blue pencil

Pittsburgh STC WorkQuest™ Group Presented at Region 4 Conference

On Saturday, November 9, five members of the *Pittsburgh Chapter STC* WorkQuest™ group presented the session "Smart Job Searching" at the 2002 Region 4 Conference in Columbus, Ohio. Capsules of these presentations follow, and handouts are posted on the STC WorkQuest™ Web site.

The Pittsburgh STC WorkQuest™ group presenters hope you'll find our presentations helpful no matter where you are on your career path, and we thank the Pittsburgh Chapter STC and Nancy Carpenter for financial contributions that significantly defrayed our costs for attending the Conference and presenting the Pittsburgh STC WorkQuest™ initiative to our Region.

About Pittsburgh STC WorkQuest™ - Janis Ramey
Group founder and Region 4 Conference session moderator Janis Ramey reviewed how Pittsburgh's STC WorkQuest™ group developed and where it stands today. Janis got the idea for this support group for technical communicators looking for work from the experiences of a friend, an article she wrote on the topic, and outplacement functions offered by some companies. She obtained the blessing of the Pittsburgh Chapter STC to start this initiative in order to motivate members and help them focus on specific tasks and issues of job searching.

Those attending STC WorkQuest™ meetings include STC members who have been laid off, contractors and freelancers whose business is down, non-STC technical communicators, recent graduates, people who want to enter the technical communications field, and other professionals. Although Janis expected that the group would attract mostly laid-off relatively young writers who were inexperienced in job searching, those attending the

Contents

Presenters (left to right) included John Clark, Janis Ramey, Diana Mathis, Jim McCarty, and Mary Ann Pike.

President's Column

I had the privilege of traveling to Columbus, Ohio on a mild November weekend to attend the Region 4 STC Conference and Leadership Day. At least eight members of the Pittsburgh chapter attended the conference. Total attendance was more than 100. For only $85, attendees heard a day of sessions by speakers from the 2002 STC international conference. It was an outstanding value, especially in light of today's tight travel and training budgets. This issue of the *Blue Pencil* contains several articles about various conference presentations.

The presentation by the Pittsburgh chapter's own WorkQuest group was a highlight of the conference. Janis Ramey, John Clark, Mary Ann Pike, Jim McCarty, and Diana Mathis each gave a presentation on some topic relating to finding work. Even if you didn't make it to Columbus, you will have a chance to hear each of their presentations at the December 10 chapter meeting.

Their advice and insights are valuable to everyone, not just active job-seekers.

In other chapter news, I'm pleased to announce that Nicky Bleiel has agreed to take over the position of Membership Committee Manager from outgoing manager Nancy Pearson. You can contact Nicky by email to nableiel@software.rockwell.com. Nicky's responsibilities range from welcoming new members to creating a strategic plan for doubling the membership of the Pittsburgh chapter within the next three years.

In all seriousness, membership remains a significant issue for the Society at the international level. Total membership is down significantly due to the current economic malaise. We will be working at the chapter and regional levels to increase membership in the coming months. Membership in the STC costs approximately the same amount as five or six large pizzas. Please consider this value when you receive and act on your membership renewal notice for 2003.

Identity Crisis: How Can We Increase the Demand for Technical Communicators?

By Meg Papa

It isn't news that the job market is currently a bit lean. As the popularity of the chapter's WorkQuest group attests, technical communicators are not exempt from the effects of the weak economy. How can we, as technical communicators, find — and keep — employment? We can spend a lot of time and effort marketing ourselves, or, as Greg McCormick suggests, we can elevate the visibility and credibility of our profession as a whole.

McCormick, an information and curriculum designer at North American Logistics, gave a lively and humorous talk on this topic at the Region 4 Conference on November 9. He firmly believes that the STC, its chapters, and its members have to work together to raise the profile of technical communicators in the workplace. He vividly demonstrated how little people know about technical communicators by listing several questions one could ask about a profession, including: What is the person doing? What does the person wear? What education and training is needed? What is the work environment like? He then named several professions: Nurse, Construction Worker, Swash-Buckling Pirate, Starship Captain, and Crime-Fighting Super Hero. A humorous list to make a serious point: more people can answer the questions for these professions than can answer them for a technical communicator. He asks, "Does the average John Q know what we do? Most people are clueless." This is a problem — one that the STC can address.

Employment Issues Column: Marketing Yourself

By Pam Schmidbauer

Area Manager, Aquent

While looking for employment you become a marketing specialist – and the product is you. Here are some tips to keep in mind while marketing yourself.

Know The Product - You
What are your work values, goals, interests, and skills? What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Develop a Good Sales Tool - Your Résumé and Cover Letter
These resources should accurately reflect you — your goals, accomplishments, and your style. They should be brief and concise. The résumé and cover letter should be focused toward the type of industry and/or company of interest. As a sales tool, they will be influential in securing an interview.

Identify and Research Your Market
Think about what you want to do and start a priority list. Identify organizations most desirable to you and best suited to your talents and values. There may be many alternatives. Utilize company literature and conduct exploratory interviews.

Advertise
Let everyone know that you are available. Since fewer than 12 percent of job hunters find jobs through ads and five percent through employment agencies, it is important that you be active in making personal contacts and letting others know of your skills.

Develop a Referral Network
The most effective way of securing a position is through making personal contacts. To take advantage of this fact, you have to build a referral network. You need to try to identify the people you already know and the people you could meet who would be able to refer you to open positions. This is important because a face-to-face encournter means more and lasts longer than any letter, phone call, or résumé. Develop a list of people you know - relatives, friends, former co-workers, faculty, and schoolmates can all be valuable.

- Make sure the people on your list are aware of your skills and of the job search you are undertaking. Some of these people may be willing to write you letters of reference should you need them.
- Give each person a copy of your résumé.
- Keep records of your conversations and the information you've received.
- Make a second list of referrals for people you have not met. For instance, a writer may contact someone who is a communications manager.
- Build your list by looking at organizations in which you are interested and finding out who would be the responsible manager in that area. Contact and visit these organizations.

Keep Records
A log is an excellent way to keep your job search organized. For every contact you make, fill out a log sheet with all the perti-

Single Source Text with Word—Sort Of

By Robert P. Mohr

The ability to single-source text for reuse in multiple documents has become a hot topic in recent years. Word has had this capability, to some degree, for some time, and it can be done with any of five methods:

1. Insert > File > Range
2. Insert > File
3. Insert > Object
4. Paste Special
5. Merge

Though methods 1 through 4 all have advantages and disadvantages, the concept of how to use them is basically the same: Text (in whole or in part) from one or more source files is linked or copied into a target document. Method 5 is a completely different animal.

Suppose the target document is a proposal. Folks in HR maintain the biographies on key personnel that you can link into your document. Likewise, the cost and technical sections are also created by others and also linked into your document. Which of the 5 methods is best? As always, it depends.

1. Insert > File > Range
The advantage to this method is that it relies on bookmarked text in the source files. This is good when the source file is lengthy, acting as a container for many chunks of text, tables, graphics, etc. Each chunk is encapsulated by a bookmark. You can also specify the connection between the two files to be dynamic. Pressing **F9** refreshes the link to the bookmarked text and assures your target document is current. The disadvantage to this method is that you must know the name of the bookmark you're linking to prior to establishing the link. Here's the procedure for using method 1:

1. Open the target document and position the insertion point where the source text is to be inserted.
2. Select **Insert > File**.
3. Select the source file and click the **Range** button.
4. Type the name of the bookmark encapsulating the text you want.
5. Select **Insert as link** from the **Link** drop-down list. Word copies the text into the target document.
6. At any time you can highlight the text and press **F9** to refresh it.

People News

October membership

Chapter   189

Total STC 21055

New Members

Scott H. McCall

Jeremy B. Sloan

Paula M. Sloan

Region 4 Conference Provides Information on Upgraded Tools

By Mary Ann Pike

On Saturday, November 9, I attended the 2002 Region 4 Conference in Columbus, Ohio. In addition to the session I presented along with four other members of the Pittsburgh STC chapter's WorkQuest™ group (see article on page 1), I attended two of the sessions on recently upgraded document development tools. I found both sessions to be very informative.

Dreamweaver MX

Since Macromedia released Dreamweaver, it has been my webpage editor of choice. And Macromedia's recently released MX version represents a marked improvement over previous versions of Dreamweaver. The GUI is superior and provides even more automated entry of various HTML command attributes. Along with many other features, the MX version includes good support for cascading style sheets, a selection of predefined buttons created from Fireworks, and easy integration of code from other web development programs. Michael Starr, the webmaster of the STC Central Ohio Chapter presented this very informative session.

FrameMaker 7

FrameMaker is another of my favorite tools, which I have been using since version 1.3. Adobe representatives gave an overview of the structured document support added to FrameMaker 7 and of the collaborative features in Adobe Acrobat 5. FrameMaker 7 supports the development of XML documents and has the capability to easily develop your document type definitions (DTD). It allows you to generate print or pdf documents and edit your XML structures. FrameMaker 7 includes some basic formatting templates, and allows you to specify output templates that you've developed using another tool. Acrobat 5 has some powerful collaborative reviewing capabilities which allows you to put a file out for review and have the reviewers attach annotating comments or entire files. Multiple reviewers are able to view and update the comments simultaneously.

Break Through the Single-Source Roadblock

By Nancy Carpenter

Jesse Wiles, consultant to Quadralay Corporation in Austin, Texas, was the featured speaker at the November 6 chapter meeting. Jesse described single sourcing, then demonstrated the capabilities of WebWorks Publisher. Single-sourcing is the re-use of information in different formats for different purposes. The source document is not changed, but the output is customized for the specific audience and medium. No post-processing is needed.

Quadralay developed WebWorks Publisher to provide a single-sourcing tool for FrameMaker and Word documents. It is template-based and requires that the author use the styles in the source software. The author selects the template for the desired format.

WebWorks then maps the source document styles to the template to convert the document to the online format. The template can be changed in the same way that styles can be changed in the source software.

WebWorks Publisher can produce a variety of online formats. FrameMaker documents can be converted to HTML, JavaHelp, XML, XHTML, Accessible HTML, WinHelp, and all industry-standard online help systems. Word documents can be converted to HTML Help, JavaHelp, WinHelp, and WebWorks Help.

For large writing departments, Quadralay also provides two support programs — WebWorks AutoMap, which performs batch document conversion on a scheduled basis; and WebWorks AutoMap Client, which puts a WebWorks dropdown menu on the FrameMaker menu bar for use in conversions. Oracle Corporation, BEA Systems, Excelon, Cognos, Agilent, and Cadence now use WebWorks AutoMap Client.

You can download a demonstration version of this software.

Quadralay was formed in 1992 as a developer of search engines. They noticed a need to publish online from FrameMaker and developed a conversion package to assist their writers. This is now marketed as WebWorks Publisher. Quadralay provides several services related to WebWorks Publisher — on-site training, WebWorks University, consulting, coaching, and support. For more information, see: www.webworks.com, or email at info@webworks.com.

WorkQuest™ Group Going Strong

By Mary Ann Pike

The Pittsburgh Chapter's WorkQuest™ group continued its weekly meetings in October.

October 8: Career Coaching – Jane Duffy
Featured guest speaker Jane P. Duffy's career focus is career management and coaching. She is a career coach at the University of Pittsburgh's Katz School of Business, works for an outplacement firm, and is developing her own business (Work in Faith) to help people connect their faith with their career.

During a period of extended unemployment in her own life, Jane realized that it can be hard to determine what daily activities you should plan to further your job search. She said that the amount of time you spend on your job search should be in the neighborhood of 30 hours each week. You need to try to spend those hours in a manner most constructive to your job search.

She explained that unsolicited direct mail only has about a three percent rate of return, and is usually not worth the effort. The Internet is a major recruiting source for companies right now, but might not be as useful as you think. Companies are receiving such a large volume of résumés for each job posted, that they are looking at the résumés in the order they receive them, taking the first eight or ten that look promising, and ignoring the rest. Search firms are not a very good source of leads at this point in time, either, since they are overwhelmed with people looking for work. Jane stressed that these three methods of finding work should constitute the smallest percentage of your job search.

Networking is considered to be the most successful job hunting activity. Networking is any conversation you have with someone about your job search. It can be with an acquaintance, a contact in a company you've targeted as a place you'd like to work, or a hiring manager in a department that has a job opening. Jane suggests a goal of speaking to 20 or 30 new people each week about your job search. She says that speaking to eight to ten new people is a good accomplishment. For someone who doesn't have a lot of contacts, she suggests discussing your job situation with everyone you know – your hairdresser, your auto mechanic, church members, fellow hobbyists – you never know who might know of someone that has a position appropriate to your skills. As an exercise, write a 30-second summary of yourself and practice giving it to people.

Jane explained that you should have a marketing plan because you're selling yourself, just as a company selling a product would have a marketing plan. Your plan should have:

- An objective – the type of work you want, possible job titles
- Qualifications and key accomplishments – brief summary of what you've done and what you have to offer
- Target market – geographic area where you want to work, industry or type of organization you want to work for, size of the organization, any other criteria important to you

Pittsburgh STC WorkQuest™ Group Presented at Region 4 Conference

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Pittsburgh STC WorkQuest™ group have been mostly experienced people and have included several from other professions, such as sales and information technology.

The group meets every Tuesday at 10 a.m. – early enough to get everyone going and late enough to miss rush hour traffic. The meeting place moves around the Pittsburgh area each week to provide variety and the opportunity to become familiar with various areas of the city and suburbs. Attendance averages 10 to 12 of a total roster of about 25.

The Pittsburgh STC WorkQuest™ presentation at the Region 4 Conference session, "Smart Job Searching" modeled a weekly STC WorkQuest™ session. Each session starts with a "check-in round" in which attendees (newcomers and "established" members) reiterate their job search objective(s) and report on their past week's job-related activities and results. After presenters reported, many members of the small but focused group of session attendees also "checked in" and handed out their business cards/marketing materials.

In addition to a professional activity each week, STC WorkQuest™ meetings provide outlets for attendees to demonstrate and develop their professional expertise. So, following the "check-in round" at the Region 4 Conference, each of the four additional STC WorkQuest™ presenters gave a very condensed version of presentations they had developed for STC WorkQuest™ meetings this fall. The presenters have encapsulated their presentations below.

Sell Yourself Effectively – Mary Ann Pike
In her presentation, Mary Ann touched on a number of tasks that need to be completed to prepare for a job search. She listed the following:

- Develop a personal marketing plan

- Create an effective résumé
- Write effective cover letters
- Build an impressive portfolio
- Work with recruiters and agencies
- Use the Internet to further your job search

Mary Ann then focused her presentation on résumés, providing a brief overview of her article in last month's *Blue Pencil*, and on Internet job searching.

Mary Ann noted that in today's market, the average human resources person spends only 20 seconds evaluating a résumé. She provided many tips for getting your résumé noticed which covered organization, content, and format. She gave excellent advice about how to use your résumé to best advantage in your job search.

In the second part of her presentation, Mary Ann shared tactics for successful use of the Internet in your job search. Internet searches can focus on job searching, information gathering on companies and locations of interest, or general and/or specialized education to increase your value. Mary Ann discussed a number of ways to get the most out of each type of search.

Finding Opportunities – Jim McCarty
Jim McCarty talked about how we go about finding those elusive jobs in this very tough job market.

He noted that conventional approaches to job searching, such as using the Internet, reading want ads, talking with headhunters, recruiters and temp agencies, put us in touch with only 20 to 25% of the jobs that are out there. The other 75 to 80% are never advertised! These jobs are uncovered through networking.

Networking was an important part of the presentation. Jim talked about the importance of getting ready to network, making networking contacts, and getting and conducting yourself during a networking interview. He emphasized the difference between a networking interview (to gather information and referrals) and a job interview (to sell yourself into the job).

Jim also discussed the Hiring Life Cycle, or the process companies go through from recognizing the need to hire someone, to actually bringing someone aboard to fill that position. He explained that the earlier you can infiltrate the Hiring Life Cycle, and get in front of the people who can hire you, the greater your chances are of getting the job. Networking provides great opportunities for such infiltration.

His closing remarks hit home with everyone who is looking for work. **Looking for work is a full time job.** If you are spending less than 40 hours a week looking for work, you are short-circuiting your employer. Who is your employer when you are unemployed? **YOU**, of course.

Nurturing Yourself – Diana Mathis
Job crises or losses are special opportunities to nurture ourselves professionally and personally. Attitude is vital: think and act "newly self-employed," not unemployed. Adopt an active, not a passive approach to the freedoms and responsibilities of your new job. Who knows, you may decide to remain self-employed!

Objectives of your new position include taking charge of your finances and budgeting to meet the physical and medical needs of yourself and your family, deciding what path your career will take, and honing psychological and emotional coping skills to maintain equilibrium in this time of high stress. Three points to remember about coping:

Pittsburgh STC WorkQuest™ Group Presented at Region 4 Conference

1. Life is stress; stress is life.

2. People respond to stress in different ways.

3. We need to learn and practice coping skills to manage stress.

Life is stress. Dr. Hans Selye, a medical specialist in endocrinology, noticed that all illnesses have similar basic symptoms, such as feeling/looking sick, aches and pains, digestive upset, fever. These symptoms, due to hormonal changes, can be triggered by physical stress (a cold) or psychological stress (job loss). Physical reactions to increased stress include increased heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, muscle tension, and stomach acid. Chronic excess stress leads to high blood pressure, sleep disorders, chronic headache or other pains, exhaustion, more infections, and, in those who are predisposed, illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, and cancer. Mental reactions to chronic stress include psychological exhaustion, lethargy, depression, and anxiety.

People respond to stress in different ways. To be alive is to experience stress, but as Selye said, "The same stress which makes one person sick can be an invigorating experience for another". Know yourself. Know how you respond physically, mentally, and socially to excess stress.

Learn and practice coping skills. Tactics to control physical symptoms of excess stress include breathing and relaxation exercises. Mental coping skills include using imagery and silently reciting a personal verse or mantra. Learn to use tactics such as silence or a stock phrase to defuse stress in a social interaction. Prevent the build-up of chronic stress by following a healthy diet and regularly participating in physical exercise, stress-relieving leisure activities, and conversations with supportive friends.

Hone your coping skills **now** - you never know when you will be contacted about a new job, called for an interview, or win the lottery!

Presenting Yourself – John Clark
In his presentation, John focused on the key points to a great interview:

- Think straight
- Do your homework
- "Swing the bat"

Thinking straight means that how you think about interviewing can make all the difference between a successful interview and one that doesn't go so well. Part of it is realizing that the most qualified people don't necessarily get hired; the most prepared usually do. Thinking about interviewing as a game, a dance, or a play can help with the mental preparation. You realize then that you need to know how the game is played in order to do well.

Doing your homework involves preparing and researching four key areas. First, learn about the interviewing process itself. Research the typical questions that interviewers ask. And for that, John recommends two books: *Knock 'em Dead* by Martin Yate and *Job Interviews for Dummies* by Joyce Lain Kennedy. Both books help you by providing the tough questions that will most likely be asked, along with how to give good answers that are tailored to your specific situation.

The second area where you need to do your homework is about yourself. Turn your skills and accomplishments into stories and examples that show how you helped the company make money, save money, or save time. You'll use these stories to amplify and support your answers to the tough questions.

The third area of preparation is in finding out about the company. Find out what's

important to it by researching it through the Internet, newspapers, and business articles. Plan to use this information in your answers.

The last area of homework is about the job. Before you go on the interview, find out about the job's scope and responsibilities, typical projects, and anything else that will help you match your skills and accomplishments to the job you're applying for.

In order for all of this preparation to do you any good, you've got to "**swing the bat.**" Just as professional sports players routinely practice to stay at the top of their game, you need to do the same for your main event. It isn't enough to think about the answers. You've got to actually say the answers. There's no substitute for role playing with a friend or associate in a mock interview.

Follow these guidelines and you'll have a great interview.

For more information
Pittsburgh's STC WorkQuest™ group has its own Web site, developed, hosted, and managed by Tod Pike, who posts materials almost instantly. In addition to presentations by WorkQuest™ members at weekly meetings, the site's "Documents/Articles" directory has copies of the handouts prepared by each of the five presenters at the Region 4 Conference. Check out the wealth of info. for career management at http://home.earthlink.net/~workquest/.

Identity Crisis: How Can We Increase the Demand for Technical Communicators?

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He then went on to suggest ways that the STC and its members can advertise and explain our profession, and link our supply with the demand in the workplace. He classified these options as being the responsibility of the STC, the individual, or a cooperative effort between both.

Action items for the STC

- Buy radio and television commercials.
- Buy advertising in print media.
- Send brochures to the headquarters of major organizations.
- Develop a professional vocabulary. (Should we outlaw certain words? What about phrasal verbs?)
- Provide Certificate of Membership (Member in Good Standing since…).
- SIGs should create publications to publicize and standardize our profession:
  - o Create informational brochures (MarCom SIG).
  - o Develop standard PowerPoint presentations that members can download and use for events and visits (MarCom SIG).
  - o Develop a "Profitability-Value Line" for the various services of our profession (Management SIG).
  - o Develop a best practices methodology and document (Procedures SIG).
  - o Collect data on productivity for the profession, such as hours-per-page for a user manual, minutes-per-page to edit, hours to develop a training program, etc. (various SIGs).
  - o Develop and make available a template library for various documents, web pages, etc. (InfoDesign SIG).
  - o Develop a Usage Guide for style, vocabulary, punctuation, etc. (Usability SIG).

Action items for individuals

- Talk about our profession and what you do – constantly!
- Attend business and academic events.
- Give newspaper or magazine interviews.
- Ask web-based job sites to add "technical communicator" to their dropdown lists.
- Create a library of explanatory and exemplary material of what you do.
- Pay attention to how you "brand" yourself (business card, letterhead, website, etc.).
- Show respect for your profession and your audience.
- Exhibit the STC Ethics statement in your office and discuss it in your conversations.
- Remind yourself that "You are a Subject Matter Expert."
- Display evidence in your workplace of your training, certifications, memberships, testimonials, reference tools, professional periodicals, etc.
- Develop a three-second, 30-second, and three-minute introduction of yourself and your profession.

Action items needing cooperation

- Work to add "technical communication" to business surveys, newspaper classifieds.
- Identify the demographics of markets that employ us.
- Build profiles of companies that hire technical communicators.
- Determine salaries by specialty and region.
- As a chapter, staff a phone bank for a public TV fund drive.

- Participate in job fairs and career days as representatives of the profession, not of our employers.
- Educate employment recruiters – they have to know what we do to represent us accurately to potential employers.
- Talk to Chambers of Commerce and City/County officials to get "technical communicator" listed on their websites.
- Get involved in STC events at all levels.

Some of these suggestions, such as exhibiting the statement of STC Ethics, may seem odd, until you compare it to common practices in other professions. McCormick asked, "Would you go to a doctor who didn't have an AMA membership [certificate] on his wall?" Likewise he asks, "Other professions have SOPs [standard operating procedures]; why don't we?"

He also talked about the need to change our mindset when we represent ourselves. We should think (and talk) of ourselves as members of a profession first, an employee of our organization second. We need to "be verbal billboards for our profession" and represent ourselves as professionals and experts at all times. We all have a theme we project, whether we know it or not, and it is important for each of us to figure out our own theme. His professional theme is "I explain technology to people who need to use it." The theme for his talk was that we have to take our profession seriously before anyone else will.

Single Source Text with Word—Sort Of

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2. Insert > File

The advantage to this method is that it does not rely on bookmarked text in the source files. This is good when the source files are themselves individual chunks of text, tables, graphics, etc. This method also uses dynamic links. The disadvantage to this method is that unless the content of a source file is *exactly* what you want, you may get more than you really need and will have to manually delete excess content. Here's the procedure for using method 2:

1. Open the target document and position the insertion point where the source text is to be inserted.

2. Select **Insert > File**.

3. Select **Insert as link** from the **Link** drop-down list. Word copies the file into the target document.

4. At any time you can highlight the inserted text and press **F9** to refresh it.

3. Insert > Object

This method is a variation on the previous method. The advantages and disadvantages are basically the same. Here's the procedure for using method 3:

1. Open the target document and position the insertion point where the source text is to be inserted.

2. Select **Insert > Object**.

3. Click the **Create from File** tab.

4. Click **Browse** and select a file using the dialog box.

5. Click the **Link to File** check box to establish the link. Word copies the file into the target document.

6. At any time you can highlight the inserted text and press **F9** to refresh it.

4. Paste > Special

This method is probably the most familiar. Everyone knows how to copy and paste, right? The advantage to this method is that it's simple and visual. You see what you're selecting. The disadvantage to this method is that you have to open the source file then close it again after you glean what you want from it. Here's the procedure for using method 4:

1. Open a source file and select the content you want to copy.

2. Select **Edit > Copy**.

3. Open the target document and position the insertion point where the source text is to be inserted.

4. Select **Edit > Paste Special**.

5. Select **Microsoft Word Document Object** in the **As** list box.

6. Click the **Paste Link** radio button.

7. Click **OK**.

8. At any time you can highlight the inserted text and press **F9** to refresh it.

5. Merge

By merge, I'm referring to merging a Word document to a database. This method is the most powerful and the most complex.

Records in the database take the places of source files used by the other methods. There are several advantages to a using a database:

- Content is organized and uniform.

- Database records are easily queried and sorted.

- Speed. Merging a Word template containing established merge fields to a database is by far the fastest way to generate a new document with up-to-date content.

- Reliability. There is less chance of error when merging to a database because there is less manual input required. Selecting the proper records and data fields is simpler than remembering and manually typing many bookmark names.

There are also disadvantages:

- If you don't know how to create a database, or don't have access to someone who does, you'll have to learn. *(Not to worry! Starting next month, I'll write a 4-part series on creating an Access database.)*

- You'll have to make the database accessible to your contributing authors so they can maintain their content in the database.

- As you may be unfamiliar with databases, so might your contributors. You may have to train them in the use of database forms and editing content.

Here's an overview of how to merge with a database to generate a document:

1. Create a database comprised of one or more tables containing the content you need.

2. Create a Word document (or template) for the merge.

Single Source Text with Word—Sort Of

3. Start Word's merge process and establish a connection to the database. You can specify the database, the tables, or queries you want to use as the data source.

4. Insert the merge fields at various locations within the Word document.

5. Execute the merge. Word grabs the specified content from the database and fills out the document.

Conclusion
There are many ways to skin the single-source cat using Microsoft Word. However, consistency and discipline are crucial. If you work with others who are responsible for text that you rely on, be sure they stick to a few simple conventions regarding file names/locations, bookmark names, graphic types, table sizes, etc. Remember, if the source files should be renamed or moved to another folder, then the links to those files must be recreated to reflect the new locations and names. A little instruction from you on chunking and organizing content will be a big help to you in the long run.

Relying on templates is also important and you can add a level of automation in some of your documents by starting from templates with the links to bookmarks or merge fields that are already embedded in them. Start a new document from a template, press **F9**, or execute a merge, and presto! Your new document suddenly comes alive with pages of content.

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WorkQuest™ Group Going Strong

- List of specific companies you want to target – try to get name of people to talk to target -- try to get the names of people to talk to within those companies

Jane gave the group a handout (which is on the WorkQuest website) that listed key criteria to use in tracking your job search, contained a chart you can use to track your job search activities, and provided a template for writing a marketing plan.

In order to keep your job search on track, Jane suggested keeping a daily log your job search activities. She stresses that you need to evaluate your activities, and if you aren't getting any results from your current activities, you need to change you approach to one that may be more productive. She also pointed out that you shouldn't overwhelm yourself with more than three or four strategies at once because you'll dilute your focus on the individual activities.

She also suggests that since job searching is a very stressful activity, you should keep to a regular schedule that includes time doing online searching, time for networking phone calls, time for leisure activities, and time for spiritual renewal.

October 15: Using the Internet for Your Job Search – Tod Pike
The Internet allows you to extend your reach immensely, helping you find information at any time or location. This has both positive and negative implications for a job search, since other people are also using the Internet in the same way – they also have the same benefits as you do. In the past, using the Internet for job searches was limited to high-tech workers and employers (the only ones with Internet access). Unfortunately, the Internet is now a mass-market tool that any person or company can use, making the job search much more difficult.

Tod discussed the different uses of the Internet in your job search. Specialized job

search sites make their money from posting job listings from companies, and let you search for a job by location, keyword, and date. If you are interested in a particular location, Tod suggests searching by date since you may miss some relevant job postings if you search using a keyword different from those used in the posting. In order to reduce the amount of time spent at each site, you should search them frequently – every few days at the least.

Another source of jobs is the career pages of corporate websites. If you have some companies that you've targeted as places you'd like to work, go to their website, find the career sections, and bookmark them. You should check these pages at least once a week. You may have more luck responding to a job posted on a corporate site because the company may not be using the big job search sites, or may try to fill the position from their own searching before resorting to a post on the job search sites.

While not directly related to finding a job, the Internet also excels at helping you find out general information about corporations or regions that can help you in your job search. General-purpose search sites, such as Google or AltaVista, can help you locate target companies in an area, find out more information about life in a particular city, or help you learn more about technologies of interest to you.

The Internet is a vast resource for career opportunities in general. Don't overlook on-line seminars, web broadcast (web casts) and other ways of finding out about new products and technologies. Look at the corporate websites of companies that market products or technologies of interest for more information. Often, companies put out demo or trial versions of their software that you can download for free. Also, there are numerous opportunities for online education. The University of Phoenix is almost entirely online, and most of

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the local universities offer online versions of courses.

October 22: Job Search Checklist – Janis Ramey

Janis developed a checklist of job search tasks, which includes activities related to the startup of your job search (like listing your job criteria, and identifying companies where you'd like to work), activities pertinent to your active job search phase (like attending networking meetings and making cold calls), weekly tasks, and daily tasks. If you use this checklist regularly, it will be a great tool for keeping your job search on track.

October 29: Networking Tips – Various

Lois Bradley, President of The Bradley Partnerships, along with co-presenters Deirdra Makowiecki, of MAKK Strategies, and Jonna Martin of AdvanceMe Associates, gave a talk entitled "Tips for Networking to Land that Next Career Opportunity".

Lois Bradley's career focus is management consulting. She explained to the group that nationally, networking is the way 60% of people find their next job, but in Pittsburgh the number is thought to be more in the range of 80% to 85%. Networking is a very important activity and should be the focus of your job search. She stressed that networking should be a lifelong activity since you need to have a good network in place if you unexpectedly need to use it. The people in your network can come from all facets of your life: professional, recreational, family, and church/community service. Because networking is so important, she suggests preparing for networking like you would for a job interview. Make sure that you present yourself well, and follow up with the people you meet.

Deirdra Makowiecki consults for businesses and individuals on organization and time management. She gave the group a sample organizational chart that could be applied toward job searching. She suggesting making a list of your job hunting activi-

ties, prioritizing the list, and then being very structured about scheduling the tasks you've identified, giving more weight to the high-priority tasks. Make everything that you have to do an appointment with yourself. Crossing things off of your list can give you a sense of accomplishment.

Jonna Martin is an image consultant. She stressed that your physical appearance generates a powerful impression on people who don't know you. You make your first impression within seven seconds of meeting someone. Fifty-five percent of your impression is visual, thirty-eight percent is vocal, and only seven percent is based on the content of your conversation. She has seen statistics that the decision not to hire someone is made within the first three minutes of an interview.

She focused on some of the aspects of making a good visual impression. She stressed having good grooming and hygiene, wearing clothes that are conservative (white shirts and simple ties for men) and aren't out of style or dowdy, wearing cotton or (for women) silk shirts, having your clothes starched (if appropriate) and pressed neatly, and wearing tasteful amounts of jewelry. She told the group that when you meet someone, you should be sure that your posture is good, you have a firm handshake, and you smile and focus on the person. Talk about non-confrontational topics, and end on a positive note when you leave that person to meet someone else.

In closing, they presented the following tips:

- Ask questions about activities in a company you've targeted.
- Identify the company's needs and try to sell yourself to fill those needs.
- If you talk to someone who isn't the right person to get you into a job, see if you can get the name of the person you should be talking to.
- Follow-up with the people you talk to.

November 5: Networking Revisited – Jim McCarty

Group member Jim McCarty provided a detailed plan for developing a wide network of possible job contacts. Jim gave the following figures on how people find their next job:

- Internet Ads
- Newspaper Ads -- 20 to 25%
- Recruiters -- Collectively
- Temporary Agencies
- Job Fairs
- Other (like company websites)
- Networking -- 75 to 80%

Jim described networking as an organized approach to developing contacts that can help you find individuals who have the authority to hire you. He said that many of these networking contacts are casual. They are seldom the decision-makers you eventually need to meet, but they can guide you to the right people.

In order to network effectively, Jim suggests developing a game plan. Prepare a marketing program to follow. Prepare your marketing materials, to include:

- An attractive business card
- A succinct profile, résumé, and cover letter (or several versions of them)
- A list of target companies to contact
- A contact list, or list of persons who know, including business acquaintances - this is a starting point for your networking

Make contacts at networking groups and start attending meetings. Because meetings are impromptu, you should always be ready with a well-rehearsed, quick overview of what you do. This is often referred to as the 30-second drill. Describe your skill set - what you offer an employer - in

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30 seconds or less. The 30-second drill should emphasize who you are, what you have accomplished, what you can do for a new employer, and what you want to do.

When you schedule a networking meeting with someone in a targeted company, do not leave a résumé. A networking interview is not a job interview. It is a fact-finding session, and the opportunity to sell yourself to your referral who probably cannot hire you, regardless. Instead of a résumé, leave a one-page Profile Sheet, or Executive Summary. It should emphasize your skills and major accomplishments, and maybe a brief client list. Tell the interviewer that you want to stay in contact with him or her. After the interview, send a personal, hand-written thank you note.

In your job search, Jim stresses keeping good records. If you analyze the results of your job search activities, you can pursue the successful activities and omit the unsuccessful ones. Some of his points included:

- Develop a list of details (potential variables) you want to track. Start with those listed above.
- Rank the importance of each, with respect to contributing to success or failure.
- Determine how you will record and track your performance. Use software such as ACT, Excel, Outlook, etc.
- Evaluate the outcome of each interaction to determine potential causes of success and failure.
- Determine what elements might be changed to produce better results.

If you're not having much success in your job search, Jim suggests that you try the following:

- Make cold calls (by telephone and in person) to develop leads and contacts. Try to get names of key individuals, including those in human resources

and purchasing, project managers, department heads, administrative managers, and executives. Be creative in your approach with receptionists, secretaries, and other gate-keepers.

- Check newspapers for company articles and make contact based upon that article.
- Check calendars of events in newspapers and attend group meetings, such as networking groups, associations, conventions, etc. Network as much as you can.
- Maintain your networking contacts. A good network will keep you employed.

WorkQuest™ was formed as a resource for you. Although the meetings are geared toward writers, everyone who is looking for work is welcome to attend the meetings. Many interesting topics are planned for the next month. Notices of the meetings can be found on the WorkQuest™ website *http://home.earthlink.net/~workquest/*.

Employment Issues Column: Marketing Yourself

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nent information on the person contacted, the company, the content of your discussion, and any action you need to take. Date the logs. You never know when someone you talked with two weeks ago will call you with an appropriate job opening.

Follow Up
Always follow up on your visits or phone calls with a letter thanking the person you contacted.

Remain positive! A good attitude goes a long way when looking for your next job.

[Editor's Note: This column marks Pam Schmidbauer's last Employment Issues column for the *Blue Pencil*. The editorial staff of the *Blue Pencil* and the officers of the Pittsburgh chapter of the STC thank

her for her many contributions to this newsletter. -MAP]

Pam Schmidbauer is Area Manager of Aquent's Pittsburgh office and can be reached at pams@aquent.com or 412-322-4940. Aquent (aquent.com) is a global professional service firm delivering creative and IT solutions. Through a network of nearly seventy offices in twelve countries, Aquent provides staffing, consulting, and outsourcing services in the areas of print and Web design and production; application and database development; and project management. In its fifteen-year history Aquent has made over 200,000 matches of independent professionals with client companies worldwide. Aquent is headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, and is a privately held firm.

Wanted – Column Ideas

The *Blue Pencil* staff is looking for ideas for a new column to add to this newsletter. Are there topics you would be interested in reading about from month to month? Better yet, would you like to volunteer to write a column? (Length and frequency are flexible.) Please contact Meg Papa (mv0t@andrew.cmu.edu) with your ideas or offers of assistance. Thank you very much.

Third Annual Worst Manual Contest

Just a reminder for the holiday season: When all else fails, read the manual.

Have you ever been so frustrated with a manual or set of instructions that you cursed the author and wished you had never bought the product in the first place? Does this sound familiar? How about $100 for your frustration? Technical Standards, Inc. (TSI), a Southern California documentation services company, is offering $100 for the winning entry in their third annual 'Worst Manual Contest.'

Send a manual or set of instructions that is hard to understand, poorly written, or just plain wrong. Send it if it has bad grammar, too much legalese, is poorly translated, or has missing steps. If it is the worst entry, you will win $100.

"We thought we would have fun with this contest. Everyone has had trouble with a manual," says Michelle Wier, Director of Operations of TSI. "That's why we started our company. People like products they understand how to use, and good technical documentation reduces the need for technical support. That's why good manuals are so important."

You don't have to send the whole manual; excerpts of the worst parts are okay. The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2003, so check those holiday gifts for potential entries. Entries must be in English. For complete contest rules, see the TSI website at www.tecstandards.com. The winner will be announced on the TSI website on February 28, 2003.

Technical Standards, Inc., specializes in contract technical writing projects, technical writer staffing, and training. Since 1993 in San Marcos, CA, TSI has provided writers and editors to the high-tech community who produce printed documents, online Help, and Internet documentation.

Joint Meeting Postponed

The joint meeting that was scheduled for Saturday, December 7 in Youngstown, Ohio, is postponed until early 2003. Look for more details on the chapter web site in a few weeks.

Life Skills for Looking for Work

The December chapter meeting will feature four presentations by our own WorkQuest special interest group. Whether you are currently looking for work, or may some-day look for work, you will find value in these presentations.

John Clark: "Presenting Yourself"

Mary Ann Pike: "Job Search Preparation"

Jim McCarty: "Finding Opportunities"

Diana Mathis: "Nurturing Topics"

Parking in the building is available for $5.00 at the Westin Convention Center Hotel parking garage. Parking is free during the holiday season at Pittsburgh Parking Authority garages. The PPA garages at 9th Street and Penn Avenue and at 9th Street and Liberty Avenue are within a few blocks of the meeting.

WHEN: Tuesday, December 10, 2002

TIME: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

WHERE: Federated Investors, Inc., 19th Floor, 1001 Liberty Ave., (Adjacent to the Westin Convention Center Hotel)

COST: There is no charge for this meeting. Light refreshments will be provided.

RSVP: An RSVP is REQUIRED due to building security regulations. Please contact Darlene Mullenix at (412) 288-8676 or e-mail to dmullenix@federatedinv.com

Independent and Lone Writers SIG January Meeting

The next meeting for the Independents and Lone Writers SIG will be Tuesday, January 28 at 6 p.m. at the Panera Bread Company in Oakland. The discussion for this meeting will focus on issues that affect lone writers in a company.

As the lone writer in a company, your responsibilities may not just focus on creating documentation and help, but you may be part of other facets in the development process. This meeting will discuss some of key issues that lone writers face along with some resources and skills to help troubleshoot the challenges that arise for the lone writer. Everyone is encouraged to bring some of their own tips for survival as a lone writer, along with software and reference ideas to help others.

There is no cost for this meeting, but Panera has great sandwiches, salads, soups and pastries that you can purchase and enjoy during the discussion. Please RSVP to Barb Stanton by Monday, January 27 to Bstanton@seec.com or call (412) 893-0383.

STC Chapter Meeting Schedule, 2003

Mark your calendars! Here are topics and tentative dates for the remainder of the 2002-2003 meeting calendar. More details on each meeting will be published as the dates draw closer.

January — Winter Party (date to be determined)

February 11 (Tuesday) — Frame 7 (Kay Ethier)

March 11 (Tuesday) — Chapter 50th Anniversary Party and Awards Banquet (Janis Ramey)

April 8 (Tuesday) — Robohelp (Leslie Johnson)

May — Spring Fling Party (date to be determined)

Editorial Calendar

This combined December/January *Blue Pencil* is the final issue of 2002. Details of the January meeting will be mailed out via postcard. For 2003, the editorial calendar will follow the schedule below.

Meeting Date	Blue Pencil Publication Date (Monday)	Article Submission Deadline (Monday)
Week of February 10	January 27	January 6
Week of March 10	February 27	February 6
Week of April 7	March 24	March 3
Week of May 12	April 28	April 7