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Coming Soon: Open STC-Boston Chapter Elections

By Ellen Lidington
STC-Boston Chapter member

The elections start the planning process for the next season, and it is time for us to start planning for 2008–2009.

The Council and our active volunteers look forward to bringing you more programs and workshops. As a Council member, you attend monthly Council meetings in which we brainstorm and discuss ideas for additional member benefits, such as reaching out to a wider geographical audience—by, periodically, offering networking meetings during the day, evening programs, and workshops.

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Accounting 101: To the Bleeding Edge by the Numbers

By Neil Perlin
STC Associate Fellow

Accounting isn't on the bleeding edge, but it will help us get there...

Think of the trouble you had getting approval for a mere \$800 for a copy of FrameMaker. What's it going to be like when you ask for \$25,000 for that CMS that you need for your new singl-sourcing effort? That's where accounting comes in, helping you buttress your requests by cost-justifying them in a language that a CFO wants to hear — numbers based on traditional accounting and finance principles.

Many people think of accounting as being arcane, nitpicky, and dry, and it often lives up to that reputation. For example, a big issue several decades ago was how to account for the depreciation of an apparently nondepreciable asset like software (in the days when computers were just coming into use in business). A common issue in inventory accounting is whether to use LIFO (“last-in-first-out”) or FIFO (“first-in-first-out”) to calculate cost of goods sold. Arcane, nit-picky, and dry topics... but millions of dollars may depend on the answer, making such topics very interesting to a lot of people.

At a high-concept level, however, accounting has three very simple and useful premises: how much money do we have, where did we get it, and where it is going?

Technical communicators rarely have to work at the LIFO vs. FIFO level of detail unless you're documenting accounting software (something I did for several years because I have an MBA in accounting.) Understanding a few basic concepts may be enough to get you into the habit of looking at the financial aspects of your projects, which in turn will start to raise the doc group's business credibility.

Double-Entry Bookkeeping

This always sounds illegal, but it simply means that any financial transaction affects two accounts and should be recorded that way. For example, let's say that a client pays your invoice. Your Cash account balance goes up and your Accounts Receivable account balance goes down by a corresponding amount. Or, let's say that you take out a business loan. Your Cash account balance goes up and your Accounts Payable balance goes up as well, again by a corresponding amount.

These account balance changes are referred to as debits and credits or pluses and minuses. For example, when the client pays your invoice, the payment is actually a debit to Cash and a credit to Accounts Receivable.

Financial Accounting

This is the practice of tracking a business's financial activity and reporting it in financial statements, such as balance sheets and income statements to management and outside parties - stockholders, vendors, lenders, financial analysts, regulatory agencies, etc. Basically, financial accounting is the high-level summary of a company's financial status and operations.

Accounting, Page 2

Also, we are starting to reach out to student groups at colleges and high school job fairs.

These ideas can only become a reality with the effort from Council members and a pool of volunteers. We hope that you will take time to consider joining our group. The more people involved, the greater the chance of adding some of these new benefits.

Open Council Seats

The following is list of open Council seats:

- **First Vice-President:** Manages the program committee and the Council's nominating committee
- **Second Vice-President:** Serves as the volunteer coordinator
- **Member-at-large (4 seats):** Responsible for various tasks; for example, sponsorship, membership, programs, and public relations

You can refer to the bylaws for detailed descriptions of these positions and Council responsibilities at: <http://www.stcboston.org/ftp/downloads/bylaws2006.pdf>

If you are interested in learning more about participating on Council, contact Pamela Sarantos at



pamstc.boston@gmail.com, soon to get more information. We need to get our slate together by early April.

We look forward to hearing from you, and to you joining our 2008–2009 team.

Volunteering Is About You!

Consider working with us and learn how volunteering can fit into your schedule. For more information, contact Volunteer Coordinator Pamela Santos at: pamstc.boston@gmail.com.

Managerial Accounting

If financial accounting is the high-level summary, managerial accounting is the low-level, day-to-day operational detail. In manufacturing, this might involve monitoring the cost of raw material cost for product X so as to monitor its profitability. In technical communication, this may involve tracking production cost for hard-copy documentation so as to calculate how much money might be saved by moving to online. Or, it might involve collecting data to calculate the cost of a tech support call in order to determine how much might be saved by introducing better documentation.

In essence, managerial accounting involves tracking data that the company uses to make operational decisions. Financial accounting looks at and reports on the results of those decisions.

Balance Sheet

The balance sheet is a snapshot of a company's financial position at a specific point in time and is one of the primary financial statements in financial accounting.

A balance sheet is basically a two-column table. The left column lists assets: cash and cash "equivalents" like accounts receivable, inventory, fixed assets like buildings and equipment, etc. The right column is broken into two parts. The top part lists liabilities: accounts payable, short- and long-term loans, etc. The bottom part lists equity (often called "shareholder' equity") in publicly traded companies. Equity is what's left over after subtracting the liabilities from the assets.

The balance sheet is officially issued at the end of a company's fiscal year for reporting and auditing purposes, but it's issued more often for ongoing management and analysis.

Income Statement

The income statement connects successive balance sheets; for example, how the company got from FY 2006's financial condition to FY 2007's financial condition.

The income statement lists various types of revenues, expenses, and the resulting income. It also provides various levels of calculation, such as gross profit revenue *minus* direct costs (costs specifically related to the creation of the product); and net profit: gross profit *minus* indirect costs (operating and administrative costs, including the cost of the doc group, interest expense, taxes, and so on).

How do these concepts fit together? Managerial accounting data supports the operational decisions that generate revenues that are recorded in financial accounting reports.

Summary

Why should technical communicators as a group care about accounting? Most of us have apparently done fine for years without it. In some quarters of our profession, there's even resistance to learning about accounting because "humanists don't do numbers."

The problem is that such an attitude actually hurts technical communicators by making us unable to participate in many strategy, policy, and operational decisions because we don't speak the same language as the participants, especially those who control the money. If we cannot quantitatively justify our proposal in the language that management is looking for, we will lose out to those who can.

In the past, this didn't matter much because technical communication was a fairly closed world. Today, however, single sourcing and new concepts like multi-channel publishing and Web 2.0 are changing the role of documentation and increasing its visibility and financial stakes. This is attracting outside consultants who can speak COF-

The Middlesex Community College Technical Writing Program

By Katie Lesesne

The Middlesex Community College Technical Writing Program has been around since the late 70's helping people to transition into the technical writing field. It was in the late 70's that Massachusetts implemented Proposition 2 1/2. At that time, there were a lot of public school teachers being laid off while at the same time there was a need for writers in the software industry field. The Massachusetts High Tech Council, Middlesex Community College and a state agency came together to come up with a retraining program for the teachers so that they could work as technical writers in the industry field. The Technical Writing Program was originally a grant-funded program but with the help of tuition and fees it became self-sustaining.

The original technical writing program gave students the complete range of skills they needed to enter a new career field. The skills taught included 220 hours of training in technology that covered everything from how a computer works to Assembly language. Students created 200 lines of code, which they could then use as a part of their portfolio. The program also included a writing section and a professional skills section. The program in that incarnation lasted from 1980–2003.

The program had a hiatus from 2003–2005. It was difficult to place people at that time because of changes that had taken place in the software industry. The advisory board recommended a suspension of recruitment for the program and worked with Kim Burns, Assistant Dean of Academic & Community Partnerships and Director of the Technical Writing Program and Middlesex Community College, and the instructors of the program to redesign the program into what it is today.

“At the point of 2003, it was \$6,000 and 420 hours of training, so it was three nights a week plus one Saturday a month, and it was really expensive,” said Burns.

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ish. Being able to speak COF-ish ourselves will help us compete for the interesting new projects, rather than being relegated to “documentation.”

I'll close with an idea to start developing your accounting sense and raise your credibility within the company. Why not invite someone from the finance or accounting department to address the documentation group and explain your company's financial statements over lunch?

Neil Perlin is president of Hyper/Word Services (www.hyperword.com) of Tewksbury, MA. He has 28 years of experience in technical communication with 22 in training, consulting, and development for online formats and tools. He is a member of the IEEE and STC, an associate fellow of the STC, and can be reached at nperlin@concentric.net or www.hyperword.com.

Competition Staff and Committee Members Needed

by Mark Decker

General Competitions Committee Chair

Our chapter's three competition committees need volunteers for the 2008 competition season. Volunteers are needed to staff the Technical Publications, Online Communications, and Technical Art competition committees. Each of these committees has a chairperson who needs people to help with the tasks associated with running a competition.

The competition season runs from March to December with the busiest time period from late August through November. Committee tasks vary from season-long duties (for example, publicity) to one-time-only tasks (for example, competition day logistics). The competition chairpersons can provide a list of available tasks.

There are many benefits to working on a competition committee, including:

- Polishing your leadership and organizational skills
- Networking with your peers
- Meeting potential employers and showing them what you can do
- Growing your visibility in the technical communications community
- Building a network of resources



We also need a volunteer Competitions Publicity Manager who handles publicity for the upcoming competition season. The Publicity Manager is a member of the General Competitions Committee and is responsible for publicizing the chapter's three competitions. **We need to fill this position as soon as possible.**

The competition publicity season runs from March through November. The most important tasks include:

- Submitting our competition dates to STC and local area publications
- Establishing contact with other related professional associations in our area to get our competition dates on their calendars, and vice-versa
- Promoting the competitions at our chapter meetings (both Boston and Northern New England)
- Writing and submitting promotional items to the Broadside and Nor'Easter
- Submitting promotional items to local area business, technical, and professional publications
- Encouraging local area business, technical, and professional publications to attend and report on our competitions

Competitions, Page 4

“But we had a 97% placement rate so there was a pot of gold at the end to work towards. But when it didn't seem like the labor market could support that anymore it wasn't viable to have such an intense program if we weren't able to place people.”

Students graduating from the current program do continue to have success with finding technical writing positions.

The current Technical Writing Information Certificate program at Middlesex Community College is composed of two courses, one in the fall and the other in the spring. The course offered in the fall is called Writing and Managing Effective Information and is taught by Charles Murray. This course teaches the core technical writing skills and main techniques for technical communication. Included in this course is a project that can serve as a possible portfolio piece for students.

The course that is offered in the spring is called Authoring and Distributing Technical Documents and is taught by Andrew Harrington. This course teaches the tools and technologies that are used in technical writing and doesn't really focus on the writing itself. The course is taught so that any student could quickly learn any technical writing tool in a workplace environment.

The current program is a modified version of what it was before, but it is still a viable option for employers to find technical writing employees and interns.



Please note that this Publicity Manager position is not limited to one person; it can be a shared position.

For more information or to volunteer for a committee, please contact one of the Committee Chairs:

- Steve Straight - Online Communications Committee: steve.straight@openwave.com
- Mike Nelson - Technical Publications Committee: mnelson@kvh.com
- Patty Morin - Technical Art Committee: patty.morin@hp.com

For more information on the Committee Publicity Manager position, contact Mark Decker at: mdecker@rsa.com or msdhusker@comcast.net

The Broadside Needs Your Input!

We're always looking for contributions from our readers. If you want to submit an article for publication, send it to Managing Editor Bryan Davis at:

boston.broadside@gmail.com.

The following is the publishing and deadline schedule and for upcoming issues:

- **May** – Deadline is **April 25**
- **July** – Deadline is **June 27**

In general, the *Broadside* is published on the second or third week of the month.

Remember, the *Boston Broadside* is for our readers and by our readers, so it's what **you** make of it. Thanks!



2008 Program and Workshop Schedule

The following is the program and workshop schedule for the rest of the 2008 season:

Programs

Date	Program Topic
April 16	Modular Writing and Reusability
May 21	Online Showcase
June 11 or 18	End-of-Year Celebration

Workshops

Date	Program Topic
April 5	Structured Authoring Without DITA or FrameMaker (full day)
April 5	How to Expand Your Tech Writing Skills Into Sales and Marketing (full day)
April 5	Putting the “Job” in your Job Search: Turning a Job Search into a Job Offer (half day)

For more information on these workshops, please visit www.stc-boston.org.

Chapter Membership Report

By Virginia Adams
Membership Committee Manager

We would like to welcome the following people who joined the Boston Chapter in December 2007 and January 2008:

Total Boston Members: 693

New Community Members (19):

- Ezinne Amaonwu
- Paul Carlotto
- David Carrington
- Christopher Dawley
- Michael Dehn
- Jennifer Dittman
- Jane Ehrenstrom
- Chris Eideh
- Perry Goldstein
- Laura Gosselin
- Imran Malek
- Paul Masalsky
- Keith McGrath
- Nicolas O'Donohoe
- Carl Olson
- Paula Ploetz
- Thomas Ryan
- Pamela Totas

- Nathaniel A. Trammell

Members Transferring in (12):

- John Branco
- John P. Burger
- Corin J. Caliendo
- Nancy Paisner Harrison
- Mary J. Marotta
- Arthur J. McCarron
- Peter A. Monchamp
- Maria E. Renear
- Mark Rudden
- Suzanne L. Sanders
- Corrine Schillin
- Sue A. Stableford

STC Elections Now Open

The STC election season has begun, and all members are encouraged to vote and have a say in the future of the organization.

To vote, visit the STC's website at:

<https://eballot3.votenet.com/stc/login.cfm> and log in by entering your STC member number and the random password e-mailed to members on March 12.

Those members who requested a paper ballot will receive one soon if they have not already. However, all members are asked to consider voting online instead. By doing so, you will save time and postage, and ensure that your vote is received immediately.



For a list of candidates, their biographies, and the positions for which they are running, visit the [STC's election website](#).

Online voting closes April 14, 2008, at 12:00 noon, EST

If you have any questions, please contact Publications Manager Ed Rutkowski at: ed@stc.org.

XML Using FrameMaker

By Arun Jain

As more and more companies embrace XML-based documentation, a key dilemma revolves around the choice of tool for authoring XML content. Up until now, the mainstream authoring tools did not provide adequate support for developing XML documentation. Technical writers had to pick from one of many exotic tools that requires immense investment of dollars and time. This has been one of the biggest impediments in the adoption of XML.

With Release 8, FrameMaker has become one of the first mainstream authoring tools to provide complete capabilities to develop, publish, and maintain XML documentation. Although previous versions of FrameMaker provided some support for XML, they were missing some key capabilities.

FrameMaker 8 adds new key capabilities, such as integrated DITA support, CSS import, and processing instructions. A vast number of technical writers, who already know FrameMaker can now develop XML using a tool they already own and use. We believe that this will serve as a watershed event in the adoption of XML for technical documentation.

Summarized here are the XML capabilities of FrameMaker 8, which make it a viable tool for developing XML content. We will briefly review the following topics:

1. Creating XML Content
2. Reusing Tagging Rules and Formatting Style
3. Converting Existing Unstructured Content to XML
4. Reusing and Repurposing Existing XML Content
5. Authoring DITA Content
6. Publishing DITA Content in Multiple Formats
7. Adding New XML Features Using FDK
8. Getting Started by Using FrameMaker 8 Help

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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

STACIES Celebrate Accomplishments

By Katie Lesesne

Over 100 technical communicators, writers, content developers, artists, and editors gathered at the Hilton Garden Inn in Burlington, MA on February 27th to celebrate excellence among their peers in the annual STACIES awards ceremony.

The speaker for the evening was Cheryl Landes who spoke on the benefits of entering and judging competition based on her experience as both an entrant and a judge at STC competitions. The rewards she shared from entering competitions include receiving helpful, useful, constructive feedback from your peers in technical communication and improving your technical and marketing pieces by incorporating the feedback of your peers. Landes has entered pieces in the STACIES competition in 1994, 2002, 2006, and this year. In 2006, Landes' entry, *Laboratory Sourcebook*, received both an Award of Distinction in Technical Publications and Best of Show. In this year's competition, Landes' work for Phoenix Controls Corporation, *Phoenix Controls Aids Patient Healing at City of Hope National Medical Center*, received an Award of Distinction.

Landes has helped judge for the Boston Chapter STACIES competition between 2004 and 2007. In 2006, she also judged technical art for the Puget Sound Chapter. Some benefits Landes said she gained from judging include: gaining experience in constructively evaluating others' work which helps to improve your communication skills, and gathering new ideas that you can incorporate into your own projects.

The BossTunes, who have performed at the STC-Boston Chapter's events since 2003, provided the entertainment for the evening. The members of the group are Anna V. Pratt, Hans Fenstermacher, Steve Jong, Taryn Light, Val Rushanan, and Ed Marshall. They performed several songs including "Fugue for Writers and Editors," a song adapted from music taken from *Guys and Dolls*, "Peel Me a Grape" and an original song entitled, "Can You Sleep Tonight." All members of the group are also members of the STC-Boston Chapter.

And the winners are ...

Awards of Merit Online Communication Competition

Autodesk, Inc.

Revit Architecture 2008 Imperial Tutorials - James Cowan, Andra Serzans, Angela Visco

BAE Systems

Hearing Conversation - Bruce Flower, Suzanne Russo, Loui Welby

Platform Solutions Divestiture - Cheryl Egan, Grace Spaminato, MMS Web Team

United to Serve - 2007 Electronic Warfare Incentive Program - Rachel Heneault, John Libby, Loui Welby

Hewlett-Packard Company

Linux - HP Integrity Servers (Presales) - WBT - Al Lanseigne

HP iPAQ 500 Voice Messenger Series Service and Support - Alice Jacobson, Jacki-Ann Roy, Sandra Williams

Progress Software Corporation

Using JMS in OpenEdge - Elaine Rosenberg

Telerik, Inc.

RadChart v4.0 Development Manual - Nikolay Debrev, Noel Rice

Reporting Development Manual - Nikolay Dobrev, Noel Rice, Dimitre Taslakov

Waters Corporation

FractionLynx Online Information System - Jeanne Monahan

Technical Art Competition

BAE Systems

Aviation Week and Space Technology Cover for High Powered Microwave Devices - Ron Allbach, Phil Fogg, Loui Welby

Technical Publications Competition

Children's Hospital Boston

ISD News - Andrew Clark, Kim Forbes, Clare Kiley

Cisco Systems, Inc.

Cisco AnyConnect VPN Client Administrator Guide - Shirley Boulay, Thomas F. Martin, Marguerite Krupp

Oss Integration Guide for the Cisco Mobile Wireless Transport Manager, Release 6.0 - Judy Askari, Harry Bryant, Lynn Dalton, Susan Sarkes

CT TyMetrix

Adding Matters - Steve Clark

CT Matter Metrix Member Management User Guide - Steve Clark, Maura O'Leary

CT TyMetrix 360 Budgets and Forecasts User Guide - Steve Clark, Maura O'Leary



EqualLogic, Inc.

PS 3000 Series QuickStart - Karla Sorenson

Liberty Mutual

From Research to Reality - Joanne D. Bangs, Jo-Ellen McCarrick, Dianne Morgado

MathWorks

SimHydraulics User's Guide - Barbara Bailey, Helen J. Eventov

Polycom, Inc.

User's Guide for the Polycom PowerCam Presenter - Mona Cocciardi

Windmill International, Inc.

Recruiting Tri-Fold - Len Costa, Deb McNally

Awards of Excellence

Online Communication Competition

Autodesk, Inc.

New Features Workshop - James Cowan, Scott R. Davis, Andra Serzans

Autodesk Quantity Takeoff 2008 Online Help - Angela Visco

Children's Hospital Boston

PeopleSoft Payrate - Andrew Clark, Kim Forges, Clare Kiley

The Hartford

Personal Lines Policy Change Center Guided Tour - Pam Greigore, Deanne Kelly, Sheila Owens

Quote Marine - Motor Truck Cargo Demo - Alison Bridges, Marty Leonard, Sanna Malloy

Hewlett-Packard Company

HP Global Methods for Application Services: Testing Lifecycle - Cheryl Carey, Rajat Patnabish, Rahul Singh

HP Compaq Thin Client Fundamentals - Michael Dwyer, Gerard Martin

Open VMS Basics for System Managers - WBT - Al Lanseign, Tara Pangakis

Progress Software Corporation

SOAP for OpenEdge Developers - Elaine Rosenberg

RSA, Security Division of EMC

RSA Authentication Manager 7.0 Help - Rebecca Batchelder, Kevin Kyle, Barbara DiStefano

Waters Corporation

Empower 2 Method Validation Manager Help - Rhonda Bengiovanni, Jeanne Monahan, Karen Wojciak

Technical Art Competition

BAE Systems

Dependable - Innovative - Ron Albach, Phil Fogg, Loui Welby



KVH Industries, Inc.

Intra-Convoy Communications Quick Reference Guide - James Dyson

Telerik, Inc.

Telerik Q2 Release Hype Game - Nikolay Dobrev, Dimitre Taslavkov

Technical Publications Competition

Autodesk, Inc.

Moving from Land Desktop to Civil 3D - Beth Ann Paul, Paula Bedard

Blackstone Medical

Trinity Multipotential Cellular Bone Matrix Technical Monograph - Bob Demetrius, Raymond J. Linovitz, M.D., Loren Walker, M.S.

CT TyMetrix

CT TyMetrix 360 Basic Tools User Guide - Steve Clark, Maura O' Leary

EqualLogic, Inc

SAN Setup Poster - Kristen Abbott, Karla Sorenson

Imprivata

OneSign Documentation Set - Imran Malek, Colleen Norton, Johan Sgamato

Polycom, Inc.

Setting Up the Polycom PowerCam Presenter - Mona Cocciardi

Progress Software Corporation

Building EasyAsk Data Search & Query Applications - Peter Tran

State Street Corporation

My State Street Interactive Viewer Desktop Reference - Maryann Bolsover, Janet Morrissey

Sun Microsystems, Inc.

Sun StorageTek 5800 System Administration Guide - Lori Adams, Sue Blumenberg, Dany Galgani

Windmill International, Inc.

In the Wind - Gary Davis, Jon Katz, Deb McNally

Awards of Distinction

Online Communication Competition

Autodesk, Inc.

AutoCad Architecture 2008 Imperial Tutorials - Lisa McCarty, Andra Serzans, Angela Visco

Dynamics Research Corporation

Ohio SACWIS Online Help - Steve Crump, Mary Elizabeth Gehres, Leakhana Penn

The Hartford

Commercial Lines ExpressWay Demo - Alison Bridges, Marty Leonard, Sanna Malloy, James Scott

Progress Software Corporation

OpenEdge 10.1B Product Tour - Progress eLearning Development Team

Waters Corporation

Connections INSIGHT Remote Intelligent Service: Customer Overview, How it Works, and Installation - Esther Donlon, Brian San Souci

Technical Art Competition

BAE Systems

We Protect Those Who Protect Us - Ron Allbach, Phil Fogg, Doris Mills, Loui Welby

Technical Publications Competition

Cisco Systems, Inc.

User Guide for Mobile Wireless Transport Manager, Release 6.0 - Harry Bryant, Susan Conaghan, Lynn Dalton, Eddie Owens, Susan Sarkes

Insulet Corporation

OmniPod Insulin Management System User Guide - Iesa Figueroa, Cynthia M. Shaler, Rick Miranda, Robert Campbell

KVH Industries, Inc.

TracVision M5/M7 User's Guide - Control Panel Configuration - James Dyson

TracVision M7 Installation Guide - Michael Nelson

MathWorks

Getting Started with System Identification Toolbox - Ena Arel

Phoenix Controls Corporation

Phoenix Controls Aids Patient Healing at City of Hope National Medical Center - Donna Ford, Cheryl Landes, Mike Soper

UNH - EOS

EOS Spheres - Kristi Donahue, David Sims

Best of Show

Online Communication Competition

Dynamics Research Corporation

Ohio SACWIS Online Help - Steve Crump, Mary Elizabeth Gehres, Leakhana Penn

Technical Art Competition

BAE Systems

We Protect Those Who Protect Us - Ron Allbach, Phil Fogg, Doris Mills, Loui Welby



Technical Publications Competitions

Insulet Corporation

OmniPod Insulin Management System User Guide - Iesa Figueroa, Cynthia M. Shaler, Rick Miranda, Robert Campbell



Register Now for the STC's Annual Technical Communication Summit

Join fellow technical communication professionals in the "City of Brotherly Love", Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for this year's Technical Communication Summit.

Featuring over 130 education sessions ranging in topics from *Applying Research and Theory Practice to Producing and Publishing Information*, this year's Summit will feature keynote speaker author and technology consultant Howard Rheingold.

Rheingold is credited with inventing the term "virtual communities." He served as the founding Executive Editor of Wired magazine's HotWired, the first commercial Webzine to introduce the Web-based discussion forum and online banner. Electric Minds, the Web site he founded in 1996, was named one of Time magazine's "Best Web sites of 1996."

For more information on Summit events and to register, visit:

<http://www.stc.org/55thConf/index.asp>



1. Creating XML Content

Writing under Guidance

Creating XML content in FrameMaker 8 is similar to creating regular structured content in FrameMaker. You don't really need to master the XML syntax. You will work with the familiar WYSIWYG interface and the "guided editing" feature of FrameMaker 8.

Working with existing XML files

When you open an XML file in FrameMaker 8, you need to handle many of the other types of files associated with that XML file, such as:

- DTD or schema files
- FrameMaker templates
- Read/write rules files

FrameMaker 8 allows you to group all such related files and other configuration settings for different types of XML files into a structured application.

FrameMaker 8 provides several, ready-to-use, structured applications for common documents. You can use these structured applications or modify them to meet your own authoring and publishing requirements.

Validating XML Content

You can validate the XML content to ensure that it is well-formed and valid against the appropriate DTD or XML schema. After writing and tagging the XML content, you can save it in a standards-compliant XML file.

2. Reusing Tagging Rules and Formatting Styles

Reusing Tagging Rules

In XML technology, the tags and the rules to apply the tags on the content are defined in text files such as DTDs and schemas. FrameMaker 8 allows you to convert DTDs and schemas from/to EDDs.

Reusing Content Presentation Styles

Style sheets, such as CSS files, contain formatting rules for XML files. XML files are formatted by linking CSS files with the XML files. FrameMaker 8 allows you to import/export formatting rules from CSS to EDD, and vice versa.

3. Converting Existing Unstructured Content to XML

FrameMaker 8 provides the capability to convert existing content to XML. The basic approach is to indicate which XML tag to apply, based on its specific formatting style. For example, <para> tag to the content with "body" formatting style. FrameMaker 8 provides built-in conversion tables to specify how to translate paragraph styles into a structured hierarchy of tags.

However, in some cases, conversion tables may not be sufficient to convert the entire content to structured format. In such cases, FDK (FrameMaker API) for FrameMaker 8 can be used to programmatically convert the content to XML.

4. Reusing and Repurposing Existing XML Content

You can merge, split, change, or re-organize existing XML content by applying XSLT transformations. Transformation rules for specific tags and their attribute values are defined in XSLT. Once the transformation is applied, you get a new XML file that meets your specific needs.

FrameMaker 8 allows you to apply an XSLT transformation when opening or saving an XML document. For example, you can automatically sort glossary entries when saving a file, or convert XML to WML (Wireless Markup Language) for display on small-screen devices.

5. Authoring DITA Content

Working with DITA requires creating content as "topics." Topics are small units of information that can exist independently and convey meaning without depending on other units. Task, Concept, and Reference are the three basic types of topics. The final content is created by linking DITA topics via DITA maps. The DITA model is ideal for reusing or repurposing XML Content.



FrameMaker 8 provides a feature-rich and user-friendly environment for creating DITA-compliant XML content. You can create Task, Concept, or Reference topics. You can also create DITA maps by linking the topics together. These DITA Map files can be used in FrameMaker 8 to publish content in formats, such as PDF or HTML. FrameMaker 8 provides several ready-to-use templates to publish your documents.

6. Publishing DITA Content in Multiple Formats

By integrating FrameMaker 8 with DITA Open Toolkit, you can publish your DITA-compliant XML content in multiple formats. The formats supported include:

- PDF
- RTF (MS Word)
- XHTML
- HTML Help (CHM)
- JavaHelp

7. Adding New XML Features by Using FDK

FrameMaker 8 provides API's called Frame Development Kit (FDK). By using the FDK and writing software programs (FDK clients), there are unlimited possibilities for adding new XML features to FrameMaker 8. For example, you can automate conversion of any kind of unstructured documents into XML by writing FDK clients.

8. Getting Started by Using FrameMaker 8 Help

FrameMaker 8 provides lots of “getting started” support, such as:

- The *XML Cookbook* that gives you a jump-start at designing and implementing a structured authoring system.
- A white paper, *Migrating from Unstructured to Structured FrameMaker*, to guide you in the migration from an unstructured workflow to a structured one.

In Summary

If you already work with FrameMaker, FrameMaker 8 becomes an easy option to take you from unstructured authoring to a world of XML and DITA.

Arun Jain is the Founder and President of Bay State Documentation (www.BayStateDocs.com), a Boston area company that provides technical documentation services. He can be reached at ajain@BayStateDocs.com.

This article is an abridged version of the whitepaper XML Using FrameMaker. The white paper in its entirety is available for download at: <http://www.baystatedocs.com/xmlusingframemaker.html>

Chapter Renewal Challenge

STC is excited to announce the 2008 membership renewal challenge designed to support chapters’ renewal efforts with a variety of incentives.

The chapters in each size category that obtain the highest renewal rate by March 31 will receive four free registrations for the Technical Communication Summit, to be held June 1–4, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Other prizes will also be distributed.

To compete in the challenge, a chapter must reach a renewal rate of 71 percent. In case of a tie, a drawing will be held to determine the winner. Winning percentages include all members who have already renewed this year.

Chapter size categories are:

- Category 1 (601 or more members)
- Category 2 (301 to 600 members)
- Category 3 (151 to 300 members)
- Category 4 (76 to 150 members)
- Category 5 (41 to 75 members)
- Category 6 (15 to 40 members)



How is the Boston Chapter doing? As of March 14, Boston was in first place at 58.56 percent, just ahead of the Silicon Valley Chapter which was at 56.36 percent. [Click here](#) for the latest race results.

STC will honor the chapters with the highest retention rate at June’s Technical Communication Summit.

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:

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- Arun Jain
- Katie Lesesne
- Ellen Lidington
- Neil Perlin

Thank you, everyone!



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 e-mail to: boston.broadside@gmail.com

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