

# word to the wise

October 2009

the newsletter of Cedarville University's student chapter of the Society for Technical Communication

## BREWING BENEFITS

STC sells private label coffee  
10/9/2009

-Genelle Schedlbauer

Cedarville STC is partnering with Stoney Creek Roasters, a coffee shop in Cedarville, to sell bags of Costa Rican coffee as a fundraising effort. Our organization will receive 50% profit from each bag of coffee sold. The proceeds from the sales will help fund STC's spring trip to visit companies that utilize technical writers. The bags will feature the new STC logo and serve as word-of-mouth advertising for both STC and Stoney Creek Roasters. We plan on taking bags of coffee to the October 21st meeting of the Southwestern Ohio STC chapter. Look for more information regarding the sales on Facebook or visit [www.scrfund.org](http://www.scrfund.org) to order bags online. This delicious coffee would make great Christmas presents!



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## LOOKING BACK

second STC meeting  
10/8/2009



The second STC meeting of the 2009-2010 school year was held Thursday, October 8th at Cedarville. Once again, attendance was impressive. The October STC meeting served to provide snippets of information regarding five of the internships done by upperclassmen the past summer. Along with stories about each student's experience, they each shared what they learned and the highs and lows of their responsibilities. Katie gave announcements and sign-ups went around for upcoming events. The STC logo contest is on! We are looking

for a logo to represent the organization as part of the website, newsletter, and t-shirts. Look for the winning design in the near future!

SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY CHAPTER

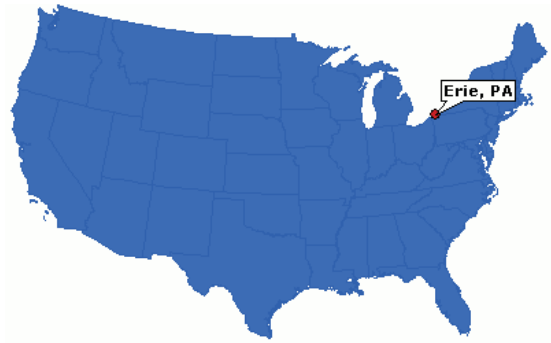
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ONE

# A TECH WRITER'S WORST NIGHTMARE

conquering DSD579  
10/23/2009

-Brent Persun



This summer I worked at Erie Insurance in the IT department as a tech writing intern. While the experience was great, my project was not. Basically, I was handed a 600-page document that was the policy and procedure manual for the Production Control section of IT. I still don't understand exactly what Production Control means. All I know is that they kept the mainframe up and running and did a lot of trouble shooting. Their manual covered over 30 systems from FTP to Firecalls.

Apparently the manual was born long ago, perhaps ten years. The exact date has been lost to time. This poor manual was born an orphan, without anyone to care for it. So as the years passed, it grew without proper guidance, catching all the random tidbits of information Production Control sent its way. Yet it still lacked true form. So finally, about two years ago, an employee came along who was ambitious and who took on the task of helping this manual into its full being. Unfortunately, he had no clue what he was doing. So was created the perfect storm of DSD579.



As I worked with the manual, DSD579, I realized that it was basically a compilation of raw data with little to no tech writing put into it. Most of the "procedure" (I hesitate to even use that word) was incomprehensible. Some sections were merely chains of email conversations. As I worked on the manual, I realized that this was going to be quite the undertaking. Luckily I had people to help. Tina was my expert/SME. What she didn't understand, she found out from her section. Jeanne was my mentor on the project. She had plenty of years of experience and knew which of my ideas would fly and which would smack into an unseen glass window. I also had Kyle, a fellow intern, and Jeff, a newly-hired writer, to help me with the bulk of the writing.

Though I didn't get to see DSD579 come out as a sparkling new manual, I was able to see it get off to a good start. I cut out at least 200 needless pages and reorganized the structure so that it was actually meaningful. And though the project was a nightmare, my internship couldn't have gone better.

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## ABWE MISSION AGENCY

combining skills and passion  
10/23/2009

-Peter Arthur



I pursued this internship at the ABWE mission agency because I wanted something that would be a combination of my various passions: missions, writing, editing, graphics, and web design. I grew up in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in a missionary family, and I feel like God has called me to return to Brazil sometime after graduating from Cedarville to start a culturally relevant, gospel-rich magazine for lost teenagers in that city. This internship in the Publications department not only allowed me to practice my skills in writing, editing, and graphics, but I was also introduced to the processes necessary to printing, publishing, web posting, and financing a magazine. I couldn't have chosen a better place to learn these things than at the ABWE home office, as I have made many friends there whom I will keep in touch with for the rest of my life as a missionary.

**continued on next page**

## ABWE MISSION AGENCY, continued

During my first week, the director of Missionary Care asked me to do a logo for use in a PowerPoint and a set of brochures he wanted to send out to churches and missionaries. We decided on a final design that materialized his idea of combining the efforts of the church, agency, and missionary, all toward the great commission.

Other side projects came up (editing letters, award speeches, or other short pieces), but for the most part, I was responsible for posting online articles weekly to the <http://www.abwe.org/news/> page and finding possible content or leads for the next edition of The Message. I had missionary prayer letters emailed to me so I could follow their stories in case anything came up that might be worth publishing.

As an intern, of course, I was pulled into a few character-building experiences. I was asked to run the lights, video, and PowerPoints for a medical missions conference held during a weekend in June. They also asked me to control two cameras for a live webcast of a recognition service for missionaries who have been appointed in 2009. Inexperienced as I was in these areas, I was glad to have learned these skills, at least on a basic level, because I'm sure they will be useful later on in life.

A bigger project assigned to me was to write an article based on an interview. I had to contact the interviewees (a newly appointed missionary couple), formulate relevant questions, conduct the interview with audio recording, transcribe it, and write an article from it. The whole process took a while, but through that experience, I learned how important it is to be thorough and specific when asking for information, especially if your sources are not available later for further inquiry. I was stretched to be more independent in planning out my own work strategy with this project, which is something I will absolutely need if I'm going to consider starting a magazine.

The internship as a whole really encouraged me that although there are many intertwined dynamics to creating a magazine (standardization and consistency, editing processes, content/design conflicts, financial limitations, style guides...), they can all be managed correctly to create an effective issue. The skills I learned while on this internship may be the most applicable skills I'll learn while in college simply because they are put to work in a real corporate environment and the results are more tangible and meaningful.

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## NPULSE NETWORKS

a virtual internship  
10/26/2009



-Matt Pretty

This past summer I interned with nPulse Networks, a small network sensor design company based in Charlottesville, VA. My internship was a very unique experience: I did not drive to some corporate office and work at a desk from 9-5 every day. I did not have to dress up to go to work. In fact, I didn't even have to take a shower to go to work. Yet I somehow managed to help improve nPulse's marketability by creating numerous quick start guides, designing a company profile sheet, and developing a few data sheets. "How were you able to do all that without taking a shower every day?" you ask. The answer is a virtual internship.

I actually worked from Atlanta, Georgia, for most of the summer (I say most of the summer because, thanks to the flexibility of my schedule, I was able to do a lot of traveling). My bosses, Randy Caldejon and Peter Shaw, and I would communicate via email for most of the week, and then every Friday we had a 3-way conference call via telephone. This was truly an incredible experience for me because the only previous professional exposure I had was in a corporate environment. This could not have been more different – and I loved it!

# STEELCASE, INC.

spending a summer with IT geniuses  
10/9/2009

-Genelle Schedlbauer

I interned this summer at Steelcase, Inc. in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Steelcase is an industry-leading multi-billion dollar furniture manufacturing company. They make chairs, tables, desks, lighting systems, seating systems, paneling systems, leisure furniture, health-care furniture, and a variety of other products and technological solutions. Along with global headquarters, located there in Grand Rapids is an R&D facility, learning and showroom facility, and three manufacturing plants. Steelcase has plants, Worklife centers, distribution centers, and other facilities all over the world. The expansiveness of this company is hard to wrap my mind around.

I acquired this internship by making the most of a personal contact. My family is friends with the CIO of Steelcase, Bob Krestakos, and I emailed Bob in the spring to ask for suggestions of people I could send my resume to within the company. He mentioned a company called The Wordsmiths that Steelcase does frequent business with. He said the owner is a woman he knows well and works with on a regular basis because The Wordsmiths is the primary source of Steelcase's published material.

After an interview over Easter break during which I showed Diane Herbruck my portfolio and learned more about the potential responsibilities before me, I was hired by The Wordsmiths as a contract writer for Steelcase. I was to be stationed at Steelcase in the IT department as part of the Vendor Management Office under Denny

Atkinson. Because of legal issues related to my attendance at intern events as an "outsider," I was switched over to Steelcase's payroll in the beginning of June.

This internship was a rewarding challenge from the beginning. Not being an information systems or computer science major, I knew nothing about information technology. As a result, my supervisor had to explain everything to me. Not only did he clearly communicate my responsibilities for the summer, but he explained what IT was, how it factored into Steelcase's infrastructure, operations, and daily functions. Thankfully, he was patient and welcomed my questions and inquiries.

My first assignment was updating the communications plan for transferring work from Grand Rapids to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. There was a plan created, but it lacked examples, charts, links to helpful websites, and was without a significant amount of information. I used technical writing skills to add explanatory paragraphs and other helpful bits of information. The plan is now comprehensive and used by anyone who is part of the work transfer process, regardless of how integral their role is in the actual movement of the work.

My second assignment was to create work instructions templates for IT Service Requests. These requests were coming from a variety of places and being received in several different ways. The problem was a gap in how they were received and how they were distributed. A streamlined system was needed to make the process of submitting requests, approving requests, assigning work, doing work, finishing work, and validating work more efficient and successful. I interviewed several different people and asked questions,

gathered information, did my own research, and formulated conclusions before creating the templates. This was a long process, but the time and effort was necessary for the documents to be useful for the IT Department.

My third assignment was creating network diagram templates for desktop engineers. I spent time with the leading desktop engineer, getting his thoughts about necessary improvements. He explained the Steelcase networks and answered a plethora of questions about the extensive technological connections. This diagram, although beyond my understanding, provides the engineers with a visual representation of new networks or systems they install.

The internship highlights all occurred beyond my cubicle and were Lunch and Learns with various IT leaders, Meet and Greet sessions with the CEO's direct reports, a scavenger hunt for knowledge, tours of the facilities, West Michigan Intern Olympics, a West Michigan Whitecaps baseball game, and several other opportunities to get to know more about one another as co-workers and friends. I am thankful Steelcase cared not only about work we were doing for them, but also about enhancing our experience within the company by exposing us to many of its aspects.

I hope to return to Steelcase next summer as an intern in Corporate/Employee Communications. Whether or not I spend another day there as an official employee, I will always highly value the time I spent with Steelcase. I not only further developed the skills I learned from my Cedarville classes, but I developed real relationships with my co-workers, made discoveries of my own about the corporate world, and actually contributed to furthering the international success of Steelcase, Inc.

# A CHRIST-CENTERED BUSINESS

communications internship  
10/23/2009



-Shea Hansen

This summer I served as an intern at my home church in Granger, Indiana. I served on the Communications team at Granger Community Church. I worked with print materials, like creating and laying out fliers, notes, and postcards. I worked closely with Jami, my supervisor, and Lisa, the team's graphic designer, to come up with concepts that fit the purpose and audience of the piece. I was able to create lots of pieces for my portfolio, but more importantly I was able to experience the creation of those pieces from start to finish.

The knowledge I got from my internship was beneficial for my future career. The most rewarding part of my summer was learning from and getting to know the people on staff at Granger. My team was so encouraging and fun. I learned how Christ-centered businesses can run successfully by the examples I saw from the staff at Granger.



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## WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO

upcoming events  
10/29/2009, 11/12/2009



The next event is a bonfire at Mrs. Harner's house on Thursday, October 29th at 7:00. This will be a fall-themed party with hot drinks and both costume and pumpking carving contests. This evening should be a fun way to continue getting to know one another as we enjoy some classic fall activities. Coming this week!

The next STC meeting will be held at Cedarville at 7:00 on November 12th. The rest of the upperclassmen who had internships this past summer will present their experiences. An update on coffee sales will be presented. Be sure to attend!



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## WORD TO THE WISE

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