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From the Boston Chapter President

by Mike Ball
STC-Boston Chapter President

We can forgo the dramatic allusions - Sturm und Drang or worse. However, you should know that your Council has been planning and working hard with me, as have various committee heads and other volunteers.

This is a particularly trying period. While we have not solved all the big problems, we shall keep you posted on the issues, the intended resolutions, and our progress.

Big Issues

Late last spring and over the summer, we thought our biggest challenge would be finding new meeting places for our programs, SIGs, workshops and other

"Chapter President (continued on page 2)"

Is "Fuzzy Matching" Still Fuzzy to You? or: How Translation Memory Really Works

by Jana Bily
International SIG Leader

The increasingly stronger demand for translated content has shaped the translation industry. Formerly, very much a craft-like business, it has become a technology-driven industry seeking operational excellence.

The industry has been experimenting with computer aided translation (CAT) tools since the 1980s. Translation Memory, a reusable database of paired text segments in the source and target language, has emerged as the most practical technology and is widely used today.

While for many the translation memory is common and its benefits straightforward, the logic behind it is often puzzling. Unless well understood, one may not be maximizing the benefits of increased translation consistency and decreased cost and time to market.

The International Special Interest Group met in November to hear a presentation by Jean-Baptiste Daian, the president of EzGlobe, a full-service localization company. Daian talked about the brains of the translation memory technology and how technical writing impacts the output of these powerful tools.

People often confuse translation memory with machine translation. Daian explained that machine translation is done by a computer without human interaction. Examples of this technology are Systran, BabelFish, or Reverso and many are readily available on the Internet free of charge. The use of machine translation, however, is still very limited for commercial use.

Translation memory, on the other hand, is generated when a human performs the translation and the computer assists. Translated segments of text, paired with their English originals, are stored in a database and these translated segments are then available for reuse in similar content. Examples of this technology are SDL Trados, Catalyst or WordFast.

Segmentation

Regardless of the original authoring tool, the localization vendor first converts the source files to a pivot format compatible with the translation memory. For example, FrameMaker files are first converted to MIF and then to RTF. Next, the translation memory tool segments the files based on the predefined segmentation rules. Typically, one segment equals one sentence but the tool is smart enough to recognize titles, for example, as segments as well.

Translators work directly with the segmented files and translate each text segment one by one. As soon as a segment is translated, its translation is stored in the database and paired with its source language original. It is then available for reuse.

Fuzzy matching

So how does it really work? The translation memory tool analyzes each segment against

"Fuzzy Matching...(continued on page 2)"

events. Our recent problems have put that scramble in perspective. We faced:

- Our service provider shutting down our Website
- Our Web team stepping down in the spring of 2007
- A substantial loss of rebate from Society

Such a confluence of troubles occurs rarely. However, I am confident our volunteers, including the Council, and our bookkeeper are up to the tasks. When everything goes well, anyone could manage an organization. Heck, an oak tree could be in charge. In contrast, when there are difficult decisions to make and both new strategies and tactics to define and implement, a good team gets to work.

Restoring Our Site

Those who went to our Website shortly after it went down already know the basics. That information also went out in several stc-info mailings. The essential background is that spammers hacked our mail server and sent huge amounts of junk mail with our IP address. AOL insisted that the ISP literally enforce our contract and just cut us off. Rather than find and punish the offender, our service provider complied.

We are aware that this has happened to other businesses and non-profits alike. For us, it was crippling. In particular, our event calendars and registration were offline for weeks, affecting multiple meetings and our December program. Of course, members were unable to access our online Job Bank and other members-only resources, and anyone seeking information on us through our primary public face could not do so.

We cannot praise the efforts of Webmaster Rich Feitelberg enough in restoring our site through a new ISP. We all lost track of the hours and days he spent reconstructing the data and functionality of one of the most feature-rich sites in Society. In addition to our many evening update calls, his emails testify to the death-march efforts he made, while keeping his regular job.

He is put the last few pieces in place and

“Chapter President (continued on page 3)”

those stored in the translation memory and looks for matches. If it finds an exact match, a segment with the same content and formatting, it automatically inserts its translation. The translator only verifies that it still is valid and that it fits within the context.

Some tools even recognize in-context matches where the translator can be certain that the translation is correct because not only the content and the formatting are identical but the segments appear within the same content.

However, the translation memory tools are smart enough to recognize segments that are very similar. These are called fuzzy matches and the translator has to make a few changes to the proposed translated text.

Working with tags

Translators work with tagged files and even hidden objects are visible and accessible to translation. In the following example, there are two types of tags: protected tags (grey) and placeable tags (red). The translator cannot alter the protected tags but he or she can move the placeable tags if the syntax of the translated sentence requires it.

Example:

```
<p class="title5"><i>Localization is the process of cultural and linguistic adaptation of products and services for foreign locales.</i></p>
```

It is important to know that tags and therefore the formatting are stored in the translation memory. This means that two identical sentences may not be matched if the tags are different. The translation memory tool will likely identify them as a fuzzy match and the translator will have to make the formatting adjustments. Daian mentioned that companies sometimes change the formatting of their manuals from one version to another not realizing what kind of impact it will have on localization. Even if the content changed only minimally, the translation memory returns results indicating that there is only very little leverage. While the new formatting may look nicer and be more user friendly, the increased localization cost may not warrant it.

Suggestions for achieving the highest possible leverage

- Understand the segmentation rules and reproduce them from a version to version.
- Avoid formatting changes because formatting tags are stored in the translation memory.
- Standardize text (sentences and even paragraphs) and use it across all of your content as much as practical.
- Avoid wordiness. Translation and localization companies charge per word.

Help us help you!

The *Boston Broadside* is a newsletter for and about the Boston Chapter and its members, so it is what you make it. Submit articles and article suggestions to the managing editor, Bryan Davis, at: boston.broadside@gmail.com. Thanks!

verified the functionality. This includes the complex portions, such as the PayPal links from registration.

His primary assistant, Barbara Casaly, helped greatly and put in her own set of extra effort. Unfortunately, as the developer and site designer, Rich had to do almost all the heavy lifting and restoration solo. It was a noble and very professional effort.

Web Team Transitions

We have a new Webmaster in the works, Ellen Lidington. She has great technological savvy and has been a dedicated volunteer for our chapter for many years. Rich and Barbara are working with her and Karen Lippincott, a new member of the Web team, for the necessary knowledge transfer. They are targeting this April for the transition. We are beginning to plan the transition and the new structure and staffing of the Web team. We shall keep you informed in the Broadside, on the Website and in stc-info mailings.

Rich has been the Webmaster for 12 years - an amazing tenure for a volunteer slot, particularly for one that requires constant skill improvement. We may well not be able to find a proficient Web developer in our ranks to perform the maintenance and improvements that Rich has long provided. It is likely that we shall have to pay a modest amount for those services.

Volunteer Pitch: We are looking for Web team volunteers to support our new Webmaster. You do not have to be an expert in specific Internet technologies. We would like to have several new members who can devote to few hours a week to providing content, communicating between committees and the Web team and similar tasks. To find out more when we have specified these duties, please contact Pam Sarantos, our Volunteer Coordinator, at: 2ndvp@stcboston.org or contact me at: president@stcboston.org.

Rebate Shock

A very important component of our budget comes from our share of the membership

“Chapter President (continued on page 4)”

The Basics of Instructional Design

November STC-Boston Program

By Bill Gruener

Dynamic and enthusiastic are two adjectives that describe Patrick O'Malley, the presenter at the November monthly program, *Basics of Instructional Design*, hosted by both the STC-Boston Chapter and Greater Boston American Society of Training & Development (GBASTD). O'Malley presented a list of ten elements essential to any course, elements that can be used for any topic, and as an example of how to teach a technical topic within an instructional design structure, he used a short course entitled, “What's in Your Cell Phone?”

Instructional design elements

Before constructing the course, learn everything you can about the topic. Answer your questions. Find a colleague with whom you can test ideas. Find a subject matter expert (SME) to provide technical answers. Remember you are teaching professionals. Time is money. Focus on the essential content; delete peripheral information. Don't waste time. Adult learners need a reason to learn. Provide the motivation; provide relevant information. If you use paper materials, provide plenty of white space, which gives students a place to write notes and writing increases learning.

Outline or schedule

Disclose the topics and schedule immediately. Tell the class (audience) what they will be studying.

Intended audience

Describe the audience, which if the description fails to match one or two of the attendees, those who are not matched can depart. Bizarre but can happen, if no one matches the description, there's time to regroup.

Prerequisites

State the expected level of knowledge and skill attainment required to understand and participate in the course and state any special requirements.

Learning objectives

The contract of what we promise to teach. Set expectations. State what skills and/or concepts participants should acquire by taking the course.

Non-goals of this course

State topics that will not be covered. Be realistic: every topic other than the course topics are candidates for non-goals. Avoid creating an endless list. For example, if the course is an introduction to FrameMaker, a non-goal would be avoiding the topic of conditional text.

Introduction

With the preliminaries finished, introduce the course with a quick summary of the main topics, which follow immediately after the introduction.

Main module

Here's the meat of the course. Present no more than five to seven topics. Keep presentation of concepts short: five to seven minutes. Tell the class only what it needs to know to be productive. Avoid unnecessary history and theory. Use examples early and often and use real world examples. If you can make the examples fun, great! Start with simple examples that work. Present lists in a non-alphabetic manner because non-alphabetical can be powerful and aid retention by breaking

“November write-up ... (continued on page 4)”

dues, prorated on Society members who join our chapter. The new formula that Society is using resulted in a dramatically lower share for us this year.

The new formula for figuring rebates hits the handful of us largest chapters the hardest. Chapters of under 100 members will see no difference this year. This reformulation came from Society's decreasing membership and revenues. It is part of the larger Transformation (restructuring of STC) effort.

After initial discussions with Society, we had thought it would be close to recent rebates. However, it will be about \$5,000 to \$7,000 less than in the most recent years. That moves us from black to red ink if nothing changes with the rebate or other budget factors.

We are working on this from several angles:

- We have contacted Society several times, specified our objections and suggestions, and gotten our position relayed to the board by the executive director.
- We have discussed this with several other chapters, which are developing their own responses for Society
- We are considering both ways to increase revenues and ways to reduce our expenses

Unfortunately, in the short-term, none of these efforts will compensate for our lost money nor promise ongoing replacement for it. This may mean that this 2006-2007 chapter year will cause us to tip into savings.

However, we are committed to balanced budgets and intend to maintain our high levels of member services. We shall keep you informed on our efforts and successes in this arena.

Membership Pitch

You can help the chapter now. Immediately, as you receive your call to renew your STC membership, do so and be sure that you include membership in the Boston Chapter. This includes you in our rebate share. You can do more if your

an expected pattern.

Experience has taught us the following

This topic could be called, "We made these mistakes so you don't have to." Or, "it's not in the documentation, but ..."

Summary

Restate the introduction and summarize the main points just learned.

Additional resources

Keeps the hungry learner busy. Helps keep the class focused on main points by offering extra topics but not using up essential key time.

Lab exercises

Great way to learn! Apply the knowledge learned to their work and life. Lab exercises converts a class to a workshop. ASTD research shows that lab exercises are one of the most effective training techniques. Create plenty of lab exercises: gives the hungry students more to learn, and gives the instructor more flexibility.

Test

Questions that demand a specific answer. Questions and answers test the topics discussed in the course. Questions and answers use the same words and phrases as those used in the course. No surprises, no changes.

O'Malley noted that if you follow this structure, your course will cover the necessary topics and will present the content in a structure that helps people build skills and knowledge.

The Importance of Indexing

December STC-Boston Program

By Bill Gruener

The STC-Boston Chapter December program was a joint meeting shared with the American Society of Indexers (ASI), New England Chapter. We had two speakers: Cheryl Landes and Seth Maislin, both from ASI and both with strong ties to our chapter. Seth is the president of the ASI national organization, works, and teaches in the Boston area. Landes and Maislin gave us two views of indexing: static, the way the indexing world was-books in final proofs and indexes on 3x5 cards, and moving, the way the indexing world is-electronic content viewed on screen through the Web, constantly changing, no consistent page numbers, nothing in final proof form.

Landes reported on a study that compared the indexes created by both a technical and a non-technical indexer and reported that experienced, technical indexers can produce a richer, more helpful index (20% more entries) in half the time.

December program... (continued on page 5)

work with or know other technical communicators here who are not STC members or who have not included our chapter in their membership. We are in this together, ask and encourage them.

About the Society for Technical Communication

Mission: *Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.*

For more information, visit us online at:

Society for Technical Communication

www.stc.org

Boston Chapter

www.stcboston.org

Volunteering is All About You!

When you volunteer with the STC, you use your skills and meet new people. Volunteering also offers an excellent opportunity to network!

Consider working with us and learn how volunteering can fit into your schedule. Contact Michael Ball at: president@stcboston.org, Volunteer Coordinator Pamela Santos at: 2ndvp@stcboston.org, view the volunteer page at www.stcboston.org and choose "Getting Involved."

December program ...

Maislin tackled a moving target: trying to index content that constantly changes-Web pages, often regenerated Word and Frame files, hyperlinks. Seth points out that nothing is stable-not authors, articles, topics. He believes that there are two approaches to indexing: reactive (index what was and is static) and proactive (plan for change), and he believes that there are two technologies: an auxiliary index (or standalone index) and embedded indexes (built into the content).

Auxiliary indexes are stored in separate files attached to the document. Auxiliary indexes create more broken links. Auxiliary indexes are "old fashioned." Embedded indexes are a must for hyperlinks, are in the same document, are suited for today's content.

Maislin offered the following piece of advice: Get the job done even if doing violates best practices because best practices are from the "old" days. He said that when creating indexes we must choose keywords, see connections, and tell the reader:

- What to look up
- What to call it
- Where to put it

He closed with this thought, "Indexing is more important than ever; although, the index is disappearing."

AMWA Brunch Meeting on February 11th

On Sunday, February 11th, the New England Chapter's American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) will be hosting a professional development brunch meeting between 11:00 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn in Waltham, MA.

The brunch will include several roundtable discussions on different aspects of medical writing, including Technical Writing Opportunities in the Medical Device Industry and Transitioning into Medical Writing. The cost is \$26 for non-AMWA members and \$23 dollars for current AMWA members.

For information on registering for this program, contact Judy Linn at JudyHLinn@aol.com. In your e-mail, please reference your affiliation with STC.



New Year, New Focus!

Community Affairs are hot for the New Year!

by *Cindy Currie*
STC Fellow and Region 1 Director

Board shuffle deals new hand

The Society-level events over the past several months include the resignation of a board member (Region 5 Director, Sherry Michaels) and the shuffling around of some responsibilities and focus areas among remaining board members. As a result, I have shifted my focus from the Communications area to the Communities area. I have assumed the chair of the Community Affairs Committee and I am really enjoying the work. I also have oversight of the Leadership Community Resource (LCR), Virtual Communities, and Community Recognition committees. Watch for some important and valuable changes in all of these areas.

Give the board your input!

Monitoring and acting on the needs of the membership is one of the most important practices that STC engages in. To help facilitate this practice, the board adopted a knowledge-based governance (KBG) approach in 2005. KBG is a business-based model of using information and insight to aid strategic decision-making. The KBG approach enables and encourages STC members to provide information to the board prior to board meetings, and forms a valuable part of major decision-making. The result is better decisions that more closely meet member needs because the board has current and relevant data from members.

The STC board now regularly gathers member input just prior to each face-to-face (F2F) board meeting. The next meeting is February 2-3, 2007 in Arlington, VA. The primary focus of this meeting will be on communities. Look for another KBG survey in January. Your responses will form the basis of many of the board's discussions during this meeting, so please take advantage of this opportunity to provide timely input to the board.

Have you renewed your membership yet?

Membership renewal season opened on November 1, so if you have not yet renewed your membership, please consider putting that near the top of your "to do" list. You'll want to be sure that you are eligible to vote in STC's upcoming annual elections, and be able to take advantage of member discounts on registration for the conference this spring.

Preliminary slate of candidates announced!

Annual election season is rolling around again. The preliminary slate of candidates was announced in November. This year's slate includes one candidate for President, one candidate for First Vice President, two candidates for Second Vice President, six candidates for three Director positions, and four candidates for two Nominating Committee positions. Anyone who is interested in running for elected office this year can use the petition process to be added to slate at this time. The final slate will be announced in February. The voting will be conducted during March. Get to know the candidates and make a truly informed decision this year. The percentage of members who voted last year was up nearly 5% over the previous year and we are looking forward to another big increase this year!

Ascend the Summit!

Registration for the Technical Communication Summit - STC's 54th Annual Conference is now open with great early bird registration fees for members and non-members alike through February 28, 2007. Check out the conference site at <http://www.stc.org/54thConf/index.asp> for all the details as they unfold.

Don't miss this event; it's going to be the best STC conference ever! We've heard your feedback and have incorporated it all into this conference, STC's flagship annual event.

Update on Distinguished Community Service Awards (DCSA)

It was great to receive so many nominations for DCSAs this year. There were eight nominations from region 1, up from three the previous year, which is an increase of 167%! Note to submitters that these nominations have been approved by the board. At some point, I will list the recipients, but mums the word right now as their communities have plans to honor these individuals in some special ways in upcoming months.

Out and About

My community visit plans for this year continue to take shape. My firm plans look like this at the moment:

- **Boston Chapter, STACIES, February 2007**
- **Eastern Ontario Chapter, March, 28, 2007**
- **Southwestern Ontario Chapter, March 29, 2007**

Please let me know what your program plans and events are for this STC year and if you'd like for me to visit your community or attend a special event. I will continue my visits as your interest and my finances and schedule permit.

Chapter Membership Report

By Virginia Adams
Membership Committee Manager

We would like to welcome the following people who joined the Boston Chapter in September, October, and November 2006:

New Community Members:

- Kate Bare
- Patricia Barry
- Katherine Bouwkamp
- Patricia Brogdon
- Joyce S. Cohen
- Edward F. Dennison
- Colin Y. Ferguson
- John S. Holohan
- John P. Hunt
- Algis Kaupas
- Erika Keirstead
- Maureen King
- Toni Kistner
- Kara M. Le Treize
- Christine J. McCarthy
- Peggy McClure
- Mary M. Moore
- Nancy Nelson
- Wayne S. O'Brien
- Michelle Orloff
- Marcia Shanbaum
- David P. Sullivan
- Sara G. Vecchio
- Kate Wrightson

Members Transferring in:

- Scott P. Abel
- Steven P. Agin
- Robert Allin
- Michael D. Green
- Rose E. Jameson
- Carolyn S. Snyder
- Jennifer B. Wendell

Senior Members

Congratulations to the following members who achieved Senior Member status in Fall 2006: Scott P. Abel

- Amy Adams
- Linda Alexander
- Greg Bartlett
- Kevin Berni
- Alanna Blinn
- Nancy Charbonneau
- Stephen Corey
- Robert Corvino
- Lisa Dames

- James Doyle
- Thomas Erwin
- Iris Friedman
- Zev Frutkoff
- Bonnie Granat
- Gail Greenblatt Saporito
- Linda Greene
- Steven Greffenius
- Krista Guglielmetti
- Alexandra Hart
- Linda Haviland
- Shaun Hilditch
- Deborah Holmes
- Justine Kangas
- Ben Kauffman
- Kelly Klaiber
- Nancy Kocandrl
- Mary Lanergan
- James Lidington
- Sara Matousek
- Keith McGrath
- Stephen McIntosh
- Linda Ohkagawa
- Stephen Pecevich
- Carol Pennewill
- Michael Pytlak
- Meg Reed
- Laura Rigordaeva
- Joseph Rousseau
- Carla Schwartz
- John Sgammato
- Joshua Steen
- Charles Warrington
- Victoria White
- Wendy Wing
- Melba Wood
- Karyn Woodward

Tip of the Month

Here's a quick way to copy an Access table into Excel:

1. In the Access database window, click the table you want to export.

2. On the Standard toolbar, click Office Links.

3. Click Analyze It with Excel.

Homebrew Usability Testing Tools

by Neil Perlin

STC-Boston Chapter Member

Ask almost any software company whether usability testing is important and you'll get a resounding, "Yes!" But many of these companies often don't do usability testing because of the idea that recording and evaluating the test results is difficult, time-consuming, and requires complex and expensive tools.

There's an element of truth to this, but it's entirely possible to record usability test results for later evaluation by adapting other tools that you already own, tools that may not even have been designed for usability test work in the first place. The result won't be elegant but it will be workable, and will provide a lot of useful information. Specifically, I'm thinking of visual training development tools like Adobe Captivate, TechSmith Camtasia, Qarbon Viewlet Builder, and so on. In this column, I'll focus on Captivate because I consider it to be the most powerful of these tools, but most other tools of this type should be similarly configurable.

If you're not familiar with tools like Captivate, they're basically slide show creators. You can use them to record activity on the screen as a series of screen shots that act like frames in a filmstrip. You can then annotate those frames with text captions, highlights, animations, audio, video, interactivity features, and so on to produce anything from a simple software demo to an interactive simulation to an HR or sales simulation to surprisingly powerful eLearning. Even better, these tools are cheap - around \$500 for Captivate - and quick and easy to get started with - a two-day training course will get you up to speed with Captivate's main features.

In order to use Captivate to record usability test results for later evaluation, you can set it up to:

- Record every screen on which the test subject took some action, such as selecting a menu or sub-menu item, making a field entry, clicking the mouse, etc.
- Record the mouse path between these actions.
- Add a special effect to each mouse click for visual emphasis during playback.
- Add a descriptive text caption for anything that the test subject does that sends a Windows-standard call to the software being tested.
- Make all this happen automatically and invisibly in the background, without distracting the test subject.
- Turn on audio recording, give each test subject a headset with a boom microphone, (to make it unobtrusive), and ask the test subjects to speak their thoughts as they work through the steps of the text.

I've done this in dummy usability tests and it works almost perfectly. It basically creates a rendition of almost everything I did on the screen. I can then run this result in either a Preview or finished version for review and evaluation. The playback control bar lets me stop, back up, and play the movie as necessary in order to study how my test subjects did.

This homebrew usability test recording tool isn't perfect, although there are workarounds for all but one of the problems. Here are the problems and gotchas that I encountered in my experiments.

- It would help to show the time on the screen so that the reviewers could see when each test subject performed some action and how much time elapsed between successive actions. The easiest way to get the time on the screen is to set Captivate to record at full-screen size in order to capture Windows' clock in the lower right corner of the screen.

However, Windows' clock is of little use for recording the results of usability tests because it only shows hours and minutes. It doesn't show seconds, which is what's needed here.

To fix this, I temporarily replaced Windows' clock with a freeware clock plug-in called TClockEx (which stands for Taskbar Clock Enhancement) from <http://www.rcis.co.za/dale/tclockex/menu.htm>. This plug-in, created in 2000 by South African programmer Dale Nurden, lets you reconfigure the clock and seems to work fine under Windows XP. I set it up to show the day of the week, the date, and the time in hours, minutes, and seconds. This lets me date- and time-stamp the test results and show the elapsed time in seconds between actions. As a side benefit, having the time visible and being able to calculate elapsed time between user actions would let me synchronize the Captivate movie to a video of, for example, the test subject's face, if there was a clock in the video.

Homebrew... (continued on page

One Credential. Countless Career Options.

THE INFORMATION DESIGN CERTIFICATE upcoming courses:

User Centered Interface
February 15 and 16, 2007

Designing for Accessibility*
March 29 and 30, 2007

Usability Inspections*
March 1 and 2, 2007

User and Task Analysis*
April 12 and 13, 2007

Usability Boot Camp
March 12 to 16, 2007

Remote Data Gathering
April 19 and 20, 2007

Strategic Usability Engineering
March 22 and 23, 2007

*denotes online course

Information Session
February 8, 2007
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.



Homebrew ...

- By default, Captivate assigns the End key as the “stop-recording-and-return-to-Captivate” key. You can reassign this function to a different key. I normally recommend against doing so because the End key seems so intuitively logical. For usability testing, however, I would reassign it just in case the application being usability tested actually used the End key. I would also reassign it to some key combination to eliminate the risk of the test subject accidentally hitting it and aborting the recording of the test.
- It's a good idea to record the movie at full-screen to give the test subjects total latitude in how they use the software being tested. Before playing the result back for review, however, resize the movie down to make sure you can see the clock in the lower-right corner of the screen without having to scroll. I found that recording at 1280 x 800 and then resizing down to 75% for playback eliminated any scrolling while keeping the clock big enough to read.
- When you generate the preview or published version for evaluation, the playback control bar makes it easy to study the movie at your own pace. However, make sure you're not using a control bar that's defined as Stretched in the skin. If it is, it will cover up the clock. The solution is to select Report/Skin, go to the Playback Control tab, select the Layout option pulldown, and select Bottom Left.

Captivate is something of a memory hog and the software being tested may be temperamental. Therefore, it's a good idea to reboot the test PC between tests and to run only Captivate and the software being tested.

Note about the maximum number of frames in a movie - the default frame rate of 30 fps, and how that translates to the maximum number of minutes length of a single movie.

The only problem for which there's no apparent workaround is Captivate's inability to record the random mouse movements of a confused user.

Summary

A homebrew solution like this doesn't eliminate all the traditional barriers to usability testing. We still have to write the test scenarios and evaluate and interpret the test results. But it does provide a cheap, simple, flexible, and convenient way to gather those test results in the first place.

It's Never Too Early to Start Planning for the Online Communication Competition!

It may seem like a way off, but the deadline for entering the STC's Online Communication Competition will be here before you know it, so start planning now!

This is a good time of the year to start thinking about potential entires from your company, including:

What's new?

Think about the projects your company is producing. As you prepare, create, and finish projects, include entering the competition as one of your goals. Knowing a project is headed for the competition will give you that extra incentive to do a great job.

What's hot?

What does your marketing department think is cool? Is there a new help system technical support is anticipating? No doubt you put extra effort into these projects. Don't forget to let these departments know when you receive an award.

This is a unique opportunity to showcase your best work and get feedback from your peers. You might also win an award for your work. For more information about the Competition, please visit <http://www.stc.boston.org> and click the Competitions link.

The Broadside Staff

The *Boston Broadside* is published six times throughout the calendar year and would not be possible without the hard work of dedicated volunteers. Many thanks to the following people for their contributions:

Broadside Staff

- Donna Ayres
Publishing Editor
- Karen Giventer
Copy Editor
- Bill Gruener
Columnist/Photographer



Authors

- Viginia Adams
- Mike Ball
- Jana Bily
- Paula Berger
- Cindy Currie
- Bill Gruener
- Neil Perlin

Thank you, everyone!

- Bryan Davis*
Managing Editor



Write for the Broadside

The *Boston Broadside* encourages Chapter members to share their skills, thoughts, and ideas with other professionals in the Chapter.

If you would like to write for an upcoming issue of the *Boston Broadside*, send email to: boston.broadside@gmail.com

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