STC Special Interest Group Creation Process

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are important virtual communities within STC. Ideally, the SIGs should be organized around current, unique, or professionally vital topics under the large umbrella of technical communication. Their titles should adequately reflect their focus and their descriptions should describe the limits of their scope. Within a SIG, one would expect to find experienced members and subject matter experts engaged in an active conversation with other SIG members.

If the SIG is vital and active and discussion and learning is occurring, the SIG should be generating some new knowledge, insight, or technique to share with the rest of the STC membership and the profession. Ideally, SIG activity can be linked to the Body of Knowledge, and SIG discussions would be content generators for their members as well as producers of articles for *Intercom* and *Technical Communication*. SIGs might also contribute to STC’s education offerings.

However, nothing is a hot topic forever. At some point, tools, training, and common knowledge subsume the conversation. The practice of the profession moves on, combining disciplines or focusing on higher value techniques. We have seen this happen several times at STC. SIGs become dormant, volunteerism drops, and interest wanes.

Therefore, STC is introducing a process that requires the SIGs to re-charter after a period of time so that leaders can re-evaluate their focus and title, re-energize their activities, consider merging with other SIGs if conversations are overlapping, or simply disband if interest and activity is low. At the same time, we are introducing a simple process for starting new SIGs. By setting a limit on SIG charters and encouraging new SIGs to start up, STC hopes to create and maintain a large, active, and interesting set of SIGs that will be of significant value to our members.

This document describes the process for starting a new STC Special Interest Group.

1. After logging on to the STC website, download the STC Special Interest Group (SIG) Charter document from the Leadership Resources page or request it from the STC Community Affairs Committee (CAC) or STC community liaison. Fill out the from with the SIG name, detailed objective/purpose/scope, and output of the proposed SIG. Note the names of the chairman, vice chairman, and Web manager.

2. The purpose and scope of the proposed SIG will be reviewed. A representative from the Body of Knowledge task force will determine if the purpose aligns with the profession of technical communication, whether the scope is bounded, and whether the name appropriately describes the purpose of the SIG. All SIG topics should like to the Technical Communication Body of Knowledge (TCBOK)—the repository for any materials, content, or intellectual property developed by the SIG.
3. Once the purpose and scope are approved, STC will announce the intent to create a new SIG on its blog and website. The organizer of the proposed SIG will supply an email address where interested members can send in their names, STC IDs, and email addresses. Interest in the new SIG must be **supported by 50 STC members**. The new SIG will have **4 months** in which to collect the signatures. If 50 are not collected in 4 months, the proposal to start the SIG will need to be reconsidered.

4. If the required number of interested members is achieved, the proposed SIG charter will be presented to the STC Board for approval.

5. Once approved, STC will take the following actions:
   
   a. add the SIG to the list of communities on its website
   b. offer the purchase of membership in the SIG as an option
   c. set up a URL and template Web page for the SIG
   d. give appropriate access to the Web page to the new SIG webmaster
   e. set up listserves or Adobe Connect access as needed

Charters are valid for 2 years after approval by the STC Board until 31 December of the second year. At that time, the members of the SIG may re-charter or disband or merge with another SIG. SIGs may vote to disband or merge before 2 years if there is a lack of interest or activity.

If you have any questions about creating an STC SIG, please contact...