

**Ragged Left** About STC Home

The Monthly Newsletter for the Berkeley Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication



**Next Meeting: Wednesday November 13, 2002**

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**ViewletBuilder: Becoming an Effective Builder of Viewlets**  
**Rolfe Dlugy-Hegwer**

ViewletBuilder can be used to create compelling animated online presentations called Viewlets. Viewlets make great marketing demos, training materials, software simulations, support resources, and help content. Even though ViewletBuilder is easy to use, it can be tricky to produce Viewlets that flow smoothly. Dlugy-Hegwer will demonstrate how to capture, edit, compile, and publish Viewlets. The demonstration will include tips and techniques to help you go beyond the obvious to become an effective Viewlet designer.

Rolfe is Senior Technical Writer at Symmetricom's Santa Rosa division. He is an active player in the open source movement and Co-Vice President of the North Bay Chapter of the STC, where he has arranged presentations by speakers such as Tim O'Reilly, founder of the O'Reilly Associates book publishing company. Dlugy-Hegwer is a member of the STC's usability SIG and has given presentations on using tools such as ViewletBuilder and SnagIt to improve technical communication for users.

**STC-Berkeley Chapter Meeting Details**

Vo's Restaurant in downtown Oakland, is within easy walking distance to BART, is wheelchair accessible, and has both street and nearby garage parking.

Networking and conversation start at 6:00 p.m., and dinner at 6:30 p.m. If you want to eat dinner, reservations are required and must be received no later than 12:00 noon the Monday before the meeting. Reservations are necessary so that we can order the right amount of food. Do not contact the restaurant.

**RSVP Online**

Use your credit card to order meeting reservations via the chapter [Website](#). The meeting fee with dinner is \$18 for members, \$15 for student members, and \$21 for nonmembers. If you come for the program only, starting at 7:30 p.m., the fee is \$12 for members and nonmembers, and \$10 for students. If you are not eating, payments may be made at the door.

**RSVP by Mail**

Send checks to Berkeley STC, P.O. Box 1007, Berkeley, 94701.

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## November 2002 Monthly Columns

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### **Notes from the Editor**

Learn the Latest News about the Ragged Left, STC-Berkeley's Monthly Newsletter, from Editor Jessica Livingston.

### **President's Message**

A Few words on the state of the Chapter from President Kathryn Munn.

### **Director Sponsor Message**

Catch the latest scoop from Region 8's Director-Sponsor Bonni Graham.

### **Monthly Recap**

Each month a guest writer writes a recap of the previous meeting. Great way to refresh, or find out what you missed.

## Editor's Column November 2002

It's been an exciting year for me, as editor. I was able to design and deliver the new electronic *Ragged Left*, and create consecutive issues worthy of submission to the national STC newsletter competition. We couldn't be here now without a lot of help. Thanks to the many volunteer writers who have kindly donated countless hours of their time for our benefit. We're all taking December off, but expect to be back in January, continuing to deliver the same high-caliber news and articles that I hope will help enhance your career and skills.

As always, I'm in search of articles for our monthly columns, so review the list below to see if any of our needs match your skills. In the new year we'd like to expand the *Ragged Left* staff with more volunteers. If you're interested in contributing to our industry, while expanding your portfolio, contact [me](#).

See you at Vo's,

Jessica Livingston  
*Ragged Left* Editor

### Ragged Left Topic Needs

Below is a list of the articles we are most often searching for.

#### Monthly Recap

Each month we look for a volunteer to write a recap of the speaker's presentation at our monthly meeting. The length of that article should be around 350 words, although if it was a particularly engaging topic we can run a longer article. Attendance at the meeting would be necessary.

#### Resource Column

Every month we run a monthly resource column. Suggested topics include a review of software; new, new version, or related: a Website or other online resource related to our industry: books or other tools you found useful: a process, language, or class that was beneficial. To insure that your topic has not been recently covered, please clear the topic in advance with the [editor](#). Suggested length: 375-750 words

#### Introduce New Members

Periodically we write a paragraph or two about new members in our chapter. This involves contacting the names we provide, interviewing them about their interests and involvement in the industry, and meshing it all into a cohesive article. It will take a bit longer to get the responses back, so this feature takes more lead-time than most.

#### Feature Articles

We're open to articles on unsolicited topics.

Please send articles as an attached document, preferably in MS Word, with no formatting.

### Submission Guidelines

Thank you for considering writing for the *Ragged Left*, the Berkeley STC chapter's award-winning monthly newsletter. Each month *the Ragged Left* publishes original articles and illustrations. This is a great opportunity to be published with a byline to add to your portfolio. We edit materials to meet our needs. You retain copyright, but grant every STC publication royalty-free permission to reproduce the article or illustration in print or any other medium.

Please contact the [editor](#) to make sure your intended topic is timely and appropriate, and for details of how to submit articles and illustrations. Deadline for unsolicited submissions is the 20th of the month preceding publication.

### Copyright and Reprint Information

*Ragged Left* writers retain their copyright, but grant every STC publication royalty-free permission to reproduce the article or illustration in print or any other medium. Other STC publications are hereby granted permission to reprint articles from *Ragged Left*, provided such reprints credit the author and a copy of any publication containing such a reprint is sent to the *Ragged Left* editor. Our mailing address is: Newsletter, STC-Berkeley, PO Box 1007, Berkeley CA 94701-1007. If it is an electronic publication, email the [editor](#).

### Publication

The *Ragged Left* is published ten times a year. Monthly, except for December and August.



## **President's Message**

### **November 2002**

Greetings STC-Berkeley chapter members and friends! The electronic *Ragged Left* is up for an award! Each year STC chapters are invited to submit their chapter newsletter for consideration by the International Society of Technical Communication. Editor Jessica Livingston has been diligently working to meet the requirements and standards established by the Society for a quality publication. We are indebted to Jessica and all of you who have contributed your time and talent to write for the *Ragged Left*. Each one of you is an important element in the success of the newsletter. The submissions by Joe Devney, Robert Wazeka, John Peel, and Richard Mateosian are included in the editions to be submitted in the competition. Thanks for your great work!

On November 13, 2002 join us for a presentation about the ViewletBuilder featuring Rolfe Dlugy-Hegwer as speaker. In December we will be taking a meeting break for the holidays with plans to return to a great new year of programs in January 2003.

As always we want to hear about what the Chapter can do to support you in your professional goals as a technical communicator. Email me with your ideas, suggestions, and especially any ways you might be willing to contribute your own talent and time. See you at the November 13, meeting!

Kathryn Munn

## Director-Sponsor Column November 2002

### Adding Value for Members

#### Bonni Graham, Region 8 Director-Sponsor

By now, you've probably noticed that the STC web site has a member's only section, moving certain features behind a secure login based on your membership number and a password assigned by the main STC office. If you haven't noticed, shame on you—the STC web site contains a lot of useful information no matter what your involvement with the organization.

In January 2001, the STC Board of Directors voted to change our policy to allow chapters to restrict certain informational items to members only. We evaluated the variety of information available on chapter and the Society web sites, and decided that some of it could legitimately be placed behind a login. After further discussion, we decided to extend that change in policy to the main STC web site as well.

Primarily, the items "behind the curtain" are the Society-level job listings (for membership enhancement value) and the member directory (to protect your privacy).

You may be asking why are some items restricted to members but not all? The answer lies in our status as a charitable organization (which enables members, among other things, to claim STC dues as a charitable donation). Bill Stolgitis, in the October 2001 Tieline provided the following background and insight:

#### Background

Since 1968, when STC was reorganized as a 501(c)(3) charity, STC has devoted the substantial part of its efforts to activities within the scope of its charitable purposes. These activities (e.g., publications, conferences, research, scholarships) can be found in STC's Articles of Incorporation and its bylaws.

In keeping with its charitable status, STC has made these services available to members and non-members alike. The IRS, however, recognizes that while conducting the daily business of a charity, there will be some activities essential to the charity's well-being that are not, strictly speaking, charitable in nature. The IRS allows these activities so long as they do not constitute a substantial part of the organization's activities.

For STC, such activities have included selling advertising (magazine and journal), renting the mailing list, and providing employment information (clearly not within the scope of STC's charitable purposes). These activities have always constituted an insubstantial part of STC's total activities.

Restricting Services to Members Only STC is fully engaged in many activities that are within the scope of its charitable purposes. And these services must be made available to members and nonmembers alike. As mentioned above, STC is also allowed to engage in activities that are not within the scope of its charitable purposes so long as these activities are "insubstantial" (a minor financial burden). These non-charitable services may be restricted to members only.

Thus the new main site has been arranged to better expose the value of being an STC member. Chapters may, as well, choose to limit access to various services they provide, so long as doing so does not create an undue burden on the chapter finances. In addition, actions that contribute directly the STC's charitable purpose (such as seminars or chapter meetings) may not be restricted to members only, although members may be given preferential pricing.

If you have any questions on this policy, contact your [Director-Sponsor](#) or the [Society office](#).

## Monthly Wrap

Each month rotating guest writers offer resources that benefit the technical writing industry. This month Silicon Valley STC Chapter's Anne Mehaffey offers a recap on the October presentation.

### FrameMaker 7.0 and XML: What's the Lowdown?

By Anne Mehaffey

Ted Windsor, Principal of FrameHelp, gave both the lowdown and the top-down views of FrameMaker 7.0 with XML at the Berkeley STC Chapter's October meeting. Ted has been working with FrameMaker since its appearance on the desktop publishing scene, and added it to his knowledge base when he found it served him well in his multimedia presentations. An Adobe-Certified Trainer, Windsor was a Senior Trainer with Caxton until forming FrameHelp.

Windsor has enough experience with this field to give us both the party line, "Format your content once, publish it everywhere," and the awful truth, "Yes, there is still only one *Undo*." In talking about the industry, he also entertained us with the occasional, "That was lame, I don't know why they did that." We are all in the same boat, but he is at the top of the mast.

#### The Overview: Structure Your Authoring

Adding the XML output capability to the FrameMaker repertoire enables "structured authoring," according to Windsor. Structured authoring with FrameMaker 7 and the XML extensible mark-up language gives you a catalog of elements, a way to view "both the elements and your work concurrently," and output that displays without distortion.

#### The Movable View: Show it Anywhere

Documents converted to XML are machine-, platform-, and presentation format- independent. If you have a set of information you want to present in many formats, from Web content to PDF, from online help to PDA display, not to mention the age old but not yet forgotten printed matter, Windsor says FrameMaker 7 with its XML portability and scalable vector graphics (SVG) support may be for you.

This is "multi-channel publishing," Windsor says. "Adobe needed to do this. They were stepping back while Quark and Arbortext came in with their solutions."

#### The Point of View: Start Wherever You Want

To make use of FrameMaker 7.0 with XML, you can choose a chicken- or egg-first option. You can write the document in FrameMaker and import an EDD to apply the structure. An EDD is an enhanced DTD, or document type definition, with added definitions for formatting layout. The EDD applies elements of structure to the document. For the more technically inclined members of the STC audience, Windsor explained, "An EDD is like parsing a DTD with XSL." Or, you can do a "document analysis," create an EDD to reflect your desired result, and then use FrameMaker 7 to add the content. The EDD shows the allowable elements as you write.

Windsor says a good source of information about EDDs comes from [Sarah O'Keefe](#). O'Keefe has two books about FrameMaker.

#### The Parallel View: See What You Are Doing

For either process option you choose, you can see the *Structure View* according to Windsor, by opening a second window inside FrameMaker with a right-click on the mouse. Set *File Preferences* to enable the *Structured Authoring* function.

Some people use two monitors, one with each view, to get the best perspective. The structure view graphically represents the tagged elements and shows the element catalog in a hierarchy. A click in the hierarchy will show which element is allowable next. Users can apply the element and write. In the structure view hierarchy, round-edge boxes show each element as defined by the EDD.

#### The Inside View: Apply Rules to Ensure Conformity

Rules group one or more paragraph tags into an element definition. Applying the element applies the rules to the content. In this way, the format for a table, table head, table cell, and table row can all be applied through a single element in the structure. The element holds the content together for multi-channel publishing.

This could certainly ease the woes of formatting for different display types. Windsor explained that most writers who perform structured authoring simply use the EDD instead of paragraph tags: "To add the structure, just modify the body tag."

#### The Pre-View: See if it Works

You can validate the elements as you write or when you are done. This feature is especially valuable for large documents, such as a maintenance manual for a Boeing 747, which can run over 21,000 pages. The airline industry currently uses FrameMaker 6 with SGML and the ATA 2100 Standard DTD for their documentation. SGML is also supported in FrameMaker 7, for those who want it. However, FrameMaker 7 with XML highlights an element you select in the structure view concurrently with its associated content. Move the element and the associated text moves with it.

Windsor notes that credit card companies use structured authoring to generate form letters with validated customer account data. "Use FrameMaker to format the letter," Windsor says, "then validate the structure to answer the question: Did we pull the right fields?" Adobe's new InDesign offering will produce well-formed XML, however, the validation feature is not included.

### **The Working View: Single-Source Your Workgroup Authoring**

To address single source documentation authoring in a multiple-user group, FrameMaker 7 ships with WebDav compatibility. Although you will need to obtain your own copy of a WebDav server, you can [download Apache's](#) version for free.

A WebDav server enables file check-in and check-out for authors on different machines, giving us a facsimile, according to Windsor, of "the poor man's Documentum." Just right for those of us without the IT Department wrapped around our fingers.

### **Acrobat's View: Tagged PDF Files**

FrameMaker 7 has an improved connection to Acrobat Distiller 5; now you can set up job options within FrameMaker to generate PDF files. You can apply the U.S. Government's [Section 508 rules](#) for accessible documents to satisfy the requirements for addressing an audience with disabilities.

For example, you can add alternate (flyover) tags for the reading-impaired audience or generate tagged PDF files with a designated logical reading order. Adobe offers an accessibility plug-in for Acrobat 5 that provides the tagging system for the PDF file.

### **The Expanded View: New Things You Can Do**

Additional new features for FrameMaker 7 include master pages with up to 12 running headers and footers. This comment generated applause from the crowd, and slightly offset our disappointment over the single *Undo* news. Windsor speculated that the lack of iterative *Undos* may be rooted in FrameMaker's original construction for use over the UNIX operating system.

The added SVG support for displaying rendered vector graphics without distortion, no matter what the display scale or format, also enables a search capability for call-outs within graphics. You can create SVG graphics in Adobe Illustrator 10 and import them into your FrameMaker 7 file.

### **The View on Your Machine: Try it Out**

Concluding the talk was Windsor's distribution of the *Adobe FrameMaker 7.0 Enterprise Solutions* CD. This CD has a 30-day tryout version of FrameMaker 7.0 with XML, information about using FrameMaker 7 and Acrobat 5 together, and a guide for using Adobe products to address the needs of the enterprise environment. If you would like a copy of this CD, you can order it from [Adobe's Website](#), or download it, however, be aware that it is a 300MB file.

### **Thanks for the Views**

Windsor reflected, "I don't know why I like this product so much. It's hard to explain, but Word is like using a crayon and FrameMaker a fine ink pen."

The Berkeley STC Chapter thanks Ted Windsor for giving us the benefit of his knowledge, experience, and anecdotal wisdom.

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Anne Mehaffey is a contract technical writer who visited Berkeley from the Silicon Valley STC Chapter. She has used FrameMaker for 14 years. When she is not writing, Anne likes to walk on the beach.



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## **Networking**

Visiting other STC chapters and other writers' groups is a great way to expand your knowledge and networking circle.

## **Employment**

It's a tight job market out there, so make sure that your resume gives you the competitive edge. Each month we offer free resume reviews before the monthly meeting. Book your appointment with our [Employment Manager](#). STC Berkeley also operates a free job list, which you can [sign up](#) for.

## **Book Review**

With all of this talk about XML at the [October](#) meeting, Richard Mateosian offers as a timely [review](#) of Charles Goldfarb & Paul Prescod's new 4th edition of the *XML Handbook*.



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**News**

**November 2002**

Catch up on the latest news from the Chapter, Society, and Industry

**Chapter News**

**Member Volunteer Orientation**

The value and relevance of any STC chapter to its members is closely related to the contribution of time and talent from those members. With that thinking in mind the Berkeley chapter is pleased to announce the initiation of Member Volunteer Orientation sessions beginning on November 13, 2002. Sessions will be held on a quarterly basis from 6:00-6:30 PM on the 2nd Wednesdays of the month, just before the chapter meeting. Whether you have recently joined STC and the Berkeley chapter, or find yourself interested in taking a more active role in the Society and chapter, this Orientation may be of interest to you. Each session will include an exploration of the services and resources available to STC members, a summary of the initiatives sponsored by the Berkeley Chapter, and a review of the volunteer opportunities available to you at a Society and chapter level.

The Orientation is also an opportunity to learn about you, your goals as a technical communicator, and how the chapter might be relevant and valuable in your professional growth and development. Ideas about how to improve your experience with STC are welcome. Take advantage of the opportunity to get a first look at the job tickets for Society and chapter volunteer jobs. These opportunities can provide you with invaluable contacts, unique additions to your resume and portfolio, and expansion of your leadership or technical skills. Email [Richard Mateosian](mailto:Richard.Mateosian@stc.org), VP-Membership to let him know you plan to attend the inaugural session on November 13 at 6:00 PM.

**Northern California STC Chapters Host Free Leadership Day Event**

The Northern California STC chapters will come together for a day of exchange and information sharing on Saturday, December 7, at Northern California STC Chapter Leadership Day: *Sharing Successes and Confronting Challenges*.

The free, day-long event is co-sponsored by the STC Berkeley, San Francisco, East Bay, Silicon Valley, North Bay and Sacramento chapters. The event will be held at Mills College in Oakland from 9AM to 4 PM, and will feature our regional sponsor/director Bonni Graham as keynote speaker. A continental breakfast and lunch are included.

This is a prime learning opportunity for anyone who has thought about taking on a leadership role or working as a volunteer with his or her chapter. Come learn what volunteers and members of the executive committee do. Learn what other chapters are doing. For further information about this event, contact your chapter president.

**Society News**

**Region 8 Conference**

Mark your calendars for the upcoming Region 8 Conference, to be held January 12 through 14, 2003 at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas. A conference web site is under development and will be available soon with all the details about conference programs, exhibits, hotel rates, registration instructions, and fees. The conference tracks include:

- Passport and Maps (content and knowledge management)
- ...

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## Chapter Activities

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### November

Monthly Meeting, Wednesday, November 13

### December

Leadership Symposium

Mills College, Oakland, Saturday, December 7

A day for local STC Members to meet and discuss, chapter-to-chapter networking, ideas, resource sharing and team building. This will be the first in a series of three related sessions. Anyone thinking of running for an office in the future or just interested in helping out would greatly benefit from this session.

No meeting Monthly Meeting in December -- Happy Holiday Seasons

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**Editor's Column**  
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