

ABOUT STC



Greetings from the Society for Technical Communication (STC)! This brochure introduces STC, explains the services it provides, and suggests how members can get the most out of their involvement with the Society.



SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

What Is STC?

STC is a professional association. It serves individuals in a variety of disciplines whose work involves taking technical information from experts and making it available and understandable to those who need that information. STC comprises more than 20,000 members worldwide.

Many STC members call themselves technical writers or editors, but the term “technical communicator” encompasses much more. Job titles held by STC members include:

- usability specialist
- documentation manager
- information developer
- documentation specialist
- Web designer
- technical illustrator
- manager of a technical communication department
- teacher of technical communication
- technical translator

Members of STC work in many different industries for organizations ranging from Fortune 500 companies to small start-ups. Many STC members are managers and supervisors, and about 25 percent are independent contractors and consultants. STC also attracts educators and students from the more than 180 colleges and universities that offer programs in technical communication.

Organizational Structure

STC members come together to share information, network, publish, and conduct competitions and conferences, with the goal of improving the arts and sciences of technical communication. The Society is organized on three levels.

Chapter Level

Most STC members belong to a local STC chapter assigned by the STC office. Resources and services provided by chapters include employment fairs, newsletters, Web sites, seminars, and workshops. Chapters have the most up-to-date information on the local job market and the needs of area technical communicators. Volunteer (elected and appointed) leaders oversee the activities of chapters.



Regional Level

Each STC member (and chapter) is assigned to one of eight regions worldwide. Each region elects a director-sponsor, who sits on the STC board of directors and helps coordinate the activities among chapters in that region.

Society Level

On the Society (international) level, STC's board of directors establishes policy and oversees the activities of the chapters and regions. The STC office handles all the administrative and business matters of the Society. To reach the STC office, contact (703) 522-4114 or stc@stc.org.

Membership

Grades of Membership

First-time members of STC start out either as members or student members. The grade of senior member is conferred automatically on each member after five years.

Ranks of Membership

After ten years of membership, senior members are eligible to be nominated to the rank of associate fellow. After two years as an associate fellow, a member becomes eligible for the rank of fellow. This rank is the highest that the Society bestows on its members. The STC board of directors votes on all nominations for associate fellows and fellows.

Dues

STC dues are payable at the end of each calendar year, regardless of the time of year when the member joins. However, this does not mean that members who join mid-year get less than a year's worth of value from their dues.

New members joining on or after July 1 (but before October 1) will be billed for only half of the following year's dues. New members joining on or after October 1 are considered paid in full through December 31 of the following year.

STC members receive a notice when it is time to renew their membership (late November). All membership renewals are due at the end of the year.

Getting the Most Out of STC

STC members can maximize the benefits of membership in many ways:

Access the Web Site

The STC Web site, www.stc.org, contains information for the general public as well as a special members-only section. Many of the STC benefits, and much of the information described in this brochure, are available through the members-only section of the Web site.

Read and Submit to *Intercom*

STC's award-winning monthly magazine provides practical examples and applications of technical communication.

Intercom's feature articles help readers keep pace with the rapidly changing technology of the profession. The magazine's regular columns address specialized sectors of technical communication such as editing, Web design, and independent consulting.



The Society Pages inform members of Society news and functions. Feature articles from past issues can be searched and viewed in the members-only section of the STC Web site.

Intercom also offers technical communicators an opportunity to publish articles in a respected industry periodical. *Intercom* encourages STC members to submit articles on topics of interest to technical communicators. Guidelines for submitting to *Intercom* can be found on the STC Web site.

Read and Submit to *Technical Communication*

Technical Communication, the Society's award-winning quarterly journal, publishes articles about the practical application of technical communication theory and serves as a common arena for discussion by practitioners. *Technical*

Communication focuses on both quantitative and qualitative research while showcasing the work of some of the field's most noteworthy writers. The journal's aim is to establish a core body of knowledge essential to the theory and practice of technical communication.



Technical Communication welcomes submissions from STC members. All submissions are subject to peer reviews by industry experts. Published articles are eligible for STC's prestigious Frank R. Smith outstanding journal article award, which honors the best articles published each year.

Guidelines for submitting to *Technical Communication* can be found in each issue of the journal or on the STC Web site. Feature articles from past issues can be searched and viewed in the members-only section of the STC Web site.

Participate in Chapter Activities

Becoming active in a local STC chapter is one of the best ways for members to network and learn about the technical communication industry in their area. Within a chapter, members can volunteer their time on newsletters, Web sites, and other projects; organize meetings and other events; and take part in educational presentations. Each chapter is governed by an administrative council elected by members of the chapter. Serving on the chapter's administrative council provides even more opportunities for networking with peers on the local level. The STC office automatically assigns each member a chapter; however, members may choose to be part of another chapter if there is more than one in their area. To search a database of the more than 150 STC chapters, please visit the STC Web site.



Attend STC's Annual Conference

STC's annual conference is the largest conference in the world specifically for technical communicators. The conference includes more than 200 educational presentations, known as "technical sessions." The conference also offers opportunities for networking and a chance to view vendor exhibits and displays of award-winning entries from STC's competitions.

Getting the Most Out of STC

Enter Competitions

To encourage and reward excellence in technical communication, STC sponsors competitions for both professionals and students at the chapter and international levels. They include competitions for technical art, technical publications, and online communication.

Competitions offer two ways for members to get involved: They may submit an entry, or volunteer to help organize or judge the competition. Contest winners get exposure in STC publications; judges and volunteers get to examine a wide array of outstanding examples of technical communication.

Join Special Interest Groups

STC special interest groups (SIGs) are made up of members who share common interests or specializations within the field of technical communication. There are nearly two dozen Society-level SIGs, including those devoted to indexing, information design, online communication, and marketing communication. SIG activities include publishing newsletters, developing articles for Society publications, conducting surveys, and presenting seminars. In addition to Society-level SIGs, which can include members from around the world, some chapters form local SIGs. For a list of Society-level SIGs, contact information for SIG managers, and a SIG sign-up form, please visit the STC Web site.



Network, Network, Network!

STC activities provide excellent networking opportunities for technical communicators. Members may hear about their next job at a chapter meeting or meet their next co-worker at the STC annual conference. In addition, writing for *Intercom*, *Technical Communication*, or an STC chapter newsletter is an excellent way for members to build a reputation within the profession.



Other Benefits of STC

STC members can take advantage of these additional benefits.

Employment Resources

Technical communicators looking for their next job and managers trying to hire technical communicators can both use the STC Web site. Managers who wish to post job openings do not need access to the members-only section of the site—anyone can post a job. However, job hunters need to access the members-only section to search the hundreds of job openings there. Searches can be done according to geography and salary range.

Many STC chapters also offer employment information. (To find links to the Web sites of local STC chapters, visit the Chapters section of the STC Web site.) In addition, STC hosts an employment booth at its annual conference.

Scholarships

STC awards fourteen scholarships to full-time undergraduate and graduate students to encourage future technical communicators in their studies and to promote growth in the profession. To read more about these scholarships, please see the Grants and Loans section of the STC Web site.

Research Grants

STC offers scientific, literary, and educational grants to advance the theory and practice of technical communication. To read more about research grants, please see the Grants and Loans section of the STC Web site.



Networking



Other Benefits of STC

Insurance Options

Individual insurance can be expensive. However, STC members have insurance options. Several plans are available at association rates, which may be lower than those of many comparable individual plans. These plans are available in many states from the Mutual of Omaha Companies. For more information, please call (800) 223-6927 and use reference #AG5967.

Specialty Gifts

The Society offers a variety of products featuring the STC logo that make great personal or business gifts. Items include the STC compu-backpack, travel mug, and sport shirt.

Salary Survey

Published annually, the STC Salary Survey contains salary information from technical writers and editors. The information is broken down by gender, education level, employment level, age, years of experience, and geographic area of professionals. This survey includes information from members in the United States and Canada; it can be found in the members-only section of the STC Web site.



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