



TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

2019

SUMMIT

CONFERENCE & EXPO

Technical Communicators: Where we've been Where we're going



Janice (Ginny) Redish

@GinnyRedish

@stc_summit

#stc19

Denver
May 8, 2019

- ① **Where we've been**
A **very brief** history of tech comm and STC
- ② **What has not changed**
What tech comm is all about
- ③ **Where we're going**
Some thoughts about future trends
- ④ **Discussion and questions**

Where we've been

A **very brief** history of tech comm and STC



Timelines





Photo from replica of Lascaux, France
Photo by Mike Beauregard, 2017, Creative Commons License 2.0



<https://mymodernmet.com/medieval-herbal-remedies-guide-online>

CHAP. I.

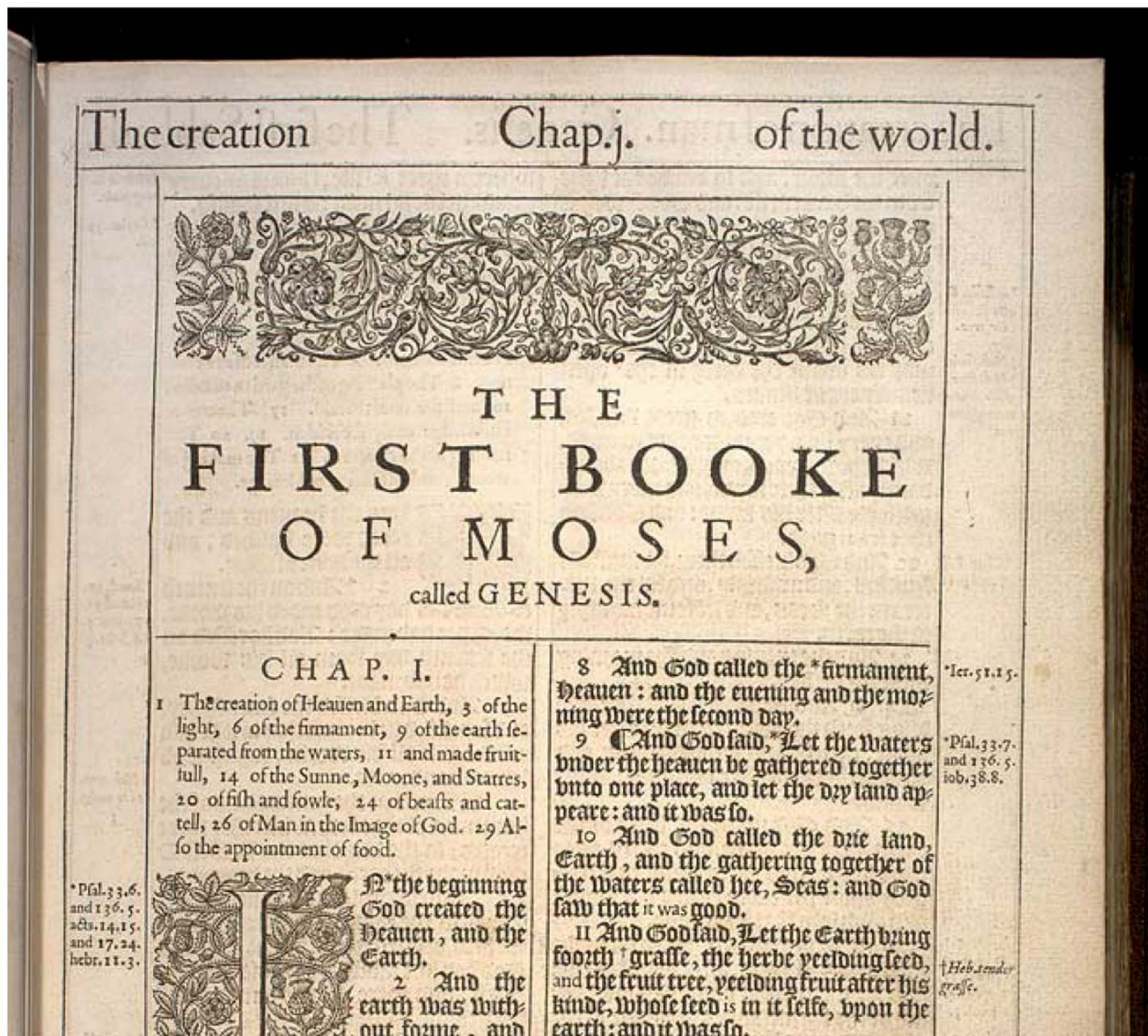
1 The creation of Heauen and Earth, 3 of the light, 6 of the firmament, 9 of the earth separated from the waters, 11 and made fruitfull, 14 of the Sunne, Moone, and Starres, 20 of fish and fowle, 24 of beasts and cattell, 26 of Man in the Image of God. 29 Also the appointment of food.

¹ In the beginning God created the Heauen, and the Earth.¹

² And the earth was without forme, and voyd, and darkenesse was vpon the face of the deepe: and the Spirit of God mooued vpon the face of the waters.

³ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.³

⁴ And God saw the light, that it was good: and God diuided the light from the darkenesse.⁴



1953 Society of Technical Writers

1953 Association of Technical Writers and Editors

1957 Society of Technical Writers and Editors (STWE)

1960 + Technical Publishing Society

Society of Technical Writers and Publishers

1971 Society for Technical Communication



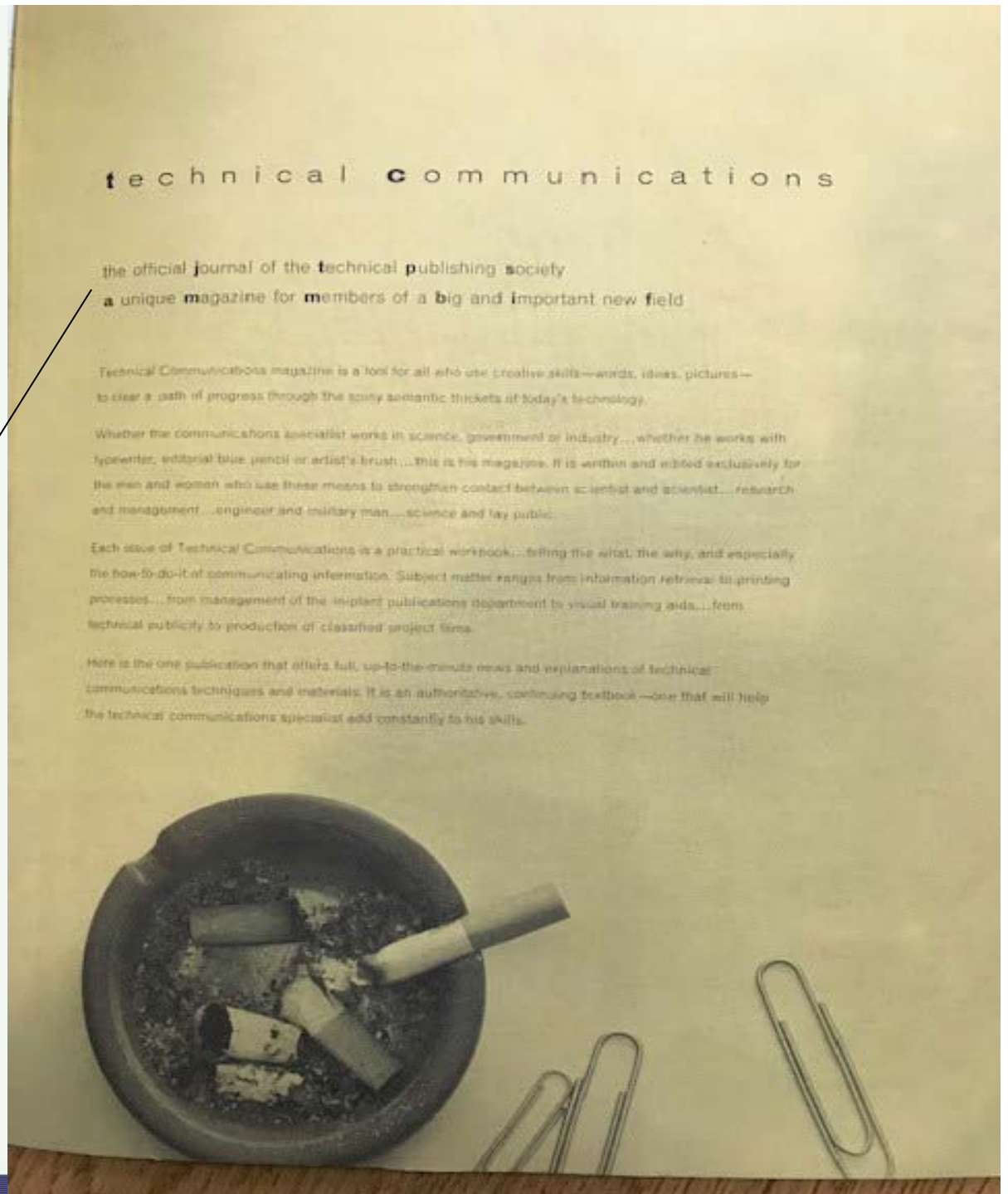
Board meeting at the 4th TWE conference (1956)
Source: STC archives



the official journal
of the **technical
publishing society**

a unique magazine
for **members of a
big and important
new field**

Source: STC archives



Janis Geisler,
now Janis Ramey



1958 – Erwin Steinberg started teaching technical writing at Margaret Morrison Carnegie College for Women.

From an article in the *Pittsburgh Press*, Oct. 3, 1958



Janis Ramey

Wanted: Writer For Outer Space Job

Tech Can Supply Just Right Girl

By JOAN HERKOLD -
Five pretty freshmen at Margaret Morrison Carnegie College get drooly when they think of writing about the newest medical discoveries, jet flights that table-hop from continent to continent or even to the moon and back.
They tingle at the prospect of writing about the most exciting scientific do-

The Pittsburgh Press
Women's Pages

ings on this world. Or another world. Or outer space.

Dr. Erwin R. Steinberg is their BMOG (big man on campus) professor-wise. Dr. Steinberg says he can teach them to do these things—to write and edit technical articles, reports or manuals; coordinate technical information or be whiz-bang successes in public relations, advertising or sales promotion.

As head of the department of general studies at Carnegie Institute of Technology, of which Margaret Morrison is a division, Dr. Steinberg is master-minding the latest addition to Tech's power-packed scientific program.

The course draws on the experience of faculties of five schools and colleges at



TRAINING FOR CAREERS in technical writing includes evaluation of current company reports. Nancy Ferree, right, gives her verdict to group including Ellen

Brady, Sara Shook, Sally Gannon, Janis Geisler and Dr. Erwin R. Steinberg, department head.

Tech. The largest percentage of study is in basic sciences and mathematics, English language, writing and literature, social sciences and arts.

In addition courses in graphic arts processes, layout and design, typewriting and technical research and report writing are included.

On Nov. 17 and 18 Dr. Steinberg will address the National Society of Technical Writers and Editors at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D. C.

"Technical writing is an obvious choice for women who like science. It's a growing profession in which a woman can make a beginning salary of from \$350 to \$400 a month. Women aren't discriminated against particularly.

Technical writing dates historically to papers scientists used to write to tell about their discoveries and observations. Those who were the best writers got the biggest hearing and the

greatest slice of fame—like Galileo, Newton, Franklin and Darwin.

"I don't expect our girls will have trouble finding jobs," Dr. Steinberg maintains.

Pittsburgh Press
October 3, 1958

Thanks to Janis Geisler Ramey for sharing the article with me.

ENGINEERING

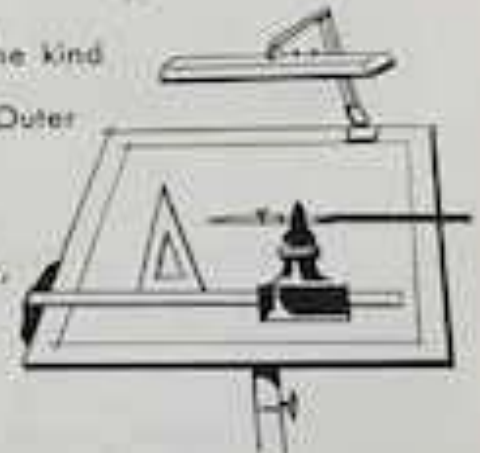
WRITERS ILLUSTRATORS



Convair-Astronautics is now offering select positions to qualified technical writers and illustrators. These men will prepare job and equipment-oriented technical manuals on the ATLAS Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) — one of the nation's top priority missile programs.

If you're interested in a secure, interesting career, and have the kind of talent and imagination it takes to plan and build for flight into Outer Space — there's a place for you now at Convair-Astronautics.

Here you'll work in Convair-Astronautics' new \$40,000,000 facility, associate with world-famous "names" in the field of missile development. And, of course, you'll enjoy living in beautiful, smog-free San Diego.



Ad from the first issue of *technical communications*
Source: STC archives

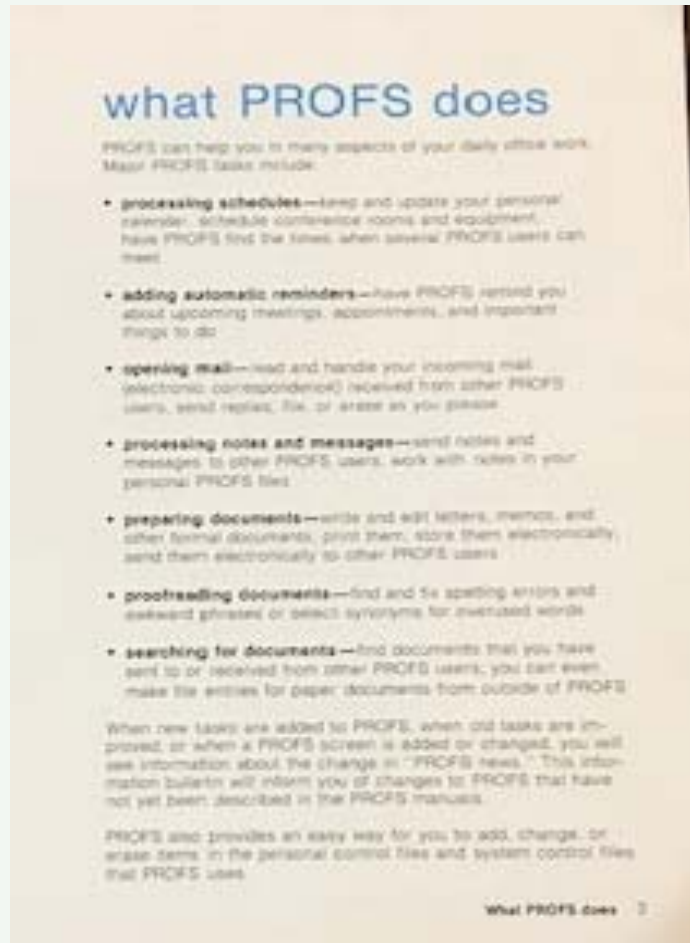
1981



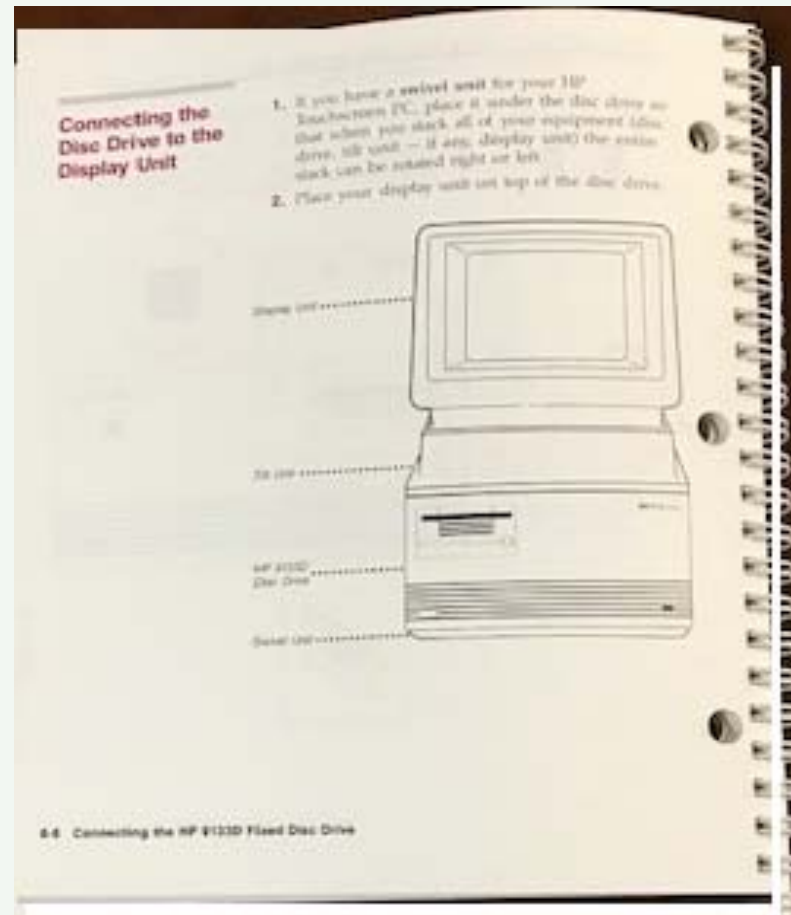
1984



Technical communicators started to create user-oriented, task-oriented manuals



IBM PROFS ~1983



HP VECTRA ~1984

Products from the Document Design Center, American Institutes for Research



STC Board of Directors meeting – mid 1990s
Source: STC archives



Carnegie Mellon Master of Arts In Professional Writing students in 2013
<http://www.cmu.edu/hss/english/graduate/ma-pw/index.html>



A recent Summit session

Photo from the STC
Summit 2019 website

For more history

RPI – and the early history

Merrill Whitburn

[https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/
10.1177/1050651909338801](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1050651909338801)

CMU – a retrospective about Erwin Steinberg

Ginny Redish

https://www.youtube.com/watchv=_cq0oPwABGw&t=107s

Plain Language in the US Gains Momentum: 1940-2015

Karen Schriver

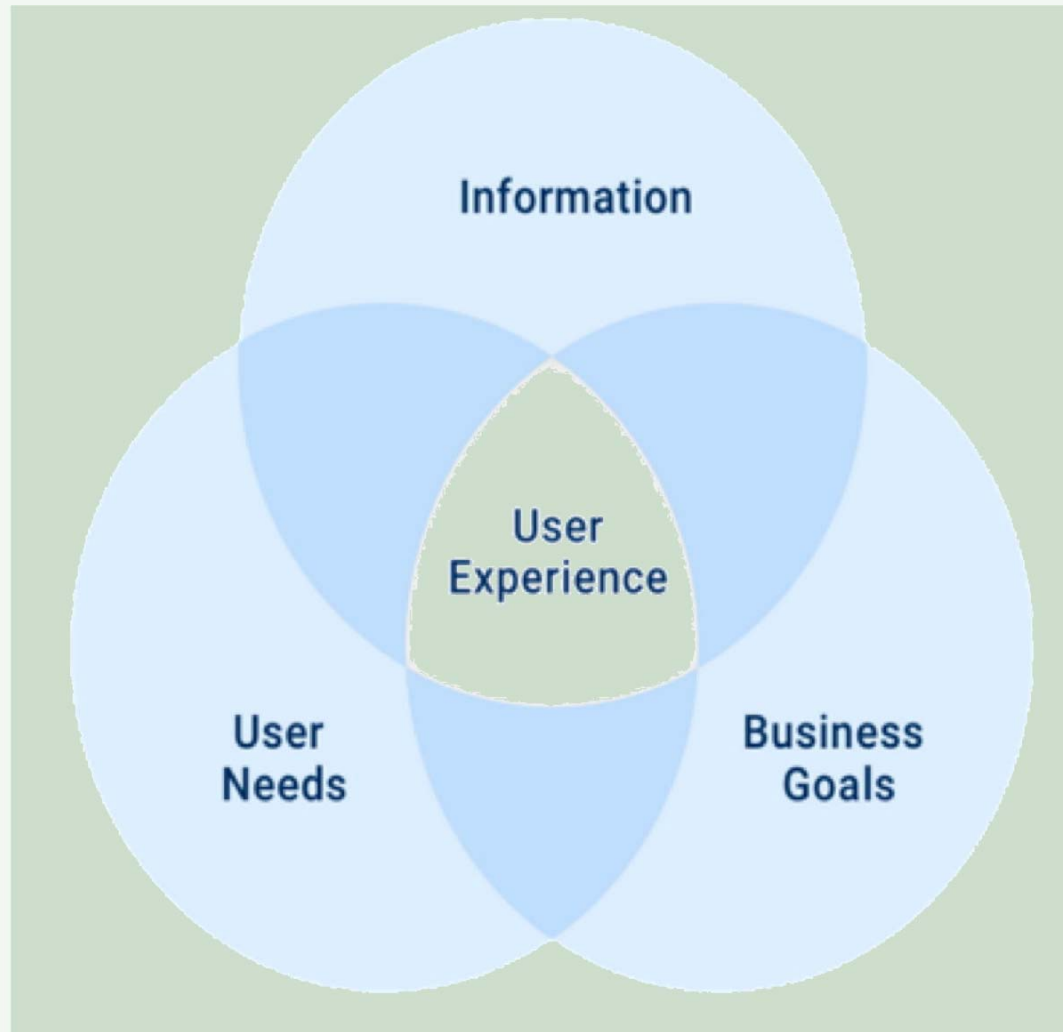
<https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/8115322>

What has not changed

What tech comm is all about



T C has always been user-centered



Sergey Gladkiy
June 14, 2018
[https://uxplanet.org/
user-centered-design-
process-and-benefits-
fd9e431eb5a9](https://uxplanet.org/user-centered-design-process-and-benefits-fd9e431eb5a9)

Good T C is both useful and usable

If we do our job well, the people who must (or should) use what we write can

- **find** what they need,
- **understand** what they find, and
- **act** appropriately on that understanding
(**use** what they find to meet their needs)

in the time and effort that they are willing to spend.

<https://www.plainlanguage.gov>

Everything we write is part of a conversation

Content as Conversation



Thinking of content as a two-way conversation with users for better, friendlier interactions.

Article No :823 | May 3, 2012 | by Ginny Redish

<https://uxmag.com/articles/content-as-conversation>

Asynchronous

^ conversation is *the* contribution of professional technical communicators



Issuance of a TOP command results in a line zero condition.



To go to the beginning of your file, type TOP and press Enter.

Ready to *transform*
your career?

There's one
clear choice.



Join STC today.

High Quality Education
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Experienced Connections
Professional Certification



<https://www.stc.org>

Snoozing...



You have been inactive for over an hour.
I was bored, so I decided to take a nap. Let me know when you get back.

Wake Up!

<https://hootsuite.com>



Get started with a free account

Find your people. Engage your customers. Build your brand. Do it all with Mailchimp's marketing tools. Already have an account? [Log in](#)

Email

Username

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 [Show](#)

- One lowercase character
- One uppercase character
- One number
- One special character
- 8 characters minimum

Get Started!

By clicking the "Get Started!" button, you are creating a Mailchimp account, and you agree to Mailchimp's [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

<https://login.mailchimp.com/signup>

Add basic page numbering

Sea



Adobe InDesign User Guide > Layout and design

Select an article:



Common page numbering tasks

InDesign offers several different features that help you create page numbering effects.

To do this:	Do this:
Add page numbering to documents in a book.	See Number pages, chapters, and paragraphs in a book.
Add section numbers and chapter numbers.	See Add section and chapter numbering.
Create running headers or running footers that use text variables such as the create date, filename, or the current heading or title.	See Create headers and footers and Text variables.

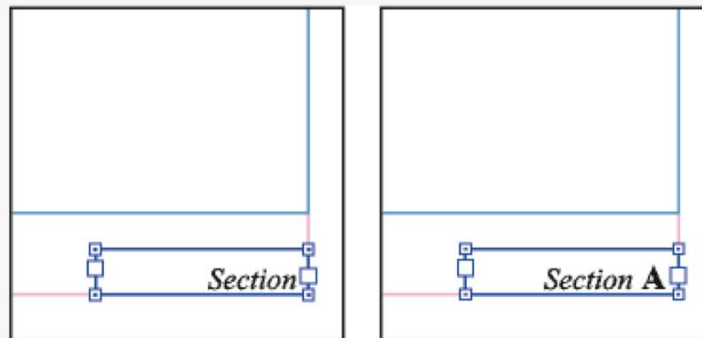
<https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/using/layout-design-9.html>

Numbering pages, chapters, and sections



Add an automatically updated section marker

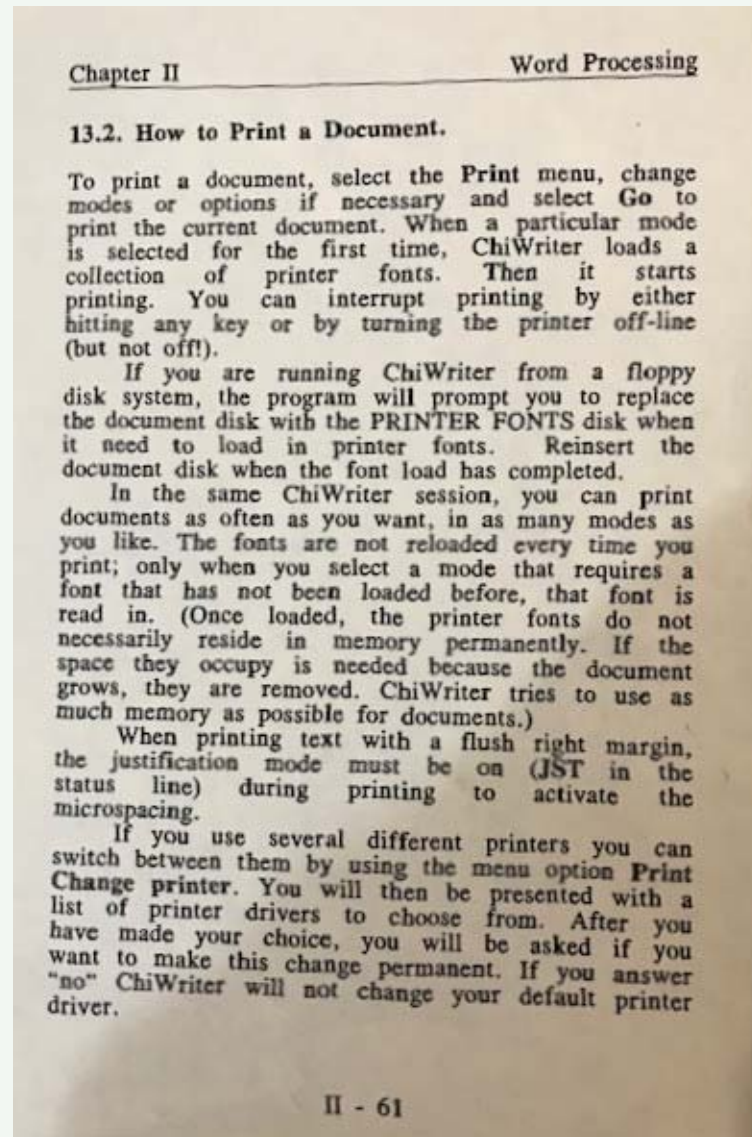
- 1 Define sections in your document. (See [Define section numbering.](#))
- 2 On a page or master that you're using in a section, drag the Type tool to create a text frame large enough for the section marker text, or click in an existing frame.
- 3 Choose Type > Insert Special Character > Markers > Section Marker.



On master page A, section marker (left) and section marker with page number marker inserted (right)

https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/using/numbering-pages-chapters-sections.html#add_section_and_chapter_numbering

T C pays attention to information design



Instructions for printing
from a typical 1980s manual

NOT
by a technical communicator



You know you need physical activity to stay healthy.
But did you know it can help you feel better right away?



Boost your mood



Sharpen your focus



Reduce your stress



Improve your sleep

So get more active — and start feeling better today.

How much activity do I need?

Moderate-Intensity aerobic activity

Anything that gets your heart beating faster counts.



AND



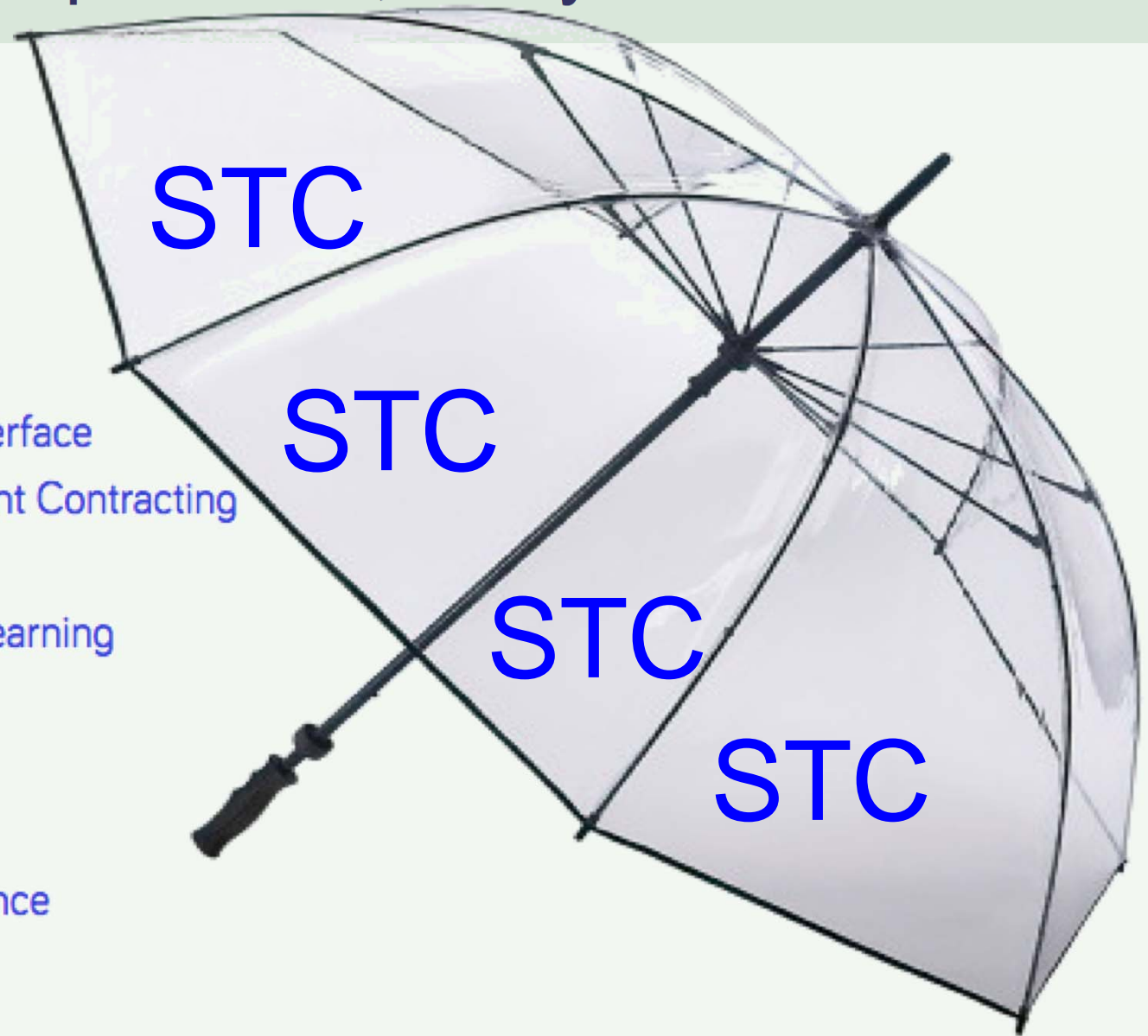
Tight on time this week? Start with just 5 minutes. It all adds up!

<https://health.gov/paguidelines/moveyourway/#factsheets>

from CommunicateHealth
<https://communicatehealth.com/>

T C is many specialties, many domains

- Academic
- Accessibility
- Agile
- Application Program Interface
- Consulting & Independent Contracting
- Health & Medicine
- Instructional Design & Learning
- Lone Writer
- Policies & Procedures
- Technical Editing
- Usability & User Experience
- Women in TechComm



Where we're going

Some thoughts about future trends



So where are we going?

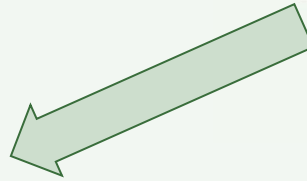


<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/technical-writers.htm#tab-6>

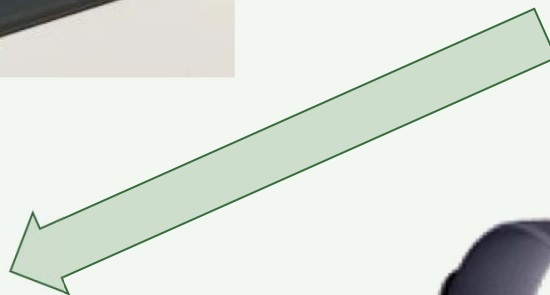
Job Outlook

Employment of technical writers is projected to grow 11 percent from 2016 to 2026, faster than the average for all occupations.


Our tools will keep changing



The space we have for our content may keep getting smaller



We may write for more and different media

 **Get Email Updates**

To receive email updates about this page, enter your email address:

[What's this](#)



 **STC Philadelphia Metro Chapter**
156 like this · Nonprofit Organization

22 hrs ·  · If you didn't hear the news, the STC-PMC was again awarded Platinum Community! To celebrate our accomplishments for the year, please join us at the Conshohocken Brewing Company in Bridgeport, PA for our last meeting of the 2018-2019 program year...



Our focus may get both more global
– and more local for different users



Our roles may expand

Content Strategy

User Experience

Customer Experience



Discussion and questions

What do you see in your future
– and our future as a profession?



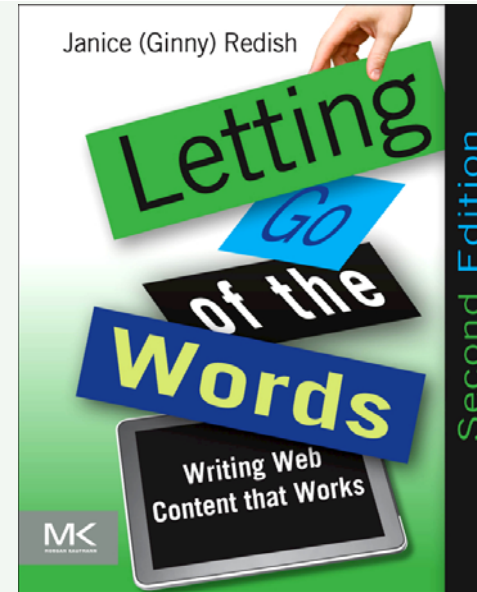
iStock photo licensed to Ginny Redish

Thank you!

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More questions?
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2019 Summit Education Evaluation

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