

# TOUCHING LIVES

Conference Newsletter of STC India Chapter



## STC INDIA 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE MUMBAI | 7-8 DEC 2018

### President's Address

Hi,

STC India Chapter has three major goals: building the community, learning, and networking. For the past 20 years, it has achieved these goals, raising the benchmark each year. The community has grown beyond the vision of the founding members. Technology has definitely helped in bringing the community closer and geographical boundaries have been no hindrance to this growth. The learning has been a continuous process. And, the networking has increased among peers, entrants and experienced professionals.

The unique model of a parent (the STC India Chapter) and many children (the cities) has also helped in making this happen. It is not easy to sustain a chapter for these many years without the support of the chapter members and non-members. This sustainable model is feasible and reliable because of the chapter's volunteers, the backbone of the chapter. Many ask me, "What do I gain in becoming a volunteer or a member?" There are varied answers for people who are trying to demystify this aspect. Ask any volunteer or member what they have gained and each one will have a unique story to tell.

This year we have added a few cities where our tribe is increasing- Coimbatore and Cochin-baby steps today, a giant leap soon. As you all know, major activities in each city include the learning sessions, regional conferences, and workshops. Learning is a continuous process. All which is learnt or imbibed may not be useful, the organization may not be using the technology, tools, or process.

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But, knowledge thus gained is not going to go sour; it will be the power behind an idea or an innovation in the future.

The next two days will see you unlearning, learning, and taking away a huge basket of knowledge. You would have made new friends, met old acquaintances and friends, and increased the network before you go back to the grueling routine of stringent deadlines and expectations. Each one will be touching lives in some way or the other...

Welcome to the 20th Annual Conference of the STC India Chapter. A toast to a wonderful learning experience!!!

Warm Regards

**Kiranmayee**

**STC India Chapter President**

## From the Conference Program Manager

### **The countdown to the conference – Touching Lives**

*“A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame.”*

Our first meeting to kick-start this event took place on March 1, 2018 and since then, there's been no looking back. A dedicated foursome, Aruna Panangipally, Mini Philip, Julie Anthony, and Asha Mascarenhas set the ball rolling by jotting down everything they could think of to make this conference happen. The first and most important decision was the venue. After stepping in and out of several hotels around the most preferred location, Andheri, we were charmed by Holiday Inn. The receptiveness of the staff and their support helped us pin this one down.

We then got into our fold another volunteer, Sanchari Mitra, who used her contacts and connects to help us negotiate prices, fix vendors, and close down on infrastructure and logistics related matters for the main conference. Similarly another volunteer Sangeeta Kataria stepped in and took charge of fixing up a venue for the Pre-conference. From printing to infrastructure, from catering to mementos, they helped with all the decisions and there we are, all ready to set the space ablaze with learning and sharing.

Mini Philip was the first to suggest a conference theme – Touching Lives, and made us think about the numerous ways in which we as technical communicators, user experience experts, user assistance evangelists, editors and writers, and more touch the lives of our customers and their customers through our contribution.

Then came along another important task - of selecting conference papers. Mini and Aruna went through the entries, posted call for papers, advertised and marketed the conference to get our pick of conference speakers. The core team with the help and support of the STC India President, Kiranmayee P and Treasurer Saravanan M, then put together the agenda, found sponsors, fixed up vendors, identified mementos, organized a kit and did everything else it takes to get a conference going.

So here we are, ready for STC India Chapter's 20th Annual Conference.

We hope to imprint in your minds the experience of a conference that is well planned, organized, and executed and aim to leave no stone unturned to make this a truly memorable experience.

**Asha Mascarenhas**

**Conference Program Manager**

## 20 years in the making

I am excited that the STC India Chapter's Annual Conference has finally come to Mumbai, my home city. As we were planning this conference, I thought of the past 20 years and marvelled at how far we have come.

I still vividly remember the very first conference we had in Le Meredien, Bangalore. Two action-packed days in one large room with about 100 of us. We were amazed to see that there were 99 others who did what we did for a living, and with so much passion. That sense of bonding and kinship with the early members of the tribe has only grown with successive conferences.

The Indian technical communication community has since grown and is now at the forefront of delivering the relevant information to the target audience using the appropriate channel. This is reflected in the presentations of the STC India Chapter Annual conferences. Each year, we have a variety of presentations that touch upon various facets of our profession. Presenters share their knowledge and practical experiences, and this helps us learn new and/or better ways of doing things. More importantly, we get a glimpse of the best practices adopted by other organisations and this helps us grow.

This year is no different. This year's conference has *Touching Lives* as its theme, and the presentations are focused on this theme. Come, see for yourself the value being delivered by technical communication professionals across India. For example, hear Kavitha Shinde of PTC speak of how Augmented Reality (AR) is helping people with autism. Then you have Rahul Roy of Deloitte Support Services talking of building a human-centered learning organization.

Times, they are a-changing, and we have quite a few industry leaders speaking on how you need to evolve and adapt to stay relevant and thrive in these changing times.

Apart from the learning, one of the best parts of the conference is meeting with technical communication professionals from across the country. I have made many a lasting contact at various conferences, and indeed, am looking forward to meeting some of them in this year's conference too.

I cannot end this article without mentioning our sponsors who make the event possible. Many of them have been with us through the years and some have come aboard recently. Each of them is a thought leader in their area and we get to learn a lot from them too.

As you can see, I am quite the champion for attending the STC India Annual Conference. 😊 As you are reading this newsletter, I know you are here too. Do connect with me and others, and let us take our community further and higher.

**Aruna Panangipally**

Core Group - Organizing Committee

## Conceptualizing the theme of '*Touching Lives*'

When the organizing committee met up for the first time to plan for the 20th STC Conference in Mumbai, we chanced upon the thought that in our obsession with tools, development models, authoring techniques and such, we tend to forget that the ultimate objective of all that we write is to touch the lives of end users.

All of us agreed that we seem to have lost track of the human factor, be it in design, language, illustrations, or in our overall documentation process. It is the templates and requirements that often drive our documentation. It is then that we decided that in this STC conference, we would work to re-focus and re-align ourselves to see how each of us as technical communicators can touch lives—and thus came to life, the theme of the conference—Touching Lives!

And as soon as it was announced, it brought to life the entire community! Social media reacted with smileys and thumbs-up and often thank-you notes. Enthused by the welcome, we decided to implement the concept at every stage, starting from the conference kit to the conference content.

The call for papers went with a note about presentations aligning with the theme - and what a response we got! Every paper abstract came with a justification about how their work endeavored to touch lives! Be it about how Autism and Augmented reality could work hand in hand or Instructional Design and Accessibility Standards, or balancing People, Process, and Technology, every paper was curated by the Content Committee so that every participant of the Conference would go back proud that their community indeed touches lives!

The conference kit was also a case study in touching lives. We ensured that there would be no plastic, unless absolutely needed, so we chose paper bags instead of any other synthetic material. The pen was one that could grow into a tree if planted after use, but to top it all was the jute folder that was made by the Self-Esteem Foundation for Disabled. When you use that jute folder made by a differently-abled child in a suburb of Navi Mumbai, remember, you touched a life!

**Mini Philip**

Core Group - Organizing Committee

## The Team who made it happen

### **The Core Group (Mumbai)**

- \* Asha Mascarenhas
- \* Aruna Panangipally
- \* Mini Philip
- \* Julie Anthony
- \* Sanchari Mitra

### **Admin Council (National)**

- \* Kiranmayee Pamarthy - President
- \* Edwin Skau - Vice President
- \* Saravanan Manoharan - Treasurer
- \* Nibu Thomas - Immediate Past President
- \* Vimal Chhutani - WebMaster

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# From Content to Context

## *Mapping the route from creating content to touching lives*

- Suyog Ketkar, AVEVA

We, technical communicators, are often called the backstage players. Rarely do we get to meet the consumers of our products and services. Despite that, we must understand—if not feel—their pains and help them get the relief. In this process of stepping into the user's shoes, do we not get too occupied in juggling with tools and methodologies? I explore this question as I answer a few others.

### **Why we do what we do?**

Effective communication (writing, editing, proofreading, et al) is much more than having the technical know-how. It means that I have the skills to connect the minds of Developers (software engineers) to the hearts of the end users. It also means that I know how to rip apart the ambiguities to get to the crux and communicate it with equal ease. Still, none of the many hats that I wear as a technical communicator gives the complete projection of my work. This means, my job of creating technical content is neither easy to do nor easy to explain.

### **Why is creating content hard?**

I deliver content for diverse readers who have varied knowledge on a lot of subjects. So much so that at times I deliver the same document to users, some of whom may be experts, while some may be using a product for the first time. In the recent past, I have also evolved the way I deliver my content: videos and walkthroughs, tutorials, guided access, tooltips, pictures, text, and whatnot—all that spread across formats, personas, and devices. So, how would all that be easy!

### **How am I touching lives?**

Right from the time the users get up from their beds in the morning until the time they slip back into them, I do a lot to make their lives easier. But, for that, I pester my fellow teammates by interrogating them. What do I get out of this? Who do I do it for?

These are some pretty questions that deserve equally pretty answers.

*I transform complex technical information into some simple, usable chunks of actionable items. I help people do wonderful things.*

Throughout the life-cycle of a product, I continue to supply the content for disparate business functions. In the context of Information Technology (both Hardware and Software), I provide referential information and insights for the product's proposal, demos, introductory videos and presentations. If I were to take the analogy of the human body, I could consider the disparate business functions as body parts and the content as the lifeblood. Throughout the various stages of a product's life-cycle, from pre-sales through product requirements, through architecture and design, through development, testing, and deployment, and, later, through after-sales and maintenance.

I contribute to the causal blood that helps the body function. In organizations that assume strict compliance with safety and quality, I help establish and adhere to the product benchmarks. Whether it is FDA, SARA, GMP, CFIHOS or ISO, I provide the required support for helping my team build compliant and trustworthy products and services.

As for the user experience, the design is the first level of interaction for the users; it forms their early opinions. Wherever possible, I provide my inputs on creating intuitive design methodologies. My efforts in streamlining documentation in medicine and hospital administration faculties have considerably reduced the time taken for inpatient and outpatient management.

Organizations in wearables, mobile devices, and the Internet of Things (IoT) are using the quality content that my team provides for composing machine-to-human and machine-to-machine interactions. Some of my friends are doing exciting stuff with chatbots and digital personal assistants like the Siri and Alexa.

Overall, I have been able to explore and establish complete content ecosystems where I provide end-to-end content for all the requirements. I aim to provide contextually relevant information, which is searchable in no specific form: the users themselves can navigate from header-level to line-level information or the other way around based on their convenience.

That way, I also govern how the information is consumed.

This is important when it comes to providing dynamic content; the reader can come from anywhere, yet, the content is responsive to drive the user to the required information.

## Conclusion

In my professional stints, I have helped in formulating need-based communication strategies. I have been a backstage player until now, but I am sure that my efforts will continue to influence every single business function. This also means I use the same set of vocabulary throughout my organization, which brings consistency and holds the disparate business functions together. While this surely touches the lives of my colleagues, it has a positive impact on me, too. With each passing day, I am a better communicator, a better problem solver, and—more importantly—a better person.

The only thing I look for when creating content is to map it to people's problems. The content I create is findable and usable. That's my value proposition. **I spend most of my day's efforts in bringing the information down to its purest form, to its lowest common denominator: the value proposition.** As a technical communicator, what I do significantly increases the value proposition for my products. Much like you, that's how I continue to touch the lives of at least a handful of people around me. This is my story. And, yours, too.

# It's the world of Alexa, Cortana, and Siri!

## Customer success in the age of Voice

- Ravi Kumar Adapa , CA Technologies (past)

*"People-to-people conversations, people-to-digital assistants, people-to-bots and even digital assistants-to-bots - that's the world you're going to get to see in the years to come. Bots are the new apps."* says Satya Nadella who is one of the key visionaries driving the way humans interact with machines.

### Voice Interfaces – what's the big deal

Throughout the history of computing, we have used various methods that are progressively natural to interface with machines: the CLI, screen, keyboard, and mouse were one step in this direction; while Touch screens are the most recent development, the future will most likely hold a mix of Augmented Reality (AR) and VOICE commands. After all, it is only natural and easy to ask a question or have a conversation than it is to type something or enter multiple details in an online form. As voice assistants increasingly become commonplace, writing for conversational interfaces and artificial intelligence will go through significant transformation.

### Future is Conversational

Sale of 40 million devices within last 6 months and availability of 50000+ Alexa skills, do clearly say that Voice is not a fad any more. Voice is a big change, and it's coming at us faster than ever before. Voice-driven experiences are receiving great traction; see how technology giants are launching a voice assistant one after the other (Alexa, Siri, Cortana, OK Google). As Technical Writers and customer success champions, we may need to bring change in content strategy, information design, content consumption, and overall digital experience.

*Using Amazon's Alexa, we can provide superior customer experience at various touch points spanning across buyer and customer journey. We can use Alexa for customer success, starting from product research, on-boarding, customer connect, support, feedback, voice of customer, and a lot more.*



### Alexa for Customer Success

Delivering a seamless digital experience across the customer journey is the foundation of your business success. Here are a few proofs of concepts (PoCs) where Alexa can be used to deliver micro moments across buyer and customer journey for customer delight.

### On-boarding and Adoption

Owing to the complex architecture and the range of operations, our products need great deal of help with getting started. See the flow of the on-boarding PoC.

- Offer the just-in-time and just-right content with on-boarding and adoption.
- Provide procedural guidance on the sequence of operations.
- Draw customer's attention to the best practices, tips, and exceptions during each step.
- Suggest 'what next' steps with installation, administration, integration, and overall adoption of the product.

### Self-Service with Troubleshooting

Create L1 self-support channel by providing timely advice for FAQs with troubleshooting to reduce tickets and support costs.

- Help debug and troubleshoot the issues.
- Suggest the alternatives through info snippets.



### Support and Ticket Management

To help customers raise ticket with ease, update progress of the ticket, and provide resolution.

- Help customers open, track, and close tickets
- Engage and update customers with resolution
- Provide resolution and close the tickets

### Content Marketing and Information Discovery

To provide comparative and analytical articles on how customers can benefit from the marquee features of the product through Voice Search and discovery.

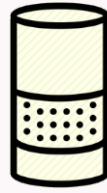
- Analyze voice search strategy for organization.
- Create and optimize content for voice discovery.
- Leverage existing content base and create micro content or snippets that are indexed by popular search engines
- Use REST API and calls for promotion, search, and discovery of right content.

### Customer Connect

Use Voice to regularly update customers with news, updates, fixes, upcoming trainings, and upcoming webinars for more engagement and retention:

- Improve customer experience with targeted, dynamic content delivery in real-time.
- Single point interface for product purchase and renewals.
- Unify all content channels currently available in silos.
- Provide a Voice tool to improve outbound communications with our customers and partners.
- Connect with customers for brand loyalty

Additionally, we can use Voice Interfaces to go beyond features and benefits and create an engaging and lasting relationship with customers.



## Voice User Interfaces 101 Primer

### The Age of VOICE

Touch era is soon going to end as Voice revolution takes over. With Voice Interfaces, Technical content becomes part of customers routines, provides useful insight into product use, and touches customer lives. It's time for businesses to benefit from the power of voice tech.

Almost a billion devices sold with a sales growth of 300%.



### Voice Search

over 200 billion voice searches by 2020 that is 50% of total searches

Siri

Cortana

Alexa,

OK Google

Over 60% people using Voice atleast 2-4 times a day



### VoiceTech Adoption

Voice is all-pervasive. Voice offers the most natural interaction, speed, and ease of use. Voice is the future interface of enterprise businesses.



**NEW WAVE**

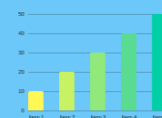


YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE VOICE-DRIVEN, IS YOUR PRODUCT TOO?!!



IS YOUR CONTENT VOICE-READY?

### New Age Tech



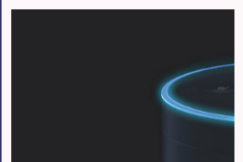
A Voice Assistant uses AI, ML, and NLU to automate engagements, respond instantly, improve customer satisfaction, and increase business efficiencies.

### TECHNICAL CONTENT



Improve customer experience by 10X with Voice First Strategy. Talk to Ravi, Voice Tech Champion [ravikumar.adapa@gmail.com](mailto:ravikumar.adapa@gmail.com) today !

### FUTURE IS VOICE



# Changing lives by changing mine

- Nibu Thomas, Infor

Flab. It's every writer's nightmare. Only, I'm not talking about flab that any editor can help you trim. To touch as many lives as possible, and make a difference, one needs to first be alive! There's no use blaming circumstances for your weighty issues. It's something that is in your control. If your shoes are wearing out too soon, it's time to trim that document called Me!

Maintaining a healthy weight is key to relieving several medical symptoms. Most of us lead sedentary lives. We sit in a place and write. It's time our bodies supported our minds. And it's actually a simple process. I've been on the pudgy side for several years now, complete with the prosperity family pack delicately balanced on a belt! In spite of morning walks and moderation! I tipped the scales at 91 kilos. At 175 cms, I was a good 15 kilos over weight. I could actually hear the machine groan "ouch" each time I stood on the scale. And so I stopped torturing the poor thing. I suffered from severe back pain. I was even hospitalized once for a slip disc. Made me spend weeks together on bed rest. And the first thing the doctor said was – you need to get back in shape.

*They interviewed Vishal Gondal, the CEO of GOQii, a preventive health care startup. I listened very keenly to what he had to say and decided to give it a try.*

I've tried the GE diet. You'll lose 5 to 7 kilos in a week's time. I've tried it. Not very difficult. But you gain it back pretty soon. The key to losing weight is to do it slowly. Just like you gained that weight – slowly! And then I heard about a solution. One of the habits I've developed is listening to different podcasts during my morning walks. One of the podcasts was from Shunya One. They interviewed Vishal Gondal, the CEO of GOQii, a preventive health care startup. I listened very keenly to what he had to say and decided to give it a try.



It's been one of the best decisions I've made. I've lost 10 kilos in a little over 12 weeks! I've promised my wife to stop after I lose another 5. She is worried I'll disappear at this rate!

So what are the insights that you need to understand? I could tell you that it is a matter of mind over matter. But let me simplify this for you. There are just 3 things to keep in mind while venturing on such a mission. And these are not national secrets.

1. What goes in and when.
2. How do you spend the energy generated.
3. Measuring both 1 and 2.



It's really that simple. If you are putting on weight, you are either doing more of 1 than 2. Or you are not doing enough of 2. And since you aren't doing any measurement for 'considerate' reasons, you really don't know where you are until it is kinda of late.

So what did I get for a subscription with GOQii? A fitbit and a coach.

The fitbit helps you set goals and watch what you eat. You can't improve what you can't measure right? That part changes with the device you wear around your wrist. I've actually replaced my wrist watch, since all the old one did was tell the time! You know exactly how many steps you take in a day, how many hours of deep sleep you get. And if you aren't getting enough sleep, trust me, it's a reason to put on weight. And the device also measures your heart rate and blood pressure. So you have something other than your boss to show you how high or low it can go 😊

And I cannot over emphasize this to anyone. It's not tough. Nor is it drastic. That's a promise. All it takes is some Vitamin D. Determination.

So get into shape. Because a well-rounded personality can only get you downhill-faster! You have someone who loves you at home. Try this for them. It is time to touch lives. But let's first begin with your own.

# Adding the essence of multimedia, to touch lives

- Pallavi Vishwanathan, SAP

The basic idea of every invention is to make life easy, and in the modern era, it's also closely associated with appeal and beauty. The typical "Look Good Feel Good" concept is also applicable to our products. Innovators are coming up with various innovations that involve making processes simpler and more beautiful by using Artificial Intelligence, Chatbots, Machine Learning, IoT, and much more. The archaic form of documents in the form of CDs and PDFs are a big NO these days.

## As Information Developers, how can we do anything at all?

We can do much more than you could probably imagine, here are few tips:

**Online help:** Online help in the form of tutorials, guided tours, web assistants, html formats etc. not only simplifies the use of an application, but also adds beauty and a feel-good factor so the user does not get stuck. We should aim at making the process of using the application, and in turn the user-experience, a seamless one.

**Minimalism:** Making the written content as minimal as possible is what we try to achieve. Improving the UI and making it as intuitive as possible is the best solution here. We as technical writers can make use of tutorials that contain a short description instructing the user on what actions need to be performed, in a step-by-step manner.

**Using web-assistants:** Using web-assistants like X-ray can also minimize the text that goes into a guide. These web assistants involve creation of hotspots on the various buttons/ options on the UI, which can be in the form of bubbles, or other shapes. Clicking on these hotspots would provide some crisp and clear information on the respective button or option.

And, if you're thinking of solutions that would make your HTML documentation better then consider placing them at the right places and ensuring that it's available to customers at the right time.

**Images and screenshots:** Images and screenshots, if added in our documents, help customers in understanding the product easily without having to go back to the product and trying to relate what terms are present in the document and in which screen or part of the product. By using images, juggling between the document and the product is greatly reduced. Indicating the position of certain UI buttons and options using screenshots in the documents would make it simple for customers to follow. That's what our ultimate purpose is, isn't it?

## Consider making a video instead of a GIF:

- *If you have more than 5 steps to be performed*
- *If you need more than 15 seconds to explain the procedure*
- *If the user expects a high-quality video*

**Image maps:** Image maps allow you to specify linkable areas in an image. Clicking on a link would redirect you to various topics in a document and to other websites as well. You can use one image and divide it into various parts instead of having separate image files. You can also provide a short description to each hotspot that you assign. This would appear on hovering the mouse over the respective areas of the image.

A typical example would be a landscape system with multiple components in the graphic that leads to details about that specific component. It makes navigation within the document a cakewalk.

**GIFs:** GIFs are to be used when there are a few steps to be followed and a screenshot wouldn't suffice. GIFs complement your written documentation. You can consider this option when you don't have sufficient time to create a video or don't have access to a native speaker for a voice-over.

(contd on page 13)

## INNOVATION & DIGITAL ACCELERATION



Create well-structured documentation that can be accessed on any digital platform such as mobile phones, tables, computers and more

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GIFs can be created in a jiffy using various tools, the simplest being Camtasia Studio and Snagit Editor (from v13). Adding these GIFs at relevant positions make it extremely simple, that even a 10-year-old can follow the instructions.

**Videos:** Today videos are to documentation what icing is to cake. Highlighting the latest features of your product, capturing complicated procedures as videos and allowing them to play within the documentation enhances the streamlining of instructions in a document.

All of us prefer going through videos rather than reading pages of content. We would simply pause a video, follow the instructions and then resume the video.

However, in case of written documentation, it would take a few minutes for us to hunt for the step that we performed last, once our eyes are off the content. Pheww!

Consider making a video instead of a GIF:

- If you have more than 5 steps to be performed
- If you need more than 15 seconds to explain the procedure
- If the user expects a high-quality video

Don't you think all this would simply make the users happy and guarantee customer satisfaction for your organization's products? YES.

It's time for us to start thinking big and delivering efficient content thus, touching people's lives.

# Touching Lives – Feeling Blessed!

-Mrunalini Kelshiker

We, technical communicators, touch lives of end users when we are successful in making their lives easy. We act as caring hands for users to eliminate their troubles and make them experience the difference in the real world. We make Knowledge Transfer possible, which ignites consciousness in humans leading to betterment of lives and enlightenment.

We touch lives of users by influencing them, especially by enhancing their comprehension regarding the product/service delivered. We are fortunate enough to impact lives of other humans.

## Humanity at its core

We are humans, writing for humans. If we visualize a bigger picture, documentation is connecting humans at two ends.

- At one end - UI/UX designers (who design the product), Developers (who make the product), Testers (who test the product)
- At the other end - Users (who use the product)

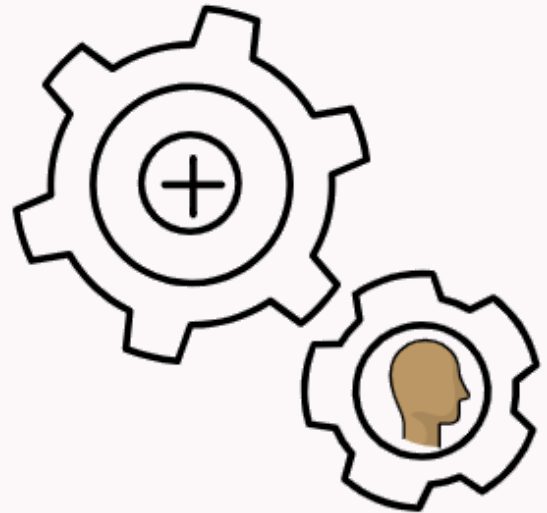
*We treat our end users as priority and consider them to be of utmost importance.*  
*The most popular quote “Customer is King” is well deserved at this point*

A piece of writing is worthless, no matter how intelligently it has been designed/written, if it does not make things easier for users.

It is time to inject humanity first in our thought-process, the rest will align automatically. Usability is one such factor that will come into force.

## Usability – an inevitable factor

How many of us would like to leave our users irritated at the end for not getting the desired information? The complexity of the interface or documentation leaves users scratching their heads. In contrast, effective documentation makes complex interactions easy to understand.



When we talk about human interaction with the application or document, we subconsciously measure its usability. The usability of a document can be measured through the effortlessness of the users in getting enough information to achieve their goals. The document should be designed in such a way that users can get the required information in lesser number of mouse clicks. Do not make it a challenging task for users to figure-out what the documentation means.

Understand the real time business scenarios to construct use cases and add them in documentation. Apply usability techniques in documentation, it can boost the user experience dramatically.

As we all agree, technology is of no use if it is difficult to use. The implementation of tools, design and process are meant to improve end users' lives, not to make their lives harder.

It is important to know what matters to end users while writing documentation for them.

**It matters to me, I'm not an alien on the planet Earth.**



How much weightage is given to content creation matters more when the content is being delivered to end users.

The way—what and how—we communicate via documentation matters to end users. It impacts how our users feel when reading the language we use in the documentation.

Clarity of subject, purpose, and audience throughout the DDLIC brings clarity in the output. Audience should be the essence of the methodology that you follow in all the three stages of documentation:

- Information gathering - through study, interviews, or using the product
- Writing - through clear and concise language
- Reviewing - through constructive feedback

Confusing content raises ambiguity for users, which eventually causes discontentment for the product. To address the needs of humanity, we need to put ourselves in shoes of the end users.

Our strength lies in keeping pace with the constantly changing technology world and providing innovative solutions to solve users' problems. The importance of content remains intact even in today's world of hi-tech applications and UIs.

We are talking about sustaining humanity in a world of AI, where algorithms make applications smarter and powerful enough for calculations, data processing, and reasoning without human intervention.

When you start thinking about humans and sympathizing with the community, you enter the spectrum of spirituality automatically. This is the right moment, I think, to quote the verse from the Upanishad -

*"Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah"*  
(May All become Happy)

We, technical communicators, should feel ourselves blessed that we got chance to assist users in knowing what they need to know



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# Volunteerism in STC - a powerful means to touch lives in the community

- Punit Shrivastava

STC India 2018 - Hyderabad City Representative

As a technical writer acting as the voice of a company, we are the de-facto friends of customers / end users who need helping hands to sail through while using our company's product or services. We always knew that. Having worked as a Technical Writer for 14+ years, I have experienced that directly when the documentation team receives not only thank you notes from internal teams spread across development, QA, sales or even pre-sales but also feedback from customers. And, then that is followed by acknowledgment from management on the important role documentation team plays in achieving today's key objective: customer satisfaction.

I wanted to go beyond what I was achieving and make a bigger impact within the society without joining an NGO and just by using individual skill. In early 2018, I thought it was possible but was not actually aware about how to achieve the bigger goal.

After sitting on the fence for years and attending three STC Annual sessions in different cities, in 2018 I decided to take the plunge and be part of the non-profit group with the desire to be useful to the technical writing community. Acting as STC India 2018 City Representative for Hyderabad, while also managing my office and personal work, had its own challenges. But, can we ever smile unless we face challenges?

*Our regional conference took these efforts of sharing and helping to the next level. The efforts of the technical writing community of Hyderabad made the society of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh notice the impact and benefits.*



We were to meet for an informal gathering at a shopping mall. Unfortunately, that morning I woke up on the wrong side of the bed and sprained my back. As a result, I couldn't go to work or attend the meeting, which I was supposed to organize. But, every adversity has a silver lining. Throughout the day I was coordinating with the team and was surprised to find out that all the participants (most of whom I had never met before) switched to organizer's role to help everyone. The meeting exceeded all expectations. The participants of Hyderabad, showed how eager they were to share and seek knowledge, meet and help each other.

We didn't take long to conduct our first full-day session. The response was overwhelming. We had to limit seats and refuse entries because of space limitations. Some more sessions and workshops received similar response. The increase in the number of participants was equally matched by the huge responses received for presenting papers in every session. The community joined hands voluntarily thereby contributing towards building a bigger hub to cater to the demands of knowledge, solutions to work-related challenges, and jobs.



Our regional conference took these efforts of sharing and helping to the next level. The efforts of the technical writing community of Hyderabad made the society of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh notice the impact and benefits. With the regional conference being covered on television and newspapers coupled with our desire to help society by making people ready for a new career opportunities made educational institutions reach out to us. In addition, students approached us on how to become future technical writers.

We have come a long way as we approach STC India Annual Conference 2018. Now, we have a vibrant technical writing community, across states, still eager to not only help each other but also help the society and educational institutions in getting them ready for future jobs.

Similar efforts all over India will certainly help Technical Writing become one of the most sought-after profession and help get more respect within IT and other industries. Hopefully, 2019 will help us reach a higher level in the efforts to touch lives!

So far, 2018 has not only provided me with an affirmation but also multiple examples to share how being a technical writer can touch the life of others. Stand up as a community that is active and regularly performs activities selflessly. Just by simple knowledge sharing and extending our help, without investing any extra penny, we can make a huge difference in the society and our own writing community.



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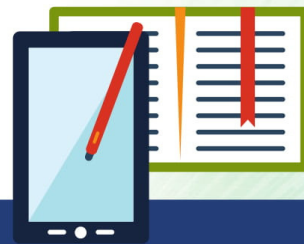
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