



Technicalities

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Summer 2005

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Technicalities

This site is best viewed with Internet Explorer 5x or newer.

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Technicalities is published bi-monthly by the Rocky Mountain Chapter (RMC) of the Society for Technical Communication (STC) and is distributed to chapter members, editors of other STC newsletters, and officers of the Society. It is available on request to anyone interested in technical communication. Other STC chapters and publications may reprint material if credit is given.

This newsletter invites writers to submit articles that they wish to be considered for publication.

Note: *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.*

Readers are encouraged to submit material on subjects of interest to Society and chapter members. Please credit repeated material and send a copy of the original material to: news@stcrmc.org.

The editor can be reached during the day at 303.405.8122, by e-mail at news@stcrmc.org, and by postal mail at 820 S. Monaco Pkwy. #286, Denver, CO 80224. Please submit electronic files in ASCII text format and include a telephone number where you can be reached. If you need to mail or fax articles and/or artwork, please contact the editor for a mailing address and fax number. The deadline for article submission is one month prior to issue release (first of the month, every other month).

The *Technicalities* staff reserves the right to edit articles for clarity and length; substantive editing of feature articles will be reviewed with the author prior to publication.

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Society for Technical Communication, Rocky Mountain Chapter

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Job Postings

Send job postings to jobs@stcrmc.org

Jobs are posted on the chapter website (http://www.stcrmc.org/jobs_freelance.jobs.htm), and are emailed to the techcomm-discuss mailing list.

Chapter website

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Review of the Consulting and Independent Contracting (CIC) Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting

by [Deb Lockwood](#)

Approximately 30 people attended the June 1, 2005, CIC SIG meeting at the Tivoli in Denver, where a panel of consulting and independent contracting experts answered questions about marketing and advertising strategies. The experts were Jeffrey Rowe of [Cairowest Group LLC](#),* Brian Berry of [Berry Technical Documentation](#), and Al Kemp of [Impact Technical Publications](#).

Linda Gallagher moderated and Whitney Broach captured the discussion by taking notes. This experts explained what worked for them and what consultants and independent contractors should consider as they developed their own marketing and advertising approaches.

A list of the questions and the panelists' responses follow. The questions appear in italics and the responses in normal text. The answers have been edited for the sake of brevity.

To set the context: Where is your practice based and how long have you been in business? Which industries, subject matter, and audiences best characterize your practice?

Jeffrey Rowe: His business started out as creating documentation, but then he developed the strategy of creating system requirements and performing usability testing. They all three go together. He has diverse clients with offices in Colorado and Detroit. Brian Berry: He has been an independent for 15 years, starting off using a typewriter. His office is in Steamboat Springs. Brian's background is in hardware, software, and programming. He works in numerous languages, medical equipment, making code readable, and data warehousing. Al Kemp: He has been in the documentation and technical marketing business for 17 years, and has created deliverables for sales configuration, software, hardware, and plastics extrusion for all kinds of audience.

Where are most of your clients located. Metro Denver? Colorado? USA? International?

AK: By choice, all of his clients are in the Denver metro area.

JR: His clients are in MA, IL, MI, and WI.

BB: His clients are in the Colorado Front Range; Bethlehem, Penn.; and San Antonio, Texas.

How much of your practice's revenue comes through networking leads vs. advertising leads?

BB: He does do advertising and cold calls, but 90%-95% of his work is from referrals and networking.

AK: His peer network generates about 65% and he doesn't cold call. He supports his network with targeted advertising, which generates about 20% of his work. Pure advertising is about 15%.

JR: He writes for engineering publications and various Web sites, which add up to about 300 articles per year. This provides "free" advertising and affords constant exposure.

Which advertising works best for you, and what trends and changes are underway?

JR: He has never formally advertised. The articles he writes drive inquiries.

AK: He tried direct mail brochures, but only his network responded. Now he just sends them to those he knows. He does not recommend using direct mail brochures. His Web site generates 10% of his business, a business telephone listing generates about 7%, and a Google ad generates 1%. His network is changing and moving, and is therefore hard to track. Plus the Web is constantly changing.

BB: He does not recommend direct mail. He does do cold calls to particular industries, which generates about 5%-7%. His Web site generates about 5-7% of business. The rest is by networking. He does not recommend direct mail or Yellow Page/Directory ads.

For every 10 leads you get through advertising, how many of those convert to billable work within a year?

BB: From his Web site, 5%-7% of calls generate work but he gets some profitable referrals. His advertising conversion ratio is 5%.

AK: Direct mail is 80%, Web is 50%, and a Google ad is 5%.

JR: 3%-5% of people want free advice, but you've got to cut them off. Determine if they have money and whether they will spend it.

What's your experience with leads from job or contract posting sites? Which have been more or less helpful?

AK: None have been helpful, not even STC or Boulder Writers Alliance (BWA). Some STC role tie-in.

JR: On Sundays he goes to the online job sites (e.g., Monster) looking for industry and geographical trends, such as Where are the jobs located? Monster.com has the best quality and quantity.

BB: He has gotten work through the job postings on our local STC chapter's Web site. He sends a brochure and follows up with a phone call.

On average, how much of a business month do you spend networking? What seasonality do you see in your business or your networking?

BB: About 2 days a month using e-mail and phone. He asks questions like the following: "How's it going?" "How are the kids?" "Why don't we do lunch?" There's no real seasonality.

JR: A day a week; no seasonality, but it's hard to do when you're busy.

AK: Two days a month. His experience has shown him that if he doesn't have a contract by November 15th, he won't get a job until the middle of January, so he must plan accordingly.

Is your networking mostly through face-to-face meetings or does it take other forms (e-mail discussion lists, presentations, speeches, etc.)?

AK: Lunch, formal networking, BWA, and meetings with various professional programmer's' associations. He has had no luck with social leisure groups.

JR: Formal is better, including trade shows, conferences, and golf. Golf has been an amazing strategy for him. Speaking in asides as people do on the course puts people at ease.

BB: Mix of formal (50%) and informal (50%). Ask questions and find out who is selling what. He likes this approach because it gets him into the business. Indirect leads are more common here, within the same company.

Which networking works the best for you: relatively formal, such as industry, trade and professional societies, or relatively informal, such as social, athletic or leisure groups? Why?

(Answered in previous question.)

What about functional or cross-functional networking: you can get a lead within the technical communication community (editor-to-writer, writer-to-artist, editor-to-translator), and you can get one cross-functionally (programmer-to-writer, product marketer-to-artist). Do you see more leads across functional lines or within them?

BB: To find out where the money is, do cross-functional by going to the programmers. At networking lunch groups, ask "How can I help your business?" Sell someone else's services and they will eventually sell yours.

AK: Functional (management) is 1/3 and cross-functional (programmers) is 2/3. It's someone else's overload.

JR: It's totally cross-functional: networking with marketing, programming, and management. Learning to find the right people is 3%-5% of it; talk in their terms, tell them what they need to hear because they appreciate this.

For every 10 leads you get through networking, how many of those convert to billable work within a year?

JR: 3%-5%

AK: 70% from networking; lower from all else.

BB: Advertising is 70% after response. (A response to the ad almost guarantees the job.) Networking is 10% with high payback. The rest are referrals.

How much is a referral worth? Under what circumstances, if any, do you compensate those who send you referrals? What do you think of

compensating for referrals based on a % of the project or a fixed amount?

JR: Rare; reciprocal referrals are more important.

AK: Never pad either way. 10% seems reasonable, but maybe 15%.

Compensation should be a percentage of collected revenue.

BB: Percentage never paid. He does send a thank you card with a dinner certificate or something like that for follow-up and closure. Constant marketing is valuable.

What other marketing/prospecting tools or methods have you used successfully to find projects?

Have you turned down an opportunity with a new prospect after an established client called them? What happened?

BB: He used direct mail for a while, and he regrets it. At Christmas time, he gives away little gifts to clients, and this has been a very effective strategy. He gets the items from specialty incentive stores. Coffee cups he gave one year with his logo and phone number generated 6 phone calls in 3 years, 3 of which were jobs.

AK: Quality work is a marketing tool. He will fund more quality in deliverables to get repeat business. Mediocrity kills the motion.

JR: Cold calls with a twist generated from online press releases. He reads between 100-150 press releases per day. (He uses 1,000 key words searched on each newswire every day [e.g., NPR News wire, Biz wire].) With those that generate a hit for his type of client, he calls the contact person named in the press release.

How do you handle networking and other business prospecting when you are already busy?

JR: Declined referrals to avoid a conflict of interest. Be candid with the client. Demonstrate integrity. Clients like that and they'll follow-up with you later. Remember that you don't have to like your client. But no matter what, keep your quality high.

AK: Some jobs aren't a good skills match. When they aren't, he doesn't hear from them again.

BB: Don't let referring clients perceive that you are not focused on them.

Do you have any other advice for us?

JR: Independent is better than working for someone else. He said that as you gain experience you want to remain independent. He receives 3-8 job offers a year. He has structured his business to fit his leisure. He feels more secure with a diverse resume base.

AK: He says he is not a good marketer.

BB: He thought he had to do marketing separately, but it's a continuum.

Never stop marketing. Carry your business cards everywhere; even on the ski lift.

Do you have employees working for you?

JR: He has never had employees, only subcontractors. For each job, he forms

a team for the project and then disbands the team when the job is complete.
AK: Never had employees, only subcontractors, and then mostly technical illustrators. He makes sure that the illustrators are great. He has subcontracted for others.

BB: He uses subcontractors (1099 situation) including programmers and illustrators, but no employees. Employee rules and laws are too scary.

Do you work on site or off site?

BB: Some clients want a little more visibility, so he can work on-site a few times, but not on-site permanently. He sees his clients on a regular basis, however. Tell the clients your preference. He has turned down jobs because of this issue.

AK: He always visits but off-site makes better political sense. If they want you on-site, they really want an employee.

JR: He goes on-site at first to build comfort, but then he works from home until they see him again for the project hand-off.

How is your company set up?

JR: LLC because it is less complex than a corporation.

AK: Sole proprietor.

BB: LLC now (newly formed LLC, and was previously a sole proprietor).

How often do you contact your clients?

JR: Contacts some clients monthly asking how the company is doing and checking to see how the last project went.

AK: He said less than he should. Two to four times a year for informal social networking is average.

BB: At minimum, one time a year. Christmas is ideal to talk to the client about what's going on in the new year.

What do you pay your subcontractors?

JR: Set up an hourly rate and pass it through from the company.

AK: Because he often does fixed bids, he sets the rate by the bid; essentially hourly. The markup for him to manage the projects is \$5 or so.

BB: Most projects are fixed bid, so he pays the subcontractors hourly. He doesn't report the subcontractors' pay to the clients. He makes 5%-10% for project management to cover insurance and time.

What types of professionals are in your support network?

BB: An accountant, but he keeps his own books. He has peers and mentors through STC that he uses to kick around technical problems.

AK: An accountant, an attorney, a marketing expert, and a FrameMaker guru.

JR: An attorney and accountant. He keeps his own expense records to project cash flow. Mentors are essential.

*As of the end of June, Rowe was revamping his company's Web site, thus making it unavailable. He said that it should be back up again shortly.



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Performance Technology: Going Beyond Documentation & Training (May Chapter Meeting Review)

by [Ron Arner](#)

The May chapter meeting provided a rare treat for STCRMCCers: Jane Smith, in town to conduct two instructional design seminars sponsored by the STCRMCC, led an open discussion on Performance Technology.

What is Performance Technology? Well, it's something that should happen before documentation and training. It's a way to determine the most effective solution to performance issues. To illustrate, a performance technologist would ask the following questions to analyze a performance issue: Is training alone needed? Should training be combined with other solutions? Should other solutions take the place of training altogether?

A good performance analysis process involves a series of investigations on the performance technologist's part, beginning with the identification of a triggering event. Here is a summary of the steps from beginning to end:

- Why is there a problem?
- What is its source?
- Identify the organizational goals and their optimal measurements.
- Identify the processes associated with the performance issue and their respective measurements of success.
- Identify the gaps.
- Identify the performance factors affecting the situation.
- Recommend solutions.

Smith then went on to discuss the above process in more detail, and shared with those present a case study involving a restaurant (the Rosarita Cafe) that utilized it and achieved tremendous results.

Smith and participating audience members concluded the evening with one very valuable piece of advice for all technical communicators: Be very cautious when recommending more than a 10% improvement — you don't want to "call someone's baby ugly!"

If you have any interest in becoming a Certified Performance Technologist, go

to: <http://www.ispi.org/>, the Website of the International Society for Performance Improvement.



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Trends and Issues in Information Architecture: April Chapter Meeting Review

by [Ron Arner](#)

The April Chapter Meeting was worth a year's worth of dues to the STC. In April Laurie Lamar presented a summary of the IA (Information Architecture) Summit, an annual event sponsored by the [American Society for Information Science and Technology](#). Over 400 professional from a variety of backgrounds attended this year's summit in Montreal.

What is information architecture? Technical communicators may compare it single-sourcing, or a way of chunking information so that it is more easily absorbed by one's audience. Unlike Tech Comm, however, IA historically tends to take a bottom-up approach to information processing, rather than a top-down one. IA has its roots in metadata, very similar to the information processing methods found in libraries.

Lamar detailed the differences between the top-down and bottom-up methods of IA (you can view a complete .pdf of her presentation at: <http://www.laurielamar.com/Trends-and-Issues-in-IA-2005-LaurieLamar.pdf>), often interspersing her presentation with hilarious comparisons from the not-so-technical world.

The last part of the evening consisted of some example Websites that had great IA qualities, and some that had not-so-great IA qualities, as well as a list of recommended books for anyone who is interested in exploring the topic further. If you have any interest in learning more about Information Architecture, then by all means download the aforementioned .pdf of Laurie's presentation.



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Sippel Elected to STC Board

by [Frank Tagader](#)

Martha K. Sippel, a senior member of STC RMC, was recently elected to serve a two-year term on the nominating committee for the Society for Technical Communication at the international level. Martha has served locally on the RMC council as immediate past-president, president, vice president, and a member of the local nominating committee.

The nominating committee is charged with finding candidates for the STC board.



She has championed the chapter's strategic planning sessions, managed the newsletter, as well as performing various judging responsibilities at the local and international level. She has spoken at STC international and regional conferences as well as programs within STC RMC.

Sippel is the principal of her own company, AzuWrite, based in Lone Tree, Colorado. She became a member of STC in 1992.

She holds a bachelor's degree in technical communication from Metropolitan State College of Denver, where she was named outstanding student in technical writing and editing. In addition, she has earned a bachelor's degree in geology from Colorado College. She is also a member of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists.

Previously, Sippel was intranet manager at CH2M HILL, where she and her team received the Computerworld Premier 100 award for their effective use of Internet technologies, and a Web Business 50/50 award for designing one of the top 50 Internet and intranet sites.

Congratulations Martha Sippel!



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Message from the Editor

 by [Ron Arner](#)

I hope that the acquisition of Macromedia by Adobe will not mean the end of RoboHelp as some have predicted. I say this because I'm working on my first RoboHelp project and I can't remember when I've had so much fun working with a software program. The ease with which it allows me to create an HTML help file amazes me, and talk about great features! DHTML with the push of a button, the ability to customize your skin/display, and the auto-generated Table of Contents and navigation have left me asking: "Where have you been all of my tech comm life?"

I have to admit that I feel a little bit guilty about enjoying RoboHelp as much as I am. I feel guilty because I've been to several presentations and had numerous conversations with other STC members about the product, but never realized what it was capable of until I started to use it. To me, it was one of those "another software program to learn someday" dismissals, and now I wish I'd not brushed it off so easily.

I wanted to see if I could find additional information about the combining of the two companies online, and discovered the exact same press release at both the [Adobe](#) and [Macromedia](#) sites. Adobe has added an additional page that is updated whenever there is new news about the acquisition, (<http://www.adobe.com/aboutadobe/invrelations/adobeandmacromedia.html>), which includes an FAQ document added in May. Here are some questions and answers from that FAQ that I thought might be of interest to technical communicators:

Do you anticipate a reduction in force as a result of this transaction?

When two successful growing companies join together, the result is a combined organization that creates new and exciting opportunities. The combination will lead to powerful new areas of innovation, new products and solutions, and an acceleration of our respective growth agendas. At the same time, there will be some duplication of employee functions between the two companies, and upon the close of the transaction, we anticipate some level of reduction in force. While we anticipate the integration team will identify opportunities for cost savings, the primary motivation for this acquisition is to continue to expand and grow our businesses into new markets.

What are the benefits of the combined product lines?

Many of our customer segments are complementary and in many cases customers in those segments are using products from both companies. The combined company will be able to offer increased productivity through streamlined workflow and tighter integration. However, until the close of the transaction, the companies will continue to operate their respective businesses as usual.

Are there areas of duplication in product lines?

If so, how will that be addressed? Adobe and Macromedia are committed to serving the needs of our combined customers. The companies are largely complementary, and thus the amount of competition between us is limited. Post closing, we believe the industry will remain as dynamic and competitive as it is today. Until the close of transaction, the companies will continue to operate business and usual. The combined company will not be able to create a joint product roadmap until after the transaction is closed.

What happens to the Macromedia brand?

Adobe recognizes the strong equity of the Macromedia brand. That said, it makes great business sense for a company the size of the combined company to align behind a single corporate brand. Over time, Macromedia products will transition to the Adobe brand. Adobe expects to keep and continue investing in key Macromedia product brands.

How important are Rich Internet Applications to Adobe?

Delivering a robust technology platform enabling Rich Internet Application development will be central to the combined company's strategy going forward. Macromedia has demonstrated strength in this area and the combined company expects to continue building on the solutions each has in place today.

Will any products be eliminated or phased out as a result of this transaction?

Adobe and Macromedia are committed to serving the needs of our combined customers. The companies are largely complementary, and thus the amount of competition between us is limited. Post closing, we believe the industry will remain as dynamic and competitive as it is today. Until the close of transaction, the companies will continue to operate business and usual. The combined company will not be able to create a joint product roadmap until after the transaction is closed.

How can I get more information about this transaction?

Adobe and Macromedia will provide updates via the Adobe/Macromedia Acquisition Website as information becomes available at www.adobe.com/aboutadobe/invrelations/adobeandmacromedia.html.

What do I do if I have questions regarding this transaction?

Please reference the Adobe/Macromedia Acquisition Website at www.adobe.com/aboutadobe/invrelations/adobeandmacromedia.html for information on how to submit questions regarding this transaction. We will collect questions and provide periodic updates to the FAQ.

How long will training and support be available for Macromedia

products?

Adobe is committed to Macromedia customers and believes both training and support are critical components of providing a complete customer solution. The combined company does not expect a change in this philosophy.

Unfortunately, these questions and answers did not allay my fears that RoboHelp might be phased out, although it did make me feel a little bit better to see them posted on the Adobe site because it implies others have voiced concern about similar issues. I am hopeful, but skeptical, shaking my fist at the heavens until I know for certain what the fate of my newly discovered favorite program will be.



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President's Corner

 by [Marc Lee](#), STCRMC President

I write this column for the last time, as I come to the end of my year as president of the RMC. What follows is an informal assessment of the State of the Chapter from the perspective of a past president.

As a chapter we have had our challenges...and by far the greatest for my tenure was the loss of a program manager right at the beginning of the year. To me, meeting programs are the heart of what the RMC chapter is all about, because I view them as a major component of the member value that we deliver.

The effort we made to not only fill in for the loss but to project a sense of year-long program planning was the most productive aspect of my presidential year. In October, we published a list of the programs planned for the year and — for the most part — we stuck to the plan (with a lot of furious improvising along the way). I take this to be the biggest accomplishment of the year, and the comments I received from members seem to confirm this. As we stand now, the next administration will be carrying this idea to greater lengths with a much better planned year-long program agenda for 2005-06 than we had in 2004-05.

One of the greatest disappointments of the year was the loss of the competitions for 2004-2005, and there are dim prospects for getting back into the competitions business, at least in the near future. In some ways it was bound to happen — having relied on the same team of competitions managers for 10-15 years. They had done their duty extremely well but, alas, knowing the Herculean effort involved, no was willing to step up to fill their shoes. The competitions are a great loss because they are the one chance to focus on the really impressive accomplishments that teams of talented technical communicators can produce, shifting attention from costs and issues to the powerful benefits it provides when it's really good.

Financially, I inherited a very healthy chapter. We leave it (thanks to a great effort by our treasurer) in the same condition. We made moves to be more frugal with the chapter's money and reduced out-of-pocket expenses per meeting from upwards of \$1000 to \$500-700 per month. This will continue next year with the decision to consolidate all meetings to the Executive Tower Hotel in downtown Denver. This will provide economies of scale that come

with an annual meeting-host contract as compared to single-meeting contracts.

Chapter membership has slipped significantly in the last 5-7 years, but began to remain reasonably stable for the last couple of years. We attribute this mainly to the loss of employment in the high-tech sector in the Denver market. Our recruiting and membership efforts this year were well done and successful. The current membership is just under 400 — down from about 470 at the end of 2004. I estimate that we will attain the year-end 2004 totals at the end of 2005.

On a personal level the most rewarding aspect of the presidential year was being able to experience a much broader cross-section of the profession by interacting and corresponding with a wide range of chapter members. One of the best aspects of this job is simply being able to meet and speak to a wide variety of technical communicators, during normal chapter work, at chapter meetings, or at chapter-sponsored seminars. Far from a scientific survey, the picture I receive is of a profession and a pool of professionals far from a state of equilibrium. Indeed, the profession seems to be in a constant state of upheaval, churn and job change. For people entering the profession, there is the question of getting the first job, knowing what tools to purchase and learn. For the mid-career pros, it's a matter of finding a specific niche to specialize in or making the decision to go out on one's own as an independent.

It also seems to me that we've entered an era of more highly defined sub-specialties...where even technical communicators have trouble explaining their current job function to other communicators. Everything from 'user experience designers' to usability professionals to project managers to information architects to instructional designers to multimedia developers to online help designers to web masters....all comprise our chapter today (and that leaves out the standard tech writer/illustrator job descriptions which are still well represented among us).

One recommendation I leave is to continue with efforts by the chapter to sponsor more in-depth-type professional development activities. The recent success of the Jane Smith instructional design seminars in May show that there is a 'market' for in-depth learning venues, given reasonable prices. The chapter should be in a position to sponsor such events at acceptable price points given our contacts and the pool of well-recognized content presenters within the chapter and Society.

Finally, I leave you with the thought that we, as a profession, have an important calling and niche within the greater society — that of making technology accessible to the average person. Each day, on the job, it's easy to lose sight of the big picture, but in an advanced technological society such as ours, it's important to provide the public with meaningful, accurate information about the technological wonders that intersect our lives each day. This is an important contribution: each of us endeavors to make the world a bit less confusing to the users of technology each day. It's worth the effort, folks. Hang in there.



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Tips from the Trenches

by [Deb Lockwood](#)

Summertime Resolutions...or How I'd Like to Spend My Summer Avocation

Summer is upon us. Instead of making a New Year's resolution this year, I decided to make a summer resolution. I resolve to spend some time this summer learning more about developing training materials.

I'm well on my way to making that resolution come true, having already done some research about available books and tools. I have acquired my reading material and have narrowed down to two the software demos I want to download. Now all I need is a tall glass of iced tea, my wireless laptop, and away I go!

Using our chapter's listserv, I queried STC RMC members, asking the following question: "Given the time to do so, if you were going to take some time this summer to learn a new software product, research tools, read a book, or do some other technical communications-related task, what would it be?" I received many excellent replies as follows:

Bill Thomas: "Given time, I would devote some effort to learning FrameMaker. I haven't used it much yet and would like to become somewhat proficient with it as FrameMaker seems to be the de-facto software tool of choice in the technical communications business at this time."

Laura J. Donovan: "I'd take a class in graphics editing tools, such as PhotoShop or Fireworks. Not because I want to be a graphics designer when I grow up, but because working with graphics is something I need to do fairly often and I'm utterly inept in that area. I want to learn the 'language' of graphics tools."

Frank Tagader: "I am trying to teach myself SchemaLogic Workshop this summer as a means of learning metadata modeling. Along with learning the tool, I will do research in hopes of gaining a better understanding of the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI), <http://dublincore.org/>."

Karen L. Kraft Miller: "I would learn how to create Web pages and learn how to write simple HTML code."

Susie Cone: "I would focus on learning more about:

- Information architecture, to structure content for maximum efficiency, reusability, and effectiveness to the content customer.
- Web information design trends and, in particular, the presentation of technical information provided to different audiences.
- Optimizing Web content for successful and precise search engine cataloging."

Marc Lee: "I would learn ActionScript, which is a part of Macromedia's Flash... the object-oriented programming language that is associated with Flash MX and MX 2004. It has recently become much more powerful and can do things far beyond the animations we normally associate with Flash."

Leslie Bateman: "Dreamweaver would be my first choice of something to learn."

Molly Malsam: "I would be interested in learning AuthorIT as well as investigate the career of user interface design."

Marella Colyvas: "If I WERE seriously wanting to deepen my career growth and planning to do something along the lines of what you suggest, I would definitely learn/practice on a new tool/concept because that is where I feel the weakest. If I were not personally so involved in other things, I would find some needy organization and help develop its Web site. I'd write some of the organization's content and work on setting up the site so it is useable. I would also consult with the organization on how best to structure is Web site so people can find things. I would also suggest ways the organization could best deploy its goods/services/content based on my experience with judging online communications. I'd consult with Laurie Lamar or other information architecture gurus and get insights on books to read and software tools to learn to make deploying Web sites easier."

Linda G. Gallagher: "Well, if I had time...

- I'd learn more about Structured FrameMaker, finish the Element Definition Document (EDD) I started, and convert a couple of books to it.
- I'd read more books. I recently started a list based on book reviews in the back of the last couple of issues of Technical Communication. Here are a few titles: *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*; *Don't Make Me Think*; *Project Management JumpStart*; and *How to Become a Fulltime Freelance Writer*.
- Well, if we are really being honest here I'd also take some time off."

Rita Braun: "I am looking for ways to get into Instructional Design, Information Architecture, and e-Learning, and am always on the lookout for learning opportunities in each of those areas."

Contributors: Leslie Bateman, Rita Braun, Marella Colyvas, Susie Cone, Laura

J. Donovan, Linda G. Gallagher, Marc Lee, Molly Malsam, Karen L. Kraft Miller, Frank Tagader, and Bill Thomas.



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