



The Technical Communicators Association of New Zealand
Presents

New Directions in Technical Communication

The New Zealand conference for information developers

Quality Hotel Parnell Conference Centre, Auckland, New Zealand

- **Conference: Thursday 25 and Friday 26 October 2012**
- **Workshops: Wednesday 24 and Saturday 27 October 2012**

The Technical Communicators Association of New Zealand is the professional association for technical communicators and information developers in New Zealand. TCANZ conferences offer a great opportunity to meet other professionals, share ideas, and build networks.

We'd like to invite you to our 2012 Conference, which has the theme of "New Directions in Technical Communication". This year we will be welcoming expert presenters from Australia, Canada, the United States and of course New Zealand.

Our presenters will use this theme as their main focus but will discuss a wide range of topics including:

- ▶ Case studies on Agile scrum development and careers for technical communicators
- ▶ Developments in mobile technology for technical communicators
- ▶ Grammar, controlled language, and the benefits of using plain English
- ▶ The implications of wikis and social media tools to our profession
- ▶ And much more.

On Wednesday, 24th October, we are delighted to have Saul Carliner running two half-day workshops: *Practical tips for effective, efficient projects* and *A crash course in writing e-learning programs*. As an exciting extra for this conference, on Saturday 27th, Neil James will be running a half-day workshop: *See the wood and the trees: structure mapping for longer documents*.

Please note the conference and workshop dates in your calendar and make sure you forward this brochure to your colleagues and friends!

Steve Moss

President, Technical Communicators Association of New Zealand

TCANZ would like to thank our sponsors.



Conference Sponsors

Platinum sponsor



Adobe

Gold sponsor



Silver sponsors



Graduate Diploma of
Information Design



madcap
software



WRITE
Information with clarity

Bronze sponsors



For full conference details, including costs, timetables, and booking information, see the TCANZ website:
<http://www.tcanz.org.nz/Events/TCANZ+Conference+2012.html>

Conference Venue

The 2012 conference will be held at the [Quality Hotel Parnell Conference Centre](#), Auckland, New Zealand.

For more details on the conference venue and accommodation options, visit the [conference accommodation page](#) on the TCANZ website.

Workshops

Wednesday 24 October :

- ▶ 9am – 12.30pm: Saul Carliner - **Practical tips for effective, efficient projects**
- ▶ 1.30pm – 5pm: Saul Carliner - **A crash course in writing e-learning programs**

Saturday 27 October:

- ▶ 9am – 12.30pm: Neil James - **See the wood and the trees: structure mapping for longer documents**

All workshops will be held at the Quality Hotel Parnell Conference Centre, Auckland, New Zealand.

To register to attend a workshop, go to the [TCANZ website](#). Workshop registrations open on 1st July.

Entertainment and Networking Opportunities

Pre-conference cocktail party

Meet the speakers, your fellow delegates, and the TCANZ committee at the pre-conference cocktail party on Wednesday 24 October from 6pm. The conference registration desk is open from 5pm to about 7.30pm on Wednesday so that you can miss the rush on Thursday morning.

The cocktail party is hosted by TCANZ and there is no extra charge for conference delegates.

Conference dinner

Unwind after Thursday's activities and extend your social networking by attending the conference dinner on Thursday evening, starting at 7pm. For more information, check the website or conference programme.

You can book your place at the conference dinner when you register for the conference.



Sample the unique character of the [Parnell shopping centre](#), only a 10 minute walk from the conference venue.



For full conference details, including costs, timetables, and booking information, see the TCANZ website:
<http://www.tcanz.org.nz/Events/TCANZ+Conference+2012.html>

Workshop Details

Saul Carliner - Practical tips for effective, efficient projects

Wednesday 24 October, 9am – 12.30pm

Suitable for

- ▶ Senior technical communication managers.
- ▶ Managers of technical communication groups and senior technical communication professionals who have project experience but are looking for ways to formalise and strengthen their knowledge.

Workshop overview

Effectively managing a technical communication and instructional design project involves a unique set of skills: effectively "selling" the project to stakeholders, clearly establishing expectations regarding schedule, budget, and quality; tracking the project as it proceeds and ensuring it runs smoothly – even when it appears otherwise; and closing a project with an eye to the future.

This workshop develops these skills through case studies, interactive exercises, and related class discussions.

What you should learn

After completing this workshop, you should be able to apply at least 5 specific tips for effectively and efficiently managing projects.

Specifically, you should be able to:

- ▶ Describe the role of business cases in "selling" a project to stakeholders, whether internal or external.
- ▶ Describe 3 considerations for scheduling and budgeting a project.
- ▶ Establish expectations regarding project quality.
- ▶ "Educate" new stakeholders on how to effectively participate on projects.
- ▶ Maintain healthy relationships with stakeholders during a project.
- ▶ Report the status of ongoing projects.
- ▶ Handle unplanned challenges related to schedule and budget.
- ▶ Handle unplanned challenges related to people.
- ▶ Conduct a project post-mortem.

Saul Carliner - A crash course in writing e-learning programs

Wednesday 24 October, 1.30pm – 5pm

Suitable for

People who have never developed training programs or have little experience doing so.

Workshop overview

Transfer your skills in technical and professional communication for e-learning. After exploring the essential similarities and differences between technical and professional communication, providing an overview of the instructional design process, and the essential components of a course, this workshop guides you in developing 3 essential skills for designing e-learning programs: writing objectives, writing tests, and writing for skill development rather than information sharing.

Throughout the workshop, you'll receive practical tips, opportunities to practice the skills, and criteria and worksheets for making fundamental design decisions.

Note that course assumes that you use authoring tools to develop your online learning materials, but it does not provide training or guidance for using these tools.

What you should learn

After completing this workshop, you should be able to develop an e-learning program.

Specifically, you should be able to:

- ▶ Describe at least 5 fundamental differences between technical communication and instructional design.
- ▶ Describe the role of the ADDIE process in structuring instructional design activities.
- ▶ Write behavioural objectives for an e-course.
- ▶ Given behavioural objectives, write appropriate activities, and test questions.
- ▶ Given behavioural objectives and test questions, write a lesson to develop those skills.

For full conference details, including costs, timetables, and booking information, see the TCANZ website:

<http://www.tcanz.org.nz/Events/TCANZ+Conference+2012.html>

Workshop Details

Neil James - See the wood and the trees: structure mapping for longer documents

Saturday 27 October, 9am – 12.30pm

Suitable for

Intermediate to senior technical communicators.

Workshop overview

When writing or reviewing a longer document, it is far too easy to be drawn into the detail and lose sight of the overall architecture – a classic case of not seeing the woods for the trees.

This presentation will demonstrate the Plain English Foundation's structure mapping tool, which evaluates the information design of a long text against 5 criteria:

- ▶ structural design
- ▶ complexity
- ▶ balance
- ▶ headings
- ▶ numbering and navigation.

The tool applies a series of benchmarks under each criterion to score the architecture of a document and assess how it can be improved. I will illustrate the tool using documents such as reports and manuals.

Structure mapping is particularly useful for technical writers working with subject matter experts on long documents. By diagnosing the faults of a document architecture clearly and objectively, the tool helps to negotiate a document's structure and avoid costly re-work.

What you should learn

The workshop will use a mixture of classroom, individual, and small-group activities. This will enable participants to learn the theory and research basis for the tool's criteria, but then apply the concepts to real-world examples using a structure mapping worksheet.

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- ▶ Prepare a structure map based on an existing text or draft outline.
- ▶ Understand and apply 5 criteria to evaluate the information architecture of a document.
- ▶ Use the evaluation results to improve the document's structure.

For full conference details, including costs, timetables, and booking information, see the TCANZ website:
<http://www.tcanz.org.nz/Events/TCANZ+Conference+2012.html>

Keynote Presentations

Saul Carliner - The future of the technical communication brand

Thursday 25 October, 9am

On the one hand, the field of technical communication existed long before the dot com bubble and the recent economic crisis. On the other hand, both have had a profound effect on the communication industry in general, and technical and professional communication in particular. This presentation explains how and what it means moving forward.



Specifically, this presentation places the current situation of the field into a broader perspective of our history, describes the opportunity presented to technical communicators by the economic downturn and the return (we hope) to worldwide economic prosperity, identifies specific projects occurring around the globe that could reshape and strengthen the technical communication brand, and explains how unity of vision about technical communication is central to all of these efforts.

Neil James - The future for technical writing in a converging communications profession

Friday 26 October, 9am

The passing of laws such as the Plain Writing Act in the United States present significant opportunities for communications professionals. Governments around the world are increasingly looking for ways to mandate clear communications because of the social and economic benefits it can bring.



Yet practitioners in fields such as technical writing, plain language, editing, information design, or usability are struggling to maximise these opportunities. Unlike professions such as law, engineering, or medicine, we tend to operate in silos, and we do not work to mandated standards within a certified structure tied to a rigorous research base and dedicated tertiary training.

This presentation will answer such questions as:

- ▶ What are the differences between disciplines such as technical writing and plain language?
- ▶ How have different communications disciplines emerged historically?
- ▶ What forces are likely to reshape communications practice for the future?
- ▶ How will these forces affect individual practitioners in the next 10 to 20 years?
- ▶ What benefits would a single communications profession bring, and what costs are there to remaining fragmented?
- ▶ What are the requirements for attaining professional status?
- ▶ What might a unified communications profession be called?
- ▶ What relationships would the profession have with government, industry, and the academy?
- ▶ How can we proceed, as individual practitioners and through our organisations?

For full conference details, including costs, timetables, and booking information, see the TCANZ website:
<http://www.tcanz.org.nz/Events/TCANZ+Conference+2012.html>

Presentations

Adam Shelton - More than just a pretty phrase: Four case studies of professional pathways and careers for technical communicators in NZ

There are many specialist skills in technical communication but in a small economy like NZ's, tech communicators often also need to be jacks-of-all-trades; and indeed having skills outside technical writing can add an extra dimension to their work and create more value for their employers or clients.

This presentation presents case studies of 4 New Zealand-based technical communicators who have a wide range of skills and who have used them to create strong and diverse career paths.

- ▶ How can I use my broader life and work skills to benefit my technical writing career?
- ▶ How can I raise the profile of technical communication in my organisation?

Anne Gentle - social media, social networks, and social relevance in tech comm

In a world where readers simply expect websites to offer well-connected experiences, technical documentation teams must consider the possibilities now available to us through the social web – social networking, social relevance, and social media. I want to share what I've learned about documentation as conversation. My presentation shares the methods we use, the ways my thinking has changed, pitfalls to avoid, and measurements that help refine the strategy.

- ▶ How can my team manage social web techniques and mitigate the risks?
- ▶ How can my team be strategic about community documentation efforts?
- ▶ How can my team use metrics and analytics to know if I'm achieving stated goals with social web techniques?
- ▶ How can my team collaborate with community members on documentation?

Carin van Bolderen - Entering the world of ebooks

If you're like us at Allied Telesis Labs, you're looking at your beautiful graphics-rich technical books, wondering if you need to publish them as ebooks. You run a file through a free converter, just to see what happens, and recoil in horror. Hundreds of diagrams disappear, fonts are screwed up, cross-references are a mess, and text boxes and tables are all over the place. Where do you even start?

This presentation describes Allied Telesis Labs' tribulations and success in creating beautiful graphics-rich technical ebooks.

- ▶ Why publish ebooks? What's wrong with PDFs?
- ▶ A (very brief) history of ebook formats.
- ▶ How do people read ebooks anyway?
- ▶ Processes and tools for creating ebooks, starting with document sources in FrameMaker, InDesign, or Word.
- ▶ Dealing with graphics, tables, cross-references, multiple chapters, TOCs, and interactive elements.
- ▶ Traps and tips.

Cindy Staudt - Does grammar matter?

Does grammar still matter? It's a broad question, but in a technical communication and information design context, an important one. And most professionals would resoundingly say, "Yes, it does still matter!"

The simple fact remains that grammar, spelling, and usage guidelines evolved to make communication clear. We advocate for plain language, so how does grammar figure into that?

During the presentation, we'll discuss:

- ▶ Your grammar pet peeves. Go ahead – you'll be in a safe place, and everyone who writes has them. Feel free to share.
- ▶ How poor grammar and spelling can impact on communication – and the bottom line.
- ▶ Grammar in the 21st century, including how we punctuate, spell, and capitalize computer-related items.

For full conference details, including costs, timetables, and booking information, see the TCANZ website:
<http://www.tcanz.org.nz/Events/TCANZ+Conference+2012.html>

Christine Warren and Emma Harding - Sharepoint: one tool to rule us all?

This presentation explains how Airways is using both Sharepoint and Author-it to manage information, including:

- ▶ Explanation of the need for both platforms and the scope of each platform. Content management (and enterprise content management) vs document management vs component content management.
- ▶ Brief overview of the reasons for the Sharepoint implementation and a summary of the project roll-out – highs and lows.

Key questions answered include:

- ▶ Why do so many different tools all call themselves content management systems?
- ▶ What is enterprise content management?
- ▶ What is component content management?
- ▶ Can SharePoint really do everything?
- ▶ What is Author-it Aspect?

Dave Gash - Better, faster, cheaper! The power of controlled language in user assistance

Controlled languages use basic writing rules and tightly-controlled vocabularies to make sentences simpler and more consistent. Already widely used in aerospace, defence, and other precision-critical industries, controlled language is finding its way into other technical arenas such as medicine, finance, and of course user assistance.

This session introduces you to controlled language and its many benefits, explains how to approach the adoption of controlled language in your own document sets, and looks at some available controlled language software and services. You'll find that controlled language is a logical, accessible technology that can truly make your documentation better, faster, and cheaper!

You will learn:

- ▶ Background and concepts of controlled language
- ▶ Benefits of using a controlled language
- ▶ How dictionaries can be adapted and developed
- ▶ What products and services are available.

Dave Gash - Creating user annotations with HTML5

Way back in the olden days (circa 1995), users could add their own annotations to RTF-based WinHelp. Then along came HTML-based help, soon followed by WebHelp, and user annotations became practically impossible to implement. But with HTML5's local storage feature, user annotations are once again a practical and useful content-enhancement device. This session explores local storage and shows how your users can add their own notes to your WebHelp topics or Web pages.

You will learn:

- ▶ How the HTML5 localStorage object works
- ▶ How to save and retrieve user annotations
- ▶ How to associate annotations with specific pages
- ▶ How to add an attractive annotation area to your pages.

Howard Warner - Fuzzwords: what's our fine language coming to?

Today's media are always quick to expose and comment on new directions in word usage. And dictionary compilers are striving to keep up with the latest words from popular milieus (street slang, social networks, etc) or high-profile fields such as computing.

Through translating countless public documents into plain English, Howard Warner has isolated a common lexical thread for which he has coined the term 'fuzzwords'. These are the words everyone seems to be using. But they are vague enough that they could mean absolutely anything – or nothing at all.

This presentation aims to answer the following questions:

- ▶ What's happening to our language these days?
- ▶ What words are 'correct'?
- ▶ Will they still be in use in 5/10/20 years' time, or will I have to learn a whole new vocabulary?
- ▶ How can I be more dynamic in writing for my audience?
- ▶ How can I engage the public better?

Lawrence Smith - The mobile future

In 2014 it is forecast that more people will access the internet via mobile devices, rather than conventional computers. As a result, it's vital that business and communicators start preparing themselves to deliver information and interaction in mobile spaces.

Rather than an in-depth look at one aspect of mobile, we propose a primer on a variety of topics, including but not limited to:

- ▶ Mobile usage (stats, predicted growth)
- ▶ Building Apps vs Mobile sites
- ▶ Writing copy for mobile (less is more)
- ▶ SEO for mobile
- ▶ Mobile advertising.

Luke Strongman - Effective communication for teaching practices using learning management systems in distance education

Teaching via instructional communication using learning management systems (LMSs) or virtual learning environments (VLEs) in distance education may take a myriad of forms from largely autonomous student self-management to continuous instructional communication guidance and interventions by educators and teachers.

The purpose of this presentation is to explore various strategies of communication practices in teaching communication using learning management systems in distance education – to demonstrate examples of good communication practices and hence explain how communication influences teaching online.

- ▶ What are the most effective communication methods and styles for teaching practices using LMSs in distance education?
- ▶ What communication methods and styles allow optimum information retention and course navigation in teaching practices via LMSs in distance education?
- ▶ Are teaching communication methods online influenced by psychological factors?
- ▶ What communication practices are shown to be effective in engaging learners?
- ▶ To what extent can new technologies help or hinder traditional teaching communication methods?

Meredith Thatcher – Is an e-book index worth the e-paper it's written on?

The dual purpose of my presentation will be to:

- ▶ Show the value of a back-of-book index to a technical book, no matter on what medium the book is held or how we access the book as readers now and into the future.
- ▶ Show the value of indexing the e-book, by identifying new ways of thinking about indexing.

I will identify changes in back-of-book indexing as the book has transformed from a traditional, weighty, paper and ink 'doorstop' into an electronic, light, and immediately accessible ebook.

Audience questions that I will address include:

- ▶ Why do we use an index?
- ▶ What is the value of an index to any book?
- ▶ Why do we need an index in an ebook?
- ▶ How do we create an index when we don't know how people will access it?
- ▶ How is the profession of indexing changing?

Paul Watson - Creating an intranet on a wiki for Conservation Volunteers Australia

This was an amazing project, undertaken in the first half of 2012, that combined voluntary tech writer effort through the Atlassian Foundation with community licenses for Confluence wiki and the RefinedWiki plugins, to create a corporate intranet for CVA (a non-profit organisation). High on their wish list were:

- ▶ Greater collaboration across projects and teams
- ▶ Mobile editing of the wiki
- ▶ Using social media to swell the internal and external buzz about CVA
- ▶ Integration with legacy SharePoint content.

Paul will talk about how tech writers at Atlassian wove all these threads together into Confluence, the adoption process and training they assisted with, and how well the new intranet is meeting expectations 6 months later.

For full conference details, including costs, timetables, and booking information, see the TCANZ website:
<http://www.tcanz.org.nz/Events/TCANZ+Conference+2012.html>

Rebecca Officer - Agile Scrum development: The good, the bad, and the ugly

Allied Telesis Labs started adopting Scrum a couple of years ago. This has presented quite a challenge for the writers, as well as having definite advantages.

In this session, I'll lead a discussion of the advantages and the challenges, both ours and those seen by other attendees. I'll illustrate it with examples from our projects and from the wider tech writing community.

These are the main challenges we've found and I expect to discuss:

- ▶ each writer having to be assigned to multiple teams
- ▶ multitasking, because writers have to do something on each project during each sprint
- ▶ more content re-work, because of keeping up with each iteration of the code
- ▶ the Definition of Done – when to fit in peer review, polishing and final preparation for production
- ▶ the time spent on Ceremonies as opposed to actually writing
- ▶ how involved writers should be in each team, which has varied from being full team members to taking a contractor-like role
- ▶ effective ways for estimating each sprint's deliverables
- ▶ long-term resource planning. Scrum has led to less certainty about future content requirements – or maybe has removed the previous illusion of certainty!

Grant Mackenzie - From quill to iPad

A video library can be a better solution for introducing new concepts to clients, for providing user assistance and for effective user training.

From quill to iPad is a case study showing how the presenter's video set has been created, hosted and used. Grant's last presentation, *Video killed the redundant writer*, encapsulated the thought processes and decisions to be made prior to creating videos. *From quill to iPad* showcases the next steps.

You will learn of the actual making, hosting, dissemination and usage of both internal and external help and other videos. You will delight in the modest successes and be captivated by the spectacular failures. Dreary coding and other stuff (technical term) will be avoided in this presentation. All relevant technical details are available in the extensive accompanying notes.

- ▶ When is video the answer and what are its financial and other benefits?
- ▶ Where should you host your videos and will they run in all browsers and on all devices?
- ▶ Which free tools save you time and money and why is the iPad (not free) such a fabulous video creation tool?
- ▶ What mistakes can you learn from and avoid.

Conference Speakers

Saul Carliner



Saul Carliner is popular speaker, author, and community volunteer. At Concordia University in Montreal, he is Director of the Education Doctoral Program and an Associate Professor of Educational Technology.

His teaching and research focus on the design of content for communication and learning for the workplace, the management of groups that produce this content, and the transfer of research results to practice.

Also a consultant, he provides strategic planning and evaluation services to organizations worldwide, including Alltel Wireless, Lowe's, ST Microelectronics, Turkish Management Centre, and several US and Canadian government agencies.

Among his 8 books are the popular technical communication text, *Techniques for Technical Communicators* (with past TCANZ keynote speaker Carol Barnum), the best-selling *Training Design Basics*, and the brand-new *Informal Learning Basics*.

He has received 5 awards for his articles in the journal *Technical Communication*, including 2 Best of Show awards. He serves on the boards of the Canadian Society for Training and Development and the STC Certification Commission.

He is also a past Research Fellow of the American Society for Training and Development and a Fellow and past international president of the Society for Technical Communication.

He holds degrees from Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Minnesota, and Georgia State University.

Neil James



Neil James is executive director of the Plain English Foundation in Australia, which combines plain-English training, editing and evaluation with a campaign for more ethical public language. The Foundation has trained more than 10,000 professionals in plain English and has revised thousands of documents. Its public language program includes annual events at the Sydney Writers' Festival, as well as 100 interviews and articles in the media each year.

Neil has a doctorate in English from Sydney University and has published over 70 articles and essays on language and literature. His latest book *Modern Manglish* (Scribe, 2011), co-authored with Harold Scruby and illustrated by Alan Moir, skewers the worst excesses of jargon, suitspeak and pollicie waffle. His previous *Writing at Work* (Allen and Unwin, 2007) has become a standard on workplace writing.

He is particularly active in developing plain language as a profession. In 2009, the Foundation hosted the seventh conference of the Plain Language Association InterNational (PLAIN), of which he is currently Vice President. He has since 2008 chaired the International Plain Language Working Group, which published an options paper in 2011 on standards and certification.

Neil has given plenary papers or workshops for conferences as far afield as Amsterdam, Lisbon, Stockholm, Washington, Mexico City, Oslo and Wellington for organisations such as Clarity, PLAIN, the Society of Editors, the Society for Technical Communication and the Style Council.

For full conference details, including costs, timetables, and booking information, see the TCANZ website:
<http://www.tcanz.org.nz/Events/TCANZ+Conference+2012.html>

Adam Shelton

Adam has worked as a technical and corporate communications consultant to leading public and private sector organisations around New Zealand for 15 years. Banking, insurance, manufacturing, transport, film visual effects, education and government are some of the industry sectors he has provided services to.

Before starting out as a communications consultant, Adam worked as an editor and journalist and, before that, briefly as a software developer from where his interest in technical communications was born.

Allied with his daily work with words, Adam has a strong personal interest in the use of language, its possibilities and permutations.

Anne Gentle

Anne Gentle is the author of *Conversation and Community: The Social Web for Documentation*. She works on the OpenStack project now as a Content Stacker, collaborating on community documentation so that any organization can offer cloud computing capabilities using open source software.

Anne is making the second edition of her book available in mid-2012. She explores her experiences in open source, web analytics, and content strategy with use cases and interviews with practitioners. She writes a blog at <http://justwriteclick.com> and welcomes conversation through many means.

Carin van Bolderen

Carin is one of 6 technical communicators at Allied Telesis Labs, in Christchurch. Her career pathway began at Tait Electronics Ltd. as the first female installing radio telephones into cars, taxis, and sometimes very dirty trucks. Carin progressed into Tait's front-line servicing and studied towards her radio technician certificate. Building on her technical background she later gained a Certificate in Business Computing and the Graduate Diploma in Information Design (CPIT).

Since then she has spent many years working in the software industry as a writer, document specialist, and trainer for a range of different Christchurch companies. Her current position of 7 years at Allied Telesis is focused on providing technical information to Network engineers.

Christine Warren

Christine is a senior business transformation consultant and qualified engineer, with extensive experience in public and private sector best-practice systems implementation. Christine has focused on designing and implementing IT-enabled business re-engineering initiatives, predominately in the field of aircraft maintenance. Over her 18-year career she has led major projects at Electronic Data Systems, Qantas, Dash Group Inc., and (as an IBM Global Services Consultant) Ansett New Zealand and Cathay Pacific Airlines. At Airways she has championed and led an integrated Sharepoint/Author-it Aspect implementation.

Cindy Staudt

Cindy is originally from Charleston, South Carolina, in the US (grits=good, rednecks=bad), and earned a Master of Technical and Professional Communication degree from Auburn University. After working as an assistant editor for the Journal of Consumer Affairs and an editor/designer for the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, she moved to Christchurch with her husband and children. In 2007, she began working as a tutor for the Graduate Diploma of Information Design (GDID) programme at Christchurch Polytechnic, teaching writing/editing, research and theory, and visual design.

In 2011, she became programme leader for the GDID.

Dave Gash

Dave Gash is the owner of HyperTrain, a Southern California firm specialising in technology consulting and training for hypertext developers. A veteran software professional with over 30 years of development, documentation, and training experience, Dave holds degrees in Business and Computer Science, and is well known in the tech pubs community as an interesting and engaging technical instructor.

Dave is a frequent speaker at User Assistance conferences and seminars in the US and around the world.

Emma Harding

Emma has been a technical communicator since 1989, and she has written plain English policies and procedures in industry sectors such as banking, health, manufacturing, retail sales, technology, and software. She leads the Streamliners technical writing team, and is a senior member of The Society for Technical Communication, Chair of the Advisory Committee of the Graduate Diploma in Information Design (Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology), and a committee member of the Technical Communicators Association of NZ (TCANZ). She has a BA (Hons) in Linguistics.

Emma has been a certified Author-it consultant since 2003.

Grant Mackenzie

Picture this. It was the early 1980s. New lightning-fast personal computers had made desktop publishing possible. Grant Mackenzie had just been appointed Executive Director and industry communicator/spokesman (gender-neutral speech was in its infancy) for a small professional society. His new computer increased, exponentially, the volume of information circulated to members. Not all appreciated being so well-informed.

"Give the man a quill!" was the famous board directive.

These days Grant is the technical communicator in a New Zealand software house which, having conquered NZ, is taking over Australia. Formerly, he composed print, online and context-sensitive user assistance. Now, he almost exclusively creates video user assistance. His favourite video creation tool is his iPad.

Howard Warner

Howard Warner is a dedicated plain-English specialist and director of Auckland-based Plain English People. He has been editing all kinds of 'public' documents, from a wide range of sectors, for the past 20-odd years. He also trains government and private-sector groups to write clearly and effectively.

Three years ago, he started the Editing and Plain English Group network, under TCANZ's umbrella. His passions in functional writing are sentence structure and word usage.

Lawrence Smith

Known as the Chief Cabbage, Lawrence seeded Cabbage Tree in 1996, a time when the Internet was still unheard of by most businesses in New Zealand. With a team of over 20 these days, and many of New Zealand's leading tourism businesses as clients, Cabbage Tree is now firmly focused on delivering online business solutions for tourism. These days Lawrence isn't allowed to design or develop sites; his job is to come up with the ideas and develop online strategies.

Luke Strongman

Luke Strongman is a Senior Lecturer in Communication at The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.

Meredith Thatcher

Meredith has tailored technical documents for many organisations, including those focused on biosecurity, energy, incident response, and telecommunications. She offers her clients coaching and consulting in seven areas – technical writing, editing, indexing, research, proofreading, publications management, and project management.

Meredith has created technical indexes and delivered public workshops on indexing and is a committee member of the NZ branch of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers.

Paul Watson

Paul Watson is a technical communicator at Atlassian in Sydney, makers of Confluence wiki. In a previous life he was a high school teacher, and has been a technical writer for over ten years.

He has written a variety of customer support materials, including 'on-board' help systems for both the Windows and Mac operating systems, as well as web-based content and printed manuals.

Rebecca Officer

Rebecca manages the Product Documentation group at Allied Telesis Labs, in Christchurch. Her career has involved many aspects of communication, including technical writing, customer support management, business process development and data analysis.

For full conference details, including costs, timetables, and booking information, see the tcanz website:

www.tcanz.co.nz/Events/TCANZConference2012