



TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

Your profession.

Your career.

Get the most from them.



**From novice to expert,
STC delivers what you need.**

**Discover the benefits
of STC membership.**



SOCIETY FOR
TECHNICAL
COMMUNICATION

About STC

In 1953, technical writers formed a professional association to improve the quality of their work, raise awareness about their profession, and advance their careers. This association evolved and changed its name to the Society for Technical Communication (STC) in 1971.

As technology spread into more areas of our lives, STC expanded beyond writing to include videography, multimedia design, Web design, and other communities of practice. Today, STC's 15,000-plus members work in every industry, producing printed manuals, online help, multimedia, and other forms of technical communication.

Their job titles include:

- ▶ Technical writer
- ▶ Usability specialist
- ▶ Documentation manager
- ▶ Technical editor
- ▶ Information developer
- ▶ Documentation specialist
- ▶ Technical communicator
- ▶ Technical illustrator
- ▶ Managers of technical communication departments
- ▶ Teachers of technical communication
- ▶ Web designer
- ▶ Technical translator

STC currently has more than 140 chapters on four continents. However, the goals of the Society remain the same: promoting excellence in technical communication, advancing awareness of the profession, and fostering the professional growth of its members.

“At my first STC meeting, I heard people voice the same concerns that I had at work. I realized that I was not on some isolated island — other people were facing the same issues as me. I felt I was home.”

– Deirdre A. Murr

STC Benefits Include:

- ▶ Subscriptions to *Intercom*, STC’s magazine, and *Technical Communication*, STC’s quarterly journal.
- ▶ Eligibility to join any number of STC’s 20-plus special interest groups (SIGs).
- ▶ Option to join one of more than 140 STC local chapters.
- ▶ Free access to STC’s jobs database.
- ▶ Discounts on STC’s annual conference.
- ▶ Entry into the members-only section of STC’s Web site, which features news, networking tools, and useful articles.
- ▶ Access to STC’s annual *Salary Survey*.
- ▶ Discounts on STC’s popular educational seminars.
- ▶ Opportunities to network with peers via conferences, meetings, and online discussion groups.
- ▶ Discounts on health, disability, critical illness, life, and long-term care insurance. (U.S. residents only; availability varies by state.)

“STC offers us opportunities to network with successful people in our field, show off our skills, and learn new skills, all in the company of people who truly understand what we do.”

– Brenda P. Huettner

Whether just out of school or transitioning to technical communication from another profession, you deserve a good start to your technical communication career. STC can give you that start.

Once you're on your way, STC can help you plan a career strategy that will take you where you want to be five, ten, and twenty years down the road.

Continuing Education

As a technical communicator, you need to continuously update your skills and knowledge. The technology you document is evolving rapidly, as are the tools you use to document it. STC can provide educational opportunities to keep you ahead of the curve:

- ▶ STC's annual international conference offers more than 200 educational sessions on every aspect of technical communication.
- ▶ STC chapters produce regional conferences and seminars.
- ▶ STC sponsors telephone and Web seminars — learning events similar to a large conference call.
- ▶ Articles in *Intercom* and *Technical Communication*.

Networking with Peers

Your fellow technical communicators can help solve problems that you experience in your work. Whatever your situation, chances are someone else has already dealt with a similar problem. Peers can also be a great source for job leads, tips on new tools, and industry trends.

STC makes it easy to meet other technical communication professionals at conferences and chapter meetings, through SIG e-mail discussions, and through special events like local job fairs. Through STC, you can find friends, a mentor, or maybe even your next employer.

Finding That Job

STC members are strongly supported in their job searches through access to the Society's jobs database. This database is available free to STC members.

Members can consult STC's annual salary survey to learn the salaries of technical writers and editors in the United States and Canada. Salaries are broken out by age, gender, level of education, and geographical categories.

Exploring Your Interests

STC special interest groups (SIGs) are groups of technical communicators who share resources and information about a particular field of the profession. Individual SIGs are devoted to information design, technical editing, scientific communication, and more than a dozen other specialties.

Competing for Recognition

How does your work rate? STC's technical publications, technical art, and online communication competitions let you find out. Winning entries are displayed at STC's annual conference and some chapter events, generating recognition for you and publicity for your company.



“When I have a question, I have a huge database of fellow STC members whom I can contact.”

– Sandra W. Harner

As your career gains momentum, your priorities change. Whether you aspire to management or just a higher salary, STC is there to help you move up to the next level.

Publishing Opportunities

At this point in your career, you have professional advice that others will find useful. Perhaps you know how to optimize the documentation process. Or perhaps you've become an expert on documentation tools. Turn your knowledge into an article for *Intercom* or *Technical Communication*: A published article will help your peers, boost your reputation, and enhance your portfolio.

Presenting at a Conference or Seminar

Polish your presentation skills and share your knowledge by speaking at an STC conference or seminar. The experience will prepare you for presentations to clients or employers and raise your visibility in the profession.

You may also consider presenting an STC telephone or Web seminar. These “virtual classrooms” reach a wide, international audience.

Learning New Skills

A great way to learn new skills is to volunteer as a chapter or SIG newsletter editor or webmaster. If you're considering a change in career direction or shifting the focus of your career, this is your chance to try out a new role and add a new line to your résumé at the same time.

Serving as an officer in your chapter or SIG gives you another opportunity to develop management skills. Once you've learned the ropes as a chapter president or SIG manager, you may even want to run for a Society-level office.

Developing Management Skills

You know your job; now you're ready to guide others. Hone your management skills by joining STC's management SIG, attending sessions on management at STC's annual conference, and reading articles on management in STC publications.

When you're offered a management position, don't forget to check the statistics in STC's *Salary Survey*. The survey compares salaries for mid- and senior-level technical communicators in supervisory and nonsupervisory positions. See where you stand!

Finding Employees or Subcontractors

Technical communicators who move into management may find themselves hiring new staff. You don't have to go into this process cold if you've participated in STC events. Odds are you'll already know people who have the skills you need.



“The value and benefit of STC has changed dramatically, and yet it hasn’t changed at all. The tools we use change, how we communicate has changed, how we learn has changed, and yet the fundamental tenets of technical communication remain. For me, STC continues to be the primary source for professional learning.”

– Mark Hanigan

Now that you’ve reached the top, you have a chance to shape the future of the profession. You also deserve recognition for your achievements.

Consulting

Many experienced technical communicators choose to become consultants or independent contractors. STC has a Society-level consulting and independent contracting (CIC) SIG, as well as conference sessions devoted to consulting and independent contracting.

Through STC, you’ll know other independents in your area. For those times when you have more work than you can handle, your CIC colleagues can be potential subcontractors. And after you’ve sent work their way, they may return the favor.

You’ll also find articles written by and for CIC members in *Intercom*. By sharing knowledge, networking, and referrals, STC’s CIC members help their businesses grow while building the independent professional community.

Mentoring

Mentoring gives you a chance to share what you’ve learned with someone new to the field. When you pass along your knowledge, you shape the work of an individual — and help determine the future of the profession. And you have the satisfaction of helping others achieve their career goals.

Getting Recognition

STC recognizes members who have achieved eminence in the art and science of technical communication by bestowing two honorary titles: fellow and associate fellow. These are long-time members who have attained distinction in the field of technical communication. New fellows and associate fellows are honored during STC's annual conference. The STC office also sends out press releases about new fellows and associate fellows, and their names appear in *Intercom*.

Judging Competitions

By volunteering as a judge for STC competitions, you help decide exactly what constitutes excellent technical communication. You also see the best new ideas in the design, organization, and format of technical information.

Guiding the Society

STC helps shape the entire profession — and you help shape STC. Serving on a Society-level committee or taking on the duties of office ensures that your experience benefits technical communication for years to come.



“Whether I’m moving to a different state or facing a new challenge at work, STC is my survival kit.”

– Constance L. Kiernan

STC Promotes the Profession By:

- ▶ Organizing competitions to recognize the best examples of technical communication.
- ▶ Recognizing the professional contributions of leading technical communicators both in and outside the Society.
- ▶ Awarding scholarships to students interested in technical communication.
- ▶ Holding technical writing contests for high school students.
- ▶ Sponsoring an honorary fraternity for college students majoring in technical communication.
- ▶ Honoring outstanding teachers of technical communication.
- ▶ Financing research grants that further our understanding of communication.
- ▶ Publicizing Society events and member achievements.
- ▶ Providing continual learning opportunities.



STC Web Resources

Visit www.stc.org to:

- ▶ Join STC
- ▶ Renew your membership
- ▶ Update your contact information and mailing address in the STC database
- ▶ Locate an STC chapter
- ▶ Learn about STC SIGs
- ▶ Read about STC's annual conference or regional conferences
- ▶ Read about STC's telephone and Web seminars
- ▶ Sample *Intercom* and *Technical Communication*, STC's magazine and journal



- ▶ **Lifelong Learning**
- ▶ **Professional Community**
- ▶ **Networking**
- ▶ **Sharing Knowledge**
- ▶ **Recognizing Excellence**
- ▶ **Peer Support**

**At every stage of your career,
STC works for you.**



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