

Minutes for Quarterly Membership Meeting of the STC Technical Editing SIG
July 25, 2007

News and notes

- SIG runs January to December—different from most SIGs, which run mid-year to mid-year.
- Plan to present a topic of interest each quarter.
- Pat and Michelle will be posting positions for SIG leaders.
- Update on conference, especially the editing progression. Send in topics for next year, or let Michelle know if you want to be a presenter.
- Next meeting will be sometime in the fall.

Presenter

Gail Wolff

Editing the work of nonwriters

Nonwriters are often hired for reasons other than writing skills, for example, consultants. Often an editor is questioned about ability to edit without subject knowledge.

- Build relationships by describing your educational background, which provides specialized knowledge similar to what the nonwriters provide, and by supplying helpful materials.
- Consider a supplemental guide to a company style guide to help with highly specific issues.
- Distribute monthly e-mails or newsletters—humor and grammar.
- Provide a short, easy-to-use spell-check list.

Build trust with onscreen tools, techniques, and e-mail messages.

Nonwriters often think that knowledge of topic outranks ability to write about it.

- Show that changes are knowledge based, not preferential.
- Show that good writing makes the writer look better, more knowledgeable.
- Show examples of what they did right.
- Choose battles carefully.

Good writing and consistency affects the meaning of the message.

- Show original and edited versions in some cases to show how clarity or meaning has been improved.
- Sometimes present comments as a reader rather than as an editor. “I had difficulty understanding this, and I thought your readers might too.”

The company owns the document. Not “owned” by writer or editor.