

Devil Mountain Views

Newsletter of the East Bay Chapter of STC

Supporting technical communication in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1962

January / February 2009

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We have changed our fiscal year to coincide with the calendar year. In accordance, our officers now serve from January through December. Congratulations to our **2009 Council Officers**:

- [Ann Adams](#), President (read her first [newsletter message](#))
- [Adrienne Tange](#), President-Elect
- [Joe Humbert](#), Treasurer
- [Jeanie Egbert](#), V.P. Arrangements
- [Gina Gotsill](#), Secretary
- [Richard Mateosian](#), Nominating Committee

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Also, congratulations to [Patrick Lufkin](#), a newly named Associate Fellow of the Society as announced by STC headquarters.



Patrick is a member of the Berkeley, East Bay, and San Francisco chapters. He is a former newsletter editor and former president of the San Francisco chapter. He currently holds leadership positions in the Berkeley and East Bay chapters (in the College/Career outreach committee) and the Management SIG. He is a regular book reviewer for the STC journal, *Technical Communication*, active in the Northern California Technical Publications Competitions (Touchstone), and chair of the Kenneth Gordon Scholarship. The next time you see Patrick, let him know how much you appreciate all he does for STC and our profession.



Award of Excellence
2006-2007
STC
International Newsletter Competition

Feature Articles



Award of
Excellence
2006-2007
**STC Chapter
Achievement
Award**

[The Yellow Brick Road to Technical Communication](#)

[Paul Mueller](#), a Distinguished Chapter Service Award winner for the Houston STC, describes his journey from a computer science developer to a technical communicator.

[Write on Time: Tips to Get Over Sales Rejection Fast](#)

[Adrienne Tange](#), EBSTC President-Elect, describes how to deal with what all businesses experience — prospective clients turning down your sales call.

[Why Did You Spam Me?](#)

[Liz Miller](#), EBSTC Member, laments the loss of her favorite email address.



SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

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The Yellow Brick Road to Technical Communication



by [Paul Mueller](#)
STC Senior Member

Paul Mueller is president of [UserAid](#) and has been involved in technical communication for more than 20 years. He has served as a director and a conference track manager for STC. Paul is also active in his local STC community in Houston and has held various positions in the organization, including president, vice president, director, and strategic advisor. Paul received the Distinguished Chapter Service Award in 2006.

Making the Transition from Developer to Writer

For those of us who communicate technical content for a living, we share many job titles, such as technical writer, information developer, technical communicator, multimedia engineer, content developer, and many others. Without one focused set of titles, how did we know this is what we wanted to do?

The truth is, like many other technical communicator, I didn't. I graduated with a computer science and mathematics degrees. I took a few technical communication courses at Penn State, but I had never heard of technical communication as a profession. I was going to be a programmer, like all good computer science graduates. But then, something happened. After developing my first database-driven security system, I had to document the system and train others how to use it. This process introduced me to my future career. I had always enjoyed teaching and coaching, and this was teaching through a different medium.

But how could I make the transition? I joined a writing shop as an entry-level writer. I first worked on a database product, and I was hired for my technical knowledge in that area. I thought I knew all about writing when I started. After all, I had written more than 100 pages to "document" the system that I had developed. I quickly learned how little I actually knew about creating quality software documentation. Luckily for me, there was a light at the end of the tunnel.

An Editor Guides the Way The second important event in my career path occurred when I met my first mentor, my editor, Ria (you can meet her at www.dutchtrans.com), who was an excellent guide and mentor. She used each edit as an opportunity to teach me the guidelines and show me how to refine the content and present my thoughts in a clear, concise manner. She used a green pen so that it didn't look like my pages were soaked with blood, and we talked about various ways I could improve. I soon became much more aware of the senior writers around me, and I learned to watch and listen instead of show and talk. I am very thankful to all those mentors, including many who may never know about their profound impact on my future. We should all learn from each other.

The greatest element about technical communication is the opportunity to continually learn and grow. We are consistently faced with new challenges and ways to communicate content to our audiences. Even if we are in a "standardized" environment, we can always look for ways to improve knowledge transfer to our audience. When we think we know it all, we actually fall behind and lose our drive and motivation.

EPSS Becomes a *de facto* Standard When I started in technical communication, we wrote everything in books. Online help soon followed, providing all the printed content in an online format. These formats became standard, and terms like *chunking* and *single-sourcing* became the buzz words. The big breakthrough for me was the introduction of electronic production support systems (EPSS), which accompanied products and provided assistance in parallel. Delivering the information users need, when and where they need it, was a breakthrough approach and one I quickly latched onto. The conference sessions and discussions truly inspired me to design and implement my first embedded help solution.

We continued to play with our embedded help implementation techniques, and talk with users about their experiences with the product. I also began presenting regularly at conferences about embedded help and discussing these ideas and methods with others. These idea exchanges were the key for me to find new ways to present information and expand my ways of approaching technical communication.

Today, we look at integrated user assistance as commonplace in many products. For example, wizards and text in the user interface are never considered to be forms of help. We learned that if we didn't call it help, people would actually read it and use it. We have also found ways to more closely integrate the online content with the product. For example, many help pages provide links that do something in the product itself to resolve an issue, such as a button to open a window and perform a specific task. Multimedia

continues to extend our communication methods with demonstrations and tutorials integrated with the product. These powerful technologies and our creative minds help us find better ways to communicate effectively with a wide range of audiences.

As we move toward community-generated content and extensible user assistance through Wikis and other technologies, are we working ourselves out of a job? I believe not. This evolution is just the next step in our journey, and with it our role changes in the process. We now move toward helping to shape the content and to focus on accessibility and structure within these information sets. We become the information architects and we will develop ways to make it easier for others to develop standardized community-generated content.

What's Next? True industry leaders never stop learning. Mentors share their knowledge and experience, and in turn they learn from the fresh perspectives of those they work with. We continue our discussions, share ideas, experiment and try new things, and watch, listen, and learn. From our idea exchanges at conferences and various events, future approaches that more effectively meet the needs of our audiences are born. I hope you will be a part of our future and I look forward to our continuing discussions as we find the next, better way.



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Write on Time: Tips to Get Over Sales Rejection Fast

by [Adrienne Tange](#)
EBSTC President-Elect

Adrienne Tange is the co-founder of [Write on Time Solutions, LLC](#), a technical writing company that creates clear, concise and accurate technical documentation or Web content — always on time and on budget.

In her free time, she enjoys riding and showing her Arab horse.



One of the toughest aspects about owning a business is to hear a client say "No thanks" to your sales pitch or proposal. In this economy you may hear those two words more than you like. So how do you keep on selling after a rejection?

Melody and I have had our fair share of rejection, and have developed ways of effectively handling it. Here is what works for us:

1. When you are feeling down, talk to someone.

The advantage of a partnership is that Melody and I can cheer each other up. If you don't have a partner, find someone who will support you and put the rejection into perspective.

2. Don't personalize the rejection. Be objective.

We have all heard this before, but it is especially true in business. Typically, most times when a prospect doesn't buy your service, it is for a business reason, such as lack of money, and nothing else.

3. Realize you will need so many noes before you hear a yes.

Turn each rejection into a statistic. For example in your sales cycle, you may have to hear eight noes from prospects before you hear one yes. Knowing this, if you receive a rejection, you can say to yourself, "That's OK because I need eight noes before I make a sale."

4. Use each sales pitch as a learning experience.

Melody and I examine each selling presentation, and list what we

did well and what we could improve on. If you do this, you'll learn from your mistakes and continuously improve your pitch.

5. Go out and do something else.

Sometimes you just need a break from business. After work I ride my horse. Riding is therapeutic — when I ride I must focus on my horse, and so I tend to forget the troubles of the day. After my ride I always feel much more relaxed and up beat.

Melody Brumis and Adrienne Tange started their business, Write on Time Solutions, LLC, in 2007. Their technical writing company writes and maintains documents for businesses that do not have in-house publication resources.

Melody and I will be writing this column together to help you achieve small business success. If you have any questions for us, please email us at info@writeontimesolutions.com and we will address them in future columns.



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Why Did You Spam Me?

by [Liz Miller](#)

EBSTC Member

Liz is the author of "Get Rolling" and "Advanced Inline Skating." She is a certified FIT and Level 2 Inline Skating instructor. See her Web sites at www.GetRolling.com and www.CampRollerblade.com.

We are gathered today to mourn the loss of the e-mail address — and a key part of the Get Rolling brand — Liz at Get Rolling dot com. Notice I don't dare format it like an e-mail!

Never fear, I still own the Getrolling.com domain. When my Web site launched in the mid-90s, I used my ideal e-mail address everywhere. More than 15 years ago, I didn't realize the dangers of displaying it on every Web page. About a year ago, I finally changed it, so that visitors now click an AskLiz link and fill out an e-mail form to communicate with me.

Bad People [-(Too late. Bad people continue to use my old address to send spam all over the world. A month ago I got so fed up that I created a Google e-mail account, which I now use exclusively.

But that's not all.

I use PayPal to manage book sales. A month ago, immediately after changing from the old to the new e-mail address, an application that looked exactly like a PayPal page required me to update my account details. In my innocence, I did.

Oops! Turns out that it was a clever phishing scheme piggybacked onto a legitimate PayPal page. The next morning I received an e-mail from my bank's fraud detection service questioning three charges that were made as I slept, immediately after my fateful PayPal update. I called my bank, cancelled my Get Rolling credit card account, and waited a week for my new card.

Bad Timing {-o

My other Web site, CASkating.com, is also a victim in this story, wiped off the face of the Web by my own service provider. A day before that happened, I received the first notification that the site was suspended due to a credit card charge back. (I had to research the meaning of charge back, which is a reversal of a payment card transaction initiated by the consumer.) It was truly a shock when the word deleted appeared in an e-mail a day later- despite the fact that I successfully logged in and changed my auto payment account to the new credit card a month before by following its explicit written instructions. More innocence.

My July credit card statements (one for the old and one for the new) verify my payment of the annual domain hosting fee for CASkating. The old account statement shows that transaction was cancelled and transferred to the new account. My guess is that the timing of the cancelled and transferred payment resulted in the suspension.

Thanks to technology, Liz at Get Rolling dot com will never rest in peace.

So dear reader, I apologize if you have ever received a spam from my beloved old e-mail address, I apologize if you receive a future spam, and I apologize if www.CASkating.com has not been restored to full functionality by the time you read this.

Oh yes, I also apologize for publishing my first rant.

Editor's note: Most credit companies and banks list an e-mail address for their security teams and want to know about these types of activities. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) also has an e-mail address, web site, and toll-free number to which you can report phishing and other scam attempts.

I routinely forward these types of e-mails to both the institution being spoofed and the FTC (spam@uce.gov) when I receive them. Also, see <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft> or call 1-877-IDTHEFT for more information from the FTC about this issue.

Associate Editor's note: Origin of the word 'spam' in e-mails? Some say it's from an old Monty Python routine in which customers in a restaurant that serve the mystery meat, Spam, in every dish would call out 'Spam' over and over, drowning out another's customer request for a meal. See [Wiki article](#).



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President's Message



by [Ann Adams](#)

EBSTC president

Greetings, fellow East Bay members. And a happy 2009 to you.

Recently, **Richard Mateosian** — Berkeley chapter President, nominating committee member for East Bay, Touchstone competition organizer and general all-around volunteer stalwart — wrote on the STC president's discussion list that Berkeley has adopted "recession pricing."

Richard's remark got me to thinking: what is our chapter's recession strategy? Well, it's the same as yours.

1. Stay Up to Date

- **Joe Welinske** of WritersUA delivered a great presentation at our December meeting on "Trends, Tools, and Technologies in Software User Assistance". The intrepid DJ Cline drove up from his Silicon Valley haunts and, of course, brought his camera and his reporting skills with him. See his pictures and his account of the meeting on his blog at <http://www.djcline.com/index.php?s=Joe+Welinske>.
- In March, **Liz Fraley** of Single-Sourcing Solutions will talk about "Repurposing Content for Multichannel Publishing." You can get an advance peek at Liz's talk on her blog at <http://www.single-sourcing.com/blog/>.

2. Constantly Sharpen Your Writing Skills

- In November, **Susan Ledford** offered a lively discussion of "Concision and Clarity: Decreasing Word Count and Increasing Readability". She is one of the instructors for a variety of writing classes offered by [Editcetera](#) in Berkeley.

3. Keep That Resume Fresh and Up-to-date

- At our January meeting, **Lynette Phillips**, Director of Resource Management at [TechProse](#), told us what makes her take a second look at a candidate's resume.
- **Joy Montgomery** of [Structural Integrity](#) is available before every meeting, willing to take that all-important outsider's look at your current resume and offer suggestions for improvement.

4. Network, Network, Network

- Depending on whose numbers you believe, anywhere from 30-50% of jobs are filled through personal contacts and are never posted. A chance conversation, contact or lead at an event can unexpectedly result in finding that next job.

Yesterday, my colleague and I were talking about various technical meetings in the area this month. He pointed out that February is the two-year anniversary of our meeting at an internationalization group talk. He impressed me so much with his enthusiasm and his interest in learning about our business that I went back to work the next day and told my boss that I had found our next team member.

Soon after, we had an opening and we gained a technical leader, DITA tools guru, Japanese speaker and translator and all-around great employee. We both agreed that would never have happened if we had not had that first conversation.

- I have been an STC member of the Rochester, Los Angeles and, now, East Bay chapters. The location is unimportant. Every STC meeting that I have ever attended has been a beehive of job leads, advice, insight, mentoring and support.
- I have a friend who started his new job the day after his severance ran out. That job came via a college acquaintance at a New Year's Eve party. He said that his alternative plan for New Years had been to "lie on the couch and feel sorry for myself." So, stay off that couch and come out to the meetings and see what we have to offer. You never know where it will lead.

5. Volunteer

We are blessed with a wonderful group of volunteers, many of whom labor year after year to keep the STC spirit alive in the East Bay.

- **May McCoon** and the members of her College/Career Connection team have been hard at work planning their next moves to interest the upcoming generation in our profession. Contact information is on the EBSTC home page. We will soon post a webpage for the College/Career Connection.
- Looking a little further to the future, **T.R. Girill** continues his work with high school students to improve literacy. Details are at http://ebstc.org/TechLit/TL_Front.html.
- **Jeanie Egbert** does a great job of managing the meeting details with the very helpful staff of the Crow Canyon Country Club. CCCC provides a central location handy to the freeway, easy parking, good food and flexibility in meeting rooms that makes them our continued choice as a reliable venue. Jeanie also keeps you informed of upcoming meetings via our mailing list. Please contact any of the [leadership](#) if you are not on her list.
- **Gina Gotsill** is new to our chapter and she has jumped in with both feet. Not only is she this year's Secretary, she has been responsible for two recent meeting programs and has also provided some great goodies courtesy of TechProse. (Love that handy tape measure!)
- **Joe Humbert** is our Treasurer (again/still), Webmaster, membership chair, assistant newsletter editor, and all-around rock. He really makes the chapter work. He and **Alliene Turner**, our newsletter editor, have the unenviable job of getting me to write this letter on time. In spite of their best efforts, alas, they have not been successful, so any delay in this month's newsletter is directly attributable to me.
- We are in great need of a program chair for this year. This is a good excuse to approach someone who is doing cutting-edge work, get acquainted and ask him to speak at one of our meetings. I have held the job for the last two years and have enjoyed the opportunity to get to know a variety of interesting people.

The duties involve asking people if they would be free to make a presentation on the meeting nights, working with them to define a topic, coordinating the write-up for the meeting and - very important - remembering to bring the projector. If you would be willing to take on this very

important function, please contact me directly at ahadams10@yahoo.com and I can fill you in on more details.

Final Words

- Don't forget to renew your membership. We currently have 97 members. We hope to retain everyone and maybe even grow. We know that pocketbooks are squeezed this year, but please don't fail to make the investment in yourself. To join or renew, do so at <http://www.stc.org/membership/join01.asp> .
- If you have any articles that you would like to contribute to our next newsletter, contact our managing editor, Alliene Turner (hairston.turner@gmail.com). Deadline is February 2, 2009.
- The Yahoo! Groups discussion board is available to our members. This is a forum for you to share your ideas and concerns. To sign up, click the [East Bay STC Network](#) link in the upper right corner on the home page of the website.
- We are always looking for volunteers. Check out the openings by clicking on the [Volunteers](#) link in the left sidebar of the website's home page.

This month's AARP Magazine has a great quote from Franklin Roosevelt: "We now realize as we have never realized before our interdependence on each other; that we can not merely take but we must give as well."

Together we can all get through this. See you next time.

Ann

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Editor's Message

by [Alliene Turner](#)



Alliene is an EBSTC member and long-time East Bay resident.

I'd like to extend my best wishes to everyone for the coming year. This issue of the *Devil Mountain Views* (DMV) contains an eclectic mix of articles and a book review that I hope you find both amusing and helpful. [Susan Moxley](#) did a great job editing the articles, and [Joe Humbert](#) published them in our award-winning newsletter format.

[Paul Mueller](#), from the Houston STC chapter, shares with us the path that took him from IT developer to technical communicator. Editors will be heartened to know that an editor was instrumental in this transition.

[Adrienne Tange](#), EBSTC President-Elect and co-owner of Write on Time along with Melody Brumis, offers as a regular DMV feature tips that she and Melody have picked up as new business owners. This edition they share tips for getting over sales rejections.

[Liz Miller](#), EBSTC Member, shares the perils of being sucked into phishing and other e-mail and Internet scams. A word to the wise just can't be repeated too often.

[Sri Kumari](#), a technical writer in India, reviews a book circulating in India now that tells us why Indian English (Indlish) sentence structure uses syntax such as "I am having a headache." I think you'll find this book review both amusing and interesting.

Next DMV deadline is **February 2, 2009**. Send your articles or ideas for articles to me at hairston.turner@gmail.com. ▲

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Chapter Meeting Information

Upcoming Meetings

Attending meetings is a great way to learn new things and connect with technical writers around the East Bay.

East Bay programs are usually held at Crow Canyon Country Club in San Ramon. For details on meeting location and reservations, see the [meetings page](#) on the chapter website.

January 8, 2009

"A Recruiter's Point of View on the Technical Communications Market" by Lynette Phillips

The tightening job market has left many technical communicators looking for answers to what the future — or at least 2009 — will hold.

Lynette will share her thoughts on how the economy is affecting the technical communications industry and what professionals can do in this market. Lynette will provide her insight into how to best present your resume to recruiters during these tough times. She will also offer tips on how to network, interview, and brush up your skills. There will be time to ask questions, so bring a few to ask this knowledgeable technical communications professional.

Speaker [Lynette Phillips](#) has been a recruiter at [TechProse](#) for the past 14 years.

February 5, 2009

"What's Next, Doc? Glimpsing the Opportunity Beyond the Impasse" by Andrew Davis

If you're feeling insecure about your professional prospects, you're in good company. The world has changed and it's high time to face facts: most high-tech technical communicators have become commodities, purveyors of expensive and increasingly unvalued services.

Globalization, a shrinking economy, impatient customers, and increasingly lean, "do-more-with-less" companies are now the norm. Especially in high-tech, product quality deteriorates but users seem to care only about initial cost. Meanwhile, technical communicators have become passive and

disengaged from their audience, their compensation rates are trending downward, job security has become a joke, and true professional advancement is rare. Job satisfaction is the exception rather than the rule.

What to do? Bluntly, technical communicators must create profits. If what you do doesn't make your employer or client money — lots of it, quickly, and with minimal friction (i.e., effort on their part) — your future's bleak. Contrast this with the recent past, when saving companies money (for example, with online-only deliverables, single sourcing, and structured authoring) or improving customer satisfaction (for example, with more accurate, clear, complete, or accessible content) alone were sufficient hiring justifications. You now have to do all three: be profitable, efficient, and helpful.

My view is that high-tech technical communicators' best option is to apply their skills to other industries and focus on helping customers generate profits. I don't have many specific answers to the 'where from here' question, but hope to catalyze (with insights, anecdotes, hope and, yes, fear) a productive discussion about how to respond to the marketplace's challenges.

Speaker **Andrew Davis** runs Synergistech Communications, a recruiting firm that since 1995 has matched talented technical communicators with staff and contract opportunities in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Andrew is a former Technical Writer of system administration and software developer documentation for companies such as Oracle (documenting relational databases on minicomputers), IBM (UNIX hypertext authoring tools), Informix (Windows database tools), Network Equipment Technologies (PBXs and routers), and Verity (enterprise text search tools). He's well-connected in Silicon Valley's software and telecommunications documentation communities. He also recruits technical trainers and instructional designers, medical writers, and user experience (UX) professionals.

Synergistech seeks to be the ultimate transparent, trustworthy, targeted search firm. It focuses only on technical communications opportunities, discloses full details about its (very modest) markup, provides detailed descriptions of its clients' requirements and preferences, and keeps applicants apprised of their current status -- the bad news as well as the good. Synergistech has a well-deserved reputation as the technical communicator's ally, so even if Andrew can't find you the job or contract of your dreams, encourages jobseekers and hiring managers alike to read and heed the advice shared at its site, www.synergistech.com.

Synergistech is currently doing on-demand recruiting, namely 'speaking when spoken to' rather than marketing its services actively. Most of its efforts are focused on developing a web-based job-seeking product for San Francisco Bay

Area technology workers



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Chapter Meeting Report

Past Meeting

This is a report of our December 2008 meeting with Joe Welinske by D.J. Cline.

<http://www.djcline.com/index.php?s=Joe+Welinske>

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Networking

- [Northern California STC Chapters](#)
- [East Bay STC Network \(Yahoo! Groups\)](#)
- [Professional Development SIG](#)

Northern California STC Chapters



There are five active Northern California STC chapters. Each chapter meets on a different Wednesday or Thursday so you can attend all the meetings. Contact the respective presidents for more information or visit the chapter website.

Wednesdays	Chapter	President
Week 2	Berkeley	Richard Mateosian
Week 3	San Francisco	Gilbert Gonzalez
Thursdays	Chapter	President
Week 1	East Bay	Helen Cheung
Week 3	North Bay	Chris Muntzer / Michael Meyer
Week 4	Silicon Valley	DJ Cline

East Bay STC Network



Connect with your fellow East Bay members by joining this Yahoo! Groups network.

Voice your opinions and your ideas for making this Chapter more responsive to your needs. The more members who sign up the greater our network will be, the better our Chapter will be.

For more information and to join, click [here](#).

Professional Development SIG

The EBSTC Professional Development SIG supports and encourages our personal evolutions as we transform ourselves to remain marketable.

Monthly Meetings

It's easy to remember when we meet because it's exactly a week after our chapter meeting.

What	EBSTC Professional Development SIG meeting
When	Second Thursday of the month at 11:45 A.M.
Where	Willow Tree Restaurant, 6513 Regional Street, Dublin, 925-838-9111



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Congratulations to Our New and Senior Members

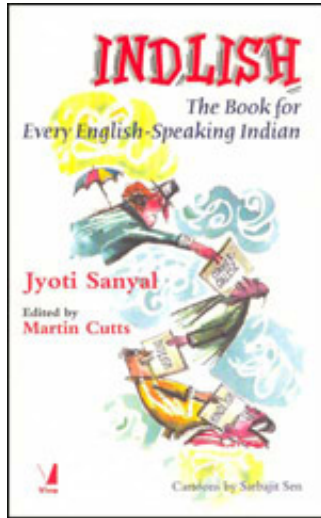


Welcome to our new, transfer, and reinstated members! We hope you can come meet us at a Chapter meeting.

Pamela G. Clark
David M. Humphrey
Kathleen S. Wills-Gidelatorre
Joseph Aquino Aseo
Trason Young

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Book Review: *INDLISH: The Book for Every English-Speaking Indian*



by [Sri Kumari](#)

Sri Kumari is a technical writer with Tektronix Engineering and Development India (Pvt) Ltd.

INDLISH: The Book for Every English-Speaking Indian

by Jyoti Sanyal
edited by Martin Cutts
cartoons by Sarbajit Sen

Available through [Viva Group](#) or from [Amazon](#).

At Last, a Book on What Ails English in India!

Why do we speak the way we do?

Why do we switch to the passive voice in English, although we keep to the active in our mother tongues?

Why are our letters long and wordy and yet can't get the point across?

Why are our textbooks so wordy and yet so vacuous?

Why do we dread reading and filling up official or commercial documents?

The list of such questions is endless. You'll find the answers to many of them in *INDLISH: The Book for Every English-Speaking Indian*, written by Jyoti Sanyal, a veteran journalist and former Dean of Asian College of Journalism, Bangalore.

INDLISH traces the history of English in India from the time of the British merchants of the East India Company-and the strange *khichri* (or *hodge-podge*, in American English) it became with *officialese*, *commercialese*, and *legalese* as its main ingredients, garnished with mistranslated idioms from our regional languages.

I have been a technical writer for eight years, and I think everyone in the technical communication profession should own a copy of *INDLISH* as a guide to clarity and precision in writing.

How the Book Addresses Common Language Mistakes

INDLISH identifies and addresses most common mistakes. Replete with everyday examples and clever cartoons, this collection of articles initially published in *The Statesman* newspaper makes interesting reading. You can open the book at any chapter and start reading.

The book emphasizes clear and concise writing by shunning needless words, using familiar words instead of the Latinate, using the active voice, and conjuring pictures with lively verbs, instead of dragging in strings of nouns and prepositions.

This book is an excellent guide and reference for all forms of communication-written or spoken-for amateurs or professionals. The articles are grouped into seven chapters:

Chapter 1: Making a Botch of Writing

This chapter discusses how to avoid clutter in writing. Here is one example:

If in our country, we are to undertake programmes designed for the protection of forests and thus improve our wood resources, the basic need is to make available to scientists, industrialists, educationists and environmentalists involved in activities related to wood and wood-products, information on scientific techniques for rational and economic utilisation of timber resource . . . It is hoped that this publication will meet the long-felt need toward achieving this objective.

Chapter 2: The letters we write

This chapter cites conventional openings. Sanyal asks: Can't we do better than start a letter with what no addressee needs to be told?

Dear Sir — We have your letter of July 21 and note that it is your intention to include in your book on modern English prose style, to be published by . . . under the title . . . a few brief passages from our . . .

Chapter 3: John Company Baboo as hack

The author quotes numerous news reports and editorials to show how journalists use certain words like a mantra. Here's how they misuse the word *involve*:

As the political scenario gets murkier, several ministers, senior party leaders and their kins[sic] are getting more and more involved in the cable war and other shady deals . Mr. P--'s son's involvement in several land deals in Saurashtra is well known.

Mr. S--, a known underworld don and an independent municipal councillor then, was indicted by the Srikrishna Commission for his involvement in the 1992-93 Mumbai riots.

For each sample, *INDLISH* offers a simpler version that sparkles with clarity and precision.

Chapter 4: Usage Indlish style

How often have we heard the following expressions?

I am having a headache.

Why don't you give them one piece of cake?

Tell me no? / say no?

INDLISH traces the origins of such expressions, and explains why they are wrong.

Chapter 5: Those troublesome midgets

This chapter deals with the misuse of tiny words such as *also*, *both*, *even*, and *only*. The book shows how misplacing them can alter meaning.

He is an only child.

He is only a child.

There is a garage on both sides of the street.

Chapter 6: Mother tongue, other tongue

This chapter presents the author's altogether original and insightful explanation about where and how English behaves *unlike* Indian languages. Indian languages, he cautions us, are extremely flexible in syntax-unlike English, which has a rigid syntax. We are therefore prone to errors of syntax:

Wanted: a piano for a lady with mahogany legs.

Chapter 7: Your reader deserves better

The author discusses good and bad writing, and suggests how we can make writing lively by importing literary devices-chiefly dialogue. He argues the case for measured but detailed description, and pleads for using words to paint pictures. ▲

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STC Information

Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.

For information about STC, go to the [Society's web page](#).

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DMV Basics

The East Bay Chapter newsletter is named after a local landmark, Mount Diablo, in Northern California. With a few exceptions, all distances in California are measured from that point, called the Mount Diablo Meridian. The East Bay Chapter serves the cities along the 680 corridor and the east/west part of 580. City-wise it's Vallejo to Pleasanton, Tracy to Oakland and Fremont. We have members from each of those places.

PUBLICATION POLICY

We are always interested in sharing technical communication trends and information with our readers. For details, contact the [Managing Editor](#).

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Devil Mountain Views is published bimonthly, five times a year (January, March, May, September, November) with occasional e-news.

ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Jan/Feb 2009 issue – December 2, 2008
Mar/Apr 2009 issue – February 2, 2009
May/Jun 2009 issue – April 2, 2009
Sept/Oct 2009 issue – August 2, 2009
Nov/Dec 2009 issue – October 2, 2009

WRITER'S TEMPLATE

If you are submitting an article, please download our [template](#) to use as a guideline for writing your article.

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MAILING ADDRESS

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DMV History **Note:** We will update this section as our chapter archives are updated.

- Awards given in one year reflect the work of the editors from the previous year.
- In 2009, the chapter changed their fiscal year to coincide with the calendar year.
- If you were a managing editor during a time frame that is missing from the history, please [let us know](#).

Year	Notes
2009	Managing editor: Alliene Turner
2007–2008	Managing editors: David Eicher (Sept 2008), Joseph Humbert (January 2008), Alliene Turner (May 2008) Award of Excellence in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
2006–2007	Managing editor: David Eicher Award of Merit in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
2004–2005	Managing editor: Becky Rude Award of Excellence in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
2003–2004	Managing editor: Becky Rude Guest managing editor: Gwaltney Mountford Award of Excellence in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
2002–2003	Managing editor: Ashwini Tharval Best of Show, Most Improved, Distinguished Technical Communication awards in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
2001–2002	Managing editors: Ashwini Tharval and Becky Rude. The newsletter is launched online in Web format. Award of Merit in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
1999–2001	Managing editor: Teresa Washburn Award of Excellence in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
1997–1999	Managing editor: Kelly Walker Award of Excellence in the STC International Newsletter Competition.

1996–1997	Managing editor: Melody Brumis Newsletter name changed to <i>Devil Mountain Views</i> . Susan Moxley won the contest held to rename the newsletter. In July 1996, a spoof issue called <i>East Bay Flame</i> is published.
1995–1996	Managing editor: Bruce Robinson An offshoot, the <i>Twig</i> , is published by President Gwaltney Mountford to supplement the <i>East Bay Log</i> .
1994	Newsletter name changed to <i>East Bay Log</i> .
1962	The <i>Pacifica News</i> was published in the fall in the year the <i>Pacifica</i> chapter was founded. (The chapter was renamed to <i>East Bay</i> in 1982 under President T.R. Girill.) ▲

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120 X 60 = \$50

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Payment: Payment must be received by the [East Bay Chapter treasurer](#) before the ad is run. Payment can be made by check.

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The second table lists the issue date, the author(s) for the featured article(s), and the article name.

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- [Sept 2001 - June 2002](#)
- [2000](#)
- [1999](#)

Date	Author	Article Name
Current Issue: January/February 2009	Paul Mueller Adrienne Tange Liz Miller Sri Kumari	<i>The Yellow Brick Road to Technical Communication</i> <i>Write on Time: Tips to Get Over Sales Rejection Fast</i> <i>Why Did You Spam Me?</i> <i>Book Review: Indlish — The Book for Every English Speaking Indian</i>
November/December 2008	Karen Reiser Louellen S. Coker Melody Brumis Bruce A. Walat	<i>That or Who? Knowing When 'Who' is More Appropriate</i> <i>Creating a Professional Portfolio</i> <i>Write on Time: Marketing Your Business</i> <i>Now, More Than Ever, STC is Important to Your Career</i>
September/October 2008	Karen Reiser Steven Oppenheimer Adrienne Tange T.R. Girill Gwaltney Mountford Patrick Lufkin Patrick Lufkin	<i>That or Which? Don't Misuse These Relative Pronouns</i> <i>Patent Careers for Technical Writers, Engineers, Scientists, and Medical Professionals - Part 2</i> <i>Write on Time: Tips for Small Business Success</i> <i>Introducing Science Teacher-Interns to Technical Writing</i> <i>Get in the Running 2008</i> <i>Call for Entries: 2008-09 Northern California Technical Communication Competition</i> <i>Call for Judges: 2008-09 Northern California Technical Communication Competition</i>

May/June 2008	<p>Laura Dahlinger T.R. Girill Meryl Natchez</p> <p>Steven Oppenheimer Danett Weinshelbaum</p>	<p><i>The Lone Writer as Project Manager</i> <i>Literacy Outreach by E-Mail</i> <i>TechProse Still a Resource for Bay Area Consultants and Companies</i> <i>Patent Careers for Technical Writers, Engineers, Scientists, and Medical Professionals - Part 1</i> <i>Garden Solace</i></p>
March/April 2008	<p>Laura Dahlinger and Josette Schaber Linda Cunningham Jane Olivera Andrew Davis</p>	<p><i>Transitioning from Technical Communicator to Project Manager</i> <i>Gems from the Writing Boot Camp</i> <i>Windows on a Macintosh Computer</i> <i>Technical Communications Internships - What, Why, Where, and How?</i></p>
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May/June 2002	Don Huntington John Gallagher Ashwini Tharval & Dipali Godbole Scott Wallace Becky Rude	<i>It Takes a Sexually Stimulated Man...</i> <i>Cross-Cultural Interactions</i> <i>Home Away from Home</i> <i>Writing Effective Online Copy</i> <i>Spotlight on Wallace Clements</i>
March/April 2002	Faraz Hoodbhoj Roz Rogoff Dan Day Ashwini Tharval Scott Wallace Adrienne Tange	<i>3G for Everyone</i> <i>Accessibility = Usability</i> <i>Characterizing Materials on the Nanoscale</i> <i>Technology Unraveled</i> <i>Web Usability</i> <i>Spotlight on Coralyn K. McGregor</i>
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September/October 2001 (1.3 MB PDF)	Don Huntington Ashwini Tharval Patrick Lufkin Patricia Smith Rosalind Rogoff Richard Lederer	<i>Grasping the Essentials in Writing for an Online Audience</i> <i>An Introduction to XML</i> <i>Touchstone 2001 Seeks Entries, Volunteers</i> <i>Joys and Pitfalls of Contracting and Consulting</i> <i>Reinventing the Wheel</i> <i>Devouring Words</i>
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September/October 1999 (1.3 MB PDF - Not available)	Jane C. Frazier	<i>Employees and Business Process: The Point of the Shared View</i>
July/August 1999 (583 KB PDF)	Lu Rehling Lenore Weiss Alice Gallagher Rosalind Rogoff Anahita Wager Smith	<i>It's Our Future, So Let's Make the Most of It</i> <i>Creating Partner Documentation</i> <i>Today's Technical Communications Job Market --</i> <i>Answers to Some Frequently Asked Questions</i> <i>Technical Training: Help Authoring Tools</i> <i>Using Knowledge Management to Organize and Deliver Information</i>