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From the STC President

Hi,



If you look closely at this month's *News & Notes*, you will see a new feature. The table of contents below now connects you to **STC News** as well as a new feature called **Industry Newsbriefs**—short pieces of news about and of interest to our industry. Check out these links for information about technical communication, what's happening in related areas, and developments that will further your own business knowledge.

In addition, please notice that we now have sponsors for *News & Notes*. The abstract service that produces **Industry Newsbriefs** is not free, but these sponsorships will more than offset the cost. We hope you'll support our sponsors and take the time to click on their links and see the tools and services that they provide.

We hope you like the expanded and improved *News & Notes*, and encourage you to share your thoughts by e-mailing newsandnotes@stc.org. For a summary of STC Board activities, please read my article below titled **Board Updates**.

Enjoy and learn!

Linda Oestreich
President, STC Board of Directors

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STC News

Board Updates

By Linda Oestreich
President, STC Board of Directors

The STC Board convened in Berkeley, California, August 16–18, for its first meeting of the new fiscal year (which runs July 1–June 30). Board members greeted Rob Hanna, the new region 1 director. With Rob's addition to the Board, we now have four countries represented: U.S., Canada, U.K., and Israel. Now, that's progress!

In a series of discussions and workshops, the Board renewed its commitment to being "strategic"—agreeing to focus on determining the WHAT, and leaving the HOW to our competent staff and volunteer committees. This model, adopted last year, ensures that we focus on the evolution of the profession, international trends, and the future of business, while keeping out of day-to-day operations of the Society that are competently handled by the STC office staff.

This model is working! Recent successes include the execution of our revamped conference, new publishing initiatives (such as the new *News & Notes*), an upgraded telephone and management system, and the re-launch of the Academic Database. Meanwhile, the Board is discussing projects with far-reaching implications such as a formal Body of Knowledge and the strategic assessment of all STC programs.

Making that assessment is so important that I've formed a Strategic Program Assessment Task Force (led by our Immediate Past President Paula Berger) to study our main programs and help determine their strategic value to STC. (Thanks, Paula!)

And believe it or not, it's already time to begin work for the next STC election! The STC Nominating Committee has been busy and has identified forty-eight potential candidates for Board positions who will soon receive information packets. Seems likely that we'll have plenty of excellent candidates on the ballot next spring!

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theory and practice of technical communication across all user abilities and all media. STC's 14,000 members produce everything from traditional user manuals to the latest Web-based interactive tutorials, all with the goal of conveying complex information in a way people can receive, understand, and use.

STC News & Notes is an executive summary of noteworthy articles pertaining to all aspects of the Society and the technical communication field.

For more information on STC and *STC News & Notes*, contact:

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By Mary R. Wise, Manager, Bylaws Committee

Over the past eight months, the Bylaws Committee has been rewriting the Society Bylaws. We needed to bring the Bylaws into compliance with New York state law, make the different sections and articles of the Bylaws consistent, and streamline the Bylaws so that they have only the necessary information. A draft of the proposed Bylaws was presented at the STC Forum at the Technical Communication Summit in Minneapolis. Members were able to give comments at that time.

In addition, the proposed Bylaws have been posted on the STC Web site and a number of members have sent the Bylaws Committee specific questions or concerns. We have taken all your comments into consideration as we continued to refine the proposed Bylaws over this summer. Thank you to all who commented and asked questions.

The current Bylaws, the newest version of the proposed Bylaws, and a rationale document explaining the changes are all posted on the Society Web site at www.stc.org/stcmembers/bylaws01.asp so that you can familiarize yourself with the proposed new Bylaws.

An e-mail notifying the Society membership of this referendum was sent to all STC members on August 16. STC is required to give thirty-days' notice of such referendums. The vote will be held in mid-September. Members will receive instructions on how to vote in the coming weeks.

For more information, please contact me at maryrwise@gmail.com.

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Region 4 Conference Announces Presenters

By Robert G. Young, Senior Member

If you did not have an opportunity to attend the STC conference in Minneapolis or if you want to hone your technical communication skills further, we have just the ticket for you (and it's affordable)! "The Crucial Communicator," the Northeast Ohio Chapter STC regional conference, will be held on Friday, October 12, 2007, from 8 AM to 5:30 PM at the Hilton Garden Inn and Gateway Conference Center in downtown Cleveland, Ohio.

Meet notable STC presenters, including Neil Perlin and Scott Abel, as well as STC Executive Director Susan Burton. Session topics include Web 2.0, structured authoring, *Captivate* for e-learning, DITA, integrated authoring and translation, international documentation standards, and XML solutions. See the complete list of presenters and topics at www.neostc.org/conf/presentations.htm.

We are privileged to have the ISO JTC 1 SC7/WG2 group, comprising international experts in standards and user documentation from the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. You can meet the guests and network during the Rock & Write welcome reception on Thursday evening (October 11).

This learning opportunity is available at the incredibly low price of just \$120 per STC member. Discount hotel reservations are also available. Register today at www.neostc.org/conf. Space is limited.

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[Get to Know the STC Forum and the STC Wiki](#)

Want to communicate with other STC members or help create and maintain content pertaining to STC and the field of technical communication? Consider signing up for accounts on the STC Forum and the STC Wiki.

STC's Forum (stcforum.org) is a forum for professional discourse on topics related to technical communication and STC. Forum topic areas include STC Publications, STC Governance, STC Conferences, STC Chapters, and STC SIGs, among others. Topic areas of professional interest include, but are not limited to, Careers, Training, and Education; Writing and Editing; and Standards.

Posting to the Forum is restricted to STC members. To register for the Forum, visit stcforum.org/preregister.php. You'll need your STC member number and password.

Current projects on the STC Wiki (stc-on.org/wiki/Main_Page) include a glossary of technical communication terms, STC community data, and an alphabetical listing of STC chapters and SIGs ("STC Organization"). In addition, the STC Wiki includes a section of Help topics pertaining to using the Forum (stc-on.org/wiki/Forum_Help).

To register as an STC Wiki user so you can contribute to any of the aforementioned projects or begin a new project, please see stc-on.org/wiki/New_Accounts for instructions.

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Noted with Interest...

Adobe updates product line. In July, Adobe Systems Incorporated (www.adobe.com) announced the releases of Adobe *FrameMaker 8* and *Captivate 3*.

FrameMaker 8's integration of XML allows users to work in style-tagging word-processing mode or in a fully structured authoring environment for producing XML and SGML. It also supports DITA. New features include support for SWF files (compatible with Adobe *Flash Player*) and 3-D file formats, and Unicode support for publishing in multiple languages. *FrameMaker 8* retails for US\$899 for Windows and US\$1,329 for Solaris Unix. Registered users can upgrade to *FrameMaker 8* for an estimated price of US\$299 for Windows and US\$429 for Solaris Unix. To learn more about *FrameMaker 8*, visit www.adobe.com/products/framemaker or attend a free e-seminar at www.adobe.com/go/techcom_eseminars.

Captivate 3 allows the creation of software training in a simple screen-capture session. Enhanced *PowerPoint* import functionality supports the conversion of slide animations into Adobe *Flash* format and allows authors to create interactive presentations. *Captivate 3* supports SWF, MP3, AVI, FLA, and FLV files, as well as new visual effects such as rollover objects and animated slide transitions. The estimated price for *Captivate 3* is US\$699. Users of Macromedia *Captivate 1* and Adobe *Captivate 2* can upgrade to Adobe *Captivate 3* for an estimated price of US\$299. Volume discounts and government and education licensing are also available to eligible customers. To learn more about Adobe *Captivate 3*, visit www.adobe.com/products/captivate.

LinguaLinx, Inc., opens West Coast office. The new office, in San Francisco, California, opened its doors on June 25, 2007. ([read more](#))

WhiteSmoke Software identifies top ten business writing errors. WhiteSmoke's technology analyzes the types of errors that its software users make and with what frequency. The company has announced that five of the top ten business writing errors are spelling errors, which account for 53.2 percent of the top ten errors. ([read more](#))

Pittsburgh Chapter STC recognizes longtime member. Congratulations to Janis

Ramey, who will celebrate her fiftieth year as an STC member in 2008. Janis serves as executive director of WorkQuest, a support group sponsored by the Pittsburgh chapter that she founded for people looking for work. She presented a paper about WorkQuest at the STC annual conference in 2004. Janis has also served the Pittsburgh Chapter STC as a member of the executive council. In this capacity, she has started and supervised a speakers' bureau; helped archive the chapter's history; and served as vice president, secretary, nominating committee chair, competitions chair, and competitions judge. She has received numerous awards in STC's International Technical Publications Competition and International Online Communication Competition. Janis received a Distinguished Chapter Service Award from the Pittsburgh Chapter STC in 2000 and was named an STC associate fellow in 2005.

Reader feedback. Barbara Heidecke of the Four Lakes Chapter STC writes regarding President Linda Oestreich's welcome letter in the July 2007 *News & Notes*:

Congratulations on your appointment as President of STC. I greatly appreciate your emphasis on "Now" as well as your bold reference to Pema Chodron's words about the effect of *Now* on the future. It is very heartening to see an integration of this philosophy at the leadership level in business arenas. Thank you for your inspiration.

For your information, I just discovered that one of the people who hired me as a contract writer for EDS has the following e-mail signature line:

Now is where we do business.

It's when we do business.

It's how we do business.

Are you ready for Now?

I take this as a very good sign that I may be well aligned in my new job.

I wish you the best in your leadership role. I will do my best to participate in and contribute to STC. I couldn't have gotten this far without STC's support, and I greatly appreciate your leadership and vision. Many thanks!

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Industry News

Firms Using Wikis, RSS as Enterprise 2.0 Grows

Investor's Business Daily (08/21/07) P. A5; Womack, Brian

Enterprises are adopting Web 2.0 collaboration tools such as wikis, blogs, and really simple syndication (RSS). This in turn is spurring tech companies to offer such products, which are falling under the umbrella term Enterprise 2.0. Wikis allow Web-page updates and editing by a group of users, and they are being employed by writing teams to eliminate frequent back-and-forth e-mailing of documents. RSS allows employees to automatically receive the enterprise's latest news via their e-mail or desktop PCs. Keyword tagging of items eases their location on the intranet, while podcasts and social networking sites are additional Enterprise 2.0 components. The Enterprise 2.0 trend expands blog usage to bolster intranet communication so that information is better circulated and more employees contribute information, and Harvard Business School professor Andrew McAfee characterizes such communication as "very egalitarian," adding that it doesn't care "about bureaucracy and it doesn't care about any box on the org chart." Almost one-fifth of corporations use blogs, 32 percent employ wikis, and 23 percent are beginning to utilize RSS to distribute company news, according to a Nemertes Research study in May. Over 60 percent of

275 business technology buyers polled by Forrester Research share a "positive" or "strongly positive" perception of Web 2.0, and list increased efficiency as a particular benefit the technologies yield. The poll indicates that most U.S. companies are considering Web 2.0 technology investments, with 54 percent investing, testing, or considering investing in blogs, 63 percent in podcasts, 64 percent in wikis, and 68 percent in RSS.

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Study: Primary Role of the Internet Shifting From Communications to Content

Ars Technica (08/13/07) Cheng, Jacqui

People are reading online content more than ever, concludes a new report from the Online Publishers Association and Nielsen/NetRatings. The Internet Activity Index (IAI), the report on a four-year-long study of people's use of e-commerce, communications, content, and search services, found that while activities such as e-commerce and communications are still popular, reading and viewing content on the Internet has risen dramatically since 2003. The OPA reports that in 2003 Internet users spent about 34 percent of their time reading content, but in May 2007 Internet users viewed content 47 percent of the time. "The IAI has identified a very significant and sustained trend in where consumers are spending their online time," says OPA President Pam Horan. "The index indicates that, over the last four years, the primary role of the Internet has shifted from communications to content." Major news events such as Hurricane Katrina or high-profile sports events create traffic spikes, but traffic remains high well after the event. Online video and social networking sites, which is considered content, are also partially responsible. Interestingly, instant messaging is also considered content and not communications, which may also contribute to content's increased popularity. OPA notes that Internet communications activity, primarily e-mail, is not dropping. Instead, there is more available content to consume, including driving directions, movie listings, reviews, news, blogs, and user added content such as YouTube videos.

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Online Learning Changing Education

BYU NewsNet (UT) (08/23/07) Beaufort, Kiku

Online education is quickly growing in popularity as schools offer more classes online and students are more than willing to take them. In the Fall of 2002, about 1.6 million students in the United States were enrolled in at least one online course, according to the Babson Research Group and the Sloan Consortium. However, by 2005, the number of online students increased 35 percent and was estimated at about 3.2 million students. "There are some things you can do online that you just can't flat do it in the old way," says Jessica Draper, a Brigham Young University instructional designer who works with professors to design online tools for classes. Draper says that both professors and students are asking for more learning to occur online. "More of the professors are starting to realize, 'Hey, I can use animations and illustrations instead of drawing on a blackboard,'" Draper says. BYU professors can go to the Center for Instructional Design with proposals for links to diagrams, illustrations, and demonstrations that provide an interactive and more effective route to learning, Draper says. In addition to requests from professors and students for more online learning, the administration at BYU is pushing for more classes to incorporate online education, but the time and effort required to develop a successful online course is a major setback. "It usually takes a professor about five months to put together a course manuscript," Draper notes, and then an additional five to seven months are needed to develop the course and test it.

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MIT's 'Clutter Detector' Could Cut Confusion

MIT News (08/21/07) Halber, Deborah

A team of MIT scientists has developed a way to measure visual clutter, which could lead to more user-friendly displays and maps, and improvements to user interfaces and Web site designs. Creating a universal definition of what constitutes clutter proved difficult as what one person considers to be clutter may be seen by another as an organized system. "We lack a clear understanding of what clutter is, what features, attributes, and factors are relevant, why it presents a problem, and how to identify it," says MIT's Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences principal research scientist Ruth Rosenholtz. Rosenholtz and colleagues modeled what makes items in a display harder or easier to see using data on color, contrast, and orientation. The model was then used to develop software that measures visual clutter. The researchers tested the influence of clutter when searching for a symbol on a map and found a strong correlation between the time it takes to find a symbol and the amount of clutter on the map. In a previous study the team asked 20 people to rank 25 maps of the United States and San Francisco in order from most cluttered to least cluttered. While there was disagreement among human subjects as to what constituted clutter, when the researchers compared the human results to their clutter measurement system there was a good correlation. Rosenholtz now plans to offer the visual clutter tool to designers as part of a user study to see what insights designers get from using the program, such as what knowledge they gain on how a user will possibly perceive their designs.

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Lifting Corporate Fingerprints From the Editing of Wikipedia

New York Times (08/19/07) P. 1; Hafner, Katie

Computer science graduate student Virgil Griffith's new Web site, WikiScanner, is capable of tracking where Wikipedia article edits are made from, which has exposed the fact that many companies are involved in editing their own Wikipedia pages. For example, SeaWorld's Wikipedia page was edited last year to change the word "Orcas" to "killer whales" because it was claimed to be a more accurate term for the animals. A paragraph criticizing SeaWorld's treatment of sea animals was also removed. It has been discovered that those changes came from a computer at Anheuser-Busch, SeaWorld's owner. In 2004, someone at ExxonMobil edited information on the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, downplaying the impact on the area's wildlife and highlighting the positive impact of the compensation payments the company paid. Overall, Internet experts are glad WikiScanner is tracking article edits. "I'm very glad that this has been exposed," says University of Michigan Law School visiting professor Susan P. Crawford. "Wikipedia is a reliable first stop for getting information about a huge variety of things, and it shouldn't be manipulated as a public relations arm of major companies." Jimmy Wales, founder of the Wikimedia Foundation, which runs Wikipedia, says WikiScanner is a very clever idea, and that he is considering some changes to Wikipedia that would help users better understand what information about them is recorded. "When someone clicks on 'edit,' it would be interesting if we could say, 'Hi, thank you for editing. We see you're logged in from The New York Times. Keep in mind that we know that, and it's public information,'" Wales says. "That might make them stop and think."

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Translation Tools: New Approaches to an Old Discipline

Computerworld (08/13/07) Vol. 41, No. 33, P. 30; Anthes, Gary

Language translation software can greatly enhance productivity with the right combination of discrimination and preparation, and researchers say new translation strategies are augmenting tool performance enormously. Since Ford Motor started using machine translation software nine years ago, it has translated 5 million automobile assembly instructions into multiple languages. The process involves the writing of English instructions by engineers and then the parsing of those instructions by an in-house AI program into unambiguous directions, which are stored as a record in a translation database. The Systran software uses rules-based translation, which utilizes bilingual dictionaries mated with electronic style guides featuring rules for

usage and grammar, along with "translation memory" databases of previously translated text represented by source and target sentence pairs. Meanwhile, statistical machine translation "trains" software on collections of documents and their translations. Large amounts of documents are necessary for statistical machine translation, but grammatical rules, bilingual dictionaries, and translation memories are unnecessary. "The new direction in the research community is to see how you can combine these purely statistical techniques with some linguistic knowledge," says Microsoft researcher Steve Richardson. "It's modeling the rules with the statistical methods." Automated translation software is most suitable in situations where translations are adequate rather than perfect, and Richardson believes practical translation milestones will be accomplished through the creation of systems that are embedded within the workflows of user organizations. An increase in translation system sophistication and complexity is being facilitated by the combination of complementary rules- and/or statistics-based machine translation and translation memories, according to researchers.

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Can Apple's New Pages Replace Word?

ZDNet (08/14/07) Harris, Robin

Apple's new iWork '08 could provide some competition to Microsoft Office, the long-standing king of office suite programs, writes Robin Harris. Although iWork cannot compete with Microsoft's Office on features, it enables more polished, well-designed, professional looking presentations, documents, and spreadsheets than Office does. Large corporations will probably continue to use Office because it enables companies to create exchangeable, editable spreadsheets and documents, but for small businesses looking to create a more finished looking product iWork may be the tool of choice. Positioning graphics in Office is often a chore and more difficult than it should be as Office applications do not support the same formats and have very different responses to the same pieces of material. iWork, however, makes positioning graphics easy with simple drag and drop controls and easy resizing. Apple has outfitted iWork with the most important word processing and layout features, and added a few extras, such as a Track Changes feature and a "Paste and Match Style" feature that automatically reformats copied material to match the document being created. iWork is far from perfect, Harris notes, as Pages does not have an outline mode, changing bullets can be difficult, and Paste and Match does not always work as expected, but it does provide an alternative to the inartistic approach Office offers, Harris concludes.

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A Lexicon for Document Analysis

CMS Watch (08/12/07) Byrne, Tony

Content analysis is becoming increasingly important, particularly for Web content, but there is a definite lack of uniform terminology that can hinder a company's efforts to utilize the latent structure of some of their online information and to re-use information across locales and channels more efficiently. Electronic publishing is still a young field and vendors, consultants, and analysts all use their own terminology, and sometimes a single word can have multiple meanings. Similar confusion can come from structured display templates as well. Web sites continue to grow in size and complexity and organizations try to manage multiple sites from a single application, requiring multiple object-oriented or "nested" template structures. These template pieces are called code snippets, template fragments, template elements, or just templates depending on an organization's terminology. The increasing complexity of systems and terminology makes it all the more important to create a solid and unified set of definitions for what your organization will call document types and elements that make up structured documents. Frequently, "type" refers to a particular document model or structure, while "element" is used to describe the content pieces that make the document. Ultimately, the exact terms used do not matter as long as there is an established standard practice so members of your organization can communicate effectively with internal and external contributors.

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IT Execs Seek New Ways to Justify Web 2.0

Computerworld (08/13/07) Vol. 41, No. 33, P. 14; Havenstein, Heather

When a company decides to implement Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs, and RSS technologies, traditional return on investment metrics are generally unable to provide a definitive answer as to whether the process was a success. William Hayes, Biogen's associate director of library and literature informatics, says the ROI for such projects is qualitative. Hayes is creating a wiki to house content generated from research requests and feedback on the research, as well as a RSS server to provide feeds anytime a particular drug is mentioned in the news. "If it improves interactivity and we're getting usage of the tools and there is better communications in the company, then we will consider it a success," Hayes says. Forrester Research analyst Oliver Young says the biggest hurdle preventing corporate use of Web 2.0 technologies is the challenge of proving the financial worth of the projects to company executives. A Forrester survey of 275 IT managers found that 63 percent still use traditional ROI measurements such as total cost of ownership to measure the value of Web 2.0 applications. Another 14 percent of respondents said they had not attempted to apply any type of value to Web 2.0 tools. Euan Semple, the former head of knowledge management at BBC, at one time managed an internal bulletin board used by about 23,000 employees, a wiki used by 5,000 employees, and several hundred bloggers. Semple says Web 2.0 technologies enabled BBC employees to collaborate with colleagues on projects and to poll workers about major initiatives. "Even if all that gets answered are small day-to-day questions, such as where to find things, how to do things or who to talk to, the cumulative effect is huge," Semple says.

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The Web Design Guru that Web Designers Love to Hate

Guardian Unlimited (UK) (08/09/07) Schofield, Jack

Jakob Nielsen is widely considered to be a Web design guru, but his own site has a decade-old design and is often the subject of ridicule. Nielsen argues that the antique design makes his site unique and if he were to update it his site would look like 10 million other sites out there. The real value of his site is that it provides useful content while making a personal statement; in this case, it stands as a protest against overly glamorous, flashy sites. Nielsen cautions that anyone starting a site should probably not take this approach. Nielsen is also closely involved with intranets, or in-house webs that allow companies to provide their staff with news, forms, and other company applications. He says small usability improvements on an intranet can make a company more efficient and generate enormous financial benefits. "Who are the users and what are they trying to do?" are the questions Nielsen says should be asked when designing an intranet. "So what is a good interface for computer engineers is not a good interface for the average person. A lot of computer guys don't recognize that, and it creates problems." To test usability, Nielsen prefers to use one or more real users who, unlike designers and company employees, do not know what they are supposed to do and often are unwilling to take the time to figure it out. "One of the main reasons companies need systematic usability studies is to make explicit the fact that outside customers don't find your design as important as you do," Nielsen writes in an article on his site.

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2007 Campus Technology Innovators: Rich Media - Drexel University

Campus Technology (08/01/07) Vol. 20, No. 12, P. 30

Drexel University has a long history of incorporating rich media into the school's academic offerings, but deploying rich media contents was often a difficult process. University instructors would bring audio, video, graphics, and textual content to the

Faculty Development Center to have it made available on the Web, requiring hours of FDC staff time to handle the material. To streamline the process, John Morris, director of academic technology innovation, and his team developed the Rich Media Conversion Project (RMCP), an automated and user-friendly digital drop box that simplifies the process of formatting audio, video, text, and other rich media items into highly compressed and streamable formats for Web delivery. RMCP is a Web-based graphic user interface that allows authenticated users to create new content channels, also known as categories, upload rich media content and metadata to new or existing channels, choose appropriate encoding schemas based on media type, create and manage playlists, and manage content access rights. When users want to upload a file, all they need to do is launch the RMCP Web interface, enter their university username and password, select a channel, enter an event name and brief description, and use the browse button to find the file on the computer. Users then select the desired output format and send the media. When the encoding process is complete, users receive a URL for the content. Morris notes that the system's RSS functionality not only lets end users subscribe to a particular content channel but receive notification of any updates to the content, such as additions, deletions, or modifications.

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The Consolidation of Collaboration

AIIM E-DOC Magazine (08/07) Vol. 21, No. 4, P. 30; Harney, John

Web 2.0 technologies can create a robust, flexible, responsive, and innovative space for employees to collaborate. Such collaboration is both a practice and a process. As a practice, workers can use informal techniques and technologies such as blogs and wikis to create new, innovative ideas and responses. As a process, users conform to formal business processes through document-centered process management tools such as process modeling and routing, document check-in and check-out, and version control. Collaborative technologies complement knowledge management tools and content management tools, while collaborative tools allow for virtual work so employees can work from different locations in different time zones. Projects can be completed more quickly and managed more efficiently because workers can track changes from constituents submitted to a project's document set. "Most people consider collaboration as communication only, when it's a much richer technology," says Gartner's Nikos Drakos. "These team-oriented tools add permanence and structure to ad hoc communications." Drakos says advanced collaboration requires artifacts, such as documents to launch, and accounts for who is participating in the effort, what their responsibilities are, and what the objective of the collaboration is. A Gartner report explains that standardized tools and strategies will usually surface in one of three technologies. Strategic technology platforms are bundled packages of collaboration technology within a larger technology platform, usually content or management systems. Standalone products are modes of communications such as real-time communication, or contain specific functions such as expertise location or threaded discussions. Lastly, embedded-in business applications are part of larger business applications such as product lifecycle management.

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The Medium Gets the Message

EContent (08/07) Vol. 30, No. 6, P. 42; Kho, Nancy Davis

The advent of Web 2.0 technologies is rippling throughout the traditional print publishing industry, forcing entrenched publishers to adopt new Web-based publishing models. Online distribution allows for higher levels of speed and efficiency in keeping information updated, which draws readers as well as advertisers; such sites also benefit from online distribution's ability to aggregate third-party content with ease. "Online publishing is faster and allows for interactivity, and that's what makes it alive," says PaidContent.org founder Rafat Ali, who adds that the flexibility of the online-only model is another advantage. The development of post-print publishing is also being impacted by publishers' realization that their content must work harder and be released on multiple media, which gives them a chance to connect with new audiences

and generate new, customized products. "The inherent value of online distribution is that it changes the economics of distribution," notes BioMed Central publisher Dr. Matt Cockerill. "A publisher can create and distribute content to a million people for very little more than it costs to distribute it to one person." BioMed employs an open-access journal model in which individual authors and institutions are charged an online distribution fee, which Cockerill says dovetails with researchers' desire to have their content cited rapidly and on a wide spectrum, adding to their reputation, expanding their readership, and improving the odds for future research funding and tenure. Sometimes content distribution follows an online-to-print model, giving publishers an opportunity to tap readers who prefer print as a primary source. Data indicates that print advertising is still highly preferable for advertisers, while publishers are under pressure to enable their content for reader-preferred access thanks to the proliferation of mobile devices, MP3 players, and interactive television. While adding searchability to rich content via indexing and tagging is important to presenting content in context, publishers can enhance value through content packaging and presentation in a user-customized format.

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Business Value of Web 2.0 Tools Hard to Measure

InformationWeek (07/27/07) Gonsalves, Antone

Nearly two-thirds of IT decisionmakers use traditional value metrics such as return on investment and total cost of ownership to evaluate the success or failure of Web 2.0 tools, concludes a Forrester Research survey. Forrester says that instead of using hard data such as a reduced number of calls to a support center following the launch of a self-service Internet application or increased Web site traffic from an RSS feed, companies tend to focus on softer benefits such as business efficiency and competitive advantage to assign value to Web 2.0 applications. Consequently, Forrester believes that many companies will avoid adding or expanding Web 2.0 tools until they are better able to measure the business value. Forrester's survey found that really simple syndication (RSS) was the highest-valued Web 2.0 technology, with nearly 25 percent ranking RSS as having "substantial value." RSS was most frequently used for corporate communications or content aggregation. Blogs were given the lowest ranking, with only 11 percent saying they had substantial value. Almost half of respondents did say that blogging held moderate value, though Forrester believes that many companies still misuse blogs. "Many business users still associate blogs with personal diaries, and some firms use blogs simply as a way to surface existing content, muting the effect," the Forrester report says. Instant messaging was the most valued technology, which 37 percent of respondents said held substantial value. The survey focused on companies that deployed RSS, podcasting, wikis, social networks, or blogs, and found that companies that deployed all five got the most value out of Web 2.0 technologies, while those that only used two or three tools saw a smaller return.

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Subject: The End of E-mail

Independent (London) (07/25/07) Shreeve, Jimmy Lee

About two years ago, Investment bank Dresdner Kleinwort recognized that e-mail was no longer working for the firm and began searching for an alternative to e-mail, one that could be preserved for important information and discussions and would not be bogged down by irrelevant office banter and spam. Many other top business leaders have started looking for alternatives as well, including Warren Buffett, Phones4U owner John Caudwell, and Boston mayor Tom Menino. E-mail continues to become less and less efficient. A recent poll by IT news site Silicon.com found that 33 percent of respondents receive between 51 and 100 e-mails a day, compared to a similar survey taken two years ago where only 23 percent of respondents said they received that many e-mails. AOL researchers report that between 10 and 50 percent of work time is spent using e-mail, creating a huge impact on productivity. A study cited in a 2006 article in the Journal of Business and Technical Communication found that the average worker had 2,483 inbox messages and 858 filed messages. To avoid the smothering

weight of e-mail, Dresdner Kleinwort alerted several workgroups in the firm about a wiki called Socialtext, which allows the company to set up pages for specific projects and invite anyone to collaborate, edit text, add comments, hold discussions, and link to other documents, graphics, and Internet sites. Dresdner Kleinwort found the Socialtext trial to be so successful it told employees not to use e-mail and set up its own proprietary wiki system with 5,000 pages and over 2,500 users around the world. Similar programs, such as Google Docs & Spreadsheets, allow users to collaborate on documents on the Web. Gartner research believes that by 2009 wikis will become mainstream collaboration tools in at least half of all companies.

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