Memo to Members

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<u>Report on STC Grant Project in Orlando</u>

Meet the Future: Harnessing Multimedia for Professional and Educational Outreach

by Cindy Hauptner and Bob Stultz, University of Central Florida with STC Fellows Dan Jones and Dan Voss

The grant project described here was performed by current and former technical communication students at the University of Central Florida, under the oversight of Dan Jones and Dan Voss of the Orlando Chapter. Four research assistants in all contributed to the project: Cindy Hauptner, Bob Stultz, John Donovan, and Suzanne Shomate. Cindy and Bob breathed life into the immortal Shanna the Hip and Dan the Nerd.

Standing in the high school hallway, they seem an odd match to the other students. She is cool and hip, and she already has a date to the prom. He is awkward and unfashionable—he wears high-water pants and from his shirt pocket protrudes a pocket protector. To us, they are the perfect characters for one of two multimedia presentations intended to teach high school students about technical communication and a technical writing competition.

In this article, we chronicle our journey into the realm of multimedia, from our efforts to obtain funding for these presentations, to our efforts to design communication products that would appeal to high school students. At the

end of the article, we discuss some of the lessons we learned along the way.

Panera Bread, a popular night-time eatery for UCF students, was the scene of several vigorous planning and review sessions by the Orlando Chapter/UCF STC grant team. From left, are Cindy Hauptner, Bob Stultz, Dan Voss, and Dr. Dan Jones.

Reaching Out

Our interest in creating multimedia presentations is rooted in outreach. Professional and educational outreach strengthens the relationships between STC chapters and their local communities. The strengthening of these relationships is essential to the future of the technical communication field. The more

actively STC chapters interact with local industry and educational institutions, the more we are seen as an essential part of our communities' prosperity. Not to mention that in the process we get to recruit some of the brightest students to our profession.

The Orlando STC Chapter has made a concerted effort over the past seven years to reach out to high school students. In 1996, our chapter launched its annual high school technical writing competition. To recruit entries for the competition representatives from our chapter's Education Committee

Meet the Future, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)
made classroom visits to local high schools to describe the field of technical communication and promote the writing competition.

Anyone who has stood before an audience of high school students appreciates the chal-

> At times, it seems their eyes shut faster than your words can reach their ears.

lenge of capturing and maintaining their attention. At times, it seems their eyes shut faster than your words can reach their ears. So, our chapter's Education Committee proposed that classroom visits by committee members could better reach the student audiences by employing a high-tech example of technical communication—a product that would personify and exemplify the profession.

Lining Up the Money

Such products do not come cheap—not in the commercial world, at least. Even in the world of volunteerism and professional associations, a project of this magnitude was well beyond the budget of our local chapter. Deter-

To enliven their multimedia tutorial on technical communication, the research assistants in the Orlando Chapter's STC Special Opportunities Grant project breathed life into a pair of animated high school characters at opposite ends of the social spectrum: Shanna the Hip and Dan the Nerd.

mined to find the resources to pursue the project, **Dan Jones** at UCF and **Dan Voss**, manager of our chapter's Education Committee, submitted a proposal to the STC Special Opportunities Grant Committee in the fall of 2001. The merits of the proposal were acknowledged, but the awarding of a grant was delayed due to funding constraints. Finally, in the spring of 2002, the "Dan and Dan" duo received notice that the project had been awarded a grant with a budget of $8,000. We were finally ready to make our vision a reality.

Deciding on Multimedia

A quick look at recent music videos and the latest Vin Diesel movie told us that if we wanted to capture and hold the attention of our young audience, the presentations had to be *high impact*—maybe even include an explo-

> We knew the presentation had to "pop," but what, exactly, "pops" with 14- to 18-year-olds?

sion, which we were, in fact, later able to work into one of the presentations. We decided that the best way to make the presentations high impact would be by integrating audio, animation, movie clips, and text in a multimedia presentation.

The program of choice was Authorware, which could accommodate all these effects and generate an easily downloadable self-executing file with multi-platform capability—and for which Dan J was able to secure a fully functional software package at a special educational price of $380—representing a whopping 86% savings over the manufacturer's retail price of $2,700. We purchased two copies so the two presentations could be developed independently. Software in hand, we were ready to go.

Overcoming the Challenges

One of the foremost challenges we confronted was how to appeal to our audience. We knew the presentation had to "pop," but what, exactly, "pops" with 14- to 18-year-olds?

As a motif for the promotional on the chapter's annual high school tech writing competition, the designers selected the perfect backdrop for Central Florida—the space program.

Early in the development process, Dan Voss recommended using two high school students as the central characters for the "What's Technical Communication?" presentation. Based on this idea, we decided to create a dialogue between two high school

seniors, Shanna and Dan, as the vehicle for our tutorial.

> … too much of any one thing in a classroom is a recipe for sleep.

Here's the catch. Shanna, the "cool" character, is an aspiring technical communicator. Dan, the "geeky" character, hasn't heard about the field of technical communication, but will listen intently to anything Shanna has to say, because he obviously has a crush on her, hopeless though it may be. Throughout the presentation, Shanna plays the role of a tour guide, leading Dan through the ins and outs of technical communication.

The "cool-versus-geek" motif was intended to dispel the perception that technical communicators are intrinsically "uncool," like "Tina the Brittle Technical Communicator" who Scott Adams made famous in the Dilbert strip. A primary objective of the educational outreach is to show students that

Meet the Future, cont'd

(Continued from page 2)

there is a bright future in the technical communication field, and we felt that our audience would relate to Shanna as a shining example of the opportunities our profession presents for talented and "cool" young people.

For the "Florida High School Writing Competition," we decided to use a space theme. This was, in part, a practical decision. Since the NASA space image and audio files are in the public domain, we would not have to obtain copyright permissions. The space theme also added a local flavor to the presentation. A number of our chapter members work for the space and aeronautics industry, and nearly all of us have experienced the incomparable grandeur of a night launch from nearby Cape Kennedy.

…we were particularly interested in the students' reception of Dan's squawky voice and nerdy personality.

The space theme helped set a more serious tone that deliberately contrasted the more playful tone of the "What's Technical Communication?" presentation. The counterpoint was intended to help keep our audience's attention. Anyone who has taught high school students will tell you, too much of any one thing in a classroom is a recipe for sleep.

Organizing Our Presentations

To set our plan of creating informative, yet entertaining, presentations into motion we began by creating storyboards of the presentations. Our storyboards were large index cards containing the tentative text and sample characters—one for each screen in the presentations. We laid out the cards for each presentation and, in collaboration with our advisors, we switched the order of several cards, penciled in new details, and added cards where necessary.

After editing the content and arrangement of the information for the two presentations, we submitted the storyboards to the manager of the STC Special Opportunities Grant Committee, **Deborah Rosenquist**, and the manager of the STC Branding Committee, **Mary Wise**, for their review. Their encouraging response to our ideas allowed us to breathe a sigh of relief. We received several constructive suggestions from them, including the recommendation that we add a module on information design to the discussion of technical communication.

While the storyboards were going through the review process, we set out to learn Authorware, which is quite different from the software applications we had used in the past. Authorware relies on users selecting and placing icons along a continuum that resembles a vertical timeline. Each icon represents a "chunk" of information, so to speak. For example, one icon may represent the text and images for a screen, a second may repre-

sent the sound that accompanies that screen, and a third may represent a pause in the screen's transition to the next screen. One of the challenges of learning Authorware was remembering what each icon represents. Icons are unforgiving. One slight disarrangement and you may be laughing or crying at what you suddenly see on the screen.

Putting the Presentations to the Test

After long hours of burning the midnight oil wrestling with Authorware, we created beta versions of each presentation. Then we arrived at the moment of truth. We tested the beta versions of the two presentations with Lake Brantley High School students in Longwood, Florida, to gather students' reactions toward the themes and narrative characters.

The students approved of the overall quality and content of the material. For "What's Technical Communication," we were particularly interested in the students' reception of Dan's squawky voice and nerdy personality. Throughout the presentation, the students laughed at Dan's awkward speech cadence, leading to high approval ratings.

The students also responded favorably to the space theme for the "Florida High School Writing Competition."

While the testing validated our basic approach, it also revealed several shortcomings in the second presentation. For example, when projected on a large screen, the typography became unreadable due to inadequate type size and contrast between type and background. Also, sections of the presentation lacked sufficient audio. Particularly noticeable in comparison to the other presentation was the absence of a narrative voice-over.

Fine-Tuning the Product

We made changes to both presentations based on what we learned from the students. We increased the type size, beefed up the graphics, and added a narrative voice-over to the "Florida High School Writing Competition. We also added an interactive menu to the "What's Technical Communication?" presentation, to allow teachers or chapter members visiting high school classes to pick and choose among the several modules of information on technical communication. We wanted the presentation to provide a comprehensive view of our profession, but we were also mindful of the need to build

The moment of truth for the grant project came during beta testing with a live audience at Lake Brantley High School. Not everything was perfect, of course, but at the end of the day, the team knew it had a winner.

Meet the Future, cont'd

(Continued from page 3)

in the ability to focus on se-lected areas and to truncate the presentation if necessary due to time constraints or waning audience interest.

With improved versions of the presentations we conducted a second usability test. This time our audience was stu-dents in a technical communi-cation class at the University of Central Florida. While it was not exactly the same as our target audience, we felt that this audience would be more critical of our content and perhaps better qualified to reveal potential organizational weaknesses. Besides, Dr. Jones spent a few minutes at the beginning of the class helping his college students regress, at least temporarily, back to their high school years.

We distributed surveys with a free-response section to the students before showing the presentation. Overall, this audience was also very recep-tive to our presentations. Some students indicated that they learned something new about technical communica-tion from the presentations.

The college students found the "Florida High School Writ-ing Competition" both read-able and engaging with the voice-over, easily readable type, and more graphics. When we surveyed the stu-dents' opinions of Shanna and Dan we received a mixed response. Some students felt that Dan's voice was too abra-sive for the presentation, while other students gave him the most favorable rating.

Wrapping It Up

Now approaching the final draft of "What's Technical Communication?" we decided to keep Dan. Whether the stu-dents loved him or hated him, he definitely helped maintain their attention, which, as you may recall, was our primary

This project … compelled us to face the central challenge of any technical communicator—know and reach one's audience!

challenge in communicating with high school students.

The college students' re-sponses indicated that we did-n't need to make sweeping changes to the content or or-ganization of the presenta-tions. So, to complete our final versions we simply made small changes to the presentations based on the way the design elements appeared when dis-played on the large screen.

Learning from the Experience

As with any project, we learned a great deal by working on this project. Like many technical communicators, we had not worked on a multime-dia project before. This project offered us the opportunity to dig into this medium and learn a new software application, as well as many lessons about developing multimedia presen-tations. The following are a few of the insights we gained about multimedia projects:

- Anticipate a learning curve for the new soft-ware.
- Expect technical prob-lems.
- Prepare for the project to take time—many months at the very least.
- Create storyboards to hammer out the narrative early.
- Use iterative testing throughout the project.

Above all, working on this project compelled us to face the central challenge of any technical communicator—know and reach one's audi-ence!

We also learned that one of the best ways to make out-reach successful is to portray technical communication as precisely the exciting and dy-namic field that it is. And what better way for us to do this than to practice what we preach? Consider our audi-ence, write clearly and con-cisely, and design for the user. We believe we did this, and that's why our project suc-ceeded.

Epilogue

At the end of the "What's Technical Communication?" presentation, Dan finally mus-ters the nerve to ask Shanna for a date. Without missing a beat, our resourceful heroine comes up with the perfect al-ibi—she has to attend an STC meeting!

Check Out Our Presentations Online!

If you really want to get the "sizzle," you need to check out the STC grant team's work on-line, in living color and multime-dia. You need to meet Shanna and Dan up close and personal!

You should soon be able to download both presentations at the STC Web Site. We made every effort to streamline file sizes to make this a realistic op-tion. However, if your platform does not permit you to down-load this material, you may con-tact **Jon Kessler** of the Orlando Chapter, coordinator of its an-nual high school tech writing contest, at jskessler@aol.com, and he will mail you a CD con-taining the executable files for both presentations.

The "What's Technical Communi-cation" presentation is turnkey-ready to use with high school classes. The "Florida High School Writing Competition" presentation can readily be adapted to support an existing writing competition that your chapter sponsors or one that you are about to initiate. If you need the Authorware source files to support such an adaptation, please contact Jon Kessler and he will arrange a suitable elec-tronic exchange.

FTC Club Gets Up Early on Saturdays to Hone Tool Skills
by Bonnie Spivey, President, UCF Future Technical Communicators Club

It's seven o'clock on a Saturday morning and the last thing I want to do is wake up, but I know I have to. Today is no different than the last six Saturdays, and besides, I have been telling myself that I need to learn HTML for the past two years. This is my chance. It's free, it's not intimidating, and it only lasts from 10-11:30 a.m.

Bribing myself with the memory of last Saturday's fresh Panera bagels, I drag myself out of bed and get ready to finally learn the basics of HTML at this morning's Future Technical Communicators (FTC) workshop at UCF. Fortunately, autopilot kicks in, and I arrive at UCF's technical writing lab without even having to think about it. As I lug the 12-pack of Pepsi up the stairs, I realize that Kevin and Bob are already there. Usually, I get to the lab around 9:15 to unlock the doors and set up the refreshments, but it was Bob's turn to buy the bagels today.

Having recently taught herself PowerPoint, Meghan Flick shares some tips with Elizabeth, Sandy, and Jen at a Saturday tool skill workshop at UCF sponsored by the Future Technical Communicators.

Shortly after I arrive, several sleepy UCF students and a few bright-eyed UCF employees file in. I knew that HTML would be a popular workshop. I feel proud for a moment that we were able to offer a mini Web designing series, and then hope that next week's FTP workshop is as popular. Only ten people e-mailed me to register, but by now I've learned that pre-registration isn't a true indicator of how many people will actually come. Before I formally introduce today's leader, I make sure that everyone has signed in. Twelve people. Not bad for the end of the semester. It seems like the people who sincerely want to learn come regardless of the date.

… we are by no means "experts" in the programs we teach, but rather we are sharing the knowledge we have.

After introducing myself, I drop in a couple of plugs for FTC and explain to the group that we are students teaching other students as a way to give something back to our educational community, an idea born several years ago by Bob Whitley. I give the standard disclaimer that we are by no means "experts" in the programs we teach, but rather we are sharing the knowledge we have. Even though Sonia and Kevin are extremely proficient in HTML, I say it to make the point that

this is an informal, no-cost, voluntary exchange of information. I also inform everyone that Kevin will be walking around to help anyone who has questions. I encourage the guests to take advantage of the bagels and sodas and then turn the floor over to Sonia.

Sonia is a student in one of my classes, as well as a member of FTC. Like all the students who teach our workshops, she has bravely volunteered. At our first official FTC meeting earlier in the semester, I presented the idea of hosting free technical communication workshops, and to my surprise, I was overwhelmed with volunteers. Kerri, next Saturday's FTP leader, had never FTP'd anything before she took on the challenge and forced herself to learn it.

This has been the case with several students. For instance, Meghan taught our first workshop, basics of PowerPoint, after writing down instructions while learning the program. On the other hand, Kevin taught a workshop on Authorware based on the tutorial he produced using it last summer during an internship. But whether it was taught by an expert or a novice, I must say that each workshop has been first-rate.

While our beginning workshops are designed to familiarize people with the basics of the programs, other workshops, like Adobe PageMaker, have been more complex. Some workshops, like the Word: MLA Formatting class that Jou-Ying taught on Saturday, April 5th, focus on helping the attendees complete a required task. In this instance, those who registered were asked to bring their research papers in on disk. This way, students were able to apply

FTC [invites] STC Orlando Chapter members who are interested in attending or presenting at our tool skill workshops.

what they learned directly to their projects. It's surprising how many people didn't know how to insert headers or use the outline function in Microsoft Word, a standard in almost any industry.

On April 12th, a student that I recruited after he generously shared his expertise with Kevin and me during open lab hours, conducted a very comprehensive workshop on Adobe PhotoShop. After covering the basics and walking the group through a simple, informative

(Continued from page 5)
exercise, Jody fielded any specific questions people had, solving several technical mysteries in the process.

Aside from our successful series of workshops, FTC has also focused on increasing the UCF presence at meetings of the local STC Orlando Chapter. Having attended a local STC meeting last semester, I wanted to see more UCF students taking advantage of the opportunity. In fact, more than 20 students from FTC attended the first STC meeting of 2003 and signed up for the discounted student memberships—which, by the way, we all greatly appreciate!

Though many students were aware that STC existed, most of them were intimidated by the expectation that they would be "overmatched" in experience and expertise and were therefore hesitant to go to the meetings. After making participation in STC a central part of our FTC mission statement, giving my very convincing pep talks (J), and coordinating car-pooling arrangements, I am pleased to report that these efforts, not to mention sheer strength in numbers, have allowed FTC to become a conduit to STC.

After successfully piloting our workshops,

FTC would now like to extend an invitation to any STC Chapter members who are interested in attending or presenting at these sessions. We are open to suggestions concerning the content of the workshops.

The next FTC workshop, focusing on advanced Power Point, is scheduled for Saturday, May 17th, at the UCF tech writing lab (Colbourne Hall, Room 203). To register, contact me at futuretek2003@hotmail.com. We hope to strengthen the longstanding partnership between the technical communication program at UCF and the Orlando STC Chapter.

FTC plans to continue to host the free technical communication workshops throughout the summer and the following school year. We hope to leave behind a successful, constructive legacy of teaching and learning together that continues long after we turn our technical communication tassels. We invite the Orlando Chapter to be our partners in this endeavor.

To learn more about FTC or our workshops, please visit our fledgling website at pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~ftech or e-mail me at futuretek2003@hotmail.com

The newest member of our chapter's Education Committee, Bonnie Spivey, has been working to strengthen our chapter's long-standing partnership with the technical communication program at UCF.

Collect the Complete Set!

Word Mint IV: A Juicy Tidbit from the World of Aerospace Contracts
by Dan Voss

Post-Definitization (adj or adv, depending on usage). Occurring in the period following contract definitization; not to be confused with "after contract definition" (a colloquial usage, considered sub-standard in educated circles). Root word is *definitize* (v.), which means "to define more precisely," as opposed to regular "defining" (colloquial; see above). In popular aerospace usage, non-frock-wearing mortals "define" contracts, but anointed contractual specialists must be called in to "definitize," them, which, of course, results in their

definitization. Whence the reference to the ensuing contractual period as "post-definitization" (formerly referred to as "being under contract"). The derivation of the term "post-definitization" bears certain similarities to that of *co-equal*, which is a more emphatic form of "equal" meaning "more equal." And to *pre-warn*, which is a more emphatic form of "warn" used in situations calling for particularly intense levels of admonition. (Whether or not the existence of the term "pre-warn" implies the existence of the complementary term *post-warn* has been the subject of intense debate amongst linguistic scholars for decades.)

Examples: (1) The Contracts team called a post-definitization (adj) party at Harry and Marsha's café after negotiations were complete. (2) Did your Contracts manager quit pre- or post-definitization (adv)? (3) We are not under contract yet, but we are proceeding with work under an Undefinitized Contract Action (UCA).*

* There actually *is* such a term *and* such an acronym. I swear. If you don't believe www.acronymfinder.com, you can ask an aerospace Contracts expert.

Two More Reasons to Visit the Orlando Chapter STC Web Site
by Mike Murray, Chapter President

If you haven't visited the Orlando Chapter's Web site recently, it's definitely time to take another look! You only have to go as far as the Home page at www.stc-orlando.org to see some prominent new additions that are worth looking over.

Strategic Plan

Select the "here" link in the colorful "Strategic Plan" box on the right side of the page to see what the chapter leadership has in mind through 2007. You'll find major objectives in the areas of membership, education, member employment opportunities, instructional outreach, Web site enhancements, promotions, and more. Specific strategies establish areas of focus for achieving these objectives as we work toward our mission of "Designing the future of technical communication in Central Florida."

Chapter Information Brochure

Do you know someone who you think would benefit from membership in STC? The new chapter information brochure is now available on our home page. Again, just look for the colorful "Prospective Members" box on the right side of the page and select the "brochure" link to download and print a few color copies for your friends and coworkers. The brochure is also a great resource for current members who would benefit from an overview of STC and the Orlando Chapter.

In the panels of the brochure, you'll find

- Information about the Society for Technical Communication
- Details about some of the professional development opportunities available through the Orlando Chapter
- An explanation of how technical communications includes more than just writers
- Some of the broad cross-section of Central Florida companies represented by our members
- Ways you can get involved in chapter activities
- Membership fees and how to join

The Chapter Strategic plan and Information Brochure and just two more reasons to visit the Orlando Chapter Web site. Please let us know what else we can do to add value to your visit.

March Meeting: Are you a Doormat or a Solution Architect?
by David Coverston

Are you a doormat or a solution architect? A Tina or a Xena? Which would you rather be? If you missed our last meeting, then you missed an excellent presentation by two of our own members that contained a recipe for transformation. In *From Tina to Xena: A Recipe for Professional Empowerment* **Dan Voss** and **W.C. Wiese** gave us a number of tips that could change you from a wimpy cartoon technical writer into a vixen of the screen. This topic was presented in Nashville, Tennessee at the 49th International STC Conference in May of 2002.

Here are some of the guidelines:

- **Dress for success.** Even thought casual business dress is in vogue now, you do not want to be the messiest dresser in your company.
- **Use first names.** When you meet co-workers in the hallways at work, use their first names. If everyone else is talking to "Fred," you don't want to be talking to "Mr. Smith."
- **Form alliances.** Build relationships with other vital groups in your company such as the IT people, marketing, and management.

Tactical operations you should conduct as part of your strategic process include having a treatment conference, a production conference and tracking the job. At the treatment conference you should assemble all the people who have a vested interest in your project, and identify your communication objectives. Likewise at your production conference you should assemble all involved communication specialists and devise your multimedia communication plan to achieve your objectives. When you track the job, meet weekly to coordinate activities and discuss any problem areas.

Notes on this presentation are on our chapter's web site at www.stc-orlando.org/prodev/49notes/TinaXena.asp.

After the presentation, we split into four groups to practice problem solving as a group. We were given a scenario, and were tasked with developing an integrated communication plan to resolve the challenge presented in the scenario. This was a lot of fun and was a great opportunity to get to know other STC members.

Tool Tips: Advanced Find in Word
by David Coverston

Often I need to find something in a Word document, and I am grateful for the tools Word provides. Each tool has its own strengths, so matching the tool to what I am trying to find is an important part of my search.

When I want to find a table or a graphic, I reach for the Object Browser tool first (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Object Browser Tool

Many writers are not familiar with this great tool. It sits unobtrusively at the bottom of the vertical scroll bar. Click the round button in the middle to open the Object Browser menu (**Figure 2**).


Figure 2: Opening the Browser

Place your pointer over any of the icons and the Tool tip pane at the bottom of the menu shows you the tool's function. In **Figure 2**, I am pointing to the Browse by Graphic tool. Click the icon and Word takes you to the first graphic in the document. After you find a graphic, the double-arrows on the Object Browser tool turn blue. Clicking the blue down double-arrow takes you to the next graphic in the document; clicking the up double-arrow takes you to the previous graphic (unless you are at the first graphic, of course). The settings for this tool are sticky, meaning that the tool "remembers" the last object you found, so you don't have to open the menu each time to choose the object you want to search for. This also works for text searches you have done using the Find and Replace tool. You can close the Find and Replace dialog box altotgether and just click the blue double-arrows to find the next occurrence of your text.

The next tool Word provides for searching is the Find tool (**Figure 3**), but this tool is buried so deep even fewer users know about it. It is quite different than the Find and Replace tool which is accessed by pressing Control+F (my favorite method) or by choosing Edit > Find from the main menu.

To use the Find tool, you have to choose File > Open on the main menu, then click the Tools drop-down arrow on the Open dialog box, and choose Find. This opens the Find dialog box. Go ahead; you'll see the difference between the two tools immediately.
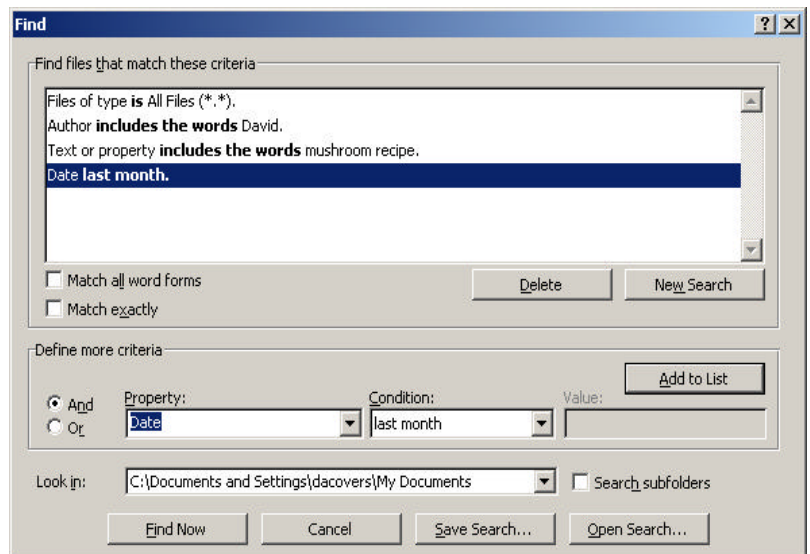
Figure 3: Find Tool

The Find tool lets you search for files by name, for text in a file, for text in comments, by author, by number of characters/paragraphs/pages, by date, and even by template. By clicking the Add toList button, you can build a search for a number of different criteria.

For example, you can look for any file, written by David, in the last month, containing the text mushroom recipe.Whew, more than you ever thought of.

In contradistinction to the previous two tools, the Find and Replace dialog is probably the most commonly used tool in Word. I have watched many a writer open the Find and Replace dialog box, type in a search term, click the Find Next button, and away they go… to nowhere. Just one wrong character will do it. I confess– I have fat fingers, so I found an easier way. You may have noticed that you can't copy text and use the Paste tool to paste text in, and right-clicking to bring up a context menu doesn't offer a way to paste your string of text either. But Control+V works in the dialog box.

With all these tools, you might think I would be satisfied. Not so. Sometimes I want to copy a string to the clipboard, but then find something different and paste the contents of the clipboard near the text I want to

Tool Tips Cont'd

(Continued from page 8)
find. Or, sometimes I want to know if a phrase appears above or below my current position in the document, and I want a fast way to find it. So I wrote "Dave's Fast Find" to do this for me. All I have to do is highlight a word or phrase, and press my hot keys to find a occurrence of the high-lighted phrase. I have a hot key for the next occurrence and one for the previous occurrence. If the macro finds a match, then the highlight moves to that occurrence; if it doesn't, then a message box tells me there is not another occurrence in the direction I am searching and my phrase remains high-lighted. If I have not highlighted a word or phrase, then a message tells me to select a word or phrase.

So open your Visual Basic editor and enter the following code:

```vb
Public Sub FindNextOccur()
'' Set Shortcut key to
Cntrl+Alt+DownArrow

Dim SelectWord As String
Dim msgText As String
Dim msgText2 As String
Dim msgButtons As Integer
Dim msgTitle As String

msgText = "Please select a word or
phrase."
msgText2 = "No more occurences in this
document."
msgButtons = 0
msgTitle = "Dave's Fast Find"

If Selection.Type <> wdSelectionNormal
Then
            Rsponse = MsgBox(msgText,
msgButtons, msgTitle)
            Exit Sub
Else
    SelectWord = Selection.Text
    Selection.Collapse Direction:
=wdCollapseEnd
    Selection.Find.ClearFormatting
    With Selection.Find
        .Text = SelectWord
        .Replacement.Text = ""
        .Forward = True
        .Wrap = wdFindStop
```

```vb
        .Format = False
        .MatchCase = False
        .MatchWholeWord = False
        .MatchWildcards = False
        .MatchSoundsLike = False
        .MatchAllWordForms = False
    End With
    Selection.Find.Execute
    If Selection.Find.Found = False Then
        Rsponse = MsgBox(msgText2,
msgButtons, msgTitle)

''Back up to and select the last occur-
rence

    Selection.Find.ClearFormatting
    With Selection.Find
        .Text = SelectWord
        .Replacement.Text = ""
        .Forward = False
        .Wrap = wdFindStop
        .Format = False
        .MatchCase = False
        .MatchWholeWord = False
        .MatchWildcards = False
        .MatchSoundsLike = False
        .MatchAllWordForms = False
    End With
    Selection.Find.Execute

    End If
End If

End Sub
```

Complete Customization
To complete your customization, set a shortcut key combina-tion to run the macro. Choose Tools > Customize, then click the Keyboard button to open the Customize dialog box. Choose Macros in the Categories list, and FindNextOccur in the Macros list. Click in the Press new shortcut key text box and press Control+Alt+Down arrow key, then click Assign and Close twice to return to your document.
Now enter the following code for the Find Previous Occur-rence macro, and customize your keyboard to use Con-trol+Alt+Up arrow to run it. There you are– a new tool to find text with. Enjoy!

Tool Tips Cont'd

(Continued from page 9)

```vb
Public Sub FindPrevOccur()
''Set Shortcut key to Control+Alt+UpArrow
Dim SelectWord As String
Dim msgText As String
Dim msgText2 As String
Dim msgButtons As Integer
Dim msgTitle As String

msgText = "Please select a word or phrase."
msgText2 = "No Previous occurences in this
document."
msgButtons = 0
msgTitle = "Dave's Fast Find"


If Selection.Type <> wdSelectionNormal Then
            Rsponse = MsgBox(msgText, msgBut-
tons, msgTitle)
            Exit Sub
Else
    SelectWord = Selection.Text
    Selection.Collapse Direction:
=wdCollapseStart
    Selection.Find.ClearFormatting
    With Selection.Find
        .Text = SelectWord
        .Replacement.Text = ""
        .Forward = False
        .Wrap = wdFindStop
        .Format = False
        .MatchCase = False
        .MatchWholeWord = False
        .MatchWildcards = False
        .MatchSoundsLike = False
        .MatchAllWordForms = False
    End With
    Selection.Find.Execute
    If Selection.Find.Found = False Then
        Rsponse = MsgBox(msgText2, msgButtons,
msgTitle)
''Back to the last occurrence

    Selection.Find.ClearFormatting
    With Selection.Find
        .Text = SelectWord
        .Replacement.Text = ""
        .Forward = True
        .Wrap = wdFindStop
        .Format = False
        .MatchCase = False
```

```vb
        .MatchWholeWord = False
        .MatchWildcards = False
        .MatchSoundsLike = False
        .MatchAllWordForms = False
    End With
    Selection.Find.Execute

    End If

End If

End Sub
```

David Coverston, Orlando Chapter secretary, is a technicalwriterfor PaySys International, Inc. If you have any questionsabout this Tool Tips article, please feel free to contactDavid at dcoverston@paysys.com.

Melissa Pellegrin Scholarships Also to be Presented

April Meeting: Progression on Job Search and Placement on the Docket for this Month's Meeting

An informative and far-ranging progression about how to enhance one's prospects for job placement or career advancement in technical communication will be the main event at this month's chapter meeting, scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 22, at the Winter Park Civic Center.

Another highlight of the evening will be the presentation of this year's Melissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarships to the most outstanding undergraduate and graduate students in the University of Central Florida technical communication program who applied for the coveted award that honors the memory of the 1994 graduate and Orlando Chapter member.

With its focus on job search and placement, the meeting has much to offer both to the chapter's strong contingent of UCF students, many of whom will soon be entering the job market, and to professionals who are looking to move up a rung or two on the career ladder—or perhaps to get back *on* it after a short detour thanks to the recession!

The progression format will consist of seven round-table presentations exploring a wide range of topics pertaining to job search and placement (see table).

There will be four 20-minute sessions with a couple minutes in between for participants to rotate tables and presenters to catch their breath. Handouts will be available at many, if not all, of the tables, so that meeting attendees can gain valuable information not only from the three sessions they participate in, but from the other four sessions as well.

All in all, there's a wealth of valuable information to be had at this month's meeting—not to mention a valuable opportunity to do some professional networking with Central Florida's technical communicators of tomorrow.

Don't miss it, folks.

TOPIC	PRESENTER(S)	DESCRIPTION
Working with a Recruiter	Chris Stubbs, *CBA Search Associates*	How to prepare for and what to expect when you decide to work with a professional recruiter.
Job Search Tips	Richard Phipps, *CIBER, Inc.*	Steps everyone should consider when beginning a job search. Specific resources that can and should be used for a job search will also be discussed.
Contract Work and Freelancing	Barbara Odom, *Barbara Odom and Associates, Inc.*, Janette Farnsworth, *Scribe Tree*	What to expect if you decide to change your employment status to contract work. How to prepare for and what to expect when you decide to become a freelancer.
Networking and Getting Your Foot in the Door	Cathi Balboa, *Intuitive Information, Inc.* Mike Murray, *Lockheed Martin*	How to build and maintain an active network of resources. This discussion group will also review certain techniques that you can use to get your foot in the door so you will be considered for the next step.
A Corporate Perspective	Pat Reed-Reimer, *AT&T* W.C. Wiese, *Lockheed Martin*	What is a company looking for in a technical communicator? Staffed by managers from Central Florida operations of two Fortune 500 companies who maintain a full-time staff of technical communicators.
Resumes, Cover Letters, and Portfolios	Dan Voss, *Lockheed Martin*	Polishing your resume, cover letter, and portfolio gets you the interview. Practical tips for both conventional and online. Time permitting "quick-look" reviews of resumes and portfolios will be provided.
Interviewing	Patti Strandberg, *Lockheed Martin*	Nailing the interview gets you the job. Strategies advice and practical tips on effective interviewing.

April Meeting: Melissa Pellegrin Scholarship Awards

The Melissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship Fund was founded to honor and preserve the memory and generous spirit of a valued friend and professional colleague, Melissa Pellegrin. She was a 1994 graduate of the University of Central Florida (UCF) and a member of the STC's Orlando Chapter.

Melissa was an exceptional student who earned an STC undergraduate scholarship. After graduation she served on the Orlando Chapter's Education Committee. Melissa's a commitment to excellence was evident in the quality of her academic and professional work. She shared her enthusiasm in many ways, including professional presentations at conferences and meetings. She was employed as a technical communicator with The Technical Resource Connec-

tion Inc., in Tampa, until her untimely death in April 1997.

The Melissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship Fund was officially dedicated on October 3, 1997 during the Trends '97 Conference, hosted by the Orlando Chapter of the STC. The fund provides scholarships and awards to selected outstanding undergraduates and graduate students at UCF.

At our next meeting, select students will be honored with a certificate and a check from the scholarship fund. These students will continue a tradition of excellence in technical communication and have their names engraved on a plaque with all past scholarship recipients at UCF.

Honoring Melissa's Memory

All STC monthly meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. at the Winter Park Civic Center unless otherwise specified.

May 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	Administrative Council Meeting 14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	STC Monthly Meeting 27	28	29	30	31

Web Site: www.stc-orlando.org

Mailing Address: STC Orlando
P.O. Box 540444
Orlando, Florida
32854-0444

Chapter Meeting Schedule

- **April 22-** *Employment Progression* and Scholarship Awards

- **May 27-** Panel Discussion on *Help*

- **June 24-** Year-end Banquet

Relay For Life: Remembering Friends and Family
by Christina Payne

On Friday, April 11, 2003, Lockheed Martin Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) participated in the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life event held at Timber Creek High School in Avalon Park. When I first heard about this fundraiser for cancer research, I knew that I wanted to volunteer my time, and of course, money. With my heavy workload, I was unable to make it to the weekly planning meetings held at our facility. However, I did manage to raise over $400 within a few days of the event!

To help raise money for the event, I enlisted a few friends to walk and contacted co-workers, friends, and family members for donations. I was impressed and touched by everyone's willingness to give to this cause. This was a deeply personal and emotional event and I wanted to especially thank fellow STC members **Bob**

Christina Payne and Miguel Valecillos at the Lockheed Martin Relay for Life tent.

Shydo, **Dan Voss**, and **Mike Murray** for their donations.

I am sure there were other STC members that attended or supported the Relay for Life, but for those that didn't make it out this year, I encourage you to take part in the event next year. The entertainment was wonderful and the weather was perfect. The sense of community, as we all rallied together, gave those suffering from cancer the hope that we are all united in trying to find a cure.

From my own perspective, I feel that fundraisers like these become more personal as we learn of more loved ones who have fought or are fighting cancer. The event also serves as an opportunity to pay tribute and remember the loved ones we have lost and to confirm our promise to friends and family members that we will be there to support them through their battle against cancer.

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