



# Newsbrief

The Monthly Publication of the Mid-South Chapter, STC

Volume 19, Number 3

March 2001

## Implications of the Wireless Web for Technical Communicators

by Nell Johnson

Mike Albers and Loel Kim from the University of Memphis will discuss differences and implications of web access

using two popular devices: the standard computer and the personal desktop assistants (PDAs). Their presentation will address issues such as content synchronization between the web and handheld systems, and basic web design that takes into account the small screen size, text-based design, and cumbersome manipulation of handheld interfaces. How users retrieve and remember information may differ in significant ways. Technical communicators designing information for the web will be interested in the exploration of this topic. With the proliferation of handheld PDAs, we will be increasingly conscious of how web-based material will be accessed and used with these devices.



Please join the Mid-South chapter at the Pig-N-Whistle for a

lunch-time meeting at 11:30 a.m. to hear Mike and Loel explain how they charted a theoretical framework for understanding differences between handheld and full-sized web environments and identifies design issues for further research. 🐷

## Meeting Notes

by Amy Hollister

A star by any other name could not have shown more brightly. I am talking about Vaughan Dewar.



## Expanding Horizons

### Overview

- Properties of Light
- Why the SPEED OF LIGHT is constant
- What remarkable changes occur as an object approaches the speed of light
- Converting matter into energy & vice versa



$$E = mc^2$$

- The dramatic consequences of very strong gravity
- The curvature of space-time itself (The 4th dimension)

Einstein predicted black holes in space long before they existed.



Amy Hollister, Scott Thompson, and George Grider listen to Vaughan Dewar's presentation

## Key Points to Specific Relativity

- Laws of Physics are the same in all frames of reference of uniform matter
- Anyone who is in uniform motion will measure the same speed of light, although the source may be in an entirely different frame of motion

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## General Relativity

- All normal laws of physics apply to objects.
- Gravity causes a curvature of space and time.



Everyone is enthralled with the Theory of Relativity

### Summary

- It's theoretically possible to travel into the future.
- It's theoretically impossible to reach the speed of light unless an object were to become pure energy.
- We can't travel into the past.
- We can observe the past from vast distances.
- Light appears to travel infinite distances if undisturbed.
- Light cannot be classified as strictly a wave or a particle. It acts like both.
- Light has mass and exerts force.
- The Speed of Light is LINKED to all ENERGY



Objects undergo remarkable changes as they approach the speed of light:

- Dilation of Time
- Distortion of Spatial Length
- Increases of Inertial Mass

Massive objects cause a curvature in Space-Time (the 4th dimension) TIME itself is actually the GREAT VARIABLE in relativity.

Editor's note:

*Vaughan Dewar enjoys sharing the metaphysical/philosophical aspects of theoretical energies "faster than light--superluminal", possibly being consciousness and/or spirit world related.*

*To quote Vaughan: "Also the theory that stated, maybe... our very existence and personal growth, creates energy that "feeds the superluminal dimension". Food for thought, that really turns me on and I'm glad to share".*

*Thank you, Vaughan for "enlightening" us about Einstein's Theory of Relativity. 🙏*

## Welcome New Members!

by Amy Hollister

I am pleased to announce that we are blessed with the bounty of more membership! Please join me in welcoming these new additions to the Mid-South chapter of STC:



### Elizabeth Boone

Elizabeth works as a writer and editor at Physicians Postgraduate Press. Originally from Texas, she moved to Memphis for graduate school. She received her Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the University of Memphis in May, 2000. Elizabeth continues to write fiction in her leisure time. She enjoys reading and a good laugh.

## Lauren Brooks

Lauren graduated from UT, Knoxville, last May with a degree in Literature. She decided to move back home and start the MA program in Technical Writing in the fall at the University of Memphis, which she has really enjoyed.

Additionally, Lauren has been working part-time since June at FedEx in their Data Architecture department as the technical editor for several internal handbooks. While at FedEx she has had a great experience and also a lot of fun. 🙏

## Writing Better Resumes Workshop

by STC Atlanta chapter

The Atlanta Chapter STC is sponsoring a workshop Saturday, February 24, 2001, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at MAPICS, Inc., in Alpharetta.

John Burnet and Jewel Kennington will lead this full-day workshop, "Writing Better Resumes."

Have you ever wondered how to write an attention-getting resume that will grab a hiring manager's interest and get you an interview? Have you ever struggled over what to put into a resume and what to leave out, or how to organize your experience so that you highlight the most important points?

If so, this workshop is for you.

John and Jewel will show you how to write better resumes. Drawing on a combined experience encompassing more than 30 years in technical communications, they will cover topics such as:

- The purpose of a resume
- What hiring managers look for in a resume
- How to avoid getting instantly eliminated from consideration
- What to put into a resume and what to leave out
- The three kinds of resumes
- How to structure and format a resume
- How to use effective wording
- Writing electronic resumes

At the end of the workshop, you will apply the principles you've learned in writing a resume, so bring your resume to work on.

The fee is \$100 per person, which includes lunch and breaks. The chapter reserves the right to cancel the workshop if there are insufficient registrations.

For more information or to register, contact:

Lori Brown  
(404) 236-2771 or  
[lbrown@iss.net](mailto:lbrown@iss.net).



The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is an individual membership organization dedicated to advancing the arts and sciences of technical communication. Its membership includes individuals whose work involves making technical information available to those who need it.

STC is the world's largest professional organization serving

the technical communication profession. It has more than 25,000 members and 150 chapters representing 39 countries. The Atlanta Chapter has over 700 members.



For information about STC Atlanta and directions to our meetings, point your browser to <http://www.pobox.com/~stc-atlanta>.

### It's Grammar Stylin' Time Kids!

by Meryl K. Evans  
*Webreference, Dec. 2000*

<http://webreference.com>.

You've just put the finishing touches on your newest baby, a Web site! You're all ready to roll it out or perhaps, you've already rolled it out and posted the URL on thousands of search engines (if not, you HAVE to read one of Webreference.com's articles on this topic <http://www.webreference.com/new/searchrank/>.) Are you forgetting something? Is something nagging at you, but you can't put your finger on it?

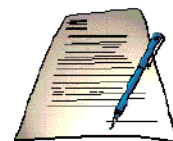
Could it be that you used the wrong word? Wrong punctuation? There is nothing more annoying to us grammar freaks than Web sites that don't follow grammar rules or recommended styles.

One of the most common, and very annoying mistakes is the use of "insure" instead of "ensure" with "assure" getting involved in

the brawl. Want to know how to stop making these stupid mistakes? Read on.

### Ensure You Insure Everything You Own

I am convinced the insurance industry sends subliminal messages through the use of the word "insure" because it is confused with "ensure," a commonly used word. Why is it that when we need something NOW it's not there for you? I looked all over the Web for an example of incorrect use of "insure" and couldn't find one. However, when I went to a jobs database and typed "insure" and sure enough, lots of examples came up and they were all wrong. Here's one example: "Interview applicants to insure accuracy and completeness of paperwork." Oh now, we need to buy insurance for paperwork??? This is ridiculous! Unless you're in the insurance business, you probably should avoid using "insure."



<http://www.bartleby.com/64/C003/035.html>  
<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~brians/errors/assure.html>  
<http://www.clearcf.uvic.ca/writersguide/Pages/UsEnsure.html>

### I Can't Assure that "Assure" Can Play with "Ensure" and "Insure"

Yes, there is another competitor for our attention and confusion. It is true that all of these words mean, "to make certain." However, "assure" is special because it's the only one that makes a reference to a person in



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an attempt to ease your mind. In writing this article, I assure you I am providing you with a good resource.

**For once, Microsoft is Right**

(It took me hours to write the admission that they're right!)

How many times have you typed the word, "which" in a sentence only to get that irritating green line under it to notify you that there's a grammar problem? Actually, in most cases, the word processor is RIGHT! It just gave me the freakin' green line when I typed "which" without a comma prior to it. "Which" usually has a comma preceding it because it is providing more information about the clause.

All the grammar experts explain that you should use "which" for non-restrictive clauses and "that" for restrictive clauses. Oh, like we remember what "non-restrictive" means. Here it is in plain English for us commoners:

This article, which is written by Meryl Two Syllables Not One, is an award winner <dream on, Meryl>. You see? I added information about this delightful article. See the comma beforehand? No green squiggly line this time.

Use "that" to identify the object in the clause. The article that Meryl wrote... in this case, if I didn't use "that Meryl..." then you would not know what article I am referencing.

<http://www.bartleby.com/64/C001/062.html#THAT>

<http://www.bartleby.com/64/C001/076.html#WHICH>

<http://www.grammarlady.com/faq.html#32>

**This Article I Effected has Affected You Deeply**

I am doing my best to affect you with the effects of my article. Here, "effect" means "result" or "intent." I hope that the results of this article will get you to clean up your writing act. We use "affect" because we want to "influence you" to make a change, but it also means "to display a liking." I better stop here before I feel like I am writing a romance novel.

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g\\_spelprob.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_spelprob.html)

<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~brians/errors/affect.html>

<http://www.mcn.net/~jimloy/affect.html>



**Oy, My Colon Hurts! Or is it Semi-Colon?**

It's easy to remember to use a colon for salutations, "Dear Ms. Thinkssheknowseverythingaboutgrammar:"; for time, it's 5:00, I'm outta here; between the chapter and the verse in the Bible, Genesis 1:1-5 (forgive me God, for bringing up religion when I said I would avoid this controversial topic); and using "To:" or "From:" in a business memo or e-mail.

Notice I used the semi-colon to separate the ideas in that long series that uses commas? I could've used a colon if I started it as "Remember to use a colon for the following: <long, dull list follows>." When you

throw a list at us, it likely will need the double dots. Though grammatically correct, it is still confusing and ugly looking. For goodness sakes, use bullets instead.

The semi-colon is also properly used prior to “therefore,” “however,” and “moreover,” “thus” you would use this instead of a comma like you do with “and,” “or,” and “but.” I think I am all quoted out here and my colon really hurts. OY!

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/punct/colon-semi.html>


<http://www.homeworkhelp.com/homeworkhelp/freemember/text/english/high/lessons/gr008/04/main.htm>

<http://www.cc.emory.edu/ENGLISH/WC/colonsemi.html>

### **The Editor Forced Me to Cover One More Quote!**

I am an editor of a nonprofit organization's newsletter. The spiritual leader of this organization makes my life heck. I'm not a wimp, like I am going to say “hell” in the same sentence as “spiritual.” He always puts his punctuation on the outside of quotes like this: “Off with their heads”! It's not the recommended style for American English. However, British English typically uses punctuation on the outside. This is an example of where there is no hard and fast rule. It's best to go by the styles of your organization or company. Personally, it bugs me when the punctuation is outside except in the Lincoln example below. No offense to speakers of British English. I often write “humour,” “theatre,” and “colour” because I like it!

The only time it really goes on the outside of the quotes is when you use a colon (ouch, still hurts)

 or a semi-colon. Now brace yourself: question marks and exclamation marks go outside the quotes... sometimes!

If the punctuation applies to the quotation itself, then keep it in the family. Kick it out when the entire sentence is a question or exclamation.

Who said, “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that 'all men are created equal'”? Please don't write me an e-mail asking for the answer. I may end up laughing myself to death before writing a response.

<http://leav-www.army.mil/wocc/IMI/wg14.htm>

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g\\_quote.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_quote.html)

### **Boys and Girls, It's Time to Conclude Grammar Lesson #1**

The article has reached its word limit so I can't present any other pitiful examples of poor grammar. We will save the rest for a rainy day.

<http://www.refdesk.com/>

<http://www.bartleby.com/141/index.html> - Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style*

<http://webster.comnet.edu/grammar/textonly.htm>

<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq.html> - *The Chicago Manual of Style*

*About the author:*

*Your teacher for the day, Ms. Meryl Two Syllables Not One, has been a Net freak since '93 and continues to whack herself for not getting into the Web biz much, much sooner. She does a little bit of everything: freelance writing for The Dallas Morning News, Web designing, coordinating newsletters for Ibizhome <http://www.ibizhome.com>, teaching an online class, volunteering, and explaining what a “process analyst” is to everyone who asks what is her day job. The day job, of course, isn't Web related and she's working to change that for good. You can reach out and touch Meryl at her Web Site:*

<http://www.meryl.net> ☺

### **Candidate for STC 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

*by Thea Teich, Senior Member, Southwestern Ohio Chapter*

Hello. Please let me introduce myself. I'm Thea Teich, and I'm running for 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president of STC. That means a four-year commitment to Society leadership, which is something I look forward to, should I win your votes.

### **Who Am I?**



Just a quick overview of my background. I was brought up in northern New Jersey. For those of you in the area, my high school overlooked the backside of the Statue of Liberty. Really!

I left NJ to attend the University of Michigan. Then I took a

master's degree at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. I spent several summers as a park ranger in Oklahoma during this period. Yes, really!

I continued to spend my young adulthood on Big Ten campuses by working for the Ohio State University School of Natural Resources for three years. Then, I became the environmental education coordinator for the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh. There I developed cooperative programs mainly for adults, trying to make complicated environmental subjects understandable and interesting so that people would be willing to take action. I didn't call it technical communication at the time, but that's what was going on.



In 1980, I moved back to Cincinnati, Ohio, where I have worked for government agencies, private industry, and as an independent, in technical communications concerning everything from water pollution control to plastic processing methods, from pharmaceutical market research to ERP software. I also teach technical marketing communications in a local technical college program. My decision to "go independent" was a long time in the making, but my being downsized in late 1995 was a significant shove in that direction.

I've been a member of STC since 1988. I've been director-sponsor of Region 4, public relations manager for the 1999 annual

conference, and a member of the academe-industry committee. I've presented at many annual and regional conferences on starting your own business, professional development, and marketing communications. For the Southwestern Ohio chapter (SWO), I was president, vice president, and competitions manager (for three years). I also served on the 1997 Region 4 conference committee and the SWO professional development committee. I regularly judge local STC competitions, have judged international competitions, and have won publications awards. I'm also a member and past officer of some other local communications organizations.

### **What Do I Bring To the Table?**

First, I bring a "can-do," implementation-focused orientation. Moving ideas and plans from "ought" to "action" is one of my strengths. Determining the optimal way, which may not necessarily be the fastest or the cheapest way, to transform projects from plans to production—and then doing it—is how I've earned my living for many years.

Second, I believe that to make good decisions, input from people who don't think exactly as I do or who have different priorities is necessary. I listen. I believe consensus leads to decisions that respond best to the issues.

Third, I bring a breadth of experience to the office. Technical communicators work

in varied situations—and I've been through most of them. Independent, corporate, nonprofit, educational, downsized, upsized, overwhelmed—I've been there. As a result, I think I have more than an inkling of what many STC members face every day.



Fourth, and perhaps most important, my aim is to use the talent and capabilities

we have as an organization to foresee the trends in our profession so we can plan for them and better help STC members meet the needs and opportunities presented by those trends.

Our profession's value to the world at large is being increasingly recognized. Part of the reason for that is the times we live in. But another part of the reason is that we have a professional organization that represents us as a body; we are no longer an amorphous conglomeration of easily replaced "support services." Over much of the past almost 50 years of STC's existence, the focus has been on promoting our professionalism, supporting educational programs and research, improving, and—let's face it—helping to stabilize—our places and value in corporate and other entities. Now that we've determined "to design the future of technical communications (our new mission statement), my goals involve focusing our efforts on the professional development of

our members so they can answer the classic job interview question, “where do you want to be in five years?” By exploring trends and possibilities now and helping members prepare for them, we can work toward—instead of merely respond to—what will happen five years from now. We can truly “design the future of technical communication”. In other words, we can design, draw, paint, and frame *our own futures*.

I also want to promote both the profession and the organization so that technical communicators view STC the way medical doctors view their associations and engineers view their societies--as essential elements of their professions. Our branding effort was a springboard. Let's put what we learned about ourselves to work.

In the meantime, please remember to vote in the upcoming STC elections. You can do so either on the traditional paper ballot or electronically at the STC Web site this year. I hope you'll vote for me for 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president. But the important thing is to vote. You're a member of this group. Here's your chance to help design STC—as well as the future of technical communication.

For more information about me, please visit my Web site, [www.TeichTMC.com](http://www.TeichTMC.com). You may also contact me at [Thea@TeichTMC.com](mailto:Thea@TeichTMC.com).

## Treasurer's Report

by Ferris Hooshmand

This chapter monthly financial report reflects the end of January, 2001.



<b>Cash balance</b> (at the beginning of Jan.-01)		<b><u>\$1,638.21</u></b>
<b>Income</b>		
Interest on savings	\$4.58	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b><u>\$4.58</u></b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Newsletter	\$34.00	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b><u>\$34.00</u></b>
<b>Surplus or (deficit)</b> (Total income less total expenses)		<b><u>(\$29.42)</u></b>
<b>Cash (cumulative) balance</b>		<b><u>\$1,608.79</u></b>



The publication of the Mid-South Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication is referred to as **Newsbrief**.

Its goals are to:

- Help create a sense of community among existing members and visitors
- Involve members and visitors more fully in professional development and service
- Attract potential members by making them aware of the benefits of chapter membership
- Provide a link between the University, Professors, students, and work-place professionals

### Publication Guidelines:

Submissions are encouraged, either as faxes or e-mails to the editor.

### Newsletter Contact:

Amy Hollister  
[awriter@midsouth.rr.com](mailto:awriter@midsouth.rr.com)

### Mission Statement:

The mission of the Society for Technical Communication is to improve the quality and effectiveness of technical communication for audiences.

### Contributors This Month:

- Elizabeth Boone
- Lauren Brooks
- Ferris Hooshmand
- Nell Johnson



## Meeting Reminder

Amy Hollister, Editor



**What:** March (Lunch) Meeting

**When:** Monday, March 5th  
11:30 a.m.

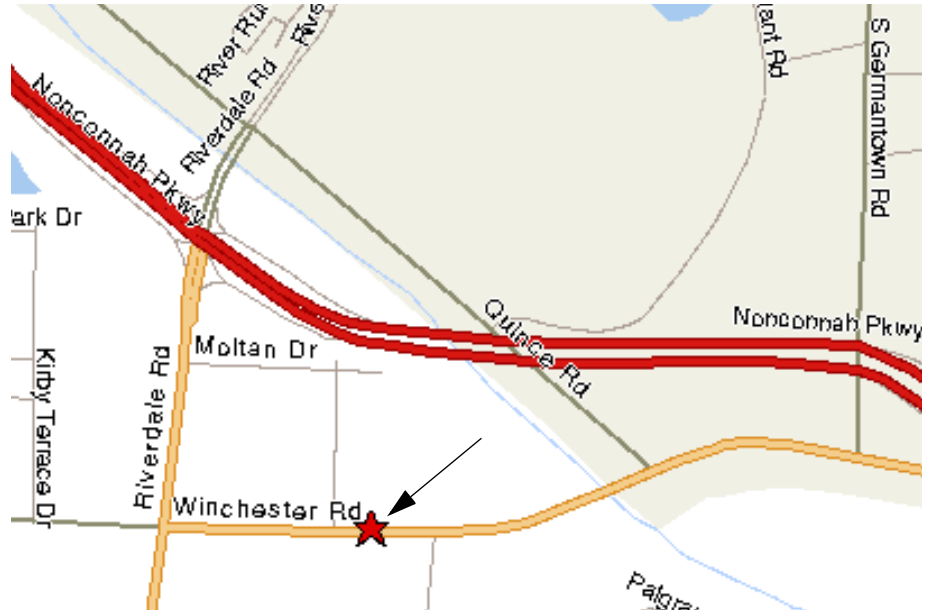
**Speaker:** Mike Albers  
and Loel Kim

**Where:** Pig-N-Whistle  
7144 Winchester Road  
(901) 754-4400

The planned menu and price  
(including tax and gratuity) is:

BBQ buffet  
Dessert  
Iced tea, water, or lemonade

**\$10.00**



society for technical communication

Newsbrief

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