

Ragged Left

The newsletter for the
Berkeley Chapter of the
Society for Technical
Communication

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Volume 21, Number 3
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April 9, 2008 Meeting Notes

Surviving Conversion from FrameMaker to DITA

by Jane Olivera

At the April meeting of the Berkeley STC, Mysti Berry described her experiences when her employer, Salesforce.com, moved their documentation from FrameMaker to an XML-based system called DITA. During this conversion they also moved online help development from RoboHelp to Flare. Her presentation gave us a taste of what DITA/XML is and insights into the benefits – and complexities – of converting documentation to a technology that is based on XML and on a different way of writing content.

What is XML? What is this DITA?

Mysti began with some definitions, given that terms such as XML and DITA are not familiar to many people.

XML (eXtended Markup Language) is a tagging language that allows you to “mark up” text to identify its structure (paragraphs, sections, etc.). The formatting of the final product – the headings, spacing, font size, etc. – is provided by applying a “stylesheet” (such as XSL) that contains the formatting information. The power of XML is that once content has been marked up (tagged) in XML, it can produce multiple different documents from the same content by using different stylesheets. For example, the content could be formatted one way for a paper document, like a user guide, and in a different format for the web.

DITA (Darwin Information Typing Architecture) represents both a system or set of XML tags and a specific kind of structured writing, called topic-based writing. Together they allow information to be repurposed in multiple ways. DITA is an open-source technology that can be easily customized to meet individual company needs.

Mysti talked about several kinds of software. Adobe RoboHelp is a program used for creating online help that has been around for many years. Madcap Flare is a new online help program written by the same people who originally developed RoboHelp, but designed to be better.

Getting More Technical About DITA

With DITA, you structure content into “topics.” But after you have created XML documents of your topics, how do you pull the right topics together to create the document you want? To do this, DITA uses what is called a “map file.” A map file is a separate XML file that contains links to topics, organized in the sequence in which you want them to appear. At Salesforce.com, they use a tool called Ant to take information from the map file and build the output document, such as a PDF. Different types of books – reference, online help, printed books – have different styles applied to them in this process. In other words, Ant looks at the map file to see what content to pull in, pulls in that content from the appropriate XML files, and outputs the type of docu-

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TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION is the bridge between those who create ideas and those who use them. Conveying scientific and technical information clearly, precisely, and accurately is an essential occupation in all sectors of business and government.

THE SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION (STC) has members worldwide. Its members include writers and editors, artists and illustrators, photographers and audiovisual specialists, managers and supervisors, educators and students, employees and consultants.

STC strives to:

- Advance the theory and practice of technical communication
- Promote awareness of trends and technology in technical communication
- Aid the educational and professional development of its members

MEMBERSHIP Membership is open to everyone. Classic membership is \$145/year with an additional \$15 enrollment fee. STC also offers Limited, E-Membership, and Student Membership options. To receive additional information and an application form, via mail or email.

- Send email to membership@stc-berkeley.org
- Send mail to Berkeley STC, PO Box 1007, Berkeley CA 94701-1007

INSURANCE Members of STC can apply for health, disability, and other insurance at STC group rates. For more information, contact STC office at stc@stc.org or (703) 522-4114.

WORLDWIDE ACTIVITIES STC's annual conference brings together more than 2,000 technical communicators from around the world for educational programs, seminars, and workshops conducted by experts in the field. Upcoming annual conference: Minneapolis, May 13-16, 2007. In addition the STC sponsors many regional conferences, which feature the same sorts of programs, seminars, and workshops on a more intimate scale. STC sponsors international and regional competitions in all aspects of technical communication. STC Special Interest Groups (SIGs) bring together members with common experiences and interests to share their skills and knowledge. STC SIGs include:

- Academic
- AccessAbility
- Canadian Issues
- Consulting and Independent Contracting
- Emerging Technologies
- Environmental, Safety, and Health Communication
- Illustrators and Visual Designers
- Information Design and Architecture
- Instructional Design & Learning
- International Technical Communication
- Lone Writer
- Management
- Marketing Communication
- Online
- Policies and Procedures
- Quality and Process Improvement
- Scientific Communication
- Single Sourcing
- Technical Editing
- Usability & User Experience

STC sponsors research grants and scholarships in technical communication. STC publishes the quarterly journal *Technical Communication*, the newsletter *Intercom*, and other periodicals, reference materials, manuals, anthologies, standards, and booklets.

Formed in 1953, STC has today become the largest professional society in the world dedicated to advancing the theory and practice of technical communication.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES The six northern California chapters of STC conduct a variety of individual and joint activities. See page 11 for contacts for these chapters. See page 11 for a list of other local organizations in which STC members may be interested.

SUBSCRIPTIONS This newsletter is free to members of the Berkeley chapter.

ADVERTISING RATES The *Ragged Left* is not accepting advertising at this time.

SUBMISSIONS *Ragged Left* publishes original articles and illustrations. We edit them 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 talk with the editor for details of how to submit articles and illustrations.

The deadline for unsolicited submissions is the last Friday of odd-numbered months.

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ment you've told it to (PDF in this example).

The Starting Point

Salesforce.com is a Software-As-A-Service company, meaning most of their product is accessed online, via a web browser. Localization is also a factor, as their online help must be localized into 13 or more languages.

The writing team comprised six senior technical writers, including one writer experienced in setting up instructions for processing the FrameMaker files into XML. When Mysti joined the project, Salesforce.com had already been through the process of converting online help files, so the writers were already familiar with tagging and topic-based writing as well as with the conversion process, although she also said that when "conversion" was mentioned, everyone winced.

The company needed to reuse the same content in multiple ways and at several levels: words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and topics.

Software Used Before the Conversion

The existing documents were in FrameMaker 7, and their online help was in RoboHelp. They were also using WebWorks, a tool that takes content from FrameMaker and outputs it as online help.

The Conversion Project

The project was to take FrameMaker 7 files for a 200-page Developer's Guide and convert them into XML source code (a properly tagged XML file) and produce a PDF file that would reside on a web server.

Why Change To XML/DITA?

In spite of the difficulties encountered previously in converting online help, the company was committed to continuing to move from FrameMaker to XML/DITA. For one thing, they had already invested a lot of time and

energy in DITA, developing locally created and maintained customizations of the DITA code. In addition, they needed more capability than FrameMaker 7 could provide, such as the ability to cross-link between the help and the developer guides so titles and other repeated information did not have to be keyed multiple times. They were also taxing the limits of FrameMaker's conditional text feature. FrameMaker 8 had not come out yet, but even if the choice had been between DITA and the improved FrameMaker 8, the company had a bias in favor of open standards over proprietary software.

Mysti distilled the needs that made them choose DITA to four:

- Help in the application and hosted on a server for web access
- Context-sensitive help
- Translation
- Reuse of information

Why Change to Flare?

They were not happy with RoboHelp or WebWorks. As Mysti put it, they "didn't want RoboHelp or WebWorks one second longer." They also didn't want to reinvent the wheel regarding the Index, Table of Contents, and Search. They researched several products as a possible replacement. The closest contender to Flare required running a specific version of Java on the web server, and they had no control over the server. So they tested Flare, and it worked right away. They have been very happy with Flare, and even with a new version of RoboHelp available, Mysti recommended Flare.

The Process

There turned out to be no easy way to take the FrameMaker content and turn it into clean XML files. For one thing, native FrameMaker files are unreadable by any other software, so they had to work with documents that had been saved in FrameMaker's readable file type, MIF. Unfortunately, the MIF files weren't exactly clean. The conditional tags were not always written out in the kind of systematic or



rigorous manner required by XML. The team's code-whiz writer wrote transformation code to turn MIF files into XML, but because the MIF files had problems that only FrameMaker could see and interpret, it was impossible to come up with transformation code that didn't have errors. That meant that Mysti had to go through each transformed XML file looking for and fixing the errors. The errors were systematic, so global search-and-replace helped a lot, but it still took her two months to fix the errors by hand.

Lessons Learned

Mistakes

Mysti noted that they made some mistakes along the way, including:

- Editing in the WYSIWYG tool (Epic) instead of the more-efficient Oxygen that would have allowed them to clean files more quickly.
- Not testing enough on a small document with only a few topics.
- Not breaking down narrative-style FrameMaker files more, to make them single-topic files rather than nesting topics.
- Adding new content in some sections before “sanctifying” the conversion, making it hard to check.
- For iterative changes, testing was only done on the changed portions, and some changes broke other parts of the document. It would have been better to insist on nightly “builds” of the whole document.

Good ideas

They did some smart things, too:

- Created profile definitions, so the conditional text displayed in different colors in the WYSIWYG tool (Epic).
- Changed to Flare for online help – it was the easiest part of the process!
- Abandoned CHM (Microsoft's HTML Help format) output. It caused problems and produced unacceptable quality output.

Suggestions

Mysti had the following suggestions based on their experiences:

- Prepare the document in FrameMaker first.
- Don't start your cleanup too soon, without enough testing to get your system right.
- Get your files in parallel structure first, even if they're not completely topic-based. That way you can consistently break up big FrameMaker files into small topic files in XML.
- Scrub your FrameMaker files for junk (extra spaces, one-off formatting changes, etc.) before converting.
- Be aware it will take four times longer than you think it will.
- Choose your own naming conventions for XML files and link IDs. (They didn't convert the numerical filenames FrameMaker generated, and now they all wish they had.)
- Identify commonly used terms (brand names – all the “stuff” you have in variables in FrameMaker now), and put them all in a single “reusable.xml” file. Then the content can pull references in from that file instead of you re-keying them. (You won't believe the time this saves when they change the product name just before release!)

TestTestTest

- Test for systematic (repeated) errors on a sample set of files first.
- XSLT (a language for transforming XML documents into other XML documents) lends itself to unpredictable changes, so test all targets before checking in build changes to source control.
- Check with your translation (localization) team – variables in XML can be hard to translate. Try to do some transformations for them before they tackle translation.

Mysti said that the conversion experience has caused her to write smaller and smaller topics and pull files apart. This has meant revising lots of links, but made the document easier to revise. (Unfortunately, they did this after the conversion!)

When asked how using DITA has changed the way she writes, Mysti said she's now



very careful about accuracy and making topics small from the beginning. She also experiments more. Another change is that she thinks about whether the content she writes will affect her colleagues. For example, while writing a particular topic she may realize it belongs in both the user guide and the API documentation.

Conclusion

- Remember: it's well worth it!
- Be aware that DITA is time-intensive to start up and maintain. If you're a small shop or you just generate books (not multiple kinds of output), DITA would be overkill – use DocBooks instead.

Jane Olivera is a long-time technical writer and web information architect, working with software, science, and recently, IT. She is looking for short-term project work and freelance opportunities as a writer, editor, or web architect.

President's Notes

by Richard Mateosian

I'm back from the 55th annual STC conference, but I haven't gathered all of my thoughts yet. It was a great opportunity to network with technical communicators from all over the world and to see how their problems compare with ours.

Nearly seven years ago, terrorists perpetrated a terrible attack on our country. Much of their funding came from sham charities in the United States. Unfortunately, the fight against such sham charities affects STC, because of our 501(c)(3) tax status. In the eyes of the Internal Revenue Service, STC is an educational, scientific, and charitable organization. This means that STC's finances and governance are open to greater scrutiny than they ever were before. What applies to STC also applies, to a lesser extent, to the Berkeley Chapter. This means that we will probably have to adopt bylaws that align closely with STC's model bylaws template. You'll hear more about this as time goes by.

I'll be happy to answer questions about what I found out at the annual conference. Let's have that discussion on our Yahoo group, Berkeley-STC@yahoogroups.com. It's easy to subscribe if you haven't done so already.

Web usability column

Timely and Relevant Content

by Eric Hughes, Managing Director,
Simplexity, LLC

In our previous columns, we discussed processes, guidelines, and best practice criteria for ensuring web development projects conclude in a successful, usable result. The focus has been on what we as technical communicators or developers have control of. In this column, we'll discuss the reason we do our projects at all: for the creation and publication of timely and relevant content.

It is good for those of us who work in technical communications to occasionally remind ourselves that the main reason we exist is to help communicate information and results for those who have interesting or commercial stories to tell. Websites, software applications, and online user manuals are only useful if we can find something to say that is relevant and timely to whomever reads or views them. The secret in this era of limited patience is to figure out how to tell those stories in a place and in a format that works, and that doesn't waste anyone's time. To do that, we have to understand how what is being said will be used and interpreted.

So in this article, let's take a look at types of content and how they are differentiated. To do that, it may help to offer some broad categories of content that can be relevant on the web. In most cases, this content can be either user-generated or owner-generated, with an increasing emphasis on user-generated. (In a future article, we'll discuss recent technologies that can help deliver content – RSS, blogs, wikis and a few others.)

Those who have stories to tell tend to be focused on objectives other than the ones we have been discussing in these articles. They just assume all this stuff will work for them when their story needs to be told! They are focused on product and associated sales, marketing, and communications issues – not structure or technology. They are the ones



who can help you understand the audience for a website, and they need to be your development best friends. When you work with story-tellers, try to get them to categorize their content into one of the following buckets. Convince them that usability is not only about technology, but about understanding.

Marketing content

Marketing communications is what we do to lay the foundation for a sale. We might be selling widgets or ideas, but in all cases our sale is made easier when buyers or decision makers have all the information they need to make a purchase or decision. Most marketing communications originate as owner-generated content, augmented by user reviews and comments. 90% of what is on the web is marketing content (my estimate). Endorsements and testimonials fit into this category, too. Marketing content can be created using any technology, and usually is. Story tellers love this stuff, and you need to help them keep it to the minimum necessary to set a foundation.

Entertainment content

If you have spent any time on miniclip.com, youtube.com, or metacafe.com, then you know entertainment content. Much as journalism has allowed writers to confuse editorial with fact in the past few years, story tellers love to combine entertainment with some of the other communications categories listed here. Sophisticated viewers or viewers with limited time are not easily fooled, though.

Public Relations content

Okay, you can classify PR content as marketing if you like, but it tends to come from different people in an organization, and it is usually more oriented to an event than to a product. It would be an announcement about the launching of a product, rather than just the product itself, for example.

Calls to Action

MoveOn.org and other online political organizations have jumped all over the ability of the web to deliver calls to action. Senator Boxer sends me one of these almost every day. So does just about every organization that wants to save any living thing in the universe. Use these wisely, since we have become numbed by their ubiquity.

Transactional or Interactive content

Transactional or Interactive content comes from applications, databases, or other visitors. Some action needs to be taken by the site visitor to cause the content to appear. The content may be different depending on a variety of factors such as time-of-day, user, and input. Input technologies are typically form fields, hyperlinks, or messaging systems. Results can be information, purchase confirmations, next steps, synchronous or asynchronous conversations.

Informational content

Facebook, anyone? How about MySpace? LinkedIn? Orkut? News fits here, too. So do many non-interactive instructional and technical manuals. My kids argue that social networking sites are all about interaction, not information. Perhaps they are beginning to be right about that.

Multimedia content

This is listed because it is so incredibly over-used. It is a poster child for the old McLuhan adage: "The medium is the message." It is an extension not of the eye, or of the ear, but of the ego. There are so few examples of effective multimedia on the web that I can't even find one to list (except in the entertainment category). It seems that if you don't have a Flash, audio, video, or animation application on your site, then you are old-school. There is little so damaging to the successful understanding of a message than obstructing the message with the medium it is delivered with.



Sharing content

de.licio.us, digg, 4chan, flickr, twitter, and stumbleupon are all examples of a fairly new type of web content – sharing. We'll talk more about these in the next article.

If you know your audience well, if you have prepared personas for them and have broad agreement that they are correct, it will be obvious to you what content is relevant or timely for them. Before you get caught up in delivery technologies and partnership agreements, research what content will be most relevant for your audiences. Label and categorize that content and make sure your customers have an easy way to find it.

In the 2008 March/April *Ragged Left*, we listed and discussed a 10-step process for ensuring usability is appropriately considered from the beginning of the development process. Many of the 10 steps are related to content for a really good reason.

You can reach Eric at eric@simplexity.net

May 14, 2008 Meeting Notes

Avoiding Death by PowerPoint (Why are good presentations so hard to create?)

by Rick Altman

PowerPoint Show

Notes by Shelley Horwitz

Rick Altman put on an entertaining show backed by a thorough understanding of public speaking, business presentations, and using PowerPoint to support these activities. Rick is a master story-teller drawing on experience with PowerPoint and how presenters use it – or misuse it – to support business presentations.

Rick started the evening with humor and animation that instantly established his appeal and connection to the audience. He asked a simple but provocative question, "Can PowerPoint make you stupid?" His answer, of course, is "Yes," demonstrated by a simple concept: "Bullet slides dumb down

Advice for preparing

- It's not about you - you're giving the audience business information, it's not about you personally
- Don't try so hard - let your audience think about what they see, you don't have to explain every detail to them
- Be analog, not digital - focus on the message, not the individual points you're trying to make

Suggestions about speaking

- Laugh - make yourself laugh and the audience will laugh with you
- Slow down - talking quickly makes everyone, you and your audience, nervous
- Keep air under your armpits - make your gestures wide and open
- Use your hands: use your hand gestures to animate your words
- Say then show - If you have to say and show something, say it first, then show it

Tips and Tricks

- Smaller is better - make titles 28 points and text 18 points. Small size makes text more distinct, white space is good
- Watch background contrast - don't let artistic background overpower the message
- Use transparency - a trick to cover high contrast background with transparent screen to mute its impact
- Use less text - too much text clutters the slide, confuses the audience, and draws attention from the presenter

About "Smart" animation

- Change pace
- Focus on understanding not decoration
- Keep it simple - Fade and Wipe are the bread and butter of PowerPoint transitions
- Separate structure from data
- Sequence the presentation



an otherwise good idea." He followed this quick "attention getter" with an overview of the evenings entertainment:

1. Survival skills for non-artistic presentation designers
2. Presenting for dummies
3. The scourge of animation
4. How to present more intelligent presentations.

The presentation was filled with insights into business needs and suggestions for using PowerPoint to meet those needs. Rick presented and demonstrated helpful advice, suggestions about public speaking, tips and tricks to use in your PowerPoint slideshows (such as transparent photo backgrounds), and thoughts about PowerPoint animation.

Rick's message was clear, "Use Power-Point to help send your message; don't let Power-Point overshadow that message."

For example, a sports coach was addressing his team at the beginning of the season. He was a gifted and naturally inspiring speaker who could motivate his players with his words and his spirit, but he insisted on using a PowerPoint slide-show. What he wound up doing was explaining the slides rather than talking to his team. His spontaneous gift of enthusiasm was gone, and he instantaneously lost his ability to focus the players on their goals.

This brings me to the essence of my review: Although this program was entertaining and enjoyable, it was not about technical writers using PowerPoint; it was about public speaking. This presentation was about putting on a marketing show with PowerPoint, not about technical writers using PowerPoint to deliver technical information. All of the content and examples were marketing presentations focused on business goals... the coach motivating his team, a private school encouraging parents to enroll their children, and numerous examples of transforming bullet slides into motivational messages. I would much rather have seen Rick address how to make PowerPoint slideshows by engineers and technical professionals more effective, more productive, and much less boring. Bullets are a way of life in

the technical communication world. I'd just like to know how to use them better.

Shelley has had the title "Technical Writer" for about 15 years, although he did technical writing for 20 years before that. In alternate lives, he's been a programmer, systems engineer, systems designer, and international consultant in software design and methodology. Currently he works for OS/soft, Inc. as a Senior Technical Writer.

Meetings

Our chapter holds a dinner meeting the second Wednesday of each month. See *Berkeley STC Meeting Location and Directions* on page 10.

Upcoming Meetings

Getting Published: How to Write a Successful Technical Book Proposal

by Tim Cox

Wednesday, June 11, 2008, 6-9:30pm

Highlands Country Club

110 Hiller Drive, Oakland, California

Program

Commercial publishing is under strain from corporate consolidation and the influence of the Web. What does this mean for aspiring authors and what opportunities does it present? What kind of proposals stand the best chance of acceptance in this climate? This entertaining and fast-moving talk will consider the situation of technical publishing today and the implications for authors. The keys to a successful book proposal will be discussed along with some of the most anxiety-producing parts of the book contract. Finally, some tips are presented for selecting a publisher, managing the production phase, and estimating financial return. The goal is to learn to think like an editor to achieve a satisfying publishing experience.

Speaker

Tim Cox is an award-winning editor with over 15 years experience in technical and professional publishing. He has established programs with companies such as Apple and Hewlett-Packard to publish



documentation and has also published market-leading college textbooks. Most recently he was a senior acquisitions editor at Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, working in the fields of software engineering, computer graphics, and game development.

Currently he is a freelance editor working in the North Bay. He holds a B.A. in literature from the University of Chicago.

Developing an Interactive Tutorial with Adobe Captivate and RoboHelp

by Laurie Edelman, Altera Corporation

Wednesday, July 9, 2008, 6-9:30pm

Highlands Country Club
110 Hiller Drive, Oakland, California

Program

In recent years, many companies have recognized the positive and effective use of simulated and interactive learning tools to systematically teach complex concepts, policy, and tasks associated with proprietary material.

The software department at Altera Corporation just completed the fourth release of the Quartus II Interactive Tutorial using Adobe Captivate and RoboHelp development tools. The Quartus II software is an advanced engineering design tool provided to customers for the purpose of creating designs and programming Altera programmable logic devices.

Speaker

Laurie Edelman is a Senior Technical Writer with Altera Corporation, where she is responsible for creating web-based training targeting programmable logic devices. Laurie has experience creating user assistance documentation within a variety of industries including Education, Software Quality Assurance, and Software Engineering.

Meeting/Dinner Prices

STC Members Meeting and Dinner

\$18.00 if reserved on our Chapter's Website by the day before the meeting
\$21.00 per person at door

Students Meeting and Dinner

\$15.00 if reserved on our Chapter's Website by the day before the meeting
\$18.00 per person at door

Non-STC Member Meeting and Dinner

\$21.00 if reserved on our Chapter's Website by the day before the meeting
\$24.00 per person at door

Meeting-only prices (reserved and at-door are the same)

STC Member \$12.00
Student \$10.00
Non-STC Member \$15.00

Special cost notes:

- Nonmembers are always welcome to STC meetings at the non-member rates.
- All members of the San Francisco Chapter of the IABC are welcome to register for Berkeley STC General Meetings at the member price (\$18 dinner/\$12 without dinner) by midnight on the day before the meeting.

Meeting Agenda

- 6:00 Check-in, networking, and conversation.
- 6:30 Dinner.
- 7:15 Chapter business and announcements. Anyone can announce jobs that they know about.*
- 7:30 Formal program. Usually we have a speaker or panel of speakers on a topic related to the business or technology of technical communication.
- 8:30 Conversation, offline questions for the speaker, follow-up on job announcements
- 9:00 Clear the room. Move conversations to the sidewalk.

* **Attendees**, please announce open positions, and bring job listings for distribution.

Recruiters are welcome to attend meetings, place literature on a designated table, and talk with attendees one-on-one during the informal parts of the meeting. We ask them not to announce specific jobs during the formal announcement



period, but they are free to stand up and identify themselves.

Similarly, we ask anyone else with commercial announcements to confine themselves to calling attention to the availability of literature on the designated table.

Berkeley STC Meeting Location and Directions

Highlands Country Club

110 Hiller Drive

Oakland, California

Information at <http://www.stc-berkeley.org/MonthlyMeeting/directions.shtml>

View from the Highlands Country Club

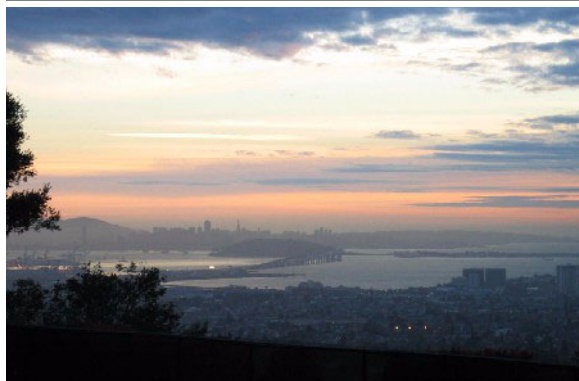


Photo courtesy of Rhonda Bracey

By Car

From San Francisco

Cross the Bay Bridge to I-580 Eastbound. Remain in the right lane, until Highway 24 Eastbound (toward Berkeley and Walnut Creek). Continue eastbound until the Tunnel Road off-ramp. Exit will loop around to the west, crossing back over Highway 24. Turn left at the stop sign. Follow Tunnel Road/Caldecott Lane to traffic signal. Veer to the right, and follow Hiller Drive halfway up the hill. Highlands Country Club will be on the right-hand side of the street.

From Walnut Creek

Take Highway 24 Westbound through the Caldecott Tunnel. Stay in the right-hand lane, taking the first exit after the tunnel ends, the Tunnel Road exit, going towards Berkeley. Follow Tunnel Road to the complex intersection and stop light, at

Tunnel Drive, Hiller Drive, and Highway 13. Veer to the right, and continue halfway up the hill on Hiller Drive. Highlands Country Club will be on the right-hand side of the street.

From I-80 and Berkeley

Take Ashby Avenue to the Highway 13 exit. Ashby becomes Tunnel Road at the Claremont Hotel. Continue on Tunnel Road (through the split-level section) to the stoplight just before the Highway 24 overcrossing. Remain in the left lane and make a sharp left U-turn around the Firestorm Memorial Garden, on to Hiller Drive. Continue halfway up the hill. Highlands Country Club will be on the right-hand side of the street.

From Hayward

Take I-580 Westbound to Highway 13 north. Continue on Highway 13 past the overcrossing of Highway 24. At the stoplight, turn right, then left, onto Hiller Drive. Continue halfway up the hill. Highlands Country Club will be on the right-hand side of the street.

Parking

Please park on the street. The club's parking lot is for members only.

Public Transit

Prefer to take BART? The Rockridge station is closest. Send email to president@stc-berkeley.org to ask about transportation from BART to the meeting.

AC Transit bus E from SF via MacArthur then Rockridge takes you as far as Tunnel Road & Roble Road, with a half mile walk uphill on Hiller Drive to the Hillside Country Club.



Other STC chapters in Northern California

East Bay: www.ebstc.org

North Bay: www.stc-northbay.org

Sacramento: www.stcsacramento.org

San Francisco: www.stc-sf.org

Silicon Valley: www.stc-siliconvalley.org

STC News

Chapter News

Leadership Positions Available

We are looking to fill several leadership positions! Contact Richard Mateosian if you are interested.

Other Organizations

American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) of Northern California. Meets periodically at various Bay Area locations. www.amwancal.org

American Society for Training and Development, Mount Diablo Chapter. Meets monthly in Danville. <http://mtdiablostd.org/>.

American Society of Indexers, Golden Gate Chapter. www.asindexing.org/site/chapters.shtml#golden

Association for Women in Computing, San Francisco Bay Area chapter — www.awc-sf.org/

International Association of Business Communicators, San Francisco chapter. A network of professionals committed to improving the effectiveness of organizations through strategic interactive and integrated business communication management — <http://sf.iabc.com/>

National Writers Union (UAW). A labor union for freelance writers of all genres. — www.nwu.org

Northern California Science Writers' Association. Quarterly meetings & other events. www.ncswa.org

Events

Bay Area PowerPoint Live Seminar Series

Renowned presentations coach Rick Altman (our May meeting presenter) will also be presenting "Do you need an antidote to Death by PowerPoint?" for his Bay Area PowerPoint Live Seminar Series.

"Your livelihood is presentations. Like the one your boss assigned you that is due yesterday, or the 90-slide deck that looks like hell, or the one with more pies than a bakery. Or how about the one for which you need to be at your very best because the stakes have never been higher?"

"Organizations are finally making the investment and raising the bar on presentation content. Now it's your turn — give us one day and we'll transform the way you think about your presentations and the way you work on them. Join us in one of five Bay Area cities this spring and turn a huge corner in your presentation design and delivery skills. Walnut Creek • Milpitas • Burlingame • San Leandro • Palo Alto

All Bay Area STC members are eligible for a \$35 discount!

Click here for details: www.betterppt.com/ seminars or call 925.398.6210.