

Rules for All Entries

Entries in all categories must:

- Contain sufficient technical, scientific, medical, or similar content to qualify as technical communication.
- Have been produced or substantially **revised within 24 months prior to September 1 of the current year.**
- Have been originally prepared (and accepted) for publication by a client, employer, or publisher.

The competition organizers reserve the right to reject any entry for any reason.

Entries must be suitable for public display. Entries that contain classified or proprietary information or that violate copyright laws are not acceptable. It is the responsibility of the submitter, and not of STC, to determine that entries do not contain classified or proprietary information and to obtain permission to submit the entry from the holder of all copyrights. Neither STC nor anyone associated with the competitions can be held responsible for loss of or damage to an entry.

Materials prepared for STC purposes are not eligible for entry in the competition. Examples of these materials include STC publications, *Intercom* and *Technical Communication*, articles; and STC community websites, brochures, and newsletters.

Multilingual entries are acceptable with prior approval from the competition manager. An entry must not have been entered in a previous STC competition and may be entered in only one year's chapter or regional competition. **Duplicate entries are disqualified.**

Entries may be submitted in a single chapter or regional competition. For example, if an entry is submitted to the Boston/Northern New England regional competition, it cannot be submitted in the South Carolina competition.

A single entry can be entered in only one category.

The "submitter" is the entry's contact person, who:

- Certifies that the entry represents the actual work of the contributors named on the entry form and that the entry qualifies for submission.
- Certifies that the copyright holder permits the submission of the entry.
- Agrees to receive **all official correspondence** relating to the entry.
- Agrees to forward **all** communication to the entry's contributors including award distribution.

A "contributor" is a person or company that participated in the creation of the materials submitted as an "entry". An entry can have no more than three contributors.

There are two levels in this competition: Regional /Local and International.

- All Distinguished and Excellence awardees at the regional/local level qualify for the STC International Summit competition. All Distinguished awardees must be submitted to the STC International competition.

Competition Categories

The STC Regional TechComm Competition NY-PMC-Houston follows the STC International Summit Awards rules. Entries **must:**

- Adhere to the STC International Summit Awards guidelines.
- Be submitted using the [Regional Online Entries Form](#).

Go Electronic!

STC strongly encourages all entrants to submit the online version of their content or send URLs because:

- Uploading online entries is faster and cheaper for entrants
- There is less risk of damage to entries if sent online
- Distribution of entries to Judges can be done quicker and at lower costs.

IMPORTANT: STC added a shipping charge for all physical entries (i.e., books, DVDs, publications, manuals and brochures). Whenever possible, send the URL or the online version of your content. Instructions will be given on sending entries via GoogleDrive or FTP.

NOTES for Online Entries

- Entries may be submitted to any competition category, as they will be judged based on the material and not the medium in which they are delivered.
- The platform (such as Web, Windows, Macintosh, iPad, or any other electronic *device*) is not a consideration in determining the category.
- Entries that run on other platforms or require special equipment (such as an iPad, mobile device, or eBook reader) will be accepted, as long as the entrants provide such specialized hardware or software to the judging location at their own expense.
- Entries that require a user login must include three separate login IDs for the judging team members to evaluate the entry.
- If the entry is provided on a CD or DVD, specify the format (PC or Mac) on both the submission form and the disk itself.
- If you submit compressed files, they must be self-extracting.
- An entry on the Web is judged as it exists on the day of judging.
- Demonstration of the entry to the judges is forbidden.
- Entries must install correctly, be virus-free, and not take an unreasonable length of time to install.
- If the entry uses any software other than the latest versions of Firefox, Adobe Reader, or Microsoft Internet Explorer, you must also provide **four copies** of the software with the entry.

The following four categories are used for judging and awards. If you are unsure about which category your entry falls into, contact us (competition@stcnymetro.net).

Informational Materials Category

Definition: Entries that are:

- 1) designed to attract potential buyers while providing information about a technical or scientific subject, product, service, or organization, and
- 2) intended to inform the user of information without a specific call to action.

The materials must persuade the audience favorably toward the subject or sponsor. Visual design, including production, is very important. So, too, is editing, because errors are very obvious.

Entry Types: Annual reports, articles, books, error messages, magazines, newsletters, periodicals, posters, research papers, videos and websites

1. **Annual Reports** are publications that summarize the activities or financial position of corporations, government agencies, or nonprofit community organizations. *Annual Reports* includes reports that comply with the regulations of government agencies, such as the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, as well as reports of unregulated, nonprofit organizations. The design should support the focus and projected image of the entity and present financial and technical information in a visual manner.

2. **Articles** include scholarly articles, professional articles, and trade or news articles.

Scholarly/professional articles are single articles that appear in academic or professional journals or in a scholarly book as an original contribution of knowledge.

Trade/news articles are single articles appearing in trade journals or general interest periodicals and are not original contributions of knowledge.

3. **Books** include bound, printed matter usually sold to the public through a bookseller, or eBooks. For this competition, a book is defined as a lengthy document covering one technical subject that is intended for sale to the public.
4. **Periodicals** include magazines, newsletters, and scholarly and professional journals that are covered and bound or published in an electronic format.

IMPORTANT: Submit **three consecutive** issues as a single entry.

Magazines have features and regular columns in an established format that people recognize. Advertising may or may not be included. They are controlled by identifiable publishers or owners and served by editorial staff. Magazines can contain news and information about an organization, technology, industry, or scientific field. They can serve either an internal, external, special interest, or general public audience.

Newsletters are regularly scheduled publications with brief articles and a flexible format. They generally have lower budgets and fewer pages than magazines and may have photographs and illustrations. Newsletters are generally

about a company's employees or products, and intended for an internal or external audience. Their primary purpose is to deliver information, which at the same time interests the reader and promotes the sponsor.

Scholarly/professional journals appear as serial publications with features and regular columns in established formats that people recognize. Advertising may or may not be included. They are controlled by identifiable publishers and served by editorial staff. Writing style may tend to be relatively formal, and design creativity may be limited, in keeping with standards defined by expectations of the profession. Journals are usually targeted for a limited and specialized audience and typically contain information about research and developments in a particular discipline or profession.

5. **Technical Reports** report on scientific or technical efforts, usually aimed at the professional community or a contracting customer or entity.
6. **Internal Organizational Manuals** include content and tone that are usually company-dictated. Examples include employee manuals, policy and procedure manuals, and style guides.

Instructional Materials Category

Definition: Entries that train a user/learner on a particular set of skills and knowledge

Entry Types: eLearning, mobile learning, Web Based Training (WBTs), facilitator guides, instructional animations or videos, student guides, tutorials, and webinars

1. **Tutorials and Training** teach concepts, products, procedures or systems through self-paced tutorials, instructor-led training and online lesson books using learning technologies.
2. **Training materials** include student guides, tutorials, workbooks, and instructor guides, or sets of these pieces. They should also display good use of motivational techniques (cartoon characters, themes, human interest stories, color); layout or content that readily pulls readers in and keeps them interested in using the materials; student participation, such as exercises; and mechanisms for learners to check their knowledge, such as quizzes and tests.

Promotional Materials Category

Definition: Entries that market or promote a product, company, individual, or event. The materials must persuade the audience to some action, using integrated text and figures. Visual design, including production, is very important. So, too, is editing, because errors are blatantly obvious.

Entry Types: Brochures, catalogs, flyers, posters, videos and websites

1. **Brochures and Catalogs** are used to deliver information about technical products and services. *Brochures* inform people about a product or the features or benefits of a product. *Catalogs* present large amounts of data in a readable format and provide information on ordering the product or service, while being visually pleasing.



- Flyers** (advertisements, product data sheets, single-unit promotional handouts, and multiple-page publications) market a technical product, service, or organization. Corporate and program identity materials (folders, stationery, logos, etc.) are acceptable if they communicate technical information or images. Do not mount entries **larger than 11 x 17 inches**. Roll up the entry and send in a mailing tube. Printed entries that are smaller than 11x17 must be mounted.
- Posters** support or market an employee campaign, technical product, organization, or event or communicate educational information (as opposed to marketing) about a technical or scientific subject, service, or organization. The entry description should include information about the poster's use. Do not mount entries **larger than 11 x 17 inches**. Roll up the entry and send in a mailing tube. Printed entries that are smaller than 11x17 must be mounted.
- Websites** include those that might contain interactive (online) or static, non-interactive information (online or print) that describes or defines the main features of a product or product line.

User Support Materials Category

Definition: Entries that provide information users need to perform specific tasks.

Entry Types: Online help, on-demand performance support, job aids, quick start or reference guides, reference documents, user guides, and websites.

- Job Aids or Quick Start Guides** have the primary purpose of assisting the user to complete a set of tasks or solve a set of problems. Examples include quick reference guides, troubleshooting tools, wizards or wizard-like task completion tools, installation guides, and automated support tools.
- Help** (user assistance) includes online information that has a primary purpose of providing immediate assistance to individuals while they use a product. It provides information appropriate to the task on an as-needed or as-requested basis. Examples include general help, procedural help, cue cards, examples, performance support, videos, laminated quick reference cards, and integrated user assistance.
- Organizational manuals** include content and tone that are usually company-dictated. Examples include employee manuals, policy and procedure manuals, and style guides.
- Quick References** include materials that provide concise reference to essential features of a technical product, service, or subject. The emphasis is on presenting essential information concisely and in a way that it is quick and easy to find. They often contain graphic devices and other job aids
- Reference Documents** have the primary purpose to define or explain structure, results, terminology, problems, or parameters. Examples include online dictionaries, glossaries, function or object descriptions, data structure definitions, encyclopedias, directories,

software documentation sets, multivolume reference materials, and videos.

- User Guides** provide informational or instructional processes for the use of a specific device or application. Examples include computer hardware guides, documentation sets, hardware/software combination guides, non-computer equipment guides, and software guides.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I enter the Competition?

- Winners receive awards and tangible recognition of achievement
- All entrants receive detailed evaluations from the judges. This objective peer evaluation supports continuous improvement.
- Awardees validate their methods and earn visibility

All entrants receive a detailed evaluation from **up to three** technical communication professionals. This alone is worth the entry fee. If your entry goes on to the STC International Summit Awards that means you will receive **six** comprehensive sets of feedback over the course of the competitions. The Assessment process is unique to the STC competitions and is in addition to any award you may win for your entry.

For online entries, what equipment and software will the judges use?

Entries will be judged on different platforms, similar to how your target audience would view your entry. Judges will have the standard browsers, Windows XP or Windows 7 or a Macintosh equivalent, and any required software supplied with the entry. All computers used by judges will have a CD-ROM drive, sound card, video card, and speakers. For Web-based entries, Firefox and Microsoft Internet Explorer are the standard judging browsers.

On the entry submission form, should I list my company's name or the name of the individuals who worked on the project? How many contributors can I include?

The goal of STC International Summit Awards is to recognize the individuals and their departments and organizations who support and outstanding technical communication. In the submission, list individuals as contributors OR cite the department or organization, if the content is produced by a team.

No more than three contributors can be listed for an entry that goes on to the STC International Summit Awards.

How are entries judged?

All entries are judged by the same criteria within two main assessment areas, Information Design and Writing and Editing.

A panel of judges selects award winners. The judges have the right to reject an entry or assign no award.



Why did only one or two judge(s) critique my entry? I thought I would get three written critiques.

Every entry is assigned to a judging team of three judges and we strive to provide feedback to all entrants from each judge.

Occasionally, our judge volunteers must withdraw for unforeseen reasons, so we cannot guarantee that each entry will receive three complete evaluations.

How will I be notified of the results?

All entries are acknowledged. Submitters will receive the judges' evaluations regardless of award level.

STC International Summit Award winners will receive notification before the STC Annual Summit. Best of Show recipients will be honored on stage during the Summit Honors Banquet.

How do I make sure my entry does not get disqualified?

STC can disqualify entries for many reasons. Below are some of the causes of disqualification and how to avoid them.

What happens to my entry after the competition?

Entries are not returned after the STC competition.

- Regional winners are displayed during the Awards event or in the Regional TechComm Roadshow.
- If your entry wins an ISA award of Distinguished Technical Communication or Best of Show, one copy will be on display at the STC Summit in the Expo Hall. Judges will dispose of all other copies of entries.

Can I get additional certificates for all contributors?

Yes, Submitters can request additional certificates at no additional cost. The certificate will be an exact duplicate of the original. Optionally, you can order a framed certificate at the cost of \$30.00.

Who do I contact if I have other questions?

Send your questions to competition@stcnymetro.net. Someone from the Regional Competition Committee will respond within a reasonable time frame.

Reason for Disqualification	Method to Avoid Disqualification
Entry does not meet the definition of an acceptable entry of technical communication. For example, entry is an STC internal document or website.	See category definitions on pages 2 and 3 for what qualifies.
Periodical entry does not have enough consecutive issues.	For Periodicals , submit 3 consecutive issues.
Entry did not meet the submission deadline.	Mail your entry to arrive at its destination (or send the URL for online entries) before the deadline. Fill out the Regional Online Entries Form for each entry.
Submission form was not submitted online or not filled out completely. A hard copy form alone mailed with your entry is not acceptable.	For physical entries, print 4 copies of the form when instructed.
Entry was mailed to STC office or another incorrect address.	You have 2 options for submission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have a physical entry, mail the forms and entries to Malu Schloss • If you have an online entry, email Kamala Raghunath who will send you uploading instructions Submission details
Entry fee was mailed with entry.	If you are paying by check, do not mail your fee with the entry. Instead, write the check to STCNY Metro . Send it to Mark Yoss, STCNY Treasurer, c/o: 444 E. 82 nd St., Suite 11-B, New York, NY 10028. Email: Mark Yoss treasurer@stcnymetro.net
Entry fee was not paid.	Entries that have not been paid by the Deadline date will be disqualified.
Entry is a duplicate. For example, if you entered ABC Training Guides I, II, and III as one entry and also entered ABC Training Guide I as a separate entry, both entries are disqualified.	Submit the entry only once.
Same entry is in two different chapter competitions (e.g., Rochester STC chapter and South Carolina chapter).	Submit the entry to only one chapter or regional competition.
Exact same entry was entered the previous year.	If you updated the entry since last year and the copyright or version number shows this, then it qualifies.