EDITORIAL: Communication and Language at Work (CLAW) – Bridging Theory and Practice, 2nd issue, 2013

Technical Communication

Editorial Board

Dear readers,

We sincerely hope that you have enjoyed a wonderful Christmas with family and friends and that the New Year may be a productive one! We, the editors, are proud to bring you the 2nd edition of CLAW with a focus on **Technical Communication**; not the least because we are confident in stating that this issue of CLAW is the strongest issue yet. It is so both in respect to the content covered (spanning from the training of technical communicators, to insights into the professional practices of technical comminatory to the ROI of tech comm) and in regards to the authors of this issue (academics as well as technical communicators).

It is no coincidence that this issue opens with the article "**Educating Technical Communication Teachers**" by Gerald Savage. Here, Gerald Savage presents us not only with a comprehensive history of the development of tech comm programmes in the U.S., but indeed also with the history of ideas of a discipline as seen by one of its most prominent figures. With this as a firm foundation the issue moves on to present us with central aspects of two European programmes. In their article, "**Teaching Workplace Skills to Technical Communicators**", Darina M. Slattery and Yvonne Cleary reveal the mindset behind how tech comm programmes are developed in Ireland; featuring a special emphasis on appropriately preparing tech comm students for their work life. Kerstin Fischer and Helena Larsen, in their article "**Communication Design**", present a central component of a Danish tech comm programme. Here, they emphasize the importance of communication design and point to an array of instances in which business and industry may benefit from technical communicators well-versed in communication design. And speaking of central components, in "**Culture and Rhetorical Expectations: A Perspective for Technical Communicators**", Kirk St.Amant advocates for integrating time-honored rhetorical strategies into the training of technical communicators. He discusses and exemplifies how seeing rhetorical strategies as a sort of "boundary object" allows tech comm and intercultural issues to integrate fruitfully. Needless to say, when thinking about intercultural issues, translation is never far away. Bruce Maylath, in his article on "**Current Translation Trends**", not only looks at the current stand of translation studies but indeed also situates (professional) translation firmly in the disciplinary field of tech comm. Among other things, he establishes links between understanding, customer satisfaction and increased sales. In her article on "**Usability Testing of User Manuals**", Margrethe H. Møller

adds yet another important aspect to tech comm practice, namely that of real-life testing of technical documents. Based on robust findings from a research project, she presents us with valuable and research-based insights into the 'why', the 'what' and the 'how' of user testing.

The necessity of multi-facetted training as well as the commitment to give voice to the reader/user of tech comm documents constitutes a perfect point of departure to the final two articles in this issue of CLAW.

In the interview "**Quick, Social and Collaborative**", Pernille Bagger Nielsen and Stanislaw Kalianov invite us inside the practitioner's boiler room, so to speak, of tech comm practice. Here, they share some of their experiences regarding using WIKI-based user documentation in particular as well as their thoughts on ROI issues of web-based user assistance in general. Last, but certainly not least, in her article "**Advice from a Professional: The DNA of a Technical Communicator**", Mette Nyberg shares with us a wide variety of insights gained over a twenty year work life as a technical communicator. In many ways mirroring Kenneth Rainey's vision of the technical communicator as "information architect" par excellence.

After these introductory remarks, all that remains for me to say is: Enjoy YOUR magazine!

On behalf of the editorial board,
Peter Kastberg
Margrethe H. Møller
Anne Møller