Intranet Solutions – Delivering information – enhancing communication

The New Zealand Conference for Information Developers

Thursday 2 to Friday 3 September, 2010

James Cook Hotel, Wellington, New Zealand

The Technical Communicators Association of New Zealand is the professional association for technical communicators and information developers in New Zealand.

We'd like to invite you to our 2010 Conference, which has the theme of *Intranet solutions: Delivering information – enhancing communication.*

TCANZ conferences offer a great opportunity to meet other professionals, share ideas and build networks. Our presenters will use intranets as their main focus but will address a wide range of issues - helpful to anyone who has to:

- Develop high-quality information products, intranet or web content
- Manage projects
- Choose and use tools
- Deal with version and quality control
- Wrestle information from subject matter experts
- Consider the implications of wikis and Google to our profession, to name just a few issues.

On Wednesday, 1 September, we are running two half-day workshops facilitated by two of our presenters - Ann Rockley and Patrick Hofmann.

Please note these dates in your diary and make sure you tell your friends and colleagues!

For further details, please visit the TCANZ website: www.tcanz.org.nz.

Steve Moss
Vice President
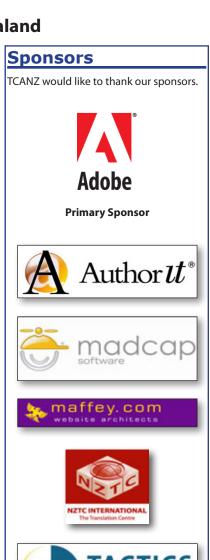**Technical Communicators Association of New Zealand**

Venue

The conference will be held at the James Cook Hotel, 147 The Terrace, Wellington.

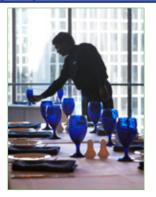For further details, please visit the TCANZ *conference venue page*

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Plan to take advantage of our Earlybird registrations and save!
For conference programme details and registration visit the TCANZ Website
http://www.tcanz.org.nz/

Pre-conference cocktail party

Come and meet the speakers, your fellow delegates and the TCANZ committee on Wedneday 1st September. You can also register for the conference to miss the rush on Thursday morning. This party is hosted by TCANZ and there is no additional charge for conference delegates.

Conference dinner

Extend your networking and relax over dinner on Thursday evening starting at 7.00pm. Please check the conference programme for further information.
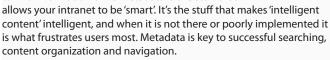
Conference topics

Keynote Presentations

Thursday 2nd September

Metadata – Key to a successful intranet with Ann Rockley

Your intranet is only as good as someone's ability to find information on it. Metadata is the stuff that allows your intranet to be 'smart'. It's the stuff that makes 'intelligent content' intelligent, and when it is not there or poorly implemented it is what frustrates users most. Metadata is key to successful searching, content organization and navigation.

This session will introduce you to the concepts of good metadata and the methodologies for developing it. It will provide tips and tricks for creating your metadata strategy and it will help you to develop processes to make it easy for your content contributors to use the metadata you have created.

- What is metadata?
- What is a taxonomy?
- How do I create and manage metadata?

Friday 3rd September

The evolution of an intranet – an AMI Insurance case study with Kaye Churches

How user-centred practices such as usability testing, structured interviews and improved information design has helped AMI develop their intranet to better meet the needs of their staff.

This case study follows the journey of the recent redesign of the AMI intranet to make better use of the homepage, improve the information delivered in the contact directory and implement better information design practices within a distributed editing environment.

- How did we engage our staff?
- How do you find out what staff really want?
- How do you sell usability to the business and the development team?
- How do you gather user feedback - and use it?

Building a better intranet with Rachael Fogarty

This is the story of our intranet – how we built it, how we involved others, how we spent so little, and how we got a great result. It explores what 'great' means, because what your comms team considers great is probably not what your IT manager would think about.

It'll cover how and when people started to get excited about the intranet and what it could do – and maybe challenge the idea that you can orchestrate any 'buy-in' or make anyone read your content (regardless of how well you've written it).

- What makes an intranet great?

- What can and should you control?

- Why is good writing the starting point for great content, and not the end point?

Ideas Market

After lunch on Thursday we have our Ideas Market. We position between 5 and 8 presenters or 'activators' around a large room; their role is to promote and activate discussion on a particular topic. Each activator presents their ideas individually to the group of conference delegates that gathers around them.

Activators prepare for their presentation by listing their main ideas on a flip chart, and after describing their ideas they invite input from other delegates. They then record, on a second flip chart, significant points that evolve. Conference delegates stay with one activator for as long as they wish and then move on to another activator, listening and contributing to the discussions that evolve at each 'market stall'.

An Ideas Market provides a great opportunity for interaction between all participants, activators and delegates. Delegates can 'dip' into a number of discussions and/or spend more time on something of particular interest.

Visual and graphic design essentials with Patrick Hofmann

In my past usability research on reading and navigating content, whether print or online, internet or intranet, the number one comment from users is "It's too busy."

Particularly for word-heavy intranet content, our users are fed up with having to scan, read, and delve endlessly through heaps of content, often unable to find what they were looking for.

How do we prevent this from happening? What design choices do we have up our sleeves to help make our content easier to scan, read, and navigate?

This presentation will address my most recent design projects and usability research to answer these questions. It will help identify specific scenarios where the simplest of design choices have revitalised or saved a product, from being downright unusable to remarkably user friendly.

- How best can we lay out search results to help users scan more effectively?

- What visual cues can we use to guide our users to their desired destination? How can we optimise those cues?

- How do we convey the overall structure of our intranet and internet-based information in a concise, usable navigational method?

- How can we promote and visualise groups and pathways from a seemingly endless set of content?

- What graphic design methods can we employ to make our information easy to read, scan, and digest?

Attracting users to the intranet with David Frank

What a technical writer has learned—from marketing, copy writing, and interviewing—about motivating people to read and take action.

Application to intranets is alluded to, but attendees will likely see potential themselves.

The need to offer value and draw customers/ users

- People need motivating – not information machines

- Marketing – finding out needs and how to meet them with a product or service

- Sales – persuading people with those needs to buy product

- Genuine value vs. manipulation and scams; these include:

    - Buyer's resistance vs user's resistance to change

    - Example of getting staff to use a wiki for company information

How to draw your target audience into your writing

- Benefits before features

- Curiosity/ provocativeness

- Relevance to their needs

- Going beyond usability to motivatibility

- Natural conversational language – the 'bar stool test'

- Trim redundant verbiage

- Reiterate important things in different words

- Specific vs general

- Use examples, stories

- Clear call to action – the next step

How to find their hidden 'hot buttons'

Be an advocate for the target audience or know someone close, or intimate interviews to uncover hidden motivators:

- Beyond Q & A

- Build trust and empathy – relational

- Make them feel important and talk in terms of their interests – Dale Carnegie

- Like fishing – have to play 'em to land 'em

- Watching emotional states, timing of questions

- Active listening and empathy – principles from counselling

- Put ego and agenda aside

- Looking for what they're not saying

- Open questions vs closed to get real vs 'official' answers

Sponsor/product/service presentation with special guests

Late on Thursday afternoon, we will be running this special short session, intended to give one of our sponsors the opportunity to present their products or services. Come along - you may learn something useful and walk off with a door prize!

Tools for enabling collaboration, management, and delivery of information on the web
with Rowdy Bristol

Rowdy Bristol, Manager of the Technical Communications Department at Gemcom Software, will explain and demonstrate the tools that they use for creating, managing, and delivering content across an intranet.

These tools have enabled software developers, testing engineers, and subject matter experts in many locations around the world to collaborate with technical communicators during prototyping and development of documentation products, as well as a means of delivery of end products to internal customers. Rowdy will share their experiences with these tools, as well as the pros and cons of each.

- What are the tools I would need to deliver and manage information across an intranet?
- What tools do others use?
- How could I use these tools?
- What's good and bad about specific tools?
- How hard are these tools to use?
- What resources would my company need to implement these tools?

Intranet publishing with Drupal—an open-source content management system
with Chris Daish and Matthew Hunt

You don't have to spend a lot of money to have an intranet that supports your internal publication needs. Using real examples, this presentation will show you how the open-source content management system Drupal can support sophisticated and demanding publication workflows, whilst also offering the flexibility to support your wider intranet needs.

- Can open-source software support the demands of my intranet publications workflow?
- Are people using open-source tools for large intranet projects?
- Could an open-source system save time and money while still providing the software support we need for our intranet?

Let's take a wiki for a spin:
Using Confluence wiki at Atlassian
with Sarah Maddox

This presentation is a hands-on demonstration of a wiki as used for an intranet. We use Confluence wiki very actively and creatively at Atlassian, where I work. During this session, we will get acquainted with the wiki, then see how to customise it to suit our needs as technical communicators. I'll also show how we can guide other departments in organising their information and making the best use of the wiki's features. A great aspect of a wiki is the way it gets all people in the company exchanging views and breaks down the communication barriers between management and other employees. We'll see how to publish blog posts and how to manage information overload. It will be fun!

- So, now we have a wiki. Does that even work as an intranet?
- How can the wiki help to get people to use the intranet?
- How can people use the intranet to make themselves heard?
- Why on earth will people ask a technical writer for help with the intranet wiki, and how can we help them?
- How can we keep up to date with what's happening on the wiki and in the company?
- Help, information overload! How can I stay on top of what's happening without drowning in the flood of news?

Video killed the redundant writer
with Grant Mackenzie

Tony Self's presentation at the 2008 TCANZ conference made it clear that whilst reports of the death of the printed help manual are an exaggeration, the internet generation does not use them.

Documentors who wish to reach this audience must employ new tools. The online video has become the learning experience of choice for millions. Technical authors ignore this trend at their peril.

This introductory presentation is for anyone who wants to make online videos but doesn't know where to start.

The presentation will cover:

- Video file types (briefly)
- Video capture and production tools (briefly)
- Planning for a successful video library
- Preparation for capture
- A demonstration of how to capture simple video
- A demonstration of how to upload and share a video to your own web site, to YouTube and to Screencast.com.

TCANZ Sponsoring New Award!

We are pleased to announce that TCANZ is sponsoring the new award for Best Plain English Technical Communicator in the 2010 WriteMark Plain English Awards. This award was created specifically for technical communicators and covers the kinds of print-based documents our members typically write, such as user and operator guides; procedures, health and safety manuals and training documents.

The WriteMark Plain English Awards is a not-for-profit event held annually to celebrate the achievements of government and commercial organisations that try to communicate clearly and honestly with their readers.

The 2010 Awards will be held on 3 September at Parliament Buildings in Wellington. This means that TCANZ conference delegates can be in Wellington for both events.

For entry details and ticket sales please go to www.plainenglishawards.org.nz. The awards are an opportunity for us to celebrate excellence in our profession — we strongly urge you to enter and join us at the Awards ceremony.

Conference speakers

Ann Rockley (keynote)

Ann Rockley is President of The Rockley Group, Inc. She has an international reputation for developing intelligent content management strategies and underlying information architecture. Rockley is a frequent contributor to trade and industry publications and a keynote speaker at numerous conferences in North America and Europe. Ann Rockley has been referred to as a 'luminary' in the content management industry.
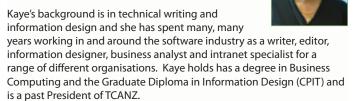
She has been instrumental in establishing the field in online documentation, single sourcing (content reuse), unified content strategies, content management best practices, and intelligent content. Rockley led Content Management Professionals, a member organization that fosters the sharing of content management information, practices, and strategies to a prestigious eContent 100 award in 2005. Ann co-chairs the OASIS DITA for Enterprise Business Documents subcommittee.

Rockley is a Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication and has a Master of Information Science from the University of Toronto. Rockley is the primary author of the new book *DITA 101: Fundamentals of DITA for Authors and Managers* ISBN 978-0-557-07291-0. Rockley is also the author of the best-selling book *Managing Enterprise Content: A Unified Content Strategy* ISBN 0-7357-1306-5.

Kaye Churches (keynote)

Kaye is currently the intranet Content Manager for AMI Insurance based at their Head Office in Christchurch and is passionate about delivering useful and usable information and business tools to her colleagues throughout the country.

Kaye's background is in technical writing and information design and she has spent many, many years working in and around the software industry as a writer, editor, information designer, business analyst and intranet specialist for a range of different organisations. Kaye holds has a degree in Business Computing and the Graduate Diploma in Information Design (CPIT) and is a past President of TCANZ.

Chris Daish

Chris Daish is the Business Development Manager at Catalyst IT (www.catalyst.net.nz). He was previously a communications manager for the E-government Unit, involved in the public launch of the government portal, e-government strategy update and the Web Guidelines. He keeps a keen eye on the world of open source and has organised two highly successful New Zealand Open Source Awards events with Catalyst.

David Frank

David comes out of a broad professional engineering background in telecommunications design, sales, project management, and documentation.In 2000 he stepped-out from Telecom NZ to start a freelance technical writing/ documentation business.

He specialises in the engineering and technology sector, including overseas clients – effectively 'technical copy writing'. This includes white papers, brochures, and sales letters. He also writes content for a variety of web design companies. Out of his experience, he's written a few articles for websites and magazines on sales-effective website content and the perils of 'DIY' website content so prevalent in our NZ cyberspace.

Grant Mackenzie

Grant Mackenzie has been a Technical Author for ten years. Prior to that he has written for Grace magazine, Management, Metro, the New Zealand Herald, the New Zealand Listener, Quote Unquote and the Sunday Star-Times. Insomniacs will welcome news that the Spanish translation of his book the *New Zealand Househusband's Guide to Life* is still available on Amazon.com.

The best idea Grant has ever had was the declaration of Winston Free Zones. He is notable only because Sir Robert Jones once declared on national television (TV1) that he should be horse-whipped.

Matthew Hunt

Matthew Hunt is a Business Analyst at Catalyst IT (www.catalyst.net.nz) with a passion for words and open-source solutions. In the past he has worked as a software engineer, helping to develop internet (and intranet) services and web sites since 1994 - when the web was new! Over the past five years he has changed track to concentrate on documentation and communication.

Patrick Hofmann

Trained as a technical writer and working as a visual interaction designer, Patrick Hofmann has turned into 'a man of few words'. For over fifteen years, this vibrant Canadian has helped clients like Sky, HP, Nokia, Motorola, Philips, FedEx, Logitech, and Netgear improve the usability of their products—often by visualising their online, hardcopy, and interface information.

His award-winning work and undying passion for visual language send him around the world, as he teaches companies how to use pictures to improve communication. Having recently developed the post-graduate Information Design curriculum at CPIT in Christchurch, New Zealand, Patrick now works at Google in Sydney, Australia, and soon hopes to complete his first book on visual instruction.

Rachael Fogarty

Once upon a time, Rachael was a technical writer, working within the communications team of the Land Transport Safety Authority. She was assigned to the project team working to get Land Transport's services online, and added to her geeky HTML and CSS coding knowledge by learning a lot about web standards and web usability. She became an editor/communications advisor when she joined the Office of the Auditor-General in 2004 – and slowly but surely took over the websites and then the intranet. Now she's in the same job, still within the Auditor-General's Reports and Communications Group, but known as the Websites and Publishing Manager.

Rachael is responsible for managing three public websites and an intranet that supports about 400 staff. She is also responsible for the editorial quality of the more than 30 reports that the Auditor-General publishes each year. Three years ago, Rachael completely rebuilt the intranet in four months, for a pittance. And people say it's pretty good.

Rowdy Bristol

Rowdy Bristol is the Manager of the Technical Communications Department of Gemcom Software, an international company providing software to the mining industry. Rowdy has worked as a mining engineer, geologist, and surveyor on mine sites in North America, as well as a mining consultant and software trainer at many mines around the world. He holds degrees in Engineering, Geology, Surveying, and Computer Science.

Sarah Maddox

Sarah Maddox is one of five technical communicators at Atlassian in Sydney, Australia. She's been a technical communicator for ten years or so, working with the usual assortment of tools and methodologies. At the moment, the tool is a wiki called Confluence and the environment is agile. Plus ça change. Sarah writes a blog at ffeathers and lives on a hill amidst the kookaburras and currawongs.

About TCANZ

TCANZ was established in 1997 as the New Zealand Technical Writers Association. In 2002, NZTWA was renamed to TCANZ to reflect the broader role performed by technical communicators.

The objectives of the Association are to:

- Establish a legitimate forum for technical communicators in New Zealand
- Promote technical communication as a profession
- Promote technical communication training within tertiary institutions in New Zealand.

Our members are people who are involved in paper-based or online documentation as:

- developers
- students
- teachers
- managers.

We hold local branch meetings in Auckland, Christchurch, Hamilton and Wellington on a monthly or occasional basis. The meetings are advertised on the TCANZ website and provide excellent networking opportunities. Non-members are welcome to attend, but are encouraged to join to take advantage of membership benefits.

Meetings are usually held as either round table discussions or as presentations:

- Round table discussions are held in a bar or cafe and participants discuss a pre-arranged topic of interest. The sessions are informal and last up to about two hours.
- Presentations are held in company meeting rooms with a pre-arranged speaker. The sessions also last about two hours, but are more formal and include question time plus the usual networking opportunities.

For more information on TCANZ, visit: www.tcanz.org.nz

Workshops

Two half-day workshops will be held on the Wednesday before the conference.

Please see the TCANZ website for further infortaion.

Content modelling
with Ann Rockley

Content models formalize the structure of your content, providing the framework upon which you build your intranet and help your content contributors to create effective materials. Today's best practice is to create structured content with content templates. Content models help you to design these materials. Workshop participants will learn how to create structured content models that support structured authoring for the web or other materials.

You will learn how to create:

- Information product models
- Element models
- Structural reuse maps
- Content reuse maps

Participants will view real examples of models and work through the development of a model.

Visual and graphic design essentials for intranets
with Patrick Hofmann

The teachings for optimising intranet information design usually focus on the classification, management, and retrieval of the content. But what about the visual and graphic design of that content? Doesn't the look-and-feel contiribute to the usable intranet experience? In this informative and entertaining workshop, Patrick Hofmann will share the trends and essentials of effective graphic design, and how they apply to searching and navigating content systems. Sprinkled with real-life anecdotes, research, and exercises, Patrick's workshop will address the following questions:

- How best can we lay out search results to help users scan more effectively?
- What visual cues can we use to guide our users to their desired destination? How can we optimise those cues?
- How do we convey the overall structure of our intranet and internet-based information in a concise, usable navigational method?
- How can we promote and visualise groups and pathways from a seemingly endless set of content?
- What graphic design methods can we employ to make our information easy to read, scan, and digest?