  
(March 22-25)  
Chicago, Illinois

### **Texts/Technology**

ATTW invites proposals for papers, panels, and poster presentations to be given at its annual conference immediately preceding the CCCC. The full-day event includes concurrent sessions, poster presentations, book exhibits, and opportunities for exchanging ideas, working on projects, and networking in a supportive and challenging academic environment.

### **Conference theme: Technology as Text**

This year's conference will explore our field's unique relationships with technology. We will explore and examine new research, teaching methods, workplace practices, and administrative activities that inform and teach us about new, current, and past technologies. The goal of these presentations will be to help us better understand and practice technical communication and communication in scientific, professional, and workplace contexts.

### **Inform, Teach, Critique**

We challenge participants to create presentations that will inform the field about new communication technologies and at the same time interrogate these technologies for their social, ethical, technical, practical, environmental, or material implications. Rather than look to tutorials or demonstrations, we are seeking robust studies, explorations, and research partnerships that engage subjects on several levels and demonstrate new ways to study and report on the technologies that we invent, use, and are subject to in workplace, academic, and daily practices.

### **Potential Topics**

Some particular areas of interest include (but are not limited to) research that examines,

- the implications, challenges, and rewards a specific technology brings to communication practices,
- connections between technological and theoretical knowledge building,
- relationships of our own technology learning to the practice of scholarship: what does mastering a new technology, or creating new technology, constitute in terms of our scholarly, intellectual enterprise?

- presentations that teach and interrogate a specific technology,
- the social values associated with specific communication technologies including the economic value, ethical implications, and value added of communication technologies,
- pedagogies that enable students to engage, address, and use communication technologies
- research methods that the field can use to examine and understand new, current, and past communication technologies.
- investigations into the social contexts in which technologies are implemented and used.

Proposals, limited to 200 words, are due October 28, 2005.

We offer two general formats:

*Regular Sessions:* 15 minute talks within 45-minute panel presentations. We will give presenters the opportunity to post copies of their presentation or paper at the ATTW Conference site approximately two weeks before the conference.

*Poster Presentations:* We will include opportunities for posters (3'x4') to be presented throughout the day with special times dedicated for conversations and specific discussions regarding this work.

Submit proposals for regular sessions via the ATTW website at <http://www.attw.org>. Connect to the site, register (or enter your password), then follow the links for conference paper submissions.

All proposals will be peer reviewed.

*Workshop Sessions:* We will make room for two 90-minute workshops as an alternative to panels of speakers. Workshops might focus on pedagogical issues, strategies for working with external partners, consulting, or research issues. Please submit workshop proposals directly to Brenton Faber at Clarkson University ([faber@clarkson.edu](mailto:faber@clarkson.edu)).

Registration and updates will also be available on ATTW's e-mail discussion list (ATTW-L) and web site ([www.attw.org](http://www.attw.org)).

For additional information, contact Brenton Faber at Clarkson University ([faber@clarkson.edu](mailto:faber@clarkson.edu)) or Bill Karis at Clarkson University ([karis@clarkson.edu](mailto:karis@clarkson.edu)).

## Online Graduate Certificate Program at BGSU

Bowling Green State University's Scientific and Technical Communication Program is taking applications for its new, 12-hour Online Graduate Certificate Program in International Scientific and Technical Communication beginning May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Aimed at an audience of working professionals, this new program provides a distance education opportunity to learn advanced theoretical and practical approaches to

- composing documents and other information products for local and global translation;
- writing collaboratively online in increasingly more diverse virtual workspaces;
- developing best practices for new online writing workspaces that are informed by current technical communication research.

International technical communication has traditionally focused on developing both the awareness and the skills necessary to understand how cultural difference affects communication in various technical contexts and to plan for and design documents that meet the needs of both culturally-diverse and culturally-specific audiences. Although our certificate program relies to some extent on this traditional approach, significant emphasis will also be placed on the growing awareness within technical communication research that generalizing about particular cultures can reinforce cultural stereotypes that obstruct communication rather than facilitate it. Thus, our certificate program also emphasizes the need for technical communicators to understand that (1) every communication situation is context-specific, (2) although context includes culture, cultures do not communicate with each other, individuals do, (3) the culture that frames individual international communication situations is actually a "hybrid" or "transaction" culture that is constructed by the participants as they interact and negotiate their cultural differences. Our certificate prepares professionals to function in the global workplace by instructing them in how to apply both knowledge about culture and knowledge about negotiating cultural difference in individual communication contexts.

This 12-hour graduate certificate can be earned in one calendar year. For more information, visit the BGSU Continuing and Extended Education website: [http://ideal.bgsu.edu/template\\_degrees/IST\\_certificate/index.php](http://ideal.bgsu.edu/template_degrees/IST_certificate/index.php) or contact Dr. Jude Edminster, S & TC Program, (419) 372-0536 [jedmins@bgsu.edu](mailto:jedmins@bgsu.edu) or Dr. Thomas Wymer, Graduate Coordinator, English Department, (419) 372-6864.

### Maxwell C. Weiner Distinguished Professorship for the Humanities

The University of Missouri-Rolla is pleased to invite inquiries for a visiting position, the Maxwell C. Weiner Distinguished Professorship for the Humanities. The Weiner Professor should be a senior scholar (associate professor or higher) in the humanities, and the fields of rhetoric, technical communication, and professional writing are desirable. The Weiner scholar's duties include teaching one course and presenting one public lecture, plus faculty interaction. Generous compensation is provided. Either fall or spring in the 2006-07 academic year is acceptable.

Please direct inquiries to Larry Vonalt, Chair of the Department of English and Technical Communication, HSS 236, University of Missouri-Rolla, Rolla MO 65409. Telephone inquiries to 573.341.4687 and by email, [lvonalt@umr.edu](mailto:lvonalt@umr.edu), are also welcome.

## Textbooks for Business and Technical Writing Courses

Patricia Goleman, *University of Houston-Downtown*

Those of us involved in teaching the survey course in business and technical writing—one which encompasses a wide range of documents—frequently wonder if we are using the best textbook for our purposes. In an effort to evaluate several and recommend one for use in our 50+ sections of this course each semester, our Professional Writing faculty reviewed more than ten of the many texts on the market last year. We considered our student body demographics and the requirements of our upper-level course: seven documents of varying length including at minimum a resume, letter, memo, proposal, progress report, long report (10 pages minimum), and instructions. From the ten texts we examined, three have been selected for this review. Depending on the focus you have for your version of this course, one of these may well provide what you need. This review will cover the text itself, ancillary material provided or available, and other pertinent information. A chart summarizing the analysis will be appended to the review, and the books will be examined in these basic categories:

- Teaching and learning support: teacher's guide, web site, style guide
- Coverage of documents: resume, job letter, memo, proposal, progress report, formal report, instructions
- Format and approach: writing style, graphics, layout, organization
- Intercultural information: quantity and quality
- Adaptability to online version of course
- Price

The books:

- Deborah Andrews, *Technical Communication in the Global Community*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Prentice Hall, 2001
- Dan Jones, Karen Lane, *Technical Communication: Strategies for College and the Workplace*, Longman, 2002,
- Mike Markel, *Technical Communication*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed, Bedford St. Martin's, 2004

### Teaching and Learning Support

Depending on your teaching style, you may use some of these items more than others. For example, some of us don't use the teacher's guide but do want a good web site for additional information, links to other sources, and exercises. Those who are newer to the classroom, however, may find the teacher's guide invaluable. The usefulness of the style guide comes down to how much the individual student will consult it, but certainly having it available requires less effort for the student, provided the guide is current and gives

many examples. The online style guides available to students on the Internet are free, current, and complete, however. One site, the Landmarks Citation Machine (<http://citationmachine.net/>), will create the appropriate text and bibliographic citations for all major style sheets from information entered by the student.

### Andrews:

*Teacher's Guide:* No teacher's guide as such is provided, but a "faculty module, which includes presentation graphics and an instructor's manual" is allegedly on the web site; however, I could not find it.

*Web Site:* The web site is very good and is free. It can easily serve as the teacher's guide, with learning objectives, online quizzes and case studies for each chapter, as well as sample documents and "communication tools," links to sites giving help with online communication and collaboration. The online quizzes (multiple choice, fill in the blank, or essay questions) are graded (including explanations of the correct answers) and can be forwarded to the instructor, a TA, or the student. This is also true of the case studies.

*Style Guide:* No style guide is included in the text but chapter 5, "Collecting Information from Documents," has links to style guides already on line as well as other help for research projects. Instead, Andrews includes a chapter on "Articles and Reviews of Literature," explaining what they are and how to create them, along with providing examples. This chapter could guide a proficient student through publication of an article or review. Coupled with the chapter on oral presentations, this book provides an excellent guide to publication and presentation basics.

### Jones/Lane:

*Teacher's Guide:* The instructor's manual is larger than the textbook. It has a chapter for every chapter in the text giving the learning objectives, a summary and teaching notes, key points, activities and assignments, a lesson plan, suggested preparation for teaching, a list of in-class activities, and suggested assignments. A new teacher or an experienced teacher wanting other ideas would find this information very helpful.

*Web Site:* The web site is free and similar to the Andrews site, with the same kind of information, multiple choice quizzes, and links. It also provides a "cyber library" and a set of power point slides for each chapter for the professor to use. Some of the links do not connect with what is indicated. For example, one connects to a journal which does not contain a template for a health plan letter of complaint, probably because that issue is now gone.

*Style Guide:* The text has three appendices: "Mechanics of Good Prose," "Grammar Issues," and "Documentation Styles." The ten-page style guide has entries for MLA, Turabian, APA, IEEE, and CBE, so is not complete but probably covers most entries students will need.

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**Markel:**

*Teacher's Guide:* Not as such; see below.

*Web Site:* The web site has many teaching resources on it, including sample syllabi, chapter summaries, powerpoint slides of the "main bullet lists in the book," transparency masters for key graphics from the book, quizzes, answers to questions in book, a web CT feature, and a Blackboard.

*Style Guide:* A "Reference Handbook" – an appendix – has information from APA, CBE, and MLA style sheets, as well as proofreading symbols, editing information, and commonly misused words.

**Coverage of Documents**

Our business writing course must prepare our graduates from all majors to write documents in many fields. We require all sections to include the seven documents, listed below, which one hopes the student can write in their chosen area of expertise. Some sections of this course are taught on-line, which makes sample documents and clear instructions even more important.

**Andrews:**

*Resume:* "The Job Search" chapter includes an excellent presentation of the job search process itself, composing a traditional resume and an electronic resume, and writing associated letters (application, interview thanks, acceptance, and refusal). The online destinations provided are a career resource center, a job search guide from Florida State's MBA placement office, and an online handbook for writing letters for the job search including samples in different formats.

*Letter:* A separate chapter on letters covers the basics of letter writing for various purposes as well as discussing letters across cultures, giving examples of French and Japanese business letters.

*Memo:* Memos and electronic mail are covered in a separate chapter, with cautions, advantages, and disadvantages discussed.

*Proposal:* The proposals chapter begins with this head note: "You can buy in your own language, but you have to sell in the language of the customer." Basic proposal information presented, as well as a good discussion of proposing work across cultures and multinational proposal teams. She covers types common to multiple disciplines and practical components, such as a justification/benefits section for proposals.

*Progress Report:* A good discussion of progress reports is supplemented with samples in the book and online. On the web there's a link to quarterly progress reports dating back to 1980 on NASA operations.

*Formal Report:* In two chapters, "Reports" and "Final Reports," good coverage of basics and complete reports are included. Web destinations include instructions and sample technical reports, NIH reports, a gallery of annual reports, and a Berkeley site for an international collection of computer science technical reports from researchers around the world in education, industry, and government.

*Instructions:* There is excellent coverage of many kinds of in-

structions, including some entirely done with illustrations – no translations needed. Testing is emphasized; web destinations include a tutorial for creating web pages which can teach students how to use HTML.

**Jones/Lane:**

*Resume:* This text provides a chapter "the Job Search" covering job searches, correspondence, resumes, portfolios, and interviewing. The text has sample resumes; the web site has links to Monster.com.

*Letter:* The correspondence chapter covers letters, memos, and email. A list of sample salutations should prove helpful to students; there is a good discussion of formats with examples.

*Memo:* The coverage is brief but good.

*Proposal:* The chapter has detailed coverage of proposals, including the various forms they may take. Samples are in-text; on-line is linked to The Foundation Center Learning Lab Proposal Writing Course in three languages as well as a detailed proposal to the Department of Commerce for managing the use of internet names.

*Progress Report:* This is covered in the chapter on informal reports; one example of a very simple progress report provided.

*Formal Report:* The relevant chapter covers information and analytical reports, background reports, feasibility reports, recommendation reports, and empirical research/scientific papers. An example of the first three pages of a hazardous materials accident report to the National Transportation Safety Board is included, as are special tips on writing abstracts and executive summaries. The text includes complete background report on computer virus problems with networked computers.

*Instructions:* The text has a chapter on writing policies and procedures as well as one on instructions. The instructions chapter includes sample instructions on how to use soft wood in wood-working, showing good integration of text and graphics. Other samples are found on the web site.

**Markel:**

*Resume:* "Preparing Job-Application Materials" includes discussion and instructions for preparing traditional and electronic resumes and writing job application and follow-up letters. It also discusses creating electronic portfolios.

*Letter:* "Writing Letters, Memos, and E-mails" covers these topics, including letters of inquiry, claim, adjustment, responses, and of course memos and email. There are many good web links.

*Memo:* See above.

*Proposal:* Good links can be found on the web site.

*Progress Report:* In "Informal Reports," one finds good discussion of many kinds of progress reports: field and lab reports, progress and status reports, incident reports, meeting minutes, process reviews.

*Formal Report:* A chapter on "Formal Reports" discusses kinds of reports and their organization and gives examples. The web site has a link to NASA memorandum, "Technical Report Writing."

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*Instructions:* The instructions chapter includes manuals, as well, but information on manuals is very limited. The text has a separate chapter on creating web sites.

### **Format and Approach**

An admittedly subjective review to determine student accessibility and utility has been made using the following elements as criteria: writing style, quality and usefulness of graphics, attractiveness of layout, and organization

#### **Andrews:**

*Writing Style:* The clear and succinct style is straightforward and directly addresses reader without being chatty. The Andrews may be easier for ESL students to understand.

*Quality and Usefulness of Graphics:* This feature is excellent, including illustrations from other cultures and discussion of effective uses in various situations. The text includes many useful charts and tables students can copy or adapt. Andrews says "design takes center stage," and emphasizes "the role of design in shaping the content of information products."

*Attractiveness of Layout:* The layout is good with room for notes in margins of pages. Regular sections, such as "A Closer Look" and "Crossing Cultures," are easily identifiable from chapter to chapter. Color is used sparingly but effectively to distinguish among headings and sections within chapters.

*Organization:* This book's organization is logical and useful.

#### **Jones/Lane:**

*Writing Style:* Good clear prose directly addresses readers.

*Quality and Usefulness of Graphics:* Good graphics are liberally supplied. Everything is illustrated in some way.

*Attractiveness of Layout:* The text uses lots of color, mostly pastel. I'm not crazy about the typefaces used, but you may be. One finds plenty of room for notes, lots of sidebars and other callouts. Each chapter has a section written "from the workplace" by technical writers with particular expertise who talk about their educational background and employment career and give "insider tips."

*Organization:* This text is well organized and includes good appendices.

#### **Markel:**

*Writing Style:* The style is mostly good but occasional lapses sometimes illustrate writing problems eschewed elsewhere in the text. For example, a suggested memo under "Presenting Yourself Effectively" includes the recommendation:

"Therefore, I recommend that we begin planning immediately to implement the plan" (115).

*Quality and Usefulness of Graphics:* Lots of color is used well to highlight different parts of the text or bring illustrations to life. The chapters "Designing the Document" and "Creating Graphics" include general design principles, page design, use of color, appropriate use of various kinds of charts and graphs, and other helpful information. Markel is good with graphics.

*Attractiveness of Layout:* The layout is pleasing with good use of color in headings and text boxes. Wide margins can be used for notes but sometimes are already full of notes provided in the text.

*Organization:* The text is well organized and useful.

### **Intercultural Information Provided**

One has difficulty imagining a job today which would not require workers to interact with people from other cultures. Making students aware of this likelihood and of differences they may encounter seems to be as necessary as teaching them how to use a computer. Having examples and illustrations at hand makes the teaching process easier. One of the texts reviewed has excellent coverage of this issue and one has little or none.

**Andrews:** As her title suggests, Andrews includes intercultural information in every aspect of the text. Andrews has a sensitive, practical and more comprehensive approach to international and ethical issues; her sections on "Collaborating Internationally" and "Multinational Proposal Teams" are good examples. The documents are designed for a U. S. or western audience, but she notes differences needed for other audiences and gives examples in some cases. A student using this book could not emerge untouched by the idea of intercultural communication, and most in my experience are interested in it and want to know more. Many of the cases pose intercultural dilemmas for students to puzzle over and discuss, and their conclusions and suggestions often prove quite amazing.

**Jones/Lane:** One finds a few passing references, but no real discussion of problems inherent in valuing one culture over others, or the need for understanding them.

**Markel:** The chapter "Analyzing your Audience and Purpose" includes a section on communicating across cultures, along with a short discussion of significant cultural differences and advice for writing in English to people in other cultures. Some of the chapter case studies involve intercultural business incidents, inviting students to consider what behavior is appropriate for the U. S. participant in the encounter. Some chapters have boxes with highlighted intercultural information. This text has more information than the Jones and Lane but much less than the Andrews.

### **Adaptability to Online Courses**

The demand for online courses on our campus increases every semester. We are an urban campus with a very ethnically diverse student body, most of whom commute into the city to work. They take classes with us in the evenings, but they also like classes online or at our few scattered remote campuses. Teaching any writing course on-line can prove onerous from the standpoint of commenting on papers, but

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using Web CT and the “track changes” and commenting features make the task doable, and the courses are very popular with students.

Any of these three textbooks would be fine for an online course. All have ample explanations and sample documents to make clear what is needed to a student.

### A Note About Price

The books reviewed vary in price depending on whether one buys them new or used or from the campus bookstore. Please inform your students to buy their textbooks on line; using the internet they can usually get prices much less than what the bookstore will charge. For example, the price of the newest editions of these texts *in paperback online* at Amazon.com in August 2005 is as follows:

Text	New	Used
Andrews	\$86.60	\$23.99
Jones & Lane	\$90.00	\$29.49
Markel	\$82.95	\$29.00

The prices at CheapestTextbooks.com were typically lower. This site surveys many different sources and probably is the best place to begin a search to buy. (Both of these sources' prices will vary depending on their supply.)

### Summary Chart

The chart following summarizes my evaluations of these texts.

	Andrews	Jones & Lane	Markel
<i>Teacher's Guide Provided</i>	Yes, but online and must be printed	Yes	Yes, also copies of most illustrations in text
<i>Web Site</i>	Yes, very good	Yes, also very good	Very good web site
<i>Style Guide</i>	No, links to online guide on website	Yes, abbreviated.	Yes, more complete
<i>Memo</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Proposal</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Progress Report</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Formal Report</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Instructions</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Resume</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Job App Letter</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Intercultural Information Provided</i>	This information permeates every aspect of the text	Almost none	Yes, a section and some cases and text boxes
<i>Writing Style</i>	Very disciplined and clear	Also very good	Good but uneven
<i>Quality and usefulness of graphics</i>	Excellent, particularly those illustrating other cultures views	Also very good but only from one culture	Very good but monocultural
<i>Attractiveness of Layout</i>	Yes	Yes, mostly	Yes
<i>Organization</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Adaptability to Online Version of Course</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes

## ACM DIS 2006: The Conference on Designing Interactive Systems

26-28 June 2006  
State College, Pennsylvania

DIS 2006 launches the second decade of the ACM conference series which has become an internationally-recognized forum for design researchers and reflective practitioners.

DIS welcomes papers in the following areas:

- all varieties of interactive systems - hand-held shopping appliances, immersive toys, head-mounted directional maps, e-commerce Websites, digital books, home entertainment systems, virtual communities.
- design analysis, design representations, design methods, design rationale capture, presentation and use, and tools and environments for designing interactive systems.
- empirical studies of design practices, including comparative studies, experience-based studies and lessons learned from design projects, investigations and development of formal notations and models, and new theoretical perspectives.
- exploring, defining, and developing the science of design.

Researchers, designers, educators, and students from all relevant disciplines are invited to participate, including anthropology, art and architecture, cognitive science, communication studies, computer science, design studies, education, graphic design, information systems, industrial engineering, interaction design, linguistics and semiotics, requirements engineering, sociology, software engineering, and user experience design.

Make a note of these dates:

- 15 December 2005: Papers due.
- 15 February 2006: Doctoral Consortium, Workshop proposals due.
- 15 March 2005: Notification to Authors and Event Organizers
- 15 April 2005: Final versions of accepted papers due.

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## ATTW BULLETIN SPRING 2006 SUBMISSION INFORMATION

DEADLINE: January 15th

MAXIMUM LENGTHS:

Articles- 2000 Words

Announcements- 250 Words

Bulletins are mailed to members 4-6 weeks after the submission deadline.

### Web-based translators

*(continued from page 3)*

More Suggested Readings

Maylath, Bruce and Emily A. Thrush, *Café, thé, Ou Lait?: How Shall We Train Technical Communicators to Translate?*, STC Proceedings, 1997  
<http://www.stc.org/confproceed/1997/PDFs/0018.PDF>

Maylath, Bruce, *Writing Globally: Teaching the Technical Writing Student to Prepare Documents for Translation*, *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 11 (1997): 339-352.

Ray, Deborah S. and Eric J. Ray, *Good, Fast, Cheap: Translation Memory Systems Offer the Potential for All Three*. Originally published in May 1999 (V. 46, No. 2).  
<http://www.techwr-l.com/techwhirl/magazine/technical/translationmemory.html>

Weiss, Timothy, *The Implication of Translation for Professional Communication*, in Lovitt and Goswami, *Exploring the Rhetoric of International Professional Communication: An Agenda for Teachers and Researchers*, 1999

**Writing : : Digital Knowledge  
WIDE RESEARCH CENTER CONFERENCE  
April 6 & 7, 2006: Michigan State University**

The WIDE Research Center announces the First WIDE Conference, "Writing : : Digital Knowledge" April 6&7, 2006 at the James B. Henry Center, Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan.

The conference brings together researchers concerned with the creation and use of digital information and asks them to focus on these key questions:

- How is the emerging digital economy changing writing practices and the nature of knowledge work -- or how will it?
- How is writing a form of knowledge work? (Is it?)
- What issues, problems, questions face researchers studying the effects of the digital economy on writing practices?

Invited panel presenters will focus on how writing relates to

the knowledge economy and knowledge work, issues of culture and identity, and related public policy challenges.

The conference begins on Thursday evening, April 6 with a keynote presentation by Barbara Mirel and reception, followed by three plenary sessions the next day, Friday April 7. Plenty of time for questions, conversation, and interaction is built into the schedule.

The WIDE Research Center is located in Suite 7 Olds Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824// Phone: 517-353-9183//Fax: 517-353-9162//http://wide.msu.edu. The Center's chief research question is: How should written information be designed in digital environments to serve the needs of writers, readers, and users?

For more information, please visit a full conference description and tentative schedule (which will be continuously updated) at <http://wide.msu.edu/conference/schedule>, or contact one of the Co-Directors, Jeff Grabill, [grabill@msu.edu](mailto:grabill@msu.edu), Bill Hart-Davidson, [hartdav2@msu.edu](mailto:hartdav2@msu.edu), or Jim Porter, [porterj8@msu.edu](mailto:porterj8@msu.edu).

### **Special Issues of *Technical Communication Quarterly***

The Association of Teachers of Technical Writing is pleased to announce that special issues of *Technical Communication Quarterly* are now available to be purchased for personal or classroom use. These thematically organized special issues are valuable, for example, as texts for special topic courses or graduate seminars. The special issues available for purchase include

- *Cultural Studies and Technical Communication*
- *The State of Rhetoric of Science and Technology*
- *Visual Thinking, Online Documentation, and Hypertext*
- *Civic Engagement and Technical Communication*
- *The State of Technical Communication in Its Academic Context, Volumes I & II*

These special issues may be ordered by campus bookstores or may be purchased online from various vendors. To purchase special issues directly from the journal's publisher, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, visit the publisher's website at <http://www.erlbaum.com>.

Members of ATTW should also remember that proposals to develop special issues of *Technical Communication Quarterly* are welcome. Topics for special issues could include (but are not limited to) communication design, the role of digital technologies in technical communication, the rhetoric of workplaces or professions, pedagogical approaches, the practices of publication management, dialogue between academics and practitioners, research methods in the field, and connections between social practices and organizational discourse.

Please submit proposals by postal mail or email the journal's special issue proposal coordinator, Sherry Burgus Little. All proposals are reviewed and approved by the ATTW Executive Committee before the guest editor(s) begins working with the editors of *TCQ* to schedule publication, coordinate manuscripts, etc.

Sherry Burgus Little Department of English San Diego State University San Diego, CA 92182-8140 (US)	(619) 594-5238 / Office (619) 594-4998 / Fax <a href="mailto:slittle@mail.sdsu.edu">slittle@mail.sdsu.edu</a>
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## Call for Proposals: Technical Communication in the Age of Distributed Work

Special issue of *Technical Communication Quarterly*

Shoshana Zuboff and James Maxmin are excited about it and see it as a moment of new liberation and choice for consumers and workers alike. Gilles Deleuze saw it as horrifying, even worse than the disciplinary society Michel Foucault described. It goes by many names: Distributed capitalism, the control society, the informatics of domination, the support economy. Whatever its name, the characteristics are the same: control over organizations is as distributed as ownership is in managerial capitalism; digital technologies play a vital enabling role; consumption is individuated, taking the form of the desire for unique identities and unique experiences; direct relationships between customers and businesses become more important; and customers look for stable beneficial relationships among consumers and producers that support these individual experiences. These needs are supplied not by large, vertically integrated companies but by temporary "federations" of suppliers for each individual transaction. These federations are endlessly recombinant. Work is fragmented temporally, geographically, and disciplinarily. Lifelong employment is replaced by what Zuboff and Maxmin call "lifelong learning" -- what Donna Haraway calls continual deskilling and retraining.

We can see the early signs of distributed work in the service sector, in the outsourcing of technical support, and in places like eBay and Craig's List. But we can also see it in the rise of home-schooling, the weakening of unions, the shift from stable identity politics to unstable sub-segments, and the popularity of automobile customization. We can detect it in the proliferation of time management methods, the popularity of distance education, the increasing importance of content management systems, and the early success of Howard Dean's campaign. We can trace its contours in Brenton Faber's discussion of corporate universities; Johndan Johnson-Eilola's explorations of dataclouds; and Teresa Harrison and James Zappen's development of online community spaces and attendant research methods.

What does distributed work mean to us as technical communicators? How is it changing our field? Should we adapt to it, critique it, or resist it?

In this special issue of *Technical Communication Quarterly*, we will discuss distributed work's implications for technical communication theory, methodology, pedagogy, ethics, and practice. In particular, we will consider topics such as:

- How is technical communication practice changing, and how will it change in the future, as it adapts to distributed work? How will it accommodate, resist, or redirect?
- How do we teach technical communicators who expect to go into the support economy? What are our political-ethical responsibilities and our logistical challenges? What changes do we need to make to pedagogical theory?
- What roles will technology play in an economic climate in which knowledge, expertise, and intelligence are widely distributed? For instance, how can software documentation survive when users routinely Google for answers?
- What theoretical frameworks are useful for theorizing the shift to distributed work? What case studies can illustrate it and explore its implications for technical communication?
- What research methods do we need to adapt or develop to apply to distributed work in technical communication research? What methods should we abandon?
- What are the contours of distributed work? What are its promises and horrors?

### Schedule:

- 1-2 page proposal for paper: March 15, 2006
- Full paper (if proposal is accepted): June 30, 2006
- Scheduled publication of issue: Summer 2007

Send proposals in .DOC, .RTF, or .HTML to Clay Spinuzzi [clay.spinuzzi@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:clay.spinuzzi@mail.utexas.edu) Also, please contact the editor by email if you would like to be considered as a reviewer for this special issue.

Dr. Clay Spinuzzi, Assistant Professor  
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### Call for Papers: Inaugural issue of the *Community Literacy Journal* (for Fall 2006)

The peer-reviewed *Community Literacy Journal* seeks contributions for our inaugural, Fall 2006 issue. We welcome submissions that address any social, cultural, rhetorical, or institutional aspects of community literacy; we particularly welcome co-authored pieces in collaboration with community partners.

Possible articles and approaches include, but are not limited to:

- What are the broad, disciplinary implications and possibilities for emerging community-literacy initiatives at the programmatic and institutional levels?
- How are the rhetorical features of oral, written, and visual curricula negotiated and transformed in academic-community collaborations?
- To what extent will it become important--or not--to distinguish between "community literacy" and "service learning"?
- What roles will writing-program administrators play in supporting community-literacy efforts?
- What is the place of community literacy in "managed" and market-principle driven universities?

Deadline: March 15, 2006 for Fall 2006 edition  
Format: MLA citation and endnote style

### Call for Newsletter Items: *Community Literacy Forum Newsletter* (for Fall 2005)

We take great pleasure to invite writing and publication contributions from Technical Communication practitioners, teachers, researchers, administrators, and community members. We welcome any news, course descriptions, projects in progress, conference materials, and other items you think might be of interest to people working in community literacy.

The *Community Literacy Forum Newsletter* solicits your conversations, reflections, ideas, and experiences working with student writers who are engaged in community-literacy contexts. As more writing and communication instructors, programs, and institutional initiatives focus their curricula outside of mainstream or traditional educational settings, we need to know what the real or potential effects are, from your Technical Communication perspective -- in curricular, scholarly, programmatic, and cultural contexts.

- Does your Program currently support any community-literacy activities?
- How might your Program administrators, staff, and teachers rethink strategies and perceptions about oral, written, and visual communication for non academic, community-based audiences ?
- Do you have any first-person narratives or speculations on community literacy from a Technical Communication perspective to share?

Newsletter contributions should be 100-500 words in length  
Deadline October 1st 2005 for Fall 2005 edition

Send Journal and/or Newsletter queries or materials (in e-mail or as an .rtf attachment) to:

**Holly Mandes, University of Arizona:** [mandesh@email.arizona.edu](mailto:mandesh@email.arizona.edu) and/or to:  
**Michael Moore, Michigan Technological University:** [mmoore@mtu.edu](mailto:mmoore@mtu.edu)

### Preliminary Mission

The mission of the *Community Literacy Forum* is to provide a place where academics and other community literacy workers can share ideas, learn about activities and projects, discuss theory and practice, and share resources. We will accomplish this by collaboratively developing an online community literacy blog and newsletter, and, in print, the *Community Literacy Journal*.

For purposes of the Forum, "community literacy" is understood as the domain for literacy work that exists outside of mainstream educational institutions. It can be found in institutionalized programs devoted to adult education or lifelong learning or work with marginalized populations, but it can also be found in more informal, *ad hoc* projects.

For us, the domain of literacy is defined as the realm where attention is paid not just to content or knowledge but to the symbolic means by which it is represented and used. Thus, literacy makes reference not just to letters and to text but to other multimodal representations as well.

### **Call for Proposals: Special Issue of IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication in Celebration of its First Fifty Years**

December 2007 marks the completion of the fiftieth volume of the journal which first appeared in March 1958 as the IRE Transactions on Engineering Writing and Speech, becoming the IEEE Transactions on Engineering Writing and Speech with the September 1963 issue and taking on its current title with the March 1972 issue.

To celebrate this milestone, we invite proposals for papers connecting the past, present, and future of research in professional communication for publication in the December 2007 issue. We are especially interested in papers that re-contextualize landmark publications from the past 50 years in order to provide an historical review of a

research topic in professional communication. We will consider reprinting those papers that appeared in our Transactions, along with an original response that builds upon it.

Papers using any qualitative or quantitative methods will be considered, but methodological approach must be clearly described within the proposal and paper. Because the journal's audience consists of practitioners, educators, and scholars from a variety of disciplines, papers must clearly represent "applied research."

One-page proposals outlining potential projects are due January 15, 2006. Based on a review of those proposals, authors will be invited to submit full papers for blind peer review by July 1, 2006. Information for authors is available on the web at [ieeeps.org](http://ieeeps.org). Submissions, as well as questions or queries, should be sent to the journal's editor, Kim Sydow Campbell, at [k.s.campbell@ieee.org](mailto:k.s.campbell@ieee.org).

**ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF TECHNICAL WRITING  
TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM  
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