

TransAlpiner

QUARTER FOUR • 2009

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION TRANSALPINE CHAPTER

TAC cohosts Content Strategy Forum 2010

STC's TransAlpine and France chapters' joint conference 15–16 April in Paris



See you in April in Paris!

The Society for Technical Communication's TransAlpine (TAC) and France Chapters are jointly organizing the Content Strategy Forum 2010, which will take place in Paris on 15-16 April 2010.

The Content Strategy Forum is going to be the most important and thought-provoking technical communication event in Europe in 2010. The program is simply outstanding. We have secured **the** top names in the content management such as Rahel Anne Bailie and Kristina Halvorson.

Plan to attend and learn how to *audit, create, deliver, and govern* your content for the satisfaction of your customers and a swift return on your investment.

Why a joint conference?

The TAC Board decided to join forces with the France chapter because it lacked the funds to host its own conference in the TransAlpine region. Together the two chapters are now able to provide their members with a high-quality conference that offers value to all attendees.

The TAC board is taking various steps to encourage you to attend the conference. First, TAC members will enjoy a €30 discount on the workshop and conference fees. In addition, sponsorships will be available to unemployed members or to members who have volunteered their time to the chapter.

Who should attend?

Content Strategy Forum 2010 is for anyone who develops, manages, or delivers content within their own organization or for their clients: user experience designers, information architects, technical writers, Web project managers, documentation managers, translators, and those looking to break into the field.

Thursday, 15 April 2010

- Four half-day workshops
 - Content strategy: purpose and practice
 - Practical applications of content strategy in the workplace
 - Content analysis and content auditing
 - The evolution of content
- An evening dinner cruise on the Seine with conference speakers

Friday, 16 April 2010

- Two keynote presentations by Rahel Anne Bailie and Kristina Halvorson
- Twelve breakout sessions, including:
 - Content strategy in Europe
 - Content strategy and information architecture
 - Designing a holistic customer experience
 - Editorial strategy
 - Localization and content strategy
 - Content marketing and its place in technical communication
 - The semantic Web
 - Mobile content
- Sponsor showcase
- Networking cocktail and book raffle

Rates for STC Members/Non-members

Friday conference only	€149/169
Conference + 1 workshop	€299/339
Conference + 2 workshops	€399/459
River boat dinner cruise	€70/70

TAC members also receive an additional €30 off their total registration fees, so renew your STC and TAC membership for 2010. To receive the discount, use the code *tac4ever* when registering for the forum at the event's Web site: <http://www.regonline.co.uk/builder/site/default.aspx?EventID=766137>

A New Year's message from the president

By CJ Walker, STC TAC President

Hello everybody! It's your TAC president again wishing you all a happy new year and the very best for 2010. I can't believe we're already here! We've got lots of good stuff planned for the chapter for the coming year.

CSForum 2010 conference in Paris

First, we have a world-class conference scheduled for 15–16 April in Paris. We're working in cooperation with the STC France chapter to create *CSForum 2010*, the first-ever conference completely devoted to the field of content strategy.

Why are we having the TAC's annual conference in Paris this year? We've doubled up our resources and finances with the France chapter to put on something of real quality and value to our members. We've been able to get names like Rahel Baillie and Kristina Halvorson to come to Europe from the US and Canada.

Paris is, indeed, outside of our normal geographic area, but as most of us have to travel to get to a TAC conference anyway, I feel good knowing that Paris is no more expensive than most European cities. And TAC members get an additional €30 discount off already reasonable conference fees. [Learn more about the conference schedule, pricing, and registration.](#)

What is content strategy?

Content strategy is the hot topic—the big buzz word not just in technical communications, but also in fields such as business analysis, Web development, information architecture, translation, and project planning.

It's really where these diverse fields intersect and become relevant to each other. I personally believe that this is a strong way forward for technical communicators because it makes a lot of sense to bring us in to cooperation with (and be recognized by) other parts of the organization.

If you want to know more about content strategy, you might be wondering where to begin. It's not an easy concept to define, but you could start to get a handle on the notion by checking out some of these links:

- braintraffic.com
- contentstrategy.rsgracey.com
- scattergather.razorfish.com

- leenjones.com/blog
- predicate-llc.com
- www.contentstrategyweblog.com
- wordsaredelicious.com

Renew your STC and TAC membership

Now to the delicate topic of renewing your STC and TAC membership. We are aware that STC membership prices have increased sharply in 2010. Although this is necessary move to save the organization as a whole, we do understand that this may create financial hardship for individual members. You are very important to us!

If you find yourself in a situation where you'd really like to renew, but you just can't afford it, we have a proposal to make: Come talk to us. We have set aside part of our budget this year to help members like you stay with us through this rough patch.

You receive enriched benefits from your STC membership, learn new skills to put on your CV, network with others in your field, and you get to feel good about helping out a wonderful community. We're planning to do the same thing for conference attendance. It feels like a win-win situation to us!

TAC on the Web

Of course there are the new [Ning site](#) and the [improved Web site](#) to tell you about. These are up and running now, and a great way to get news and views from the TAC and general STC communities.

Our goal with the Ning site is to create two-way contact using Web 2.0 technology and facilitate even better communication among our dispersed membership. The Web site is in a WordPress blog format to keep up with trends and to facilitate comments. We really value your feedback and hope to see more from you adding your comments and ideas to both sites.

Reactivate our Local Interest Groups

The last thing I want to talk about is our concerted effort to reactivate our Local Interest Groups. Such groups are especially important in our virtual community. They allow us to see the faces that go with the names of people in our profession who live close by, but not next-door.

Continued on page 3.

“We’ve got lots of good stuff planned for the chapter for the coming year.”

Continued from page 2.

The Swiss Local Interest Group had two meetings in 2009. Read about them in the article below. By all accounts, they were a great success. They even had interest from new potential members!

We're trying to create a wave to bring the local interest groups to other areas too. If you're interested in organizing one in your

area, let us know. They're little effort for a lot of fun! I'm even trying to organize one here in Sweden because I enjoy meeting fellow technical communicators so much.

Finally, I want to wish all of you a very successful, prosperous, healthy and happy 2010. I think we're off to a great start!

Local Interest Groups bring members together

By Janette Lynch, STC TAC Treasurer

Members of the TransAlpine chapter and other technical communicators representing the Swiss Local Interest Group met in Fribourg, Switzerland on Friday, 4 December. The eight attendees traveled from Basel, Geneva, Neuchâtel, Zurich and the Fribourg region to network and catch up over drinks and tapas. Conversations switched between the current job market, membership renewals, and professional projects.

our peers working in the same country or region. The majority of us are lone writers working as the only technical communicators in our workplace. There is huge value in exchanging experiences and discussing current issues that we encounter regularly.

One of the goals of the TAC in 2010 is to facilitate more of these kind of local interest groups. Because the TAC is a virtual chapter, the opportunity to meet occasionally with other technical communi-

Attendees
included
Janette Lynch,
Andrew Craven,
Catherine Janzen,
Sean Guise,
John Durham,
Dan Jones,
Isabelle Neuburg,
and
Nancy Gelman.



Dan Jones, SLIG leader, helped organize the event with local host Janette Lynch. "This event marked the second SLIG meeting in 2009," stated Dan. "In the spring, we had 11 people get together in Zurich for a similar event. And we're looking forward to another SLIG meeting next spring."

The object of getting together in a face-to-face meeting is to remain in touch with

tors and members is highly beneficial. We feel more connected to each other and we can more readily converse about topics that are meaningful to us and to our role as professional communicators in our countries.

If you would like to become more involved in organizing local interest groups in your country or city, contact Janette Lynch at treasurer@stc-transalpine.org.



The TransAlpine chapter of the Society for Technical Communication is a virtual chapter serving members in Austria, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Switzerland and around the world.

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The *TransAlpiner* is published quarterly by the STC TransAlpine chapter. It is distributed electronically at no charge to chapter members and friends. To subscribe, contact the newsletter editor.

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Have your renewed your STC membership?

Good reasons for continuing your STC and TransAlpine Chapter affiliation

Times are hard—and STC's dues have increased significantly. But you still “get a lot of bang for your buck” by continuing your STC and TransAlpine Chapter memberships. Here's a reminder of what STC membership offers you:

STC's membership benefits

STC's collective benefits include:

- STC's work to promote your profession
- International competitions
- A global network of colleagues

STC's individual benefits include:

- Electronic subscriptions to all STC publications
- Substantial savings on continuing education programs
- Free sponsored seminars
- Learning from participating in international competitions
- Access to the TechComm Body of Knowledge (TCBOK)
- Product discounts
- Resources for job-seekers (Job Seeker Boot Camp and Job Database)
- Access to special interest groups (SIGs) and chapter memberships
- Opportunities to influence the STC and what it provides to its members
- Opportunities to develop leadership skills

Read more at <http://www.stc.org/membership/>.

What does membership cost?

Basic Membership costs \$215 (up from \$150 last year), and does not include any

chapter or SIG memberships. Each chapter membership you purchase costs \$25; each SIG membership costs \$10.

For further details, visit <http://www.stc.org/membership/renew-your-stc-membership.asp>, where you can also learn about Gold Membership (\$395) and the SIG Value Package (\$375)—as well as discounts for students and retirees.

If you can't pay STC's membership fees all at once, take advantage of their installment plan that enables you to pay for your membership in four monthly payments.

The TransAlpine Chapter network

How do I continue to take advantage of my STC TransAlpine Chapter network if I choose not to renew my STC membership? A good network is especially important during hard times. We all need each other.

Although your membership in the TransAlpine chapter helps fund our activities, particularly our conferences, you don't have to be a member to:

- Receive our newsletter
- Review job postings on our [Web site](#)
- Participate in our [virtual community](#)
- Take part in local interest group events
- Attend our events—although you would have to pay full price if you did participate in them.

We hope you decide that the benefits of your membership in the STC and TransAlpine Chapter are worth the costs, given your own situation and financial priorities.

The TAC Board wants to know what you think

Take a 5-minute survey to share your thoughts on the TransAlpine Chapter

Please take five minutes to complete the TransAlpine Chapter [survey](#).

We would like to know what you are thinking about dues renewal, next year's conference, and local interest groups. By better understanding the needs of our membership, the Board can improve our service and communications to you.

Go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QVFSNL2> to complete the survey and give us your feedback.

Thanks for letting us know what's on your mind!

– Your TAC Board Officers: CJ, Claudia, Janette, and Dian