

## The Plane Crash

*John Kump, Member, Orange County Chapter*

“Hey, isn’t that where you work?” That’s the question my friend Chris asked as we flipped on the TV news on Sunday, Thanksgiving weekend 1996. I turned toward the TV and listened as the reporter explained: “A small plane carrying three passengers crashed into an office building near the John Wayne Orange County Airport in southern California. All three people in the plane were killed.” I watched in shock as the camera panned across my office area and our documentation center. The flat file cabinets that housed many original engineering drawings had somehow been hurled on top of the building as the plane took its nose dive. Hundreds of gallons of water and foam were being poured on the smoldering remains of the plane and on our documentation.

I went to work the following day. As a manager in the quality organization of my company, I was responsible for the storage, control, and retrieval of all product-related documentation. I reviewed the damage and I was speechless. The plane had taken a nose dive directly into the center of the newly renovated and centralized documentation center. We had only been in this area only a month and had recently purchased new scanning and digital imaging equipment. All of this equipment was seriously damaged or completely destroyed.

At first, I was overwhelmed. Where do we start? What do we do? How can we continue to provide our internal customers with the documents and data they need? I didn’t know then that we would be working on the plane crash recovery effort for over two years! As a result, we became stronger and more efficient, both as individuals, and as a company. Here are a few key points.

**Calculate.** Disaster planning and recovery is about one thing—risk. How much are you willing to take? Which items are the most valuable? How quickly will you need to access recovered documentation and data?

Have your leaders and business groups calculate the risks ahead of time. This will help you to know how to best prepare.

**Prepare.** Based on the calculated risks and prioritization, start protecting yourself by preparing for disaster. Keep an updated list of all items you have. Electronic documents can be backed up and stored in one or more off-site locations. How often you back up depends on the risk your company is willing to take. Microfiche and microfilm can be copied and a duplicate roll stored at an off site facility. Paper documents, vellums and transparencies can be duplicated and stored off site or scanned and stored electronically.

See “Plane Crash” on page 5

## Transitioning to ISO 9001:2000

*Ralph Robinson, Senior Member, Toronto Chapter*

The best way to approach the transition from ISO 9001:1994 to ISO 9001:2000 is to look back at how your organization achieved its initial ISO registration. Generally, organizations have set up a core implementation team to manage the efforts of all those involved. This focused approach ensured that adequate checks were made throughout the process to guarantee full coverage and that management awareness and support were present in all phases.

The establishment of a core team of individuals to plan, develop, and implement the strategies necessary to ensure a successful transition would appear to offer the same benefits as those realized during your original implementation. By having a group of knowledgeable people dedicated to ensuring an effective and efficient transition effort, many of the pitfalls of missed requirements, poor communication, lack of management awareness and support, poor commitment of employees and first-line supervision, and many other problems can be avoided. The time spent scoping and planning the processes needed will have a minimal cost impact on the overall project when compared to the costs of reversing a poorly implemented transition.

Your first step is to obtain a copy of the latest version of ISO 9000:2000 and review it to become familiar with the contents of both the ISO 9001:2000 and the ISO 9004:2000 documents. ISO 9004 provides additional information that enables an organization to maximize the benefits of a sound and robust quality management system. This latest version is much more user friendly as its development coincided with that of ISO 9001, resulting in a ‘consistent pair’ of documents. Start by using the ISO 9001:2000 to ISO 9001:1994 Comparison Map, and develop a map of your existing documentation based on the new standard’s revised structure.

The next step involves an analysis of where your current system does not meet the requirements of the revised standard: a gap analysis. Once the analysis is completed, the new required items can be plugged into your documentation map, resulting in a complete view of your new documentation set. Comparing this map to the requirements of ISO 9001:2000 will highlight oversights.

The final step involves revising those current processes that need changing, and implementing those processes that are missing from your quality management system. You will need to review your supporting documentation, revising what needs changing, and

See “Transitioning” on page 5

## SIGNificant News

### Quality SIG Panel Accepted for Orlando in May

Once again the Quality SIG will make its presence known at the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual STC Conference in Orlando May 21 through 24 as its submission has been accepted by the Program Committee. The panel is titled, "Addressing Quality in the Real World," and will feature the following speakers:

**Don Lenk**, our indomitable "he's everywhere" guy, will speak on defining quality in an organization, how it's determined, and how it's measured.

**Steven Jong**, our Metrics Subgroup Chair, will discuss product and process improvement, what it means, and how it can be achieved.

**Robbie Rupel**, our Membership Manager, will present a case study highlighting the problems, barriers, and successes faced by a modern organization in implementing a quality monitoring system for documentation.

**Amy Perry**, our Techniques and Processes Subgroup Chair, will speak on how technical writers can use quality tools to improve their productivity and the quality of their output.

**Ralph Robinson**, your SIG Manager, will present a look at how international standards, particularly ISO 9000, have affected corporate policy and procedure documentation.

## Members Make Other Presentations

Some of our members will also be making solo presentations or appearing as part of other panels or presentations at the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual STC Conference. Steven Jong will be presenting a paper titled, "You Get What You Measure—So Measure Quality," Robbie Rupel will be part of a panel discussion titled, "Developing a Documentation Process That Works in a Regulated Environment," and your SIG Manager, Ralph Robinson, will be involved with two presentations, one a solo effort titled, "ISO 9000:2000; What Does It Mean to Technical Communicators?," and the second as part of a panel from the Policy & Procedures SIG titled, "What It Takes to be an Effective Policies and Procedures Communicator."

## Other SIG Activities in Orlando

As is customary, the Quality SIG will be holding its business meeting at a breakfast meeting on Tuesday morning at 7:15 a.m. This is a great opportunity to meet with your SIG leaders, voice your concerns, make suggestions for improvements, and discuss the future direction of your SIG. Set your alarm a little early, get your continental breakfast from the main eating area, and join us to help plan the future of the SIG. For specifics on where the meeting will be held, look in the conference program.

Another activity the SIG leaders take part in is hosting tables at the SIG luncheon. Look for upcoming details about the date and time of the SIG luncheon, and join in a spirited discussion on quality topics. Each table moderator will facilitate discussions on any topic(s) that members at the table wish to delve into.

## DocQment's New Look

W-e-e-l-l-l, how do you like our new look? Richard Colvin and the *DocQment* staff have been hard at work trying to make your newsletter a more attractive publication, and I think they've done a great job. What do you think? Please forward any comments, criticisms (not too many), and suggestions to your SIG Manager at [r2innovations@myna.com](mailto:r2innovations@myna.com).

## Membership Report

It's membership renewal time! Remember to include membership to the Quality SIG when you renew your STC membership this month. Because it's membership renewal time, our numbers will fluctuate as people are dropped and added to our SIG. As of December, the STC Quality SIG has 734 members (up from 645 in Fall 1999).

Welcome to our newest members in the United States from Alabama, California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Washington DC, and Wisconsin. Welcome to our newest international members from Alberta, Canada; British Columbia, Canada; Finland; France; Manitoba, Canada; The Netherlands; Ontario, Canada; Quebec, Canada; Sweden; and the United Kingdom.

## DocQment

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### To join the SIG

Contact the STC office at  
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### Publication Policies

We welcome articles for "BookQueue," "What's Hot," or "In the Trenches." Articles should be 400 words or less. Email or phone the *DocQment* acquisitions manager, Jennifer Atkinson, if you want to review your topic before submitting an article or to request style guidelines.

Submit your articles at any time during the year to the *DocQment* editor. We prefer ASCII text via email. You can also mail us a 3-1/2" PC- or Macintosh-formatted diskette with ASCII text, Word, or RTF files. (Please mark format and application version number on the diskette and include your phone number and name.) All articles will be edited for length, clarity, and appropriateness. Include a brief bio statement.

You may reprint original material appearing in *DocQment*, as long as you acknowledge the source and send us a copy of the publication containing the reprint.

**Postmaster** Send address changes to STC office at the above address.

## BookQueue

### Memory Joggers Finish First in the Race for Quality

Amy Perry, Member, Hoosier Chapter

Two paperback books can be very useful to anyone in any organization: *The Memory Jogger™: A Pocket Guide of Tools for Continuous Improvement and Effective Planning*, and *The Memory Jogger™ 9000: A Pocket Guide to Implementing the ISO 9000 Quality Systems Standard and QS-9000 Requirements*. Each book is an example of a well-designed communication—small enough to fit into almost any purse or pocket, durable enough to last in such a location, and full of helpful graphics. This quarter I will review the first of the pair.

The *Memory Jogger* (MJ) describes a multitude of tools useful for team leaders, meeting leaders, and anyone desiring simple tools for measuring processes. MJ also provides a matrix at the front that helps you see at a glance which tools will be helpful for your particular situation.

Tools for team leaders and meeting leaders include brainstorming and storyboarding for problem-solving and process improvement. Tools for those wishing to measure processes include run charts, flowcharts, cause-and-effect diagrams, and check sheets. Most of

the measurement tools are simple and do not require the knowledge of statistics.

Each of these practical books is available from GOAL/QPC, 1-800-643-4316, [www.goalqpc.com](http://www.goalqpc.com). The cost is only around \$7 each and the books are worth far more.

Amy Perry is a Senior Technical Writer for CREW Technical Services, Indianapolis, Indiana. You can reach her at [aperry@nisys.com](mailto:aperry@nisys.com).



### Get Profiled!

Robbie Rupel, Senior Member, St. Louis Chapter

Profiling lets us share something about you with other members of the Quality SIG. If you would like to be profiled, please contact me at [rupel@inlink.com](mailto:rupel@inlink.com) and write a brief article focusing on the following questions:

- What do you do and where do you work?
- Why did you join the Quality SIG?
- What quality-related issues are you currently facing and how are you trying to resolve them?

Robbie Rupel is the Documentation Manager at Computerized Medical Systems, Inc., in St. Louis, Missouri. You can reach her at [robbie@cms-stl.com](mailto:robbie@cms-stl.com).

### See the Quality SIG Online

The Quality SIG has two online resources that provide information about the Quality SIG and its activities: a website and a listserv. We hope you will find these valuable. Questions about the website should be sent to Don Lenk at [donlenk@aol.com](mailto:donlenk@aol.com). Questions about the listserv should be sent to Ralph Robinson at [r2innovations@myna.com](mailto:r2innovations@myna.com).

**Accessing our website.** Visit the STC Quality SIG web site at [stc.org/pics/quality/](http://stc.org/pics/quality/).

**Subscribing to the listserv.** If you aren't already signed up for the discussion on our listserv, send an email to [lyris@lists.stc.org](mailto:lyris@lists.stc.org) and in the body of the message type:

subscribe stcqsig-l <your name>. (The character at the end of stcqsig-l is a lowercase 'L' and the <> characters are not part of your entry.)

For example: subscribe stcqsig-l ralph robinson

**Posting to the listserv.** To post a message for others on the listserv to see, send your posting in email to:

stcqsig-l@lists.stc.org. (The character at the end of stcqsig-l is a lowercase 'L'.)

**Unsubscribing from the listserv.** If you are already signed up for the discussion on our listserv and wish to unsubscribe, send an email to [lyris@lists.stc.org](mailto:lyris@lists.stc.org) and in the body of the message type:

unsubscribe stcqsig-l <your name> (The character at the end of stcqsig-l is a lowercase 'L' and the <> characters are not part of your entry.)

For example: unsubscribe stcqsig-l ralph robinson

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## Musing on Metrics

### Documentation and ISO 9000

Steven Jong, Senior Member, Boston Chapter

“ISO 9000” is one of the most misunderstood and lampooned of the quality buzz phrases. (Scott Adams’s Dilbert has a lot of fun with it.) What is it? How does it pertain to documentation? Can we use it to our advantage? In this column I will try to answer these questions.

ISO 9000 is an international standard for a quality management system. An ISO 9000-certified organization has a documented method for producing products of consistent quality. Boiled down to its essence, there are three steps:

1. Say what you do
2. Do what you say
3. Write it down

The theory is that if you have a well-defined process, and can demonstrate that you follow it, then you are turning out products that consistently meet your standards, whatever they are. (Notice that the objective quality may be high or low, but at least it will be consistent.) Though many U.S. companies have already achieved, or are seeking, ISO 9000 certification, it’s commonly believed that ISO 9000 is only for manufacturing organizations. That’s not so: it’s for any organization that has processes.

The document in which procedures are written down is the “quality manual.” Much of the discussion of technical communicators and ISO 9000 is centered on our writing the quality manuals for other groups, which is a good gig, though frustrating. Why frustrating? Because when workers are asked to describe what they do they tend to describe what they used to do, what they ought to do, what they want to do, or what they wish they did. Asking their manager is usually worse. (Believe me, writing workgroup procedures makes documenting software seem simple by comparison!) Writing an effective quality manual takes the full cooperation of everyone in the organization. Given the stakes, however, it is a valuable deliverable and thus a lucrative opportunity for technical communicators.

Despite the difficulties involved, I think publications groups would benefit from creating their own quality manuals. (In fact, I was the ISO 9000 coordinator for a publications group, though my main accomplishment was to convince management that a senior manager with clout needed to head the effort instead of me.)

In my view, the critical documentation processes are:

- planning
- review
- approval
- production
- archiving

If your group has any of these processes—and you ought to have them all!—they should be applied consistently, and that’s grist for the ISO mill.

See “Musing” on page 5

## Welcome New Team Members

Richard Colvin, Senior Member, Washington, DC Chapter

Volunteers are critical to the continued success of *Docqment*. Over the last quarter, Jennifer Atkinson spent about four hours soliciting articles. Liz Hidalgo spent about two hours editing the articles. Ralph Robinson and I worked with the printer to see what it would take to add some color. I spent about six hours redesigning and laying out the newsletter. After that, Sophia Marx spent about two hours copyediting this issue. She also took some time to orientate Deborah Dore, our new copyeditor. I made the changes in about two hours and forwarded the newsletter to the printer. Finally, John Kump, a new team member, spent a few hours preparing the international mailing. So, you can see what a job we have and why we need the help of many volunteers. I am happy to announce that many people responded to our call for help. Four new members have joined the team.

Please welcome Shelby Rosiak, who is taking over for me as our Production Editor. Shelby works as a technical writer for the IBM Corporation in San Jose, California. She is a member of the Silicon Valley Chapter. Her background is in English, and she holds a Bachelor’s degree from Albion College in Michigan and a Master’s degree from Southwest Missouri State University. Shelby’s primary goal for the newsletter is to continue setting the example of quality and continuing to improve the newsletter.

Please welcome Deborah Dore, who is taking over for Sophia Marx as our Post-production Editor. Deborah works as a technical writer for the Aventura Corporation in Seattle, Washington. She is a member of the Puget Sound Chapter. Deborah holds a Bachelor’s Degree in English from Western Washington University and a Certificate in Technical Writing and Editing from the University of Washington. Her goal is to have an opportunity to use her copyediting skills. She has already contributed those skills to editing this issue.

Please welcome John Kump, who is taking over as our regular International Mailing Coordinator. John works as Manager of Configuration Services at Baxter Healthcare in Irvine, California. He is a member of the Orange County Chapter. John holds a Bachelor’s degree in German studies from the University of California, Long Beach. His goal is to find new and innovative ways to make our work more fun and productive.

Would you like to join our newsletter team? We could use help in the following position:

*Acquisitions Manager:* This position has the primary responsibility of soliciting and obtaining content for the newsletter. This individual solicits content from members of the Quality SIG, from other STC members, and from individuals and publications outside of the STC. This position requires about four hours per quarterly issue.

If you are interested in helping with this position, please contact Ralph Robinson at [r2innovations@myna.com](mailto:r2innovations@myna.com).

Richard Colvin is a writer and student living in Washington, District of Columbia.

## In the Trenches

### Message in a Bottle from My Desert Island

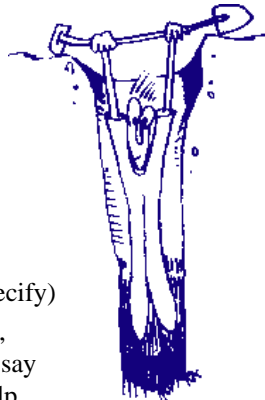
Amy Perry, Committee Chair, Processes and Techniques Subgroup

To make my portion of the panel presentation at the National STC Conference on Quality in the Real World as useful as possible to fellow SIG members, I would like to ask for your help with my audience analysis. As the chairperson of the Quality Processes and Techniques subgroup, I will be speaking partly about quality processes and techniques as applied specifically to the documentation process. If you would be willing to respond to me, please email me at [aperry@nisys.com](mailto:aperry@nisys.com) and let me know which of the following statements applies to you:

1. I am in the Quality SIG because of an interest in high-quality documentation.
2. I am in the Quality SIG because of an interest in ISO 9000, Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, SEI CMM, or documentation for an organization-specific quality effort.
3. I work with the following quality tools (for documentation or for other processes)
  - a. Brainstorming
  - b. Cause and Effect (Fishbone) Diagrams
  - c. Check Sheets
  - d. Control Charts
  - e. Flowcharts
  - f. Histograms
  - g. Pareto Charts
  - h. Run Charts
  - i. Scatter Diagrams
  - j. Style Guides
  - k. Other Quality Tools (please specify)

All you need to say is something like, "Hi, Numbers 1, 2, and 3e. Later." (Feel free to say more, of course.) I am grateful for your help.

Amy Perry is a Senior Technical Writer for CREW Technical Services, Indianapolis, Indiana. You can reach her at [aperry@nisys.com](mailto:aperry@nisys.com).



#### From "Musing" on page 4.

I have observed that documentation groups are usually in pretty good shape as far as written procedures go, but we tend to ignore some practices that are significant aspects of ISO 9000:

- Document control (keeping copies not only of documents but also of the records, called "quality records," of their creation)
- Knowledge transfer (formalized training, not just "train the trainer" or "how do you do that?")
- Corrective action (a continuous-improvement process)

ISO 9000 includes requirements for measurement. In addition to whatever product (document) measurements we care to take, the

process measurements are the quality records. The quality records are these things: documentation plans, review announcements, sign-off sheets, and completed production checklists.

If you follow the precepts of ISO 9000, you can turn out products or services of consistent quality. Does that stifle creativity? Not at all. The corrective-action process tends to drive continual improvement. Think of it as a suggestion box with teeth. In the ISO 9000 system, suggestions or complaints cannot be ignored; and once implemented, any change is driven throughout the organization. Can an ISO 9000 organization undergo quantum improvement? I believe so. In theory, there's no difference between a change that improves the process incrementally and one that transforms the process radically.

Next time: Six Sigma—the Holy Grail of documentation quality?

Steven Jong is Documentation Manager at Lightbridge, Inc., in Burlington, Massachusetts. You can reach him at [jong@lightbridge.com](mailto:jong@lightbridge.com).

#### From "Plane Crash" on page 1

Be sure to have a plan. Your plan should answer two questions:

1. How do I recover what is damaged or lost?
2. How do I continue doing business during recovery?

Having a plan will be helpful in keeping everyone focused. And a good disaster recovery plan can act as a calming factor during a very hectic time.

**Repair.** Don't overlook the people! Make sure that those exposed to the damage are cared for physically and emotionally. When recovering from the disaster, choose the right people from both company staff members and vendor partners to help with the recovery. The team makes all the difference. Select people who are stress-healthy, efficient, and capable of making logical decisions quickly. Take advantage of the newest scanning technology to improve your chances of recovering damaged hard-copy documentation.

Remember that it doesn't have to be perfect, and *some* disaster planning is better than *no* disaster planning! Disasters happen every day—are you next? Will you be prepared?

John Kump is Manager of Configuration Services at Baxter Healthcare Corporation in Irvine, CA.

#### From "Transitioning" on page 1.

creating any new documentation required to support the new standard. You may also find this an ideal time to restructure your documentation set, especially the Level I and Level II documentation, to meet the new format of ISO 9001:2000.

Practical experience with the use of matrices to direct users to the location of appropriate documents has proven to be less than ideal. As well, the maintenance of documentation, and the control of changes, can become a nightmare using a matrixed structure. The use of a matrix to reference how existing documentation fits into the new structure can, however, provide a basis for your gap analysis. It also will provide you with a roadmap for the final implementation of a revised documentation structure meeting the requirements of ISO 9001:2000, and the goals of the organization.

Ralph Robinson is author of the book "Documenting ISO 9000: Guidelines for Compliant Documentation" available through R2 Innovations in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.



## What's Inside?

The Plane Crash .....	1
Transitioning to ISO 9001:2000 .....	1
SIGNificant News .....	2
BookQueue: Memory Joggers Finish First in the Race for Quality .....	3
Musing on Metrics: Documentation and ISO 9001 .....	4
Welcome New Team Members .....	4
In the Trenches: Message in a Bottle from My Desert Island .....	5