Rules for All Entries

Entries in all categories must:

- Contain sufficient technical, scientific, medical, or similar content to qualify as technical communication.
- Have been produced or substantially revised within 24 months prior to September 1, 2014.
- Have been originally prepared and published by a client, employer, or publisher.
- Have not been entered in a previous STC competition and may be entered in only one year’s chapter or regional competition. Duplicate entries are disqualified.
- Be suitable for public display. Entries that contain classified or proprietary information or that violate copyright laws are not acceptable. It is the responsibility of the submitter, not STC, to determine that entries do not contain classified or proprietary information and to obtain permission to submit the entry from the holders of all copyrights.

The competition organizers reserve the right to reject any entry for any reason. Neither STC nor anyone associated with the competitions can be held responsible for loss of or damage to an entry.

Materials prepared for STC purposes are not eligible for entry in the competition. Examples include STC publications, Intercom and Technical Communication, articles, and STC community websites, brochures, and newsletters.

Multilingual entries are acceptable with prior approval from the competition manager.

Entries may be submitted in only one chapter or regional competition. For example, if an entry is submitted to the Boston/Northern New England regional competition, it cannot be submitted in the South Carolina competition.

An entry can be entered in only one category.

The “submitter” is the entry’s contact person, who:

- Certifies that the entry represents the actual work of the contributors named on the entry submission form and that the entry qualifies for submission.
- Certifies that the copyright holder permits the submission of the entry.
- Agrees to receive all official correspondence relating to the entry.
- Agrees to forward all communication to the entry’s contributors including award distribution.

A “contributor” is a person or company that participated in the creation of the materials submitted as an “entry”. An entry can have several contributors.

STC International Summit Awards (ISA) Categories

Entries that are submitted to the STC International Summit Awards must:

- Adhere to the STC International Summit Awards guidelines.
- Be submitted using the online STC International Summit Awards Submission Form.

Entries that are received at the STC Office will be disqualified. Entries received without a completed STC ISA submission form will be disqualified.

NOTES regarding electronic entries

- Electronic entries may be submitted to any competition category, as they will be judged based on the content not the medium in which they are delivered.
- The delivery platform (Web, Windows, Macintosh, iPad, or any other electronic device) is not a consideration in determining the category.
- Entries that run on other platforms or require special equipment (such as an iPad, mobile device, or ebook reader) will be accepted, as long as the submitter provides such specialized hardware or software to the judging location at their own expense.
- Entries that require a user login must include three separate login IDs for the judging team members to evaluate the entry.
- If the entry is provided on CD or DVD, specify the format (PC or Mac and version) on both the submission form and the disk itself.
- An entry submitted in PDF is considered to be and judged as an electronic delivery medium.
- If you submit compressed files, they must be self-extracting.
- An entry that is delivered on the Web is judged as it exists on the day of judging.
- Demonstration of an entry to the judges is forbidden.
- Entries must install correctly, be virus-free, and not take an unreasonable length of time to install.
- If the entry requires software other than the latest versions of Mozilla Firefox, Adobe Reader, or Microsoft Internet Explorer, you must also provide four copies of the software with the entry.

The STC International Summit Awards, which occurs after chapter and regional competitions, uses the following four categories for judging and awards. If unsure of which of the four categories an entry falls into, email competitions@stc.org

September 2014
Informational Materials Category

**Definition:** Entries that are both:
- Designed to attract the target audience while providing information about a technical or scientific subject, product, service, or organization
- Intended to inform the user without a specific call to action.

The materials must persuade the audience favorably toward the subject or sponsor. Visual design, including production, is important. So, too, is editing, because errors are obvious.

**Entry Type Examples:** Annual reports, articles, books, error messages, magazines, newsletters, periodicals, posters, and research papers, regardless of delivery medium; websites; videos

- **Annual Reports** are publications that summarize the activities or financial position of a corporation, government agency, or nonprofit organization. Annual Reports includes reports that comply with the regulations of government agencies, such as the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, as well as reports of unregulated, nonprofit community organizations. The design should support the focus and image of the organization and present financial and technical information in a visual manner.
- **Articles** include scholarly articles, professional articles, and trade or news articles.
- **Scholarly/professional articles** are single articles in academic or professional journals or in a scholarly book as an original contribution of knowledge.
- **Trade/news articles** are single articles in trade journals or general interest periodicals and are not original contributions of knowledge.
- **Books** include bound, printed matter and eBooks usually sold to the public through a bookseller. For this competition, a book is defined as a lengthy document covering one technical subject that is intended for sale.
- **Periodicals** include magazines, newsletters, and scholarly and professional journals that are printed and bound or published in electronic format.
- **IMPORTANT:** Submit three consecutive issues as a single periodical entry.
- **Magazines** have features and regular columns in an established format that people recognize. Advertising may be included. They are controlled by identifiable publishers or owners and served by editorial staff. Magazines can contain news and information about an organization, technology, industry, or scientific field. They can serve an internal, external, special interest, or general public audience.
- **Newsletters** are regularly scheduled publications with brief articles and a flexible format. They generally have lower budgets and fewer pages than magazines and may have photographs and illustrations. Newsletters are generally about a company’s or organization’s employees or products. They may be intended for an internal or external audience. Their primary purpose is to deliver information that will both interest the reader and promote the interests of the sponsor.
- **Scholarly/professional journals** are serial publications with features and regular columns in established formats that people recognize. Advertising may be included. They are controlled by identifiable publishers and served by editorial staff. Writing style may be relatively formal. Design creativity may be limited, in keeping with standards defined by the profession. Journals are usually targeted for a limited and specialized audience and typically contain information about research and developments in a particular discipline or profession.
- **Technical Reports** report on scientific or technical efforts, usually aimed at the professional community or a contracting customer or entity.
- **Internal Organizational Manuals** include content and tone that are usually company-dictated. Examples include employee manuals, policy and procedure manuals, and style guides.

Instructional Materials Category

**Definition:** Entries that train a user/learner on a particular set of skills and knowledge.

**Entry Type Examples:** eLearning, mobile learning, Web-based training (WBT), facilitator guides, instructional animation or videos, student guides, tutorials, webinars

- **Tutorials and Training Guides** teach the concepts and procedures for using the main features and capabilities of a product or to assist in teaching, using computer-based training applications, tutorials, online lesson books, and training aids.
- **Other Training materials** include student guides, tutorials, workbooks, and instructor guides or sets of these pieces. They should also exhibit: good use of motivational techniques (cartoon characters, themes, human interest stories, color); layout or content that readily pulls readers in and keeps them interested in using the materials; student participation, such as exercises; and mechanisms for learners to check their knowledge, such as quizzes and tests.

Promotional Materials Category

**Definition:** Entries that market or promote a product, company, individual, or event. The materials must persuade the audience to some action, using integrated text and figures. Visual design, including production, is very important. So, too, is editing, because errors are obvious.

**Entry Type Examples:** Brochures, catalogs, flyers, posters, videos, websites

- **Brochures and Catalogs** deliver information about technical products and services. Brochures inform people about a product or the features or benefits of a product. Catalogs present large amounts of data in a readable format and provide information on ordering the product or service, while being visually pleasing.
• Flyers (advertisements, product data sheets, single-page promotional handouts, and multi-page publications) market a technical product, service, or organization. Corporate and program identity materials (folders, stationery, logos) are acceptable if they communicate technical information or images. Do not mount entries larger than 11x17”. Roll up the entry and send in a mailing tube. Smaller size printed entries must be mounted if not submitted in electronic format.
• Posters support or market an employee campaign, technical product, organization, or event or communicate educational information (as opposed to marketing) about a technical or scientific subject, service, or organization. The entry description should include information about the poster’s use. Do not mount entries larger than 11x17”. Roll up the entry and send in a mailing tube. Smaller size printed entries must be mounted.
• Websites and videos include those that contain interactive (online) information or non-interactive (online or print) information that describes or defines the main features of a product or product line.
• Self-contained audio-visual material presented in DVD, High-definition video, streaming video, or other media.

User Support Materials Category

Definition: Entries that provide information for independent use to support a user in performing specific tasks.

Entry Type Examples: Online help, job aids, quick start or reference guides, reference documents, installation guides, and user guides, regardless of delivery medium.

• Help (user assistance) includes online information that has a primary purpose of providing immediate assistance to individuals while they use a product. It provides information appropriate to the task on an as-needed or -requested basis. Examples include general help, procedural help, cue cards, examples, performance support, videos, laminated quick reference cards, and embedded user assistance.
• Job Aids or Quick Start Guides have the primary purpose of assisting the user to complete a set of tasks or solve a set of problems. Examples include troubleshooting tools, wizards or wizard-like task completion tools, quick start guides, and automated support tools.
• Quick References include materials that provide concise reference to integral features of a technical product, service, or subject. Emphasis is on presenting essential information concisely so it is easy to find quickly. They often contain graphic devices and other job aids.
• Technical References have the primary purpose to define or explain structure, results, terminology, problems, or parameters. Examples include online dictionaries, glossaries, functional specifications, data dictionaries, encyclopedias, directories, software documentation sets, multi-volume reference materials, and videos.
• User Guides provide informational or instructional content for using a specific device or application. Examples include hardware guides, documentation sets, hardware/software combination guides, non-computer equipment guides, and software application guides.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I enter the ISA?

Entrants receive a detailed evaluation from three technical communication professionals at the local/regional level. If your entry goes on to the STC International Summit Awards, you will receive a total of six sets of comprehensive feedback over the course of the competitions. Unique to the STC competitions, the feedback alone is worth the entry fee, in addition to any award your entry may win.

For online entries, what equipment and software will the judges use?

Entries will be judged on different platforms, similar to how your target audience would view your entry. Judges typically have a PC running Windows XP or later version or a Macintosh equivalent and any required software supplied with the entry. The judges’ machines will have a CD-ROM drive, sound card, video card, and speakers. For Web-based entries, Firefox and Internet Explorer are the standard browsers used for judging.

On the entry submission form, should I list my company’s name or the name of the individuals who worked on the project? If I list individuals, how many of the contributors can I include?

The goal of STC International Summit Awards is to give credit and recognition to individuals and their organizations that support excellence in technical communications. STC prefers that individuals be named as contributors. However, because works of technical communication are often produced by teams, it is acceptable to cite a department or organization as a contributor.

While chapter and regional competitions determine the number of contributors they will allow per entry, no more than three contributors may be listed for an entry submitted to the STC International Summit Awards.

How are entries judged?

All entries are judged by the same criteria within two main assessment areas, Information Design and Writing and Editing. A panel of judges selects award winners. The judges have the right to reject an entry or assign no award.

Why did my entry win Distinguished/Best of Show in my chapter competition but no award at the international level?

An award (even Best of Show) at the chapter/regional level is not a guarantee of an award at the international level. The international competition employs a more stringent application of the assessment criteria. The written assessments should describe why the entry did not win an award and how to improve it.
Why did only one or two judges critique my entry? I thought I would get three written assessments.

Every entry is assigned to a judging team of three judges. However, volunteer judges sometimes have to drop out for unforeseen reasons. While the STC International Summit Awards strives to provide quality feedback to all entrants, we cannot guarantee that each entry will receive three complete assessments.

What happens to my entry after the competition?

No entries are returned from the STC International Summit Awards. If your entry wins an ISA award of Distinguished Technical Communication or Best of Show, one copy will be on display at the STC Summit in the Expo Hall and subsequently become part of the travelling exhibit. Judges dispose of all other copies of entries as instructed in the Handbook for Judges.

How will I be notified of the results?

All entries are acknowledged. Submitters will receive the judges’ assessments regardless of award. STC International Summit Award winners will receive notification before the STC Annual Summit. Best of Show recipients will be honored on stage during the Summit Honors Banquet.

Can I order additional award certificates?

Submitters can request additional certificates at a cost of $20 per certificate. Email competitions@stc.org stating how many additional certificates you require. Billing details will be provided.

How do I make sure my entry does not get disqualified?

STC can disqualify entries for many reasons. In the table on the next page are some of the causes of disqualification and how to avoid them.

Why is there a shipping fee for physical entries?

To save time and money for everyone, ISA is encouraging entries that do not need to be shipped. ISA does not ship to judges outside of North America, because it takes too long given our judging schedule and is much too expensive, not to mention the possibility of lost or damaged entries in transit. In contrast, electronic entries can be delivered the same day at little or no cost by various means over the Internet and with immediate confirmation of receipt.

What kind of entries require the $25 shipping fee?

Entries that are shipped to ISA using a traditional courier and delivery service, such as FedEx, DHL, UPS, USPS. Note: If an entry is on a flash drive, CD, or DVD, the physical media must be shipped, and therefore the shipping fee applies.

What kind of entries do not require the $25 shipping fee?

Entries that can be delivered by website download, DropBox, URL, FTP, YouTube or similar means. ISA can provide the name of its DropBox folder upon request. Hard copy posters larger than 11x17” are also exempt from the shipping fee.

Aren’t electronic entries more difficult to assess effectively than hard copies? Won’t judges miss things?

The judging emphasis is on content. If judges want to, they can print the entries. The only entry assessment criteria that cannot be judged are the production materials (paper, ink, cover material), finished size, and binding. If you feel that your entry should be judged on those criteria to receive a fair assessment, then you may mail your entry to ISA and pay the shipping fee.

The local/regional competition judged an entry as hard copy only, and it won a Distinguished/Excellence award. Can I submit the electronic equivalent to the ISA?

Yes, provided the content is identical.

Who do I contact if I have other questions?

To request clarification or ask other questions, email competitions@stc.org. Someone from the STC International Summit Awards committee or the STC Office liaison will respond within a reasonable time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Disqualification</th>
<th>Method to Avoid Disqualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry does not meet the definition of acceptable technical communication. For example, entry is an STC internal document or website.</td>
<td>See category definitions on pages 2 and 3 for descriptions of what qualifies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodical entry does not have enough consecutive issues.</td>
<td>See Periodicals on page 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry did not make the submission deadline.</td>
<td>Mail your entry (or send the URL for an online entry) to arrive at its destination well before the deadline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission form was not submitted online or not filled out completely. A hard copy form alone mailed with your entry is not acceptable.</td>
<td>Fill out the submission form found at <a href="http://www.stc.org/membership/recognition/competitions">http://www.stc.org/membership/recognition/competitions</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry was mailed to STC office or another incorrect address.</td>
<td>Do not ship your entry to the STC office. Send it to the name and address listed at <a href="http://www.stc.org/membership/recognition/competitions">http://www.stc.org/membership/recognition/competitions</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry fee was mailed with entry.</td>
<td>When you fill out the submission form, follow the payment instructions provided. If you pay by check, mail it to the STC office. Do not mail your fee with the entry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry fee was not paid.</td>
<td>When you fill out the submission form, follow the payment instructions provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry was not included in the list of Excellence or Distinguished award winners submitted by the chapter/regional competition manager.</td>
<td>For your entry to qualify, your name, the entry title, and award level must appear on list of qualified entries submitted by the chapter/regional competition manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry is a duplicate. For example, if you entered ABC Training Guides I, II, and III as one entry and also entered ABC Training Guide I as a separate entry, both entries are disqualified.</td>
<td>Submit the entry only once.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry was submitted to two different chapter competitions.</td>
<td>Submit the entry to only one chapter or regional competition to be eligible to enter the ISA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exact same entry was entered the previous year.</td>
<td>If you did not update the entry since last year’s submission, the entry is disqualified. If you updated the entry since last year and the copyright or version number shows this, then it qualifies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>