

Proposal for the Lone Star Community: Getting to Know the LSC

Prepared for Jackie Damrau
Prepared by Katie Wilson
Lone Star Community Volunteer
April 21, 2008

Introduction

For this project, the Lone Star Community (LSC) needed a way to teach new LSC members how to get involved in the community. To achieve this, Jackie Damrau asked for a web-based program that would inform new members of all the opportunities they have as members of the LSC. The proposed training that follows is user-friendly, informative, and maintains the standards currently held for online training.

To meet the LSC's needs, I have designed a web-based training module that new members can interact with, while also learning about all the benefits the LSC provides. The module will use pictures, testimonials, and links to inspire new members to get involved in the LSC.

The web-based program is called **Getting to Know the LSC**. I will discuss the planning that went into this program including analyzing why the LSC needs this program, why they should choose my program, the characteristics of the learners, and the constraints this project will have. I will also discuss the design of this program and how it will work, how long the project will take to complete and at what cost, and my qualifications for working on this program.

Product Planning

Choosing This Program

New LSC members often do not know how to get involved in the LSC. This happens for numerous reasons, the main one being that many new members cannot come to the meetings where LSC opportunities are brought to attention. The LSC should choose this program because it will show new members how to get involved and how to stay involved. This program will also inform new members about what help and resources the LSC provides.

An online solution is the best choice for the LSC because its members are computer savvy and constantly use the internet for their information needs. Most members will get information from the LSC website, but new members can find it difficult to navigate. This online training solution will help new members find what they need and give them the motivation to go to certain links on the LSC website, namely those that pertain to what the LSC can provide and how members can get involved in the LSC.

An online training solution can also provide an opportunity for long-standing members of the LSC. This project provides the opportunity for those members to volunteer their time to put the project together (which gives them extra points as members of the LSC). The LSC could also enter this project into competitions and show off how they contribute to the online training world.

Web-based Training Similar to "Getting to Know the LSC"

What I have found regarding other online training related to this project included the following themes:

- Most online training of this nature is still text based.
- Most sites require a membership to view the training.
- Training sites cost money to build (thousands of dollars).
- The sites take more than 15 minutes to get through.
- Many use PowerPoint or other non-interactive methods on their sites and require a lot of reading.
- Most sites are not interactive.

The LSC should choose my product for the following reasons:

- The training will be 15 minutes long to avoid losing the new members interest.
- The site will be interactive. This means new members will not just watch a bunch of slides pass by, but will have the chance to interact with the site.
- The new members will have control over what they view first and last.
- The site will inspire new members to get involved in the LSC by using testimonials, pictures, and links to the website.

- The site is solely volunteer-based, which means it's free.
- The site will include characters that interact with the new member by talking to them in a personal manner and will help the new member find the information that is most valuable to them.

New Member Characteristics

The main audience for this site, as stated above, is new members to the LSC. These new members are technical communicators or technical writing students in the DFW area. The new members will have varying degrees of experience in technical communication ranging from still learning about it in college to having thirty or more years experience in the field. The new members will take this course either right before they join or after they have joined the LSC. (They may have taken this course before they join if they looked at the website before joining. I think a program that is accessible to all from the website will make it easier for everyone to use and also provide a quick way of seeing what the LSC does.)

The members will take this course for many reasons; however, their main motivation will be they are not yet sure how to get involved in the LSC and they need a “start-up” guide. Most new members will access this program from their home or office computer during their break, or when they have spare time. Since all members are part of the technical communication field, they will all have an extensive background in using computers and online training.

Program Constraints

The main constraint this project will have is the amount of time volunteers have to devote to it. While volunteers are usually more than willing to help, they also have to balance their work and home life, meaning volunteers have inconsistent schedules when it comes to volunteering. However, LSC has a dedicated group of volunteers and given three months to complete this project, the program will get done well and on time.

The other constraint placed on this program is that it must be free to create. Volunteers to the LSC have already helped to alleviate this constraint by volunteering their time and software to help build the program.

Product Design

Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal of this project is to help new LSC members know how to get involved in LSC activities and have the new members actually get involved in those activities. The four main objectives for this course are as follows:

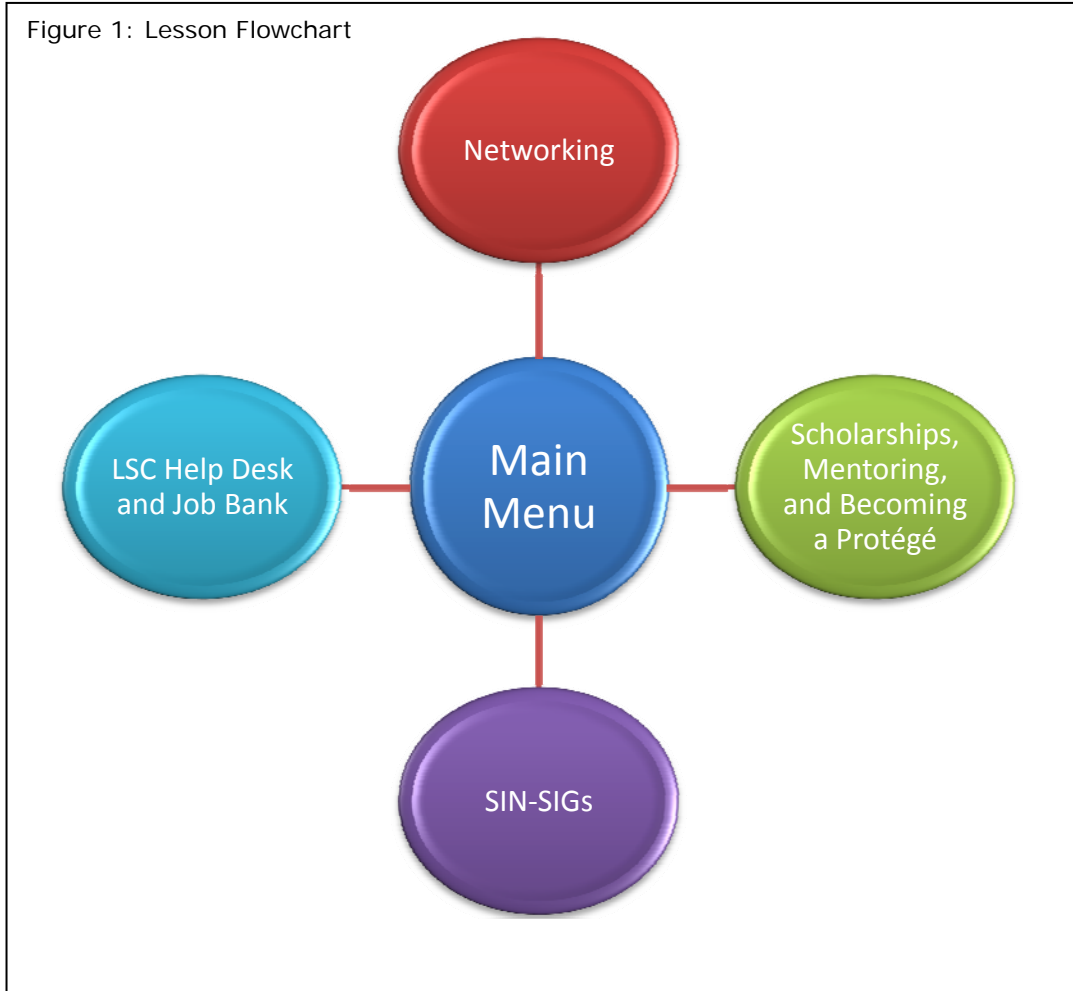
- New members know what opportunities are available to them at the LSC. These opportunities include networking, volunteering, participating in SIN-SIGs, mentoring, and becoming a protégé.
- New members know what help the LSC can provide them. These help items include the help desk, scholarships, job banks, and meetings.
- New members have an idea about where to find this information on the LSC website.
- New members take advantage of the opportunities they have during the course to get involved with the LSC.

Training Content and Organization

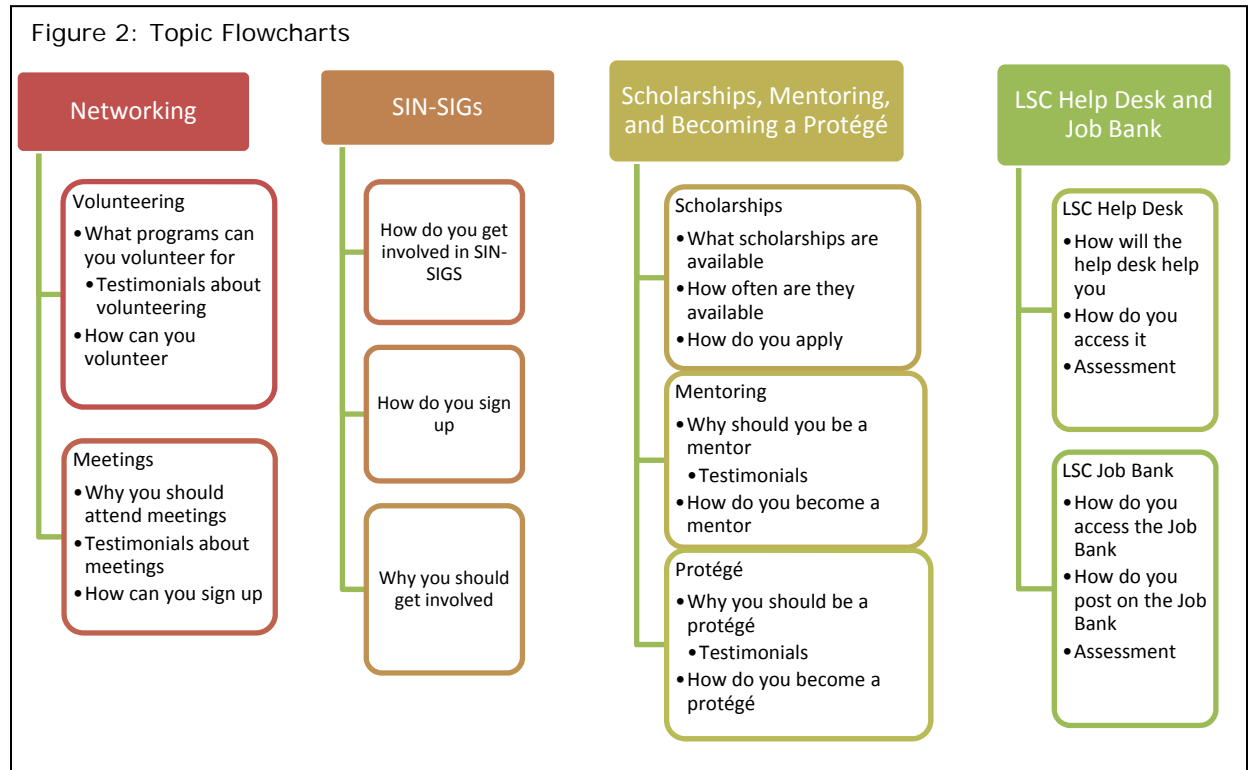
The project will contain content that shows new members exactly what the LSC does. Content will include pictures that show volunteering activities, meetings, and SIN-SIG events. The project will also contain “getting to know you” assessments. This means that the program will ask new members about issues important to them, and the program will direct them where to go so the new member can find that information. The project will not flow in a particular order; members can choose where they want to begin and end while viewing this program.

Program Flowcharts

The flowchart below shows how I have organized this program. The Lesson Flowchart shows the lessons included in the program and where they stem from.



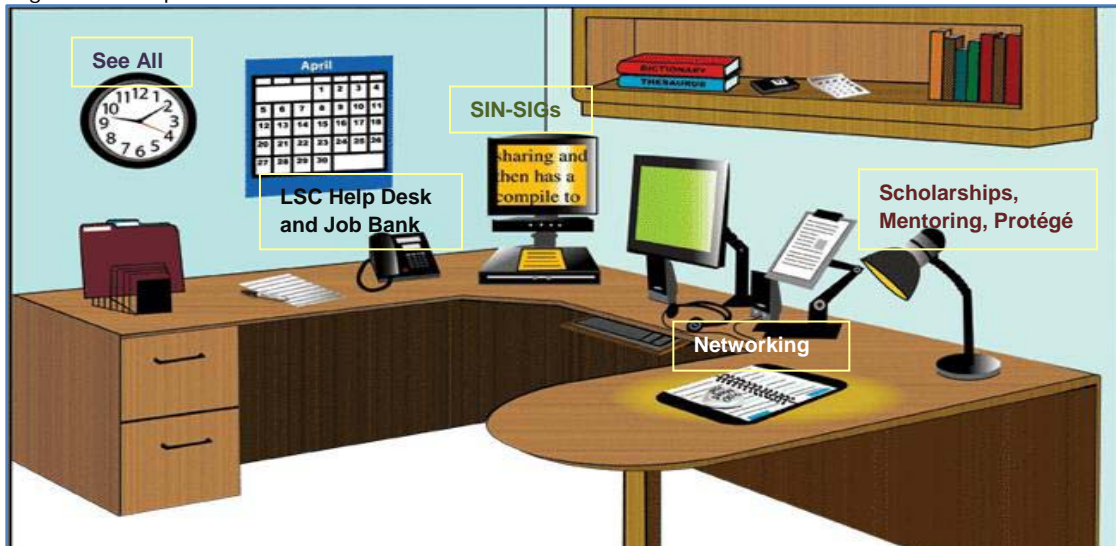
The Topic Flowchart below shows how I have organized the topics within lessons for the program. While the flowchart shows an order for the content, users will choose where they start when they view “Networking,” “Help Desk and Job Bank,” and “Scholarships, Mentoring, and Becoming a Protégé.”



How the Project Will Look and Work

The first slide will open in a virtual world that resembles the following:

Figure 3: Sample of Virtual World



Notes: Image copied from: <http://63.240.118.132/images/officedesk.jpg>. Text boxes in virtual world represent the e-learning lessons and are placed next to their corresponding object.

In the virtual office, Bill, who is pictured below, will show members how to navigate the program and will help the new members feel welcome to the program and the LSC. Bill will create a personal tone and create a conversation with the new members. Bill will also introduce Mel, also pictured below, who will alternate lessons with Bill. This will help to avoid the monotony of having only one voice.



Figure 4: Bill taken from <http://www.virtuallinks.net/wp-content/uploads/2006/07/Bill.jpg>

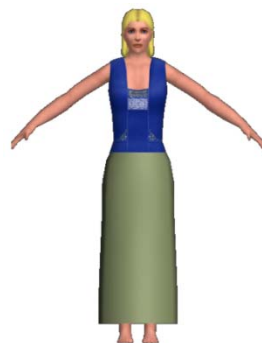


Figure 5: Mel taken from <http://www.rathan.com/adellion/f1.png>

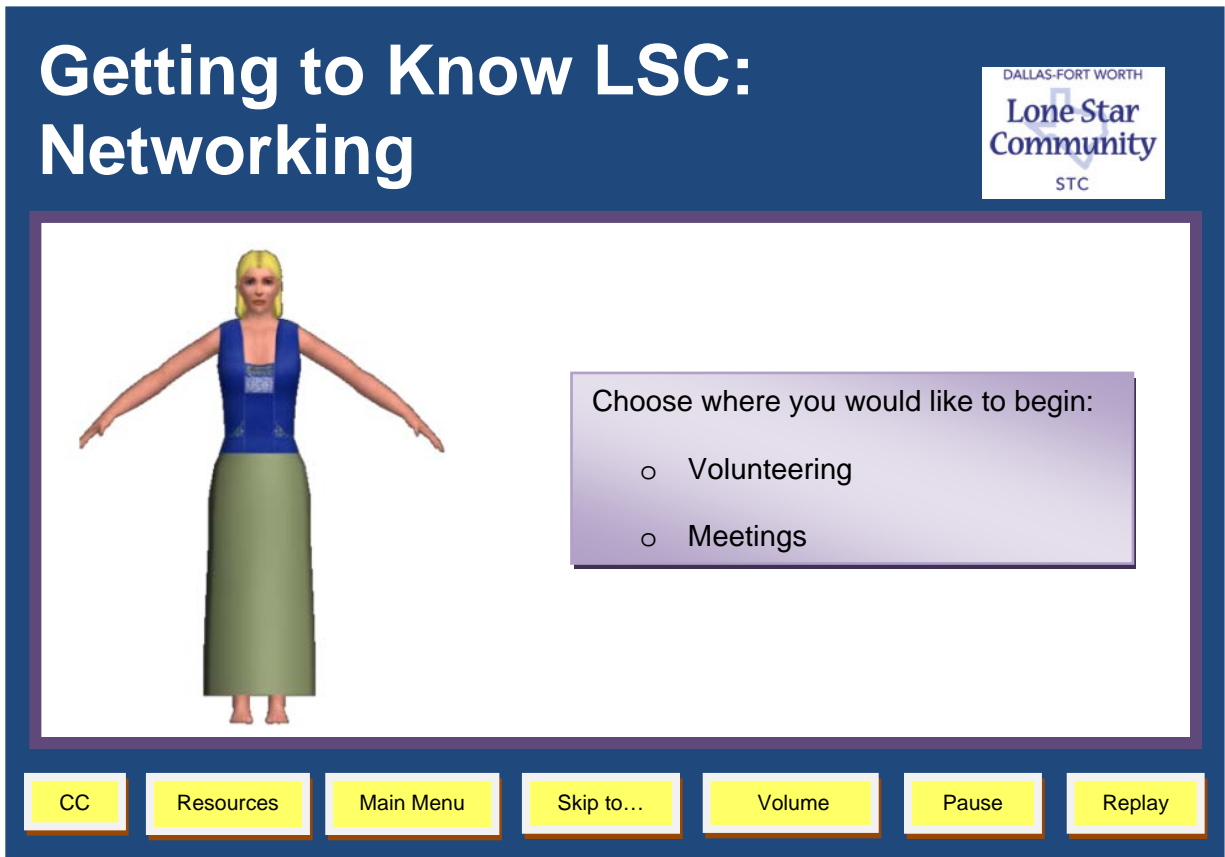
Before Bill introduces the site he will ask the following question: “What is most important to you as a new member of LSC?” The users will then list what is most important to them from these answer choices: Networking, Learning new perspectives as they relate to your career, Scholarships, Helping others become better technical communicators, or Finding out how the LSC can help you. Depending on which answer they put as their top choice, Bill will say

something along the lines of: “Excellent! I see you are most interested in...I recommend you start here where you will find out about...and then continue on through the rest of the program.”

As Bill introduces what the members are interested in that object will light up. For example, if they are most interested in networking, Bill will point out the datebook in his office, which will light up, and he will instruct the members to click there to learn about networking. Bill will then introduce the rest of the sections which will light up and stay highlighted. After the member explores a particular lesson the object that represented it will not stay highlighted, but the members can still click on it if they want to review what they just saw.

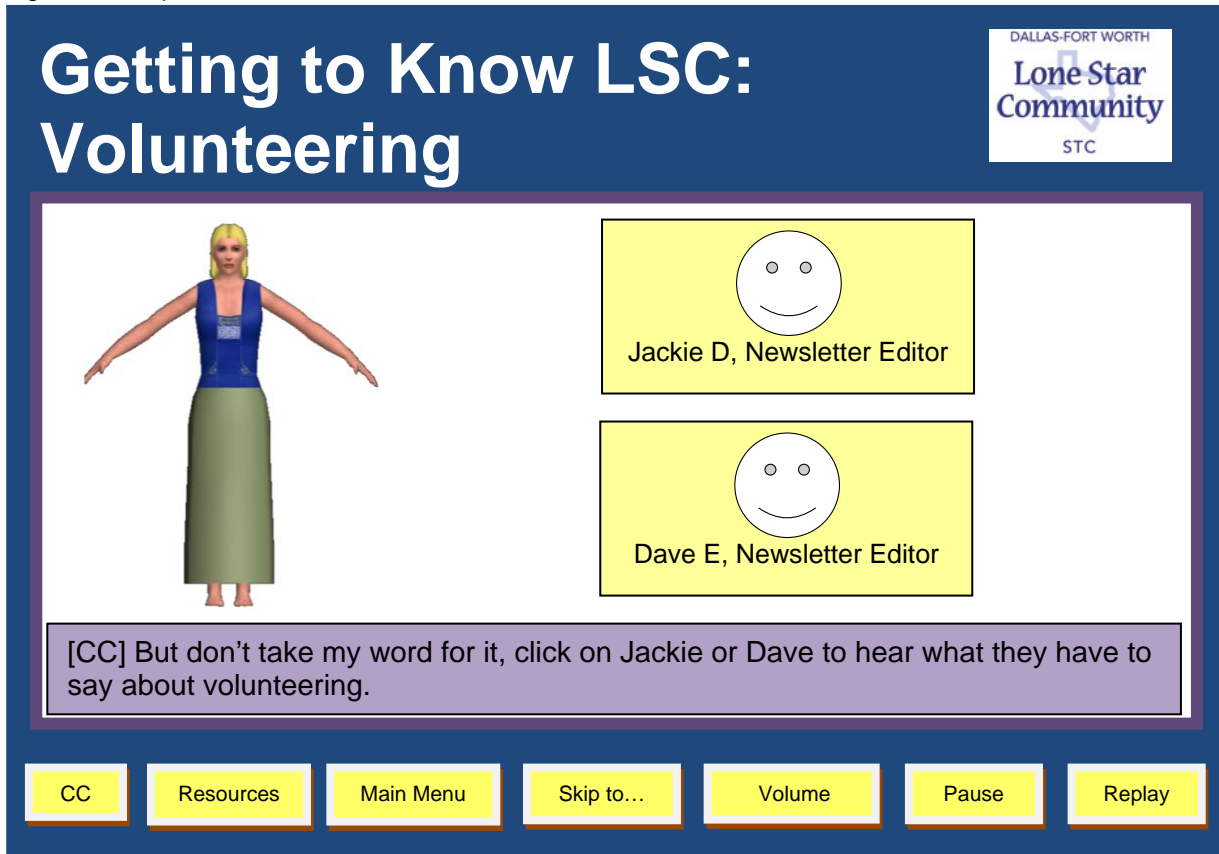
After members click on the object of their choice, Bill or Mel will take them to the opening page of that section. I have formatted all topics in a similar manner. Let’s say the new member chose to start with networking. They would click on the datebook and proceed to the opening slide. Mel will say the following: “As a new member of LSC you can network in many ways. The two most common are Volunteering [the word will fly out] and attending Meetings [the word will fly out]. Where would you like to begin?” Mel or Bill will ask where the member would like to begin because I want the member to feel like they are in control of what they learn and when they learn it. How this slide will look appears in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Sample of Opening Slide



As new members go through each topic they will see a variety of different images and will also interact with the site. For example in the “Volunteering” section, new members will see visuals of volunteering events LSC members have participated in and they will hear testimonials of what other members gained from this experience. The way that slide will look and work appears in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Sample of Testimonial Slide



Navigation Tools for the Program

The navigation tool bar has the following features:

- **Closed Captioning.** Users who need the closed captioning box can just click on the CC and a purple box will appear as seen in Figure 7.
- **Resources.** This button will take users to a page that contains links to all the sites that are important to the LSC and STC. The links will include the main LSC webpage, the main STC page, and it will also include any links provided throughout the course of the lesson (e.g., the volunteer, meeting, help desk, and SIN-SIG pages on the LSC website).
- **Main Menu.** The main menu button will take users back to the virtual office where they began their session. This option will display a second time in the **Skip to...** button in case users thought they knew where they wanted to go, but didn't.

- **Skip to...** This button allows users to skip to any page they want. A box will appear from the **Skip to...** button when users click on it. Basically, this pop-up will work as breadcrumbs only not always visible on the page. This pop-up will look as follows:

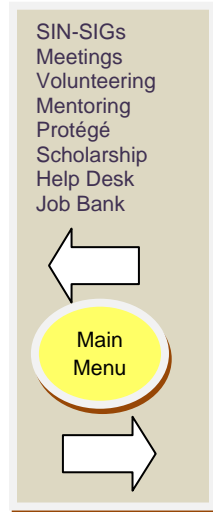


Figure 8: Sample of **Skip to...** Pop-Up

Note: Because all pages are not currently in place, some selections are missing from this box, but it will work like breadcrumbs. This will also pop up when the topic is over so users can control when they move on to the next topic or lesson.

- **Volume.** The volume control will allow the user to choose how loud the volume is, or the user can mute the speaker if they just want to read what is being said.
- **Pause.** If users need to pause the lesson, they have that option; however, if the site stays paused for more than seven minutes Bill or Mel will remind the member to come back.
- **Replay.** This button gives the users the option to replay the page and dialogue they just watched.

Assessment Materials

This program will have assessments to allow the user more interaction with the program. These assessments will include those already mentioned that ask the new member to rank what is most important to them; upon completing these assessments either Mel or Bill will encourage them to learn more throughout the section they are in. At the end of the “LSC Help Desk and Job Bank” and the end of the “SIN-SIGs” sections, I will insert a short 5-question assessment to determine whether the new member understands how to use them. These question are basic and will include questions like “how do you do this” and “where do you find this.” The program will use matching assessments to make it more useful to the user. The Help Desk Assessment will look as follows in Figure 9 on the next page.

Figure 9: Sample of Assessment Slide

**Getting to Know LSC:
Help Desk**

DALLAS-FORT WORTH
**Lone Star
Community**
STC

Welcome, **Guest**. Please [login](#) or [register](#).
 | Forever |
 Login with username, password and session length

News: SMP - Just Installed Search

HOME HELP SEARCH CALENDAR LOGIN REGISTER

My Community

General Category

	General Discussion Feel free to talk about anything and everything in this board.	204 Posts 64 Topics	Last post by LaurenW in Re: Help Authoring Tools on April 15, 2008, 06:05:06 PM
	Admin Topics A place for your LSC counsel to discuss any issues. Feel free to peruse!	31 Posts 5 Topics	Last post by Steele03 in Re: WEB COMMITTEE - Web S... on August 23, 2007, 05:14:41 PM

My Community - Info Center

Forum Stats

235 Posts in 69 Topics by 46 Members. Latest Member: mjr
 Latest Post: "Re: Help Authoring Tools" (April 15, 2008, 06:05:06 PM)
 View the most recent posts on the forum.

Users Online

1 Guest, 0 Users
 Most Online Today: 4. Most Online Ever: 23 (December 16, 2007, 07:49:59 AM)

Login (Forget your password?)

Username: Password: Minutes to stay logged in: Always stay logged in:

[CC] Directions. Excellent! Not quite, try again. The correct answer is here...

CC Resources Main Menu Skip to... Volume Pause Replay

Since passing this course is not the priority, the questions are not difficult to answer, but simply remind the member of where to find the items they will need. When they get the question right, Bill or Mel will encourage them and let them continue on to the next question. However, since the questions are not measuring the member’s skills, the member will be able to skip the questions. This program will measure success when the users click to go to the website and sign-up to get involved in the LSC.

Technical Considerations for Development

The team working on this program will create it in Adobe Flash and Illustrator. Since these are common programs in the technical communication industry, current members of the community have already volunteered their time and software to help make this project happen.

However, since the development of this program depends entirely on volunteers, this 15-minute program will take longer to create. Time issues being the biggest problem we will face, this program will take about three months to put together.

In addition to needing Flash and Illustrator, we will also need to test the site on the following:

Configuration Standards			
Configuration Number	Device	Client O/S	Browser
Configuration 1	Sony VAIO Laptop	Windows 2000 SP1 or SP2 (32 bit)	IE 6.0
Configuration 2	Sony VAIO Laptop	Windows XP SP1 or SP 2 (32 bit)	Netscape 8.1
Configuration 3	Sony VAIO Laptop	Windows XP SP1 or SP 2 (32 bit)	Mozilla Firefox 2.0.0.5
Configuration 4	Dell Precision Laptop /IBM ThinkPad	Windows Vista (32 bit)	IE 7.0
Configuration 5	Apple MAC	Mac	Safari 1.3.2
Configuration 6	T-Mobile Wing	Windows Mobile 6	IE for Windows Mobile 6
Configuration 7	Sony VAIO Laptop	Windows 2000	IE 5.5

Figure 10: Contents of table provided by Jackie Damrau.

The table below shows the technical design of the program and the benefits of those decisions.

Program Dimensions		
	Style	Reasoning
Window Size	800x600	Standard size for most e-learning and will be the easiest for all computers to handle.
Window Shape	Horizontal Rectangle	Makes images and text easier to insert and matches shape of the computer screen to avoid awkwardness between screen and training.
Window Design	Program opens in its own window. Program content will stay in one window.	Program will open in its own window so users can easily go back and forth between the training and the LSC web page when they need to use it. Program will stay in one window to avoid the annoyance that comes with having a bunch of windows constantly opening; also avoids user confusion between where they were and where they want to be.
Colors	Outside box: LSC Blue Inside box: White interior with LSC purple outline Navigation Boxes: LSC yellow with white outline	All colors match the LSC website to give users a way to associate the colors to the LSC.

Figure 11: Technical Aspects of Design

Qualifications

As a new member to LSC, I understand the dilemmas new members might face when trying to get involved in the LSC. However, aside from the fact that I am a new member, I have completed many projects for the LSC. For example, I have worked on a class project for the LSC that required my team and I redesign the LSC newsletter; my team was successful in completing the project well and on time. I continue to do other things for the LSC, such as edit the newsletter and attend monthly meetings. Doing these has given me an insight into what new members to the LSC need to know to be successful members of the LSC. I am also a graduate student in the Technical Writing Program at the University of North Texas and continue to stay informed about the direction of technical communication and how to design for different audiences.

I have attached my résumé and a sample of another work I have done for the LSC in the appendix of this proposal (pages 16-17) to show what other qualifications I have.

Request for Approval

This project will help new members of the LSC know how to get involved in the community. The program will be quick (only 15 minutes), but it will let new members know where to sign up and the personal antidotes, such as pictures and testimonials, will let them know that getting involved in the community will help them in their career as technical communicators. This program will also allow other LSC members to create a project, earn LSC points, and add another project to their résumé. Since this project will rely on volunteers, all the software and time used to create it are free. Allowing volunteers to create this project will also give the LSC another well-designed program to enter into STC competitions. To allow all these benefits to take place, the LSC should allow me to continue on with the **Getting to Know the LSC** project.

To complete this project in the amount of time stated above, I will need approval to continue by May 7, 2008.

Katie Wilson

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Denton, Texas 76201
432-559-0423
krw0103@unt.edu

Education

University of North Texas

Master of Arts in Technical Writing
Expected Graduation: December 2009

University of North Texas

Bachelor of Arts in English Literature
December 2007
GPA:3.9/4.0

- Received President's List award Fall 2005-Spring 2007
- Earned Magna Cum Laude honors
- Earned Technical Writing Certificate

Experience

Department of Institutional Research and Accreditation (IRA)

Graduate Assistant January 2008-Present

Intern August 2007-December 2007

- Designed entire newsletter including the masthead, folios, fonts and sizes, colors, and layout
- Wrote all the stories for the newsletter
- Edited the newsletter for content, grammatical errors, and consistency in both the articles and the design
- Interviewed members of the staff for more information on their projects and quotes for the articles
- Created surveys including the design, format, and the style of questions
- Created correspondence for survey participants
- Researched and wrote report on graduate education for an environmental scan

University of North Texas Press

Intern

January 2007-May 2007

- Worked in three departments of publishing: Acquisitions, Editing, Marketing
- Edited manuscripts and discussed those edits with the Managing Editor
- Read manuscripts in the acquisitions stage to determine if the UNT Press should accept them for publishing
- Researched markets where authors for the UNT Press could promote their books

Skills

- Received second place in technical writing class competition for designing an online newsletter for the Lone Star Community
- Worked with Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher, PowerPoint; Adobe PageMaker, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, and Inquisite Survey Builder

Sample of Project for LSC

Figure 12: Class Project Newsletter



The image shows the cover of the DFW Communicator newsletter. At the top, there is a night cityscape of Dallas with the text 'DFW Communicator' in large white letters. To the right of the title, it says 'Volume 23 Number 9, May 2007'. On the left side, there is a dark blue vertical sidebar with the STC logo and a list of navigation links. The main content area is white and contains sections for the DFWC Mission, Featured Articles, and Chapter Achievement Awards.

DFW Communicator
 Dallas-Fort Worth Lone Star Community STC

DFWC Mission

Test

The DFWC accepts stories from all LSC members. We encourage all our members to write us articles that will inform and enlighten the Lone Star Community of the advances of the tech writing business. However, we also encourage feature stories that give insights into the accomplishments and lives of our members to increase the feeling of community among LSC.

The DFWC is published nine times a year from September to May to ensure that our members our getting community news monthly. We work to guarantee that members our receiving stories that both give them information to help them in their tech writing careers and inform them of events and members in the community.

Featured Articles this Issue

- [Biology and English Collide: Biology Major Learns How To Succeed in the Real World](#)
- [Developing with PHP](#)
- [DSCA Winners Give Insight into Their Goals and Backgrounds](#)
- [LSC in the Community - More Than a Technical Writing Society](#)

Chapter Achievement Awards

By combining creativity, individuality, and dedication, the competition winners have distinguished themselves in service to the LSC. These award-winning newsletters illustrate the importance of the skills and talents of hard-working, perceptive editors.

The editors, writers, and other contributors to these publications deserve much praise for their time, energy, and perseverance in publishing a quality product.

- 2004 Excellence
- 2004 Excellence, Most Improved
- 2003 Merit, Most Improved
- 2002 Merit
- 2001 Merit

Note: To see more of this site, visit www.trepid.net/engl4180. Project was designed by Jesse Davis, Chris Feller, Michelle LeBlanc, and Katie Wilson.