

SIGDOC FY'17 Annual Report

Submitted by: Claire Lauer, SIGDOC Chair

SIGDOC is regarded—in the technical writing, information architecture/design, content development, and UX communities—as a vibrant organization doing cutting-edge research. This is reflected in several areas, including our competitive elections in 2016, our increased attendance at our 2016 annual conference – which saw the highest number of papers presented and the highest attendance ever at a SIGDOC conference, and our ability to recently appoint a new editor for the SIGDOC publication, *Communication Design Quarterly*, which we are pursuing into turning into an ACM journal.

Financials

Our financial viability remains strong.

Overall SIGDOC balance for FY 2016:

Opening: \$84,185

Ending: \$86,339

We netted \$2,154 overall in 2016

We are currently \$66,108 over our required minimum

Elections 2016

We had smooth and successful elections in July 2016. We had two or three members vying for each of the three elected positions (Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer). I (Dr. Claire Lauer) was elected chair, Dr. Kirk St. Amant from Louisiana Tech University, was elected Vice Chair, and Dr. Kristen Moore from Texas Tech University, was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

As chair, I put together a 20-person advisory board in an effort to bring as many new people into the organization as possible. I will likely streamline this structure a bit in the coming year, but in the first year it served the purpose of casting a wide net in an effort to increase the involvement of new people into the leadership of the organization.

SIGDOC Annual Conference 2016

Our flagship conference is our annual SIGDOC conference, which typically takes place in the summer or fall of each year. The SIGDOC 2016 conference took place in Washington, DC from September 21-23, 2016. We had a record number of papers published in the proceedings and a record number of attendees. We saw a robust engagement with graduate and undergraduate students who participated in our Microsoft SRC; we featured well-known keynote speakers, including our Rigo Award winner, Dr. Jan Spyridakis, from the University of Washington's Human Centered Design and Engineering program; and we saw robust attendance at our series of professional development workshops, Ignite talks, and the SIGDOC Research Network.

The conference closed with the following:

Total Revenue: \$22,900.00

Total Expenses: \$18,567.53

Allocation: \$2,561.04

Surplus/Loss: \$4,332.47

Paid Attendance: 100

Actual Attendance: 100

The research that our members are presenting at our conference is addressing the most salient needs of communication design and technical communication work. A sampling of the papers appearing in 2016's conference proceedings included:

[Ethical Information Flows: Working with/against the Healthcare Industry's Fascination with Social Media](#) by Dawn Opel

[A Tool to Remotely Collect and Visualize Users' Interactions with Web-Based Content](#) by Bob Watson and Jan Spyridakis

[Emerging Guidelines for Communicating with Animation in Mobile User Interfaces](#)

By Dan Liddle

[Globally Fit: Attending to International Users and Advancing a Sociotechnological Design Agenda for Wearable Technologies](#) by Jason Chew Kit Tham

[Helping Local Residents Make Informed Decisions with Interactive Risk Visualization Tools](#) by Dan Richards

Communication Design Quarterly

Our publication, *Communication Design Quarterly*, is scheduled out to the Spring 2019 issue and publishes some of the top names in our field, including as guest editors of special-themed issues, such as our most recent issue on "Re-thinking Social Media" (Vol 4, No. 2).

We recently received several qualified applications for the editor position of CDQ as part of our 5-year rotation schedule, and the board chose Derek Ross, Associate Professor out of Auburn University. Ross is Co-Director of LUCIA, the Laboratory for Usability, Communication, Interaction, and Accessibility, and is currently Ethics Editor/Columnist for *Intercom: The Magazine of the Society for Technical Communication*.

Ross brings a welcome and ambitious vision to elevating CDQ into a leading journal in our field, publishing the highest quality research in an effort to compete with STC's *Technical Communication*, IEEE's *Transaction on Professional Communication*, ATTW's *Technical Communication Quarterly*, and Iowa State University's *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, while recognizing the unique position CDQ has of being the forerunner in dynamic communication design research. His appointment also brings with it institutional editorial support in the form of a funded RAship and travel funding from his university, making it easier for SIGDOC to begin to develop a CDQ operations fund over the next few years that we can eventually use to fund additional RAships and a more robust content management system. I could not be more optimistic about Ross' recent appointment as editor of CDQ. Ross will transition into the Editor role over the next year and take over completely as editor in late 2018. Our top 5 downloaded articles were (in order of most downloads to least)

1. Online networks, social media, and communication design by Kirk St. Amant (74 downloads)

Vol. 4, No. 2

2. Big data visualization: promises & pitfalls by Katherine Hepworth (71 downloads)

Vol. 4, No. 4

3. The social help desk: examining how Twitter is used as a technical support tool by Chris Lam and Mark A. Hannah (43 downloads)

Vol. 4, No. 2

4. User value and usability in technical communication: a value-proposition design model by Keshab R. Acharya (34 downloads)

Vol. 4, No. 3

5. Over, under, or through: design strategies to supplement the LMS and enhance interaction in online writing courses by Heidi Skurat Harris and Michael Greer (33 downloads)

Vol. 4, No. 4

Our most downloaded issue for 2016 was Vol. 4, No 4 (final issues of the year) with 228 downloads to date. Our metrics for CDQ articles in 2016 appear lower at this time because they were not submitted to the DL by our interim editor until March of 2017. With a new editor in place, this oversight will not happen again.

Social Media

We have increased our social media reach on Facebook and Twitter from our 2016 numbers, adding 108 more Twitter followers, for a total of 748, and 28 more Facebook followers, for a total of 348. We have also started a podcast series, which has produced and posted three podcasts to our website in the past six months with well-known researchers in the field of communication design.

Membership

Because SIGDOC is newer than many of the more longstanding organizations in our field, I have deliberately recruited members of our board over from those other organizations. For instance, our organizational liaison served as chair of the Council for Programs in Scientific and Technical Communication, one of our members-at-large was a keynote speaker at and active member of Computers and Writing, and another member at large is on the board of IEEE ProComm. I have also prioritized organizational, industry, gender, race, and geographic diversity of our board members to help expand our reach.

We have also given awards to members and organizations from which our current membership can grow, including Women in Technical Communication, which won our Diana Award in 2015. Women in Technical Communication has united women across our three major field organizations: SIGDOC, Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC), and the Association for Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW). Through their work, a network has been established to support women in their roles as academics from graduate students to emeritus faculty. SIGDOC hosts a Women in Technical Communication breakfast each year at our conference to encourage this collaboration further. We also use the Microsoft SRC as a way of recruiting the earliest scholars in our field and their mentors.

Future Goals

Conferences

Members in our fields do not rely heavily on grant money, which means that they are typically not funded to attend more than one conference a year. We address this competition in several ways: by keeping our conference registration fees low, by featuring an impressive slate of panels, papers, workshops, ignite talks, and keynote speakers at our conferences, by awarding best paper awards, and by co-locating our conferences, or hosting them in interesting cities with vibrant academic and industry presence so as to draw on local attendance as well. For instance, the upcoming SIGDOC conference expanded our offerings from 2 to 3 days. We will award a best paper award (to Emma Rose and Elin Borjing's "Designing for Engagement: Using Participatory Design to Develop a Social Robot to Measure Teen Stress."); we will feature four workshops, including:

- [Social Media and Data Mining for Communication Research](#)
Friday, August 11, 9:00-11:30 a.m.
- [Content Auditing: How to Improve Your Organization's Most Valuable Asset](#)
Friday, August 11, 9:00-11:30 a.m.

- [Academia/Industry Workshop: Preparing Students to be Leaders and Innovators in Technical Communication](#)
Friday, August 11, 12:00-3:00 p.m.
- [Data Communication for Data Scientists and Designers](#)
Saturday, August 10, 2:30-5:00 p.m.

We will host the Microsoft SRC; ignite talks (including one from the program chair of SIGKDD), and showcase two renowned keynote speakers, including our Rigo Award winner, Dr. Karen Schriver, and Karel Vredenburg, who is the Director of Design at IBM.

In 2015, we co-located our conference with IEEE's ProComm conference in Ireland. This allowed us to connect with scholars who might not have normally thought of SIGDOC as a place to publish and present. We are considering co-locating again with IEEE ProComm in Aachen, Germany, in 2019. In 2018, the Milwaukee School of Engineering has agreed to host our conference, which provides a central US location surrounded by a great many quality programs in our field, including MSOE's own new Design of Communication degree.

To project an ethos of stability and professionalism, we are hoping to schedule conferences out three years in advance, so we are currently in talks with folks at the University of Nevada, Reno about hosting our 2020 conference, because they are also developing a communication design degree and are located in a beautiful part of the country close to major industry in California.

Bylaws

The executive committee, in consultation with an appointed bylaws committee, will be revising the bylaws to update the (very outdated) SIGDOC vision statement, permanently extend our terms from 2 to 3 years, and make other changes that will streamline the operations of the SIG.

SIGDOC Career Advancement Research Grant

In an effort to support our members and encourage new membership, SIGDOC will award a competitive \$1500 career advancement research grant that will support pre-tenure junior faculty beginning in the fall of 2017. Inaugural applications are due September 30, 2017, and the award committee will be comprised of the SIGDOC chair and former Rigo Award winners.