

SIGDOC FY'10 Annual Report
July 2009 – June 2010
Submitted by: Brad Mehlenbacher, Chair

_SIGDOC Purpose

The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Special Interest Group (SIG) on the Design of Communication (DOC) — ACM SIGDOC — emphasizes the design of communication for computer-mediated information products and systems. SIGDOC fosters the study and publication of processes, methods, and technologies for communicating and designing communication artifacts such as printed and online information, documentation designs and applications, multimedia and Web-based environments.

_SIGDOC Mission Statement

Until 2003, SIGDOC focused on documentation for hardware and software. With the shift in focus from documentation to the “design of communication,” SIGDOC better positioned itself to emphasize the potentials, the practices, and the problems of multiple kinds of communication technologies, such as Web applications, user interfaces, and online and print documentation. SIGDOC focuses on the design of communication as it is taught, practiced, researched, and theorized in various fields, including technical communication, software engineering, information architecture, and usability.

The mission of SIGDOC includes

- Promoting the professional development of its members
- Encouraging interdisciplinary problem solving related to online and print documentation and communication technologies
- Providing avenues for publication and the exchange of professional information
- Supporting research that focuses on the needs and goals of humans in technological contexts, and
- Supporting the development and improvement of communication technologies, including applications, interfaces, and documentation.

_SIGDOC Officers (effective July 1st, 2009)

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|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| • Brad Mehlenbacher, NC State University, USA | Chair
Awards Chair
2009 General Co-Chair |
| • Rob Pierce, IBM Rational Software, USA | Vice-Chair
2009 Local Arrangements |
| • Liza Potts, Old Dominion University, USA | Secretary/Treasurer
Newsletter Editor |
| • Ashley Williams, Bridgeline Software, USA | Information Director
2009 Program Co-Chair |
| • Michael Albers, East Carolina University, USA | Graduate Competition Chair
2009 Poster Sessions Chair |
| • Gloria Reece, Researcher, New Media & IT, USA | INTECOM Representative |
| • Scott Tilley, Florida Institute of Technology, USA | Past Chair |
| • Aristidis Protopsaltis, City University, UK | 2009 General Co-Chair |

• Shaun Slattery, DePaul University, USA	2009 Program Co-Chair
• David Novick, University of Texas at El Paso, USA	Member-at-Large
• Clay Spinuzzi, University of Texas at Austin, USA	Member-at-Large
• Henrique O'Neill, ISCTE, Portugal	2008 General Co-Chair
• Manuela Aparicio, ISCTE, Portugal	2008 General Co-Chair
• Carlos J. Costa, ISCTE, Portugal	2008 Program Chair
• Irene Frawley, ACM HQ, USA	ACM Program Coordinator

Viability

SIGDOC was found viable in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004. In 2008 and 2010, SIGDOC was found viable for two years to evaluate its decrease in membership and conference participation. The next viability review is in 2012.

SIGDOC Conference Updates

The ACM SIGDOC 2009 International Conference was supported by Old Dominion University and hosted and supported by the School of Informatics and the Kelley School of Business at the Indiana University at Bloomington, Indiana, from October 5th-7th, 2009. Brad Mehlenbacher and Aristidis Protopsaltis served as General Co-Chairs and Ashley Williams and Shaun Slattery served as Program Co-Chairs. Rob Pierce served as Local Arrangements Chair. The program committee had 37 members, the majority of which represented academic institutions from the United States. The conference cost was approximately \$2500.00.

The conference call for papers attracted 84 submissions from Asia, Europe, and North and South America, and the conference program included 43 papers, experience reports, workshops, and posters. The acceptance rate was 51 percent, an increase from 45 percent the previous year and a decrease from 71 percent the year before that. Highlights included papers on alternative design methods, on sensory, semiotic, semantic, and value-based methods for designing and evaluating websites, help systems, and user assistance, on rhetorical and cultural analyses of technical artifacts, on collaborative and peer-to-peer community formation and meaning making, and on the relationship between informatics and communication design. The conference papers were published in the *Proceedings of the 27th Conference on Design of Communication* (ACM Press).

The invited speakers included Jason Melton, Michael Priestly, Dr. Karen Schnakenberg, Jim Shea, and Dr. Ramesh Venkataraman. Jason Melton is a Data Management Sales Specialist with IBM Software Group. Michael Priestly is a Senior Technical Staff Member at IBM, and its lead DITA architect. He was one of the original developers of DITA, and co-editor of the OASIS DITA 1.0 and 1.1 specification. Dr. Karen Schnakenberg, a Teaching Professor of Rhetoric and Professional Writing in the English Department at Carnegie Mellon University. Jim Shea is Director of Planning for the School of Informatics and Dr. Ramesh Venkataraman is an Associate Professor of Information Systems and Whirlpool Faculty Fellow at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business.

The 2009 Diana Award was awarded to Apple for its long-term contribution to the field of communication design. Apple was recognized for its outstanding achievements in the history of personal computing (the Lisa), in laptops (the Powerbook) and handheld devices (the Newton) and, recently, in telecommunications and music appliances (the iPhone and the iPod). Accepting the award on behalf of Apple was Dr. Sandy Korzenny, Director of Apple Product Documentation. Dr. Korzenny received her BA in Education (Spanish) from Indiana University, and an MS and PhD in Instructional Technology from Michigan State University.

We are fast approaching our 28th International Conference on Design of Communication, ACM SIGDOC 2010, being held from September 26th-29th in São Carlos-São Paulo, Brazil (<http://www.sigdoc.org/2010>). The General Co-Chairs are Dr. Junia Anacleto and Dr. Renata Fortes, and the Program Chair is Dr. Carlos Costa. The international conference committee of 43 members is made up of 33 academic and 10 industry representatives. Twenty-six committee members are from the USA, 10 are from Brazil, and single members represent Portugal, the UK, Germany, France, Canada, and Mozambique.

Discussions have also begun for SIGDOC'11 which the SIGDOC Board is planning to hold in Pisa, Italy. Discussions are also in process for Boston, MA, for 2012, and Seattle, WA, for 2013. Contact has been initiated with colleagues in India about a potential conference there. These efforts to plan further in advance for conference sites are related to our goals of increasing membership involvement and conference attendance.

_Publications

Liza Potts has taken over the position as General Editor of SIGDOC's Quarterly Newsletter from Rob Pierce who served as editor for 9 years. Release of the newsletter is announced each quarter via the SIGDOC members' listserv and is available in general via the ACM SIGDOC website (<http://www.sigdoc.org/newsletter/current/>). Archived versions of past newsletters are also available (<http://www.sigdoc.org/newsletter/archives/>). The newsletter consists of news from members (notes from the chair and from the general conference chair), future conference information, interesting items, feature articles, and job market information.

In addition, ACM SIGDOC has expanded its membership communications by creating a print brochure for distribution at related conference events and initiating social media efforts (via Facebook, LinkedIn, Ning, Slideshare, Twitter, and Wikipedia).

_Partnerships

This year, SIGDOC committed to the following in cooperation agreements:

- CNSR'09: Communications Networks and Services Research Conference
- DPPI 11: Designing Pleasurable Products and Interfaces
- DocEng 09: ACM Symposium on Document Engineering
- IWCMC'09: International Wireless Communications and Mobile Computing Conference
- WebSci 10: Web Science 2010

_Membership

SIGDOC had 217 members last year and this number has been dropping a little for the last several years. The SIGDOC Website now explicitly details the benefits of joining SIGDOC (<http://www.sigdoc.org/join/>) in addition to encouraging existing members to volunteer (<http://www.sigdoc.org/members>). Following last year's viability review, the SIGDOC Board has made it a priority to examine its membership and conference numbers and to write a plan for increasing them over the next several years. Our activities forming chapters and engaging new members at the local and regional level are certainly connected to this goal. As well, conference planning for the next several conferences is currently ahead of schedule, reflecting this commitment. Finally, we have been exploring social networking spaces such as Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Ning; the implications of creating an organizational presence in these environments is under review.

_Key Issues for 2010-2011

Key issues for SIGDOC in the coming year include

- Establishing a better understanding of our current members (including serving their needs more effectively) and finding ways to increase our membership by attracting new members, volunteers, and board officers.
- Supporting our new SIG chapters (Europe, NC State, Old Dominion, and ECU), and developing policies for managing them effectively and for increasing SIG chapter activities.

