ACHIEVE!

Exciting Times in the World of Accessibility!

Looking Back, Looking Forward

By Fabien Vais, A-SIG Manager, and Dan Voss, A-SIG Immediate Past Manager
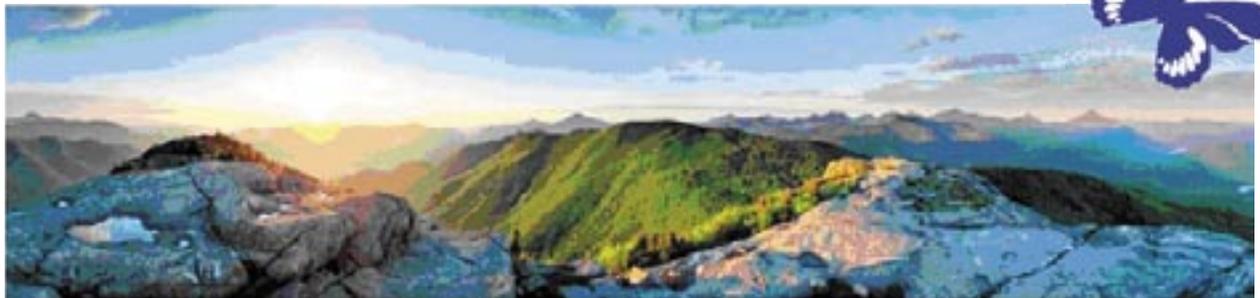
Only a few short years ago, it seems, we were a committee of fewer than 20 members (the Special Needs Committee). Now, we are a dynamic and growing Special Interest Group of nearly 250 members. These are, indeed, exciting times in the world of accessibility—and the AccessAbility SIG!

A few short years ago, Section 508 was a seating area at the Metropolitan Opera between Sections 507 and 509. Now, it is one of the hottest topics in usability as Web site accessibility has moved onto the professional and public "radar screen."

A few short years ago, an STC member with a disability who came to the STC annual conference was on his or her own. Now he or she can access a comprehensive online *Guidelines for People with Special Needs*, published well in advance of the conference, as well as an *Addendum* printed onsite following a close inspection of the facilities from the standpoint of mobility restrictions, visual and hearing loss, fatigue, and other considerations.

A few short years ago, the idea of having nearly 250 people passionately committed to the goal of universal accessibility seemed like an impossible dream. Now, it is a reality.

But we have just begun. What do we see a few years down the road?

- We see further growth in SIG membership, as awareness of and interest in our mission continues to grow.
- We see expanded participation in our already robust and enlightening listserv.
- We see more data-rich—and hopefully inspiring!—editions of this newsletter.
- We see more great things for our dynamic and comprehensive website.
- We see a continued strong presence at the STC annual conference and possible expansion to other events, using our guidelines as a model.

STC
SOCIETY FOR
TECHNICAL
COMMUNICATION

Don't Miss Our Progressions!

Willing and Able: How Technical Communicators with Disabilities Can Succeed in Their Profession (UID 5U)

Tuesday 8:30-10:00 AM (Room: Ballroom I)

Topics and presenters for this session:

- Making Public Places and Events Truly Accessible (Fabien Vais)
- Secondary Disabilities: The Vicious Circle (How One Impairment Can Cause Another) (Lori Gillen, Ria Voss, and Dan Voss)
- Airport Security for People with Disabilities (Mike Murray)
- Adaptive Technologies and Techniques for People with Vision Problems (Gloria A. Reece)
- Work Accommodations for People with Emotional or Mental Disabilities (Helen A. Marty)
- From East to West: Comparing Experiences as a Wheelchair User in Asia, Europe, and the USA (Eleanor Lisney)

Check Out These Online Resources!

- Our comprehensive and always growing Web site, at http://www.stcsig.org/sn/.
- Our archive of data-rich and inspiring newsletters, at http://www.stcsig.org/sn/newsletter.shtml.
- Our robust and enlightening listserv, at stc-accessibility@lists.stc.org (requires SIG membership).

Looking Forward
Continued from Page 1

- We see a much more international element in our undertakings. Already, we have members in 12 countries, and one of our major goals for next year is to bring their global perspectives and expertise to bear upon our mission and activities.
- We see continued and expanded research and publishing, possibly including an edition of *Technical Communication* thematically dedicated to accessibility.
- We see aggressive but responsible advocacy for people with disabilities, both within and outside STC.
- We see a long and rewarding flight for our butterfly.

And we see the now-traditional Monday night A-SIG mixer and dinner at the conference extending as far as the eye can see into the future. :) As the song goes, "On a clear day, you can see forever."

We like what we see.

Section 508 for Dummies (UID 7B)

Tuesday 2:00-3:30 PM (Room: Ballroom II)

Topics and presenters for this session:

- An Overview of Section 508 and the Law (Gloria A. Reece, Mike Murray)
- Redesigning the AccessAbility SIG Web Site for Accessibility (Cynthia Lockley, Leslie Reed)
  - Conducting a Usability Test for People with Hearing Impairments (Lori Gillen)
  - The Top Five Roadblocks to Accessibility (Karl Groves)
  - Retrofitting Two Web Sites for Section 508 (Eleanor Lisney)
  - Using Section 508 to Improve Internet Access to Information for Everybody (Thomas Vander Wal)
- User Interfaces and Adaptive Devices: Value Delivery for People with Impairments (Judy Cossel Rice)

Want to Join Us?

Simplest way is to grab (well, make that accost) one of the AccessAbility SIG members sporting the way cool butterfly pins. We'll give you a badge, we'll give you some business cards, we'll give you a lollipop, and we'll set you up with a turnkey SIG sign-up form. We'll probably also fill your ear with excitement and enthusiasm. We tend to do that.

If you somehow miss us, you can simply download the SIG sign-up form from http://www.stc.org/PDF_Files/sigform.pdf.

Trust me, an affiliation with this deeply committed and wonderful bunch of people will enrich your professional life in a way that you cannot possibly imagine. OK, don't trust me—try it!