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From the Boston Chapter President

By Arun Jain



On behalf of the incoming council, I want to welcome you to our 2009–2010 Chapter year. I am honored to serve as your President this year and look forward to

working with you to get through these trying times.

Following our past practices, I plan to provide an update on Chapter activities in every *Broadside* issue for the next year. For special topics, you may hear from me via the STCINFO bulletin. For my first update, I want to start out with a reflection on last year and briefly discuss our goals and objectives for the upcoming year.

The Past Year

The past year has been an extremely challenging one—economically and on the jobs front. Normally, we run one or two job-related programs every Chapter year. Given the tough job market, we held four, including two that were free for our members. And despite the dark economic climate, STC-Boston had a very successful year. We had a

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Be Interesting or Be Invisible: Seven Ideas for Marketing Yourself

By Cheryl Landes, STC Associate Fellow, Senior Member, STC-Boston and Puget Sound Chapters

In an economic downturn, where the supply of technical communicators outweighs demand, convincing managers to hire us or selling our freelance services to clients is more challenging than ever. At times, the task might feel downright daunting. Instead of feeling overwhelmed, we should seize this challenge as an opportunity—one in which we can discover creative ways for promoting ourselves.

Kyle Warnick, Group Marketing Manager for the Surface Computing team at Microsoft, has a solution: “Be interesting or be invisible.” “When we’re looking for a job or are promoting our services, we must think of ourselves as unique products,” he stressed in his keynote address at the annual PR Jumpstart, sponsored by the Puget Sound Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America on April 2 at Seattle Pacific University. Although his comments were targeted towards people interested in breaking into public relations, these apply to technical communicators as well.

Warnick has seven ideas to make ourselves interesting and visible:

1. Think of yourself as a brand.

“Successful people think of themselves as a brand,” Warnick said. “They don’t think of themselves as cogs in wheels.”

A brand is “very well thought out,” Warnick said. “It’s planned.” For example, when people see Rachael Ray, they have an immediate perception of who she is and what she represents. At the same time, she’s authentic. She understands who she is. This is her branding.

The biggest mistake anyone can make is “not being authentic,” Warnick said. He advises against “telling them the things they want to hear. Tell them about what you want them to know about you, your opinion, and talk about it.”

2. Network “like hell.”

Ask for help, but give back. “Don’t be cheesy,” Warnick said. “Be true to yourself. You know how you operate, how you think. Make that clear to people.”

When someone helps you, always follow up with a thank-you note. Warnick recommended handwriting a thank-you note and mailing it to the helper, because it’s more personal than e-mail. Most people appreciate that someone would actually take the time to write a note in longhand and mail it to them. This creates a lasting impression.

3. Tell good stories well.

“Telling a poor story isn’t a story anymore,” Warnick said. “If you think of a unique way to tell a story, you’ll get a response.” Warnick’s examples of great storytellers are David Sedaris, George Lucas (the creator of Star Wars), Walt Disney, and Bob Dylan. When anyone sees or hears these men’s names, they’re recognized instantly because of their storytelling talents.

4. Start a blog.

“Have an opinion about something,” Warnick said “Have a point of view.” He recommended the blog of Jeffrey Overstreet, a novelist and award-winning film reviewer, as an excellent example of how to express an opinion (see <http://lookingcloser.org>).

Be Yourself, continued on page 2

total of 20 programs, SIGs, and workshops, and our attendance was up by almost 43%.

A lot of people worked very hard to contribute to this success, but let me take the opportunity to specifically thank Pam Sarantos, whose leadership made all of this possible. Pam worked extremely hard, sometimes at the expense of her day job, and brought in tremendous energy that inspired all of us. Thank you, Pam, for your contributions. And thanks also for organizing a fantastic end-of-year event—I know it took a lot of hard work to make it happen.

The Coming Year

Although there are signs of economic recovery, the job market remains sluggish for now. Because of the economy, we intend to remain focused on job-related issues for this year as well. Some of the other areas of focus include the following:

- Continuation of our frequent communication via the *Broadside*, periodic newsletters and online surveys
- Strong programs, workshops, and SIGs, especially in the area of jobs
- Reinvigoration of our sponsorship activities and reaching out to sponsors who have typically not participated in our programs
- A more active membership campaign

Another area of challenge in the coming year relates to the Society's financial crisis. In brief, the economic downturn has hit the Society's finances hard, and they are experiencing record losses this year—and perhaps for future years as well. Several options are under consideration to expand revenue and cut costs. These deliberations have just started and will go on for some time; we will provide a separate update later.

And finally, here is the list of leaders for various programs and offices for this year:

- *Programs (including workshops and SIGs)*: Rick Lippincott
- *Sponsorship*: Jon Baker
- *Membership*: Bill Gruener
- *PR*: Linda Fritz
- *Web*: Ellen Lidington
- *Student Outreach*: Pam Sarantos
- *Broadside*: Sharon Popovsky
- *Competitions*: Mark Decker

5. Volunteer, but go beyond simply doing the assigned tasks.

"Do unique things when you're volunteering," Warnick said. Maybe the organization needs a special project completed. The organization hasn't thought about doing it, but you have the skills to do it. Approach the organization and offer to finish it. Then do it. You get some great experience, a recommendation, and a referral. "These organizations are really thin," Warnick says, so they'll appreciate what you've done.

Here's an example for the *Friends of Heybrook Ridge* in Index, a tiny town in the central Washington Cascade Mountains. This non-profit organization formed when a logging company, which owned the Heybrook Ridge property above the town, planned to clear-cut the ridge. Since the town's watershed is on the ridge, clear-cutting posed a serious threat. Clear-cutting causes erosion, and the resulting debris enters the water supply.

To stop the operation, residents formed a nonprofit organization, *Friends of Heybrook Ridge*, in an attempt to raise \$1.3 million to purchase the ridge. The logging company placed the project on hold while the *Friends of Heybrook Ridge* attempted to raise the funds required to buy the property.

Donations trickled in, and the situation looked grim as the deadline loomed.

Finally, an anonymous donor who received an inheritance contacted the organization and offered to match, dollar for dollar, donations from other sources up to \$500,000. At the same time, Jan Wright, a founding member of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the American Society for Indexing (PNW/ASI), heard about the plight and began calling on all professional indexers to donate. (Shortly after the chapter was founded in 1996, PNW/ASI adopted the town because of its name.) Indexers from as far away as Egypt contributed. The unusual connection sparked the interest of Lynda Mapes, a reporter for the *Seattle Times*, who published an article about the fund-raising efforts that mentioned the indexers.

The *Friends of Heybrook Ridge* achieved its fund-raising goal and purchased the property in July 2008. In August, the Index City Council approved contributing money toward creating a new county park, the Heybrook Ridge Education and Recreation Area. The park will include interpretive trails on the ridge and an education center.

Professional indexers in the Pacific Northwest continue following the developments closely. When we learned that the *Friends of Heybrook Ridge* was redesigning its Web site, I volunteered to help write and edit marketing copy. So far, I have edited one piece, a statement from the local parks department. This volunteer work allows me to contribute my skills in marketing writing to a worthy cause and helps me gain experience in a new area of marketing writing—environmental preservation. It also expands my networking base.

6. Be current.

Stay updated on what's happening in your field. Also, keep abreast of trends in your field and others that spark your interest. Keeping updated on such trends demonstrates your expertise to employers and clients, and it can help freelancers identify new market niches.

7. Be unique, "tough to put down."

To illustrate this concept, Warnick showed a photo, a silhouette of Jim Henson talking to Kermit the Frog, from a sheet of stamps celebrating 50 years of the Muppets in entertainment in 2005. Henson sat on the floor in front of a large picture window with his back leaning against a wall and his knees bent. Kermit sat at attention on Henson's lap, looking directly at him. The contrast of the light outside the window and the dark room silhouetted Henson and the frog, but it was clear from the details available who they are. The intent look on Henson's face and Kermit staring at him appeared as though they were having a serious conversation. Henson was concerned about being photographed in this way, talking to a puppet.

President's Message, continued from page 2

- *Treasurer:* Paul Carlotto
- *Accountant:* Cindy Cookson
- *Job Bank Manager:* Barbara Casaly
- *Other Council Members:* Greg Bartlett and Ed Marshall

These people and many others who serve on their committees, are here to help you. Do reach out to them to provide ideas and suggestions and/or to participate on their committees.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to serve you—and please let me know if we can do anything to help you. You can reach me anytime at president@stcboston.org or (978) 852-7019.

STC's 56th Annual Technical Communication Summit

By Rick Lippincott

The STC's 56th annual Technical Communication Summit took place at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Atlanta, GA from May 3–6. The STC-Boston Chapter was recognized as a “Community of Excellence” at the conference, and three Boston Chapter members—Greg Bartlett, Linda Fritz, and Bill Gruener—were recognized for Distinguished Chapter Service.



Attendance at the conference was officially estimated at 800, significantly down from previous years. Despite the lower attendance, the conference still offered a wide variety of seminars and discussions on topics relevant to our profession. Hot topics this year centered around Wikis, DITA, structured content, and social networking. The energy level was high, and many people remarked that the smaller crowd actually allowed for closer networking opportunities.

Boston Chapter members who gave presentations during the conference included Ed Marshall, Leonor Ciarlone, Neil Perlin, and Valerie Rushanan.

On Monday morning, keynote speaker David Pogue entertained the crowd with his

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Henson's quote on the sheet of stamps read, “When I was young, my ambition was to be one of the people who made a difference in this world. My hope is to leave the world a little better for my having been there.” He was truly unique. He left behind a legacy with the Muppets that continues to educate children and entertain people of all ages.

As technical communicators, we are each unique. Despite our common skill—technical writing—we have different experiences and work in a variety of high-tech industries. We should be proud of our special talents. Why not leverage these talents into the next step of our careers or into some exciting freelance opportunities?



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Mapes, Lynda V. “Heybrook Ridge saved from clear-cutting.” *Seattle Times*, July 31, 2008. http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2008082919_heybrook31m0.html (accessed May 12, 2009).

U.S. Postal Service. “Jim Henson, Muppets, Get Stamps of Approval.” http://www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/2005/sr05_046.htm (accessed May 12, 2009). (The photo of Henson and Kermit is also published on this page.)

Cheryl Landes, an award-winning technical writer and STC Associate Fellow, is the owner of Tabby Cat Communications in Seattle. She has more than 18 years of experience as a technical writer in several industries: computer software, marine transportation, manufacturing, and the trade press. She is the past president of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the American Society for Indexing (PNW/ASI) and is active in the Society for Technical Communication on the chapter (Boston and Puget Sound) and international levels. She speaks frequently at STC and ASI meetings throughout the United States and Canada.

From the Bookshelf

By Cheryl Landes, STC Associate Fellow, Senior Member, STC-Boston and Puget Sound Chapters

Doumont, Jean-luc. *Trees, maps, and theorems: Effective communication for rational minds*. Kraainem, Belgium: Principiae, 2009.

Anyone who has heard Jean-luc Doumont speak at an STC international conference or the annual STC-Philadelphia Metro Chapter's conference knows about his passion for simplicity in technical communication. “Less is more.” is his mantra. In his latest book, *Trees, maps, and theorems: Effective communication for rational minds*, this theme is stronger than ever.

The book's focus is on how to communicate effectively—not only in writing, but also verbally and visually. To begin, Doumont defines effective communication in three simple words, “getting messages across.” Therefore, effective communication “is about an audience, and it suggests that we get this audience to understand something. To ensure that they understand it, we must first get them to pay attention.”

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Rick Lippincott and Arun Jain

address, “The Power of Simplicity,” and then followed up with a musical performance of a parody technical writing song. Monday evening, in place of an Open Jam, many members attended an informal “Tweetup” (gathering of Twitter users) at a pub near the Hyatt Regency.

At Tuesday night's banquet, outgoing STC President Mark Clifford made his final address and turned the reins over to incoming President Cindy Clifford. Chapters and individuals received recognition during this event.

The 2010 STC Summit will take place in Dallas, TX.

Writing Technical Information Certificate at Middlesex Community College (MCC)

Submitted by Sheila Morin

MCC's 125-hour Writing Technical Information Certificate is a career enhancement opportunity for individuals who have well-developed writing skills and want to improve their effectiveness in communicating technical information. Classes run one night per week on Thursdays and one Saturday per semester. Two courses are required for the certificate. Students may also take either course individually. For more information, please visit www.middlesex.mass.edu/careertraining/certificates/writingtechinfo.htm.

Writing and Managing Effective Information, Fall 2009

Do you want to learn how to effectively communicate technical information? Learn how to conduct audience and task analysis, work with subject matter experts, understand product documents and the product development cycle, write clear procedures, manage writing projects, and make content usable. Well-developed writing skills are recom-

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Doumont says that a “message” differs from information. Information is simply data; the details about a topic. A message interprets the information and tailors that information to a target audience for a specific reason. “It conveys the ‘so what,’ whereas information merely conveys the ‘what.’” Doumont says. As a result, “To communicate effectively, we must thus identify messages.”

Then Doumont introduces us to his three laws of communication:

- **Adapt to our audiences.** Audiences cannot be chosen; instead, we must accept them for who they are and optimize our communication for them.
- **Maximize the signal-to-noise ratio.** Noise can prevent a message and information from being received accurately. To maximize the impact of the message or information, we must reduce the noise as much as possible.
- **Use effective redundancy.** Since all noise cannot be filtered out, we can compensate by repeating messages several times or replicating it verbally and nonverbally.

From there, Doumont gives us principles and tips for planning, designing, creating, and delivering effective written documents, oral presentations, and graphical displays, followed by examples of how to apply his principles. The examples he uses are instructions, e-mails, Web sites, meeting reports, and scientific posters.

As with all his presentations at conferences, Doumont gives us exactly the information we need to create effective communication for various media in his book—no more, no less. He practices what he preaches. His simple, straightforward tips and principles are useful in any type of communication, making this book a valuable resource for any technical communicator's library.

Freedman, Marc. *Encore: Finding Work that Matters in the Second Half of Life*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2007.

“Human development doesn't end with adulthood. Later years bring changes that increase the desire of many for meaningful roles, particularly work that lets them pass on what they know to others (Freedman, p. 82).”

By 2030, more than one in four Americans will be age 60 or older. This generation will live longer than any of their predecessors. They're more active and don't want to retire to a rocking chair. In fact, many don't want to retire at all. Instead, they want to turn a dream into a second career or give something back to their communities or the world.

Welcome to the world of encore careers. Baby boomers in growing numbers are at the peak of their professions. They've advanced as far as possible. Many are disillusioned, wondering if there's a greater purpose in life. Others want to plan for their perceptions of retirement and remain active.

Freedman's book, *Encore: Finding Work that Matters in the Second Half of Life*, introduces readers to this new movement. It's the story of people who took the plunge, who are now “living out a distinct and compelling vision of work in the second half of life, one built around the dream of an ‘encore career’ at the intersection of continued income, new meaning, and significant contribution to the greater good.”

Throughout the book, Freedman tells stories of people who are pursuing those encore careers and succeeding at them. There's Robert Chambers, who stopped working as a used car salesman to help low-income people buy reliable, fuel-efficient cars. Ed Speedling resigned as a hospital executive to work with homeless people in Philadelphia. Sandra Sessoms-Penny became a teacher after retiring from the military. To combine her passions for pastoral and environmental work, Sally Bingham enrolled in college in her fifties and became an Episcopal priest.

In a comprehensive appendix, Freedman gives readers considering encore careers tips for entering this world. He starts by encouraging readers to ask themselves a few questions to determine whether they're ready for an encore career:

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mended for this course. This course is not eligible for waivers or vouchers.
Tuition: \$1,499 (64 hours).

5:45–9:45pm

Thurs., Oct. 1, 2009–Thurs., Jan. 21, 2010
(An additional class meeting is scheduled on a Saturday: TBA)
91 Springs Road, Bedford campus,
Building 1, AR–108

Application Deadline: September 24, 2009
For application details, please visit
www.middlesex.mass.edu/careertraining/certificates/writingtechinfo.htm

Authoring and Distributing Technical Documents, Winter/Spring 2010

Are you responsible for writing technical documents? Do you want to learn how to effectively author and distribute usable information using industry-standard tools? Join us for this 15-week course and learn the introductory skills needed to make information usable, create books and PDF files using Adobe FrameMaker, design a Web page, create an online help system, and convert HTML to XML. Well-developed writing skills and familiarity with technical documentation and MS Office are recommended for this course. This course is not eligible for waivers or vouchers. Tuition: \$1,499 (62 hours). Instructor: Andrew Harrington

February–June 2010; Thursday nights
Dates: TBA

To register, call 1-800-818-3434. For more information on noncredit courses and policies, please refer to the complete course schedule or contact Sheila Morin at 978-656-3416.

Creative Freelance Conference

Submitted by Cheryl Landes

Creative Freelancer Conference
August 26–28, 2009
Omni San Diego Hotel, San Diego, CA

Are you an independent contractor looking for new ways to market yourself? Or are you a regular, full-time employee who wants to become your own boss? If you answered “yes” to either of these questions, this conference is for you.

Now in its second year, the Creative Freelancer Conference, sponsored by *HOW Conference*, continued on page 6

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- How would you like to spend the next five, ten, or twenty years?
- What community or national or global problems motivate you to act?
- How much income do you need to earn?
- Do you want to stay in the same field or explore something new?
- Do you want to start your own organization or work for an existing one?
- Are you willing and able to go back to school and get other training?

After answering these questions, Freedman says to consider whether you want to be a career recycler, career changer, or career maker. Career recyclers transfer their expertise from one field to another. Career changers start over: They “thrive on the uncertainty and excitement of starting fresh.” Career makers turn a lifetime interest into a job that helps others.

Next, Freedman suggests thinking hard about your own motivations on what makes you happy. What are your reasons for working, aside from earning a salary? Think about compensation in a new way, as doing something to be fulfilled instead of earning a high salary.

When you are moving into an encore career, sell your experience as an asset. Focus on qualities like reliability, good judgment, problem-solving, negotiation skills, and your ability to listen. Also, stress that people in different age groups bring different and valuable life experiences and perspectives to a team, which enhance diversity.

Look for career ideas in fields that motivate you, such as health care, education, aging, government, and the nonprofit sector. When you find one, ease your way in with an internship, part-time job, or by volunteering. Freedman includes a list of Web sites where you can search for jobs in these sectors.

Freedman's last tip is to consider a career as a social entrepreneur. According to the Skoll Foundation, these entrepreneurs “are proven leaders whose approaches and solutions to social problems are helping to better the lives and circumstances of countless underserved or disadvantaged individuals.”

If you're preparing for a second chapter of your professional life or are simply thinking about it, *Encore* is a great guide for launching your journey and enjoying the rewards.

Howell, Lorraine. *Give Your Elevator Speech a Lift!* Bothell, WA: Book Publishers Network, 2006.

Three years ago, during a cross-country drive from Boston to Seattle, I stopped at the boyhood home of Almonzo Wilder, husband of Laura Ingalls Wilder in the popular *Little House on the Prairie* series, in Malone, New York. While exploring this small farm, I met a couple from Pennsylvania. We chatted for a while, and eventually the husband asked, “What do you do?”

“I'm a technical writer,” I replied. “I write manuals for computer programs and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment.”

The husband and his wife looked perplexed, as they nodded and smiled.

“I write instructions on how to use computer software and equipment,” I clarified.

“Oh,” the husband responded, but still looked confused. So did his wife.

Then I tried a different strategy. I said, “I write the manuals that no one wants to read.”

They laughed. “OK, that makes sense,” the husband replied.

As technical communicators, we understand what we do, but how do we explain this to others clearly and concisely—especially to someone who doesn't know what a technical communicator is? While this task may seem daunting, it is possible with Lorraine Howell's tips in her book, *Give Your Elevator Speech a Lift!*

Howell, founder and owner of Media Skills Training in Seattle (<http://www.mediaskillstraining.com>), trains professionals on how to communicate effectively with the media.

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Conference, continued from page 5

Magazine and *Marketing Mentor*, provides tips on how veteran freelancers, or “solopreneurs,” can grow their businesses, even in this tough economy. Also, new freelancers or those who want to launch their own businesses, will receive a lot of practical advice on how to get started.

Topics to be addressed during this conference include:

- Taxes for solopreneurs
- Creating and submitting proposals for work
- Tips for giving effective presentations
- Marketing effectively through social media
- Dealing with difficult clients



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As part of her training, she teaches students to perfect their “elevator speeches,” answering that all-important question, “What do you do?” A polished answer to this question boosts your confidence and demonstrates your ability to communicate effectively with a broad range of audiences.

To hone and polish your elevator speech, Howell has developed a list of 10 questions to answer:

1. Who is your target audience?
2. What do they care about?
3. Why should they do business with you, meaning WIIFT (What's in It for Them)?
4. What do you do? What results do you provide?
5. What are you selling? (How do you want people to feel when they work with you?)
6. What “spins your jets” about your business? (What are you passionate about?)
7. What do you do better than anyone else? (What is your specialty?)
8. What would your best clients or customers say about you?
9. Can you give an example of one successful project?
10. What do you want people to remember about you and your service?

When you answer these questions, condense your answers into a response that you can finish in 30 seconds. While you're condensing, think as though you're talking to a news reporter who is limited on time and needs the information quickly. You want to capture the reporter's interest, but also give the reporter the details he or she needs to make a decision—in this case, to sell yourself for landing a new client, adding connections to your network, or attracting a hiring manager's attention.

As technical communicators, we should develop several versions of elevator speeches, designed for different audiences. For example, if you meet an I.T. manager in that mythical elevator, your response to “What do you do?” would be much different than if you meet a chef. The I.T. manager already has some knowledge about a technical communicator's role, so your reply would take into consideration that manager's level of understanding. A chef probably doesn't know what a technical communicator is, so your response would be tailored toward his or her unfamiliarity with your field.

Perfecting our elevator speech is important, especially during this economic downturn. We all need to market ourselves, regardless of what we're doing. Promoting ourselves, whether we're employed or looking for work, should be an ongoing process. *Give Your Elevator Speech a Lift!* is an excellent guide for achieving that first crucial step in self-promotion.

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

STC-Boston Chapter

www.stcboston.org

Kupka, Lorraine and Joy Underhill. *Five Steps to MadCap Flare*. Rochester, NY: WME Books, 2009.

I remember my first Flare project with the fondness of a root canal. At times, I longed for the root canal. It was in the early days of Flare when, as a regular, full-time lone writer employee of a manufacturing company in Massachusetts, I had to complete a 500-topic help system in less than a month, on top of all of my other duties. By the time this project started, I had attended a half dozen demos of Flare at various STC meetings, and my supervisor had approved the purchase of Flare shortly thereafter. The demos looked simple, so how hard could using Flare be?

Oh, my! As a veteran RoboHelp user (more than 10 years at that point), my learning curve for Flare was much higher than I expected. I struggled through the program, writing topics and developing the help structure as the deadline loomed. My final output, which I am not proud to share, was a mess. We had to release the help system as is, because I didn't have time to fix anything.

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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

Sharon Popovsky
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Karlyne Hutchings
Copy Editor

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This Issue's Contributors:

Arun Jain

Cheryl Landes

Richard Lippincott

Sheila Morin

Pamela Sarantos

Thank you, everyone!

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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

By submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to this newsletter to run the article and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. Copyright is held by the writer. In your cover letter, please let the editor know if this article has run elsewhere, and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications.

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So when Joy Underhill posted a request for help authors to review hers and Lorraine Kupka's new book, *Five Steps to MadCap Flare*, I replied immediately. I hadn't seen a published book yet that would guide users through the maze of features in Flare and how to set up a help project. They selected me as one of the reviewers, and when I received the book and read it, I wished that such a guide had been available when I labored through that first Flare project.

Five Steps to MadCap Flare walks readers through all of the necessary steps to create and compile a complete help project. Before Underhill and Kupka present the first step, they cover all of the basics, from defining the term, topic-based authoring, to giving a tour of the Flare interface. They even include a table that provides tips on when to use these help formats: DotNet Help, HTML Help, WebHelp, WebHelp Plus, and WebHelp AIR.

Underhill and Kupka's five steps to a finished Flare project are:

- **Getting started:** Planning a project and understanding the basic tasks, such as creating a Flare project; adding, previewing, and opening topics; spell check; adding targets; saving files; creating a document template
- **Learning the XML editor:** Working with text in the XML editor; viewing tags, cursors, text blocks and layout modes; saving projects
- **Developing content:** Copying and pasting text; deleting topics; working with lists, tables, images, symbols, and special characters; formatting topics
- **Creating navigational aids:** Creating tables of contents, links, cross-references, and index entries
- **Creating print and online output:** Types of print and online output; creating print and online documents; formatting print output; troubleshooting and testing online output; distributing online documents

Each of these steps is illustrated with ample screen shots so readers can follow along as they create their own Flare projects and not become lost in the process. There's also a detailed appendix with troubleshooting tips in case users encounter glitches along the way. Other appendices include tips for planning worksheets for help projects, importing content from other file formats into Flare, and comprehensive references for the XML editor, single-sourcing, and context-sensitive help.

Five Steps to MadCap Flare is an excellent guide for the first-time Flare user to start and finish that initial project successfully and painlessly. For those who have more experience, it's an essential resource that they'll refer to again and again.

Cheryl Landes, an award-winning technical writer and STC Associate Fellow, is the owner of Tabby Cat Communications in Seattle. She has more than 18 years of experience as a technical writer in several industries: computer software, marine transportation, manufacturing, and the trade press. She is the past president of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the American Society for Indexing (PNW/ASI) and is active in the Society for Technical Communication on the chapter (Boston and Puget Sound) and international levels. She speaks frequently at STC and ASI meetings throughout the United States and Canada.



Benefits of *Broadside* Advertising

By Pamela Sarantos

The STC-Boston chapter membership consists of over 500 people. Additionally, many non-members and members of other chapters also consistently check the STC-Boston Web site and read the *Boston Broadside*.

- Members and others on the STC-Boston mailing list are notified by email when a new issue of the *Broadside* is made available. A link makes access easy from the email.
- The *Broadside* is available online and easily accessible from the front page of the Web site.
- The newsletter remains available even after it is first published. Members can and do access the *Broadside* for many weeks after it is first made available.
- The *Broadside* rates provide many options that are suitable different advertising budgets.
- The *Broadside* rates include discounts for purchasing packs of four advertisements.



Rate Card for STC Boston Broadside

Size	One Time	Four Times	Three Times	Two Times
¼ Page	\$500	\$1500	\$1230	\$900
½ Page	\$700	\$2100	\$1722	\$1260
Full Page	\$850	\$2550	\$2091	\$1530
Button/Logo	\$100	\$300	\$246	\$180

Schedule

September, November, January, March, May, July