

# **Purpose and Status of the Society for Technical Communication Body of Knowledge Project**

***January 2009***

What makes a technical communicator a technical communicator? What are the skills and domains of knowledge specific to technical communication? What do technical communicators need to know in order to practice, teach, and move forward the TC profession?

A Society for Technical Communication (STC) task force is attempting to answer these questions by developing the framework for a body of knowledge for technical communication. For the past 18 months, the STC Body of Knowledge (BOK) Task Force has worked to locate, classify, and make accessible that body of knowledge through the web-based Technical Communication Knowledge Portal. As envisioned, the Knowledge Portal will:

- Help technical communicators assess their level of knowledge and skills;
- Provide easily accessed information for those wanting to hire technical communicators or enter the profession;
- Define the profession as a specialized set of skills, abilities; and knowledge

Last September, when the proposed site map for this portal was posted on the STC website, about 150 STC members provided comments. The task force is currently incorporating those comments into a revised map/taxonomy using a tool called *co-mapping*. By February 2009, we will start populating the site with content (definitions, articles, original content, links), using Delicious and Diigo as tagging and bookmarking tools. We will produce some original content as well by using collaboration tools such as Author IT, Basecamp, and other wiki-based tools.

By May 2009, in time for the STC Summit, we hope to have at least two of the 10 top-level domains populated with content, at least down to the 3<sup>rd</sup> level. Populating the entire BOK with content will take quite a while, but we want to show STC members in May how they and others will be able to use this portal to find information on specific topics, careers, programs,

research, and practices—all intuitively organized, easily accessible, and in one place.

For questions, comments, or to contribute, please contact Hillary Hart at [hart@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:hart@mail.utexas.edu) or Nancy Coppola at [nancy.w.coppola@njit.edu](mailto:nancy.w.coppola@njit.edu).