ASTC Conference 2022

In-person: 11-12 October, 9.am-5.00pm
Virtual: 13-15 October, 1.00pm-5.00pm (AEDT)

For the in-person and virtual conference timing, see the conference flyer, available from the home page of the ASTC website.

In person venue:

Room 1954
Pullman Melbourne on Swanston
195 Swanston Street,
Melbourne

To book: Register online using the Conference Registration form on the Conference Summary.

An invoice will be sent to you and you can pay by bank transfer or credit card.

From digital transformation to digital adoption, and where technical writers fit in

Jasmine Sesso, Customer Success Manager, WalkMe

The pandemic has dramatically changed the way we work and the way we do business, so organisations have been forced to introduce new technology and workforce arrangements. Remote or hybrid work has changed the way staff and customers use technology.

As a result, organisations are spending record amounts on digital transformation programs; replacing old systems with new and standardising processes across teams and business units.

Successful digital transformations rely on users adopting the new technology, often changing the way they work, and embedding these new systems and processes into their day-to-day use. Often, it's clear what "good" looks like for the transformation team. However, how end users engage with the system or how they actually complete the processes might not always align with the business's expectations in a post-go live world.

In this talk, I'd like to share with you:

- How digital adoption platforms are changing the way businesses embed new technology
- What "good" digital adoption looks like
- How Technical Communicators can influence the adoption of these new strategies.

About Jasmine

Jasmine spent more than a decade working in technical communications in a variety of industries before crossing over to Customer Success at the global SaaS company, WalkMe.

Collaborating with Developers

Dave Gash, Technical Publications Specialist

Working with developers can be one of the most challenging parts of technical communication. Developers' writing is notoriously poor, and they often find it hard to explain, verbally or on paper, concepts and procedures that they thoroughly understand. This makes it hard for technical writers to organize and present information for user consumption. This session addresses some of the challenges of working with developers and offers strategies for coping with, and adapting to, their often unique communication styles to achieve the best possible results from developer-writer collaboration.

You will learn:

- What problems are commonly associated with developer communications
- Why developers have those communication issues in the first place
- How to approach developer interviews to get the best results.

About Dave

Dave Gash is a veteran software professional with more than forty years of development, documentation, and training experience, and recently retired after seven years at Google.

Dave is well known in the international tech pubs community as an engaging and enthusiastic technical instructor. In the Before Times he was a frequent speaker, live and in person, at user assistance conferences in the US and around the world, and fervently hopes to see you all again in Australia in 2023.

The importance of metadata

Dr Tony Self, Managing Director,
Hyperwrite Pty Ltd

Partly due to the advent of XML, many parts of the documentation process are now automated.

One of the keys to accurate “processing” and “transforming” of text is metadata. Metadata is data about data – Information that describes or classifies information. Even if you've never used the term "metadata" before, you actually know it well. An index is metadata. It helps describe the information, but it is not part of the core information itself. Looking deeper, we find metadata in document styling, in semantic mark-up, in SEO, in translation, in content management systems, and even in file names. By improving our knowledge and application of metadata, we can raise the quality of our documents.

About Tony
In over 30 years of experience as a technical communicator, Tony has created online help systems, computer-based training, and electronic documents.

In 1993, Tony founded HyperWrite, a company providing training and consultancy in structured authoring, Help systems, DITA, and technology strategy.

Tony completed his PhD in semantic mark-up languages in 2011, and his book The DITA Style Guide was published in the same year. Tony is a member of the OASIS DITA Technical Committee.

Effectively using it
How good grammar contributes to clearer writing

Dr Linda Nix AE,IPEd Accredited Editor

Grammar is a key tool in communication, being less a set of prescriptive rules than an aid to conveying meaning. Dr Linda Nix AE explains common grammar errors that even experienced writers make.

She uses real examples to show how to identify and fix misplaced modifiers, dangling participles, pronoun ambiguity, non-parallel structure and punctuation issues that obscure meaning, as well as when to boldly split that infinitive. In other words, this presentation is about *using grammar effectively*.

About Linda
Linda Nix BA (Hons) Grad Dip (Computing) PhD (Cantab) is an editor, designer and technical writer. She worked in-house at law publishers before setting up her freelance business, Golden Orb Creative, in 2010.

An IPEd Accredited Editor since 2016, Linda's presentations and workshops have covered various aspects of writing, editing, publishing and technology for both editors and writers.

Can you trust your subject matter expert (SME)?

Dave Newdick, Principal Consultant
Integrated Training and Documentation

How many times have you heard, “this is how we have always done this…”. And do you ever get stuck in endless reviews because people cannot agree?

The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate some general compliance mapping principles (in a mind map) and how that feeds in to document planning, structure, and development. This is a quick way to get started with the content and structure of a new document. It also provides a standard process for completing document reviews and updates.

Dave has been involved with many document developments and reviews where the SMEs have no idea of what is really required. Quite often they are way off track where legislation or other compliance information has changed or they do not align – and maybe never did. Often, managers nominate a subject matter expert because a person is available or is on restricted duties. But they do not always pick the best person for the role.

About Dave
Dave completed 22 years as a technician in the Royal Australian Air Force, and then moved into civilian life in 2005. Unlike many colleagues, he deliberately avoided work in the aviation industry to expand his experience across other industries.

Because of his technical background and approach, Dave now works as a technical communicator in different industries. Across many industries, Dave sees common issues such as poor compliance (legislation, standards, codes) or sometimes a lack of knowledge about legislated duties.

New horizons in plain language: standards and certification

Dr Neil James, Chair of the International Plain Language Federation Certification Committee

Plain language has attracted growing interest from government and industry in recent decades. It is even being mandated in laws such as the 2010 Plain Writing Act in the United States.

While there is a standard definition and some useful guidelines on plain language, until now no detailed standard has set out what a plain language communication requires.

That's about to change with the publication of ISO/DIS 24495-1 Plain language - Part 1: Governing principles and guidelines.

This will be a major step forward in professionalising plain language, and Neil will tell us about it.

About Neil

Neil was co-founder of Plain English Foundation and recently stepped down as Executive Director. After careers in government and the media, Neil worked as a freelance writing and editor before specialising in plain English. He has a doctorate in English and published 2 books (*Modern Manglish* and *Writing at Work*)

Also active in plain language internationally, Neil was founding chair of the International Plain Language Federation that has developed a common definition and ISO standard for plain language

Presenting information the right way

Kylie Weaver, Founder,
Clearly Focused Agile Communications

Deciding how to present information is hard. We talk about it like it's obvious, but taking abstract ideas and turning them into words involves thousands of tiny decisions and educated guesses. Even though this is the essence of what we do as technical communicators, I think it's easy to underrate how challenging this is.

This challenge can manifest as writers' block, procrastination, self-doubt and multiple rewrites. But, even more importantly, if we don't present information in a way that makes sense to our readers, this can mean that customers are frustrated and either won't engage with the task, product or website, or they will turn to the organisation's contact centre for help which means high operational costs.

The ability to explain things clearly should be an aspiration for everyone in the business community: it makes email communication more efficient, it makes meetings more productive and it helps avoid conflict and disappointment when communicating the outcomes someone wants.

Kylie would like to share some techniques that help her present information effectively and to help you to gain more confidence and awareness of what you may already do instinctively.

About Kylie

Having worked mostly as a contractor throughout her 25 year career, Kylie has moved between roles as a technical writer, business analyst, project manager, lecturer and Agile coach across more than 20 teams. The unifying thread through her career is an interest in people: how they understand information, how they perform their jobs, how they communicate and how they collaborate.

Kylie loves helping people learn to write confidently and effectively. Good communication skills are the bedrock upon which we build strong, happy and effective teams and make life easier for our readers.

S1000D – Starting a Project

Ana Young, Lead Technical Author,
Pennant Australasia Pty Ltd

Industries across Australia and the globe are looking for more efficient methods of creating well-structured and engaging technical documentation to support their products. Across the Australian Defence Industry, the new and future sailors, soldiers, and aviators are demanding quick and accessible technical documentation, with a minimum of fuss and straight to the point. This is making suppliers of major material equipment rethink how they develop and deliver to Australian Defence Contracts.
This presentation will look at the international specification behind the requirements for delivering technical publications for product users across Defence. The presentation following will demonstrate how simple it can be to develop a small piece of the bigger picture.

Demonstration: Building Blocks of a Data Module

Ana Young, Lead Technical Author,
Pennant Australasia Pty Ltd

In this demonstration, Ana will show how to use R4i Writer to build a valid Data Module, add the mandatory components and explain what they mean, add content to the descriptive Data Module (text, warnings, cautions, and notes) then link the content of the Data Module to other Data Modules. As well, Ana will demonstrate how to link the content of the Data Module to illustrations and how to create internal links.

About Ana

Ana worked in the software development area for a number of years. She has been a technical communicator for over 20 years in various industries.

In the past six years, Ana worked for Boeing with the R4i products, developing documentation with the S1000D specification.

Choose Canva instead of PowerPoint for your next presentation

Grant Noble, Senior Technical Content Writer, Canva

Since its creation in 1987, PowerPoint has become the de facto standard visual presentation application. PowerPoint's worldwide market share of presentation software is estimated to be approximately 95%.

However, there's now a different tool you might want to consider for your next presentation: Canva.

Canva's vision is to "*Empower the world to design*". And their mission is to "*Empower everyone… to design anything… to publish anywhere… on every device*".

In this presentation, Grant will provide us with 10 reasons why we should choose Canva over PowerPoint for our next presentation.

About Grant
Grant arrived in Australia from Canada in 1984 for a one-year working holiday, and never left.

He started off in the computer industry but in a classic case of good luck over good management, Grant took on a technical writing/training development contract role at Suncorp (then a Building Society) and he's never looked back. Since then, he's worked for a wide range of companies, across a wide range of industries, but always in the technical writing, training, or training development area.

Grant joined Canva's Internal Developer Docs team in February 2021.

How NOT to Write a Tutorial

Dave Gash, Technical Publications Specialist

In his career, Dave has encountered sooooo many web tutorials, generally technical in nature -- how to use APIs, SDKs, UI controls, HTML5 and CSS3 features, and so on -- mostly written by developers. Not only do the authors make content and presentation errors, many of them make the **same** content and presentation errors. In fact, the patterns are so consistent that they practically beg to be documented.

In this session, we'll explore ten common errors made by tutorial authors, try to understand why they make those errors, and offer some constructive alternatives for better structure and presentation.

About Dave
See page 1.

IT security and data backup

Jason Xiros, Principal Consultant,
Communiques ICT Consulting

Why worry? Who would want to hack me?? Is this really important? These are questions we should really take seriously.

Common threats we all face:
SPAM, Phishing, Malware (Virus, trojan, etc.), Spyware, Botnets and Ransomware.

What can result?

Lost or stolen devices, intellectual property theft, identity theft, financial fraud and complete data loss.

Jason will spell out some data backup basics:

- The 3-2-1 rule
- Cyber insurance.

About Jason
Jason has had twenty years of multi-disciplinary experience in IT; providing consultancy, design, project management, and technical services to enterprise and government clients.

Most of his projects place a huge emphasis on security... it's a fundamental (and audited) deliverable, hence his specific interest in this topic for both the company and personal devices.

His passion is applying human-centered design to program management – blending traditional project management practices with innovative thinking, to ensure the client's voice is at the center of our planning and delivery.

Two big gremlins: personification and the comma splice

Deb Doyle, Editorial Training Services and
Living Proof – Book Editing

Deb will explain how not to give the attributes of an animate being to a concept or an inanimate object, as in this sentence, additionally, Deb will show us how to separate two sentences or independent clauses by using any punctuation mark/s other than the littlest pause.

About Deb

Since 1989, Deb has been editing books and publications as well as teaching grammar and editing. She self-published her text-workbook *Grey Areas and Gremlins: A grammar and punctuation refresher* and its accompanying colour-coded handouts in 2003.

Deb regularly teaches a course in *Grammar and Punctuation Fundamentals* and another in *Advanced Grammar and Editing* at Sydney Uni's Centre for Continuing Education.

SAQs (Seldom asked Questions)

Dr Tony Self, Managing Director

HyperWrite Pty Ltd

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have become so common in Help systems and support Websites that the initialism has entered the vernacular. But are FAQs more a convenience for authors than a useful tool for readers? Do FAQs make it easy for information to be dumped into an unstructured bucket? Are FAQs really frequently asked, or are they more often SAQs — Seldomly Asked Questions? In this presentation, Tony Self takes a light-hearted approach to the topic, but discovers that there are serious questions that we need to ask ourselves.

You will learn:

- When to use FAQs in your content
- What type of questions are best to include
- What type of questions you should avoid
- The balance between too much and too little information.

About Tony
See page 2.