Speaker Biographies

ALPHABETIZED BY LAST NAME

Art Berger (IBM – Technical Writer)
Art works as a Technical Writer for IBM, where he helps create technical documentation for the company's cloud services. His team produces a wide range of products, including instructions, training materials, application program interface (API) documents, user interface (UI) text, command line interface (CLI) strings, error messages, videos, infographics, and more. Art also has experience in technical proposal writing from time at companies such as Red Hat, Inc. and K3 Enterprises, Inc. in the government contracting field. A graduate of the MSTC program at NC State, he looks forward to SpeedCon each year as a great place to learn from and connect with the technical communication community.

Marsha Blackburn (RTI International – Research IT Documentation Specialist)
Marsha is a technical writer and editor in the Research Computing Division at RTI International where she has worked since 2009. She provides writing support for a variety of federally funded and commercial projects. Before she entered the world of technical communication, she was an interactive content producer for newsobserver.com. She is a certified developer in MadCap Flare, and proficient in both Mac and PC environments.

Romanda Brown (NC State University – Master's Student, Red Hat – Technical Writer)
Romanda is a second-year graduate student in the technical communication program in the English Department at NC State University and is currently employed by Red Hat as a Technical Writer. Romanda holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering Science (Biomedical Engineering and Materials Science) from the University of Virginia and still has a love for all things related to medicine. She is currently working on her capstone project at NC State, and hopes that it will act as a bridge between the two disciplines. When Romanda is not tackling pesky comma splices, she enjoys spending time with friends, family, and food.

Anni Bond (Red Hat – Technical Writer II)
Anni is a technical writer for Red Hat. She received an English degree from UNC Charlotte in 2011 and an MS in Technical Communication degree from NC State in 2016. She has been working in the technical writing field for eight years, currently writes documentation for the Red Hat Subscription Management service, and contributes to other projects. In the past, Anni has written for a video game blog with her husband and maintained it as a personal project to keep up to date with the field and web development trends. She plans to get her PhD in digital rhetoric in the future.

Brandy Byrd (IBM WebSphere Application Server – Information Development Team Lead)
Brandy is a highly motivated team contributor and leader who uses a solution-driven approach to producing quality documentation, leads information development teams in an Agile software development model, and inspires team members to create new ways to solve problems. She is a well-educated and experienced writer who has an editing background in both technical and corporate communications.

Chris Dawson (IBM – Information Developer for Cloud)
Chris is an information developer for the Hybrid Cloud organization at IBM. He has worked with technical content and user technologies at IBM for 20 years in various roles on hardware, software, mobile, and cloud products. He served as the accessibility focal point for the IBM Systems organization for several years, which required educating and advocating for accessibility with development teams and executives. When teams were not compliant with accessibility requirements, he worked with them to develop plans to move toward accessibility compliance. He currently works on the IBM Cloud Private and IBM Multicloud Manager information development team, and just ran accessibility testing on his team's documentation for the next release.

Stan Dicks (NC State University – Emeritus Associate Professor)
Stan recently retired from NCSU, where he taught for 20 years and directed the MS in Technical Communication program for much of that time. Prior to that, he worked in industry at Bell Labs and Bell Communication Research. Previously, he taught at Ohio University, Muskegon College, and Wheeling College.

His research and publishing reflect the duality of his career, with equal time spent in the academy and in industry. He is interested in the complex relationship between the business practice of designing, developing, and delivering technical communication artifacts (whether paper-based or digital) and the academic discipline for teaching and researching how such artifacts work. That attention to the interconnections of the academy and industry was reflected in Stan's book on communication management and in his book chapter on cultural differences between academia and industry. Other related work includes an article on text and graphics, a book chapter on usability testing, and a presentation on misuses of usability methods.

Huiling Ding (NC State University – Associate Professor)
Huiling is an Associate Professor of English, Director of the MS in Technical Communication program, and faculty member with the Ph.D. program in Communication, Rhetoric, & Digital Media at NC State University. She is the author of the award-winning book titled *Rhetoric of a Global Epidemic: Transcultural Communication about SARS*. In addition, her articles won the 2013 Nell Ann Pickett Award for Best Article in Technical Communication Quarterly and the 2008 Editor's Pick New Scholar Award from Written Communication.

Huiling's research focuses on intercultural professional communication, health communication, risk communication, rhetoric of health and medicine, social justice, financial communication, digital rhetoric, workplace communication, scientific communication, and comparative rhetoric. She serves on editorial boards of leading journals such as *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *Written Communication*, and *Rhetoric, Globalization, and Professional Communication*.

Beatrice Dlesk (Program Manager, Conversation Designer)
Beatrice has experience in implementing conversational platforms in the finance and aerospace industries. She has been immersed in the world of conversation design and chatbots for nearly two years now and is just waiting for the day they achieve sentience.

Erin Friday (RTI International Research – IT Documentation Specialist)
Erin is a technical writer, editor, and content manager in the Research Computing Division at RTI International, where she has worked since 2016. She started her career in Washington, D.C., working in both the private and public sectors, most notably for BAE Systems and the Federal Reserve. She has spent her career writing technical documentation for software, and frequently performs other roles, such as Documentation Team Manager, Trainer, Requirements Analyst, Tester, and Scrum Master.

Manasi Gandhi (NC State University – Master's Student)
A graduate student in the MS in Technical Communication at NC State University, Manasi interns as a Technical Writer for ITECS at NC State, authoring articles for its Help Desk Knowledge Base and editing and updating the previously written literature. Manasi holds an MA in History from the University of Mumbai, India and a Post Graduate Certification in Education from the University of Cambridge, UK. She also freelances as a science writer and has published articles in Indian portals like www.thewire.in.

Guiseppe Getto (East Carolina University – Assistant Professor, Content Garden, Inc. – President)
Guiseppe is an Assistant Professor of Technical and Professional Communication at East Carolina University and is President and Founder of Content Garden, Inc., a digital marketing and user experience (UX) consulting firm specializing in non-profits and small businesses. His research focuses on utilizing UX design, content strategy, and other participatory research methods to help people improve their communities and organizations. The findings of his research have been published in peer-reviewed journals such as *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* and *Technical Communication*. His work has also appeared in industry-based publications such as Intercom and Boxes and Arrows. He has taught at the college level for over fifteen years. During that time, he has also consulted and formed research and service-learning partnerships with many nonprofits and businesses, from technical writing firms to homeless shelters to startups. He is also a poet. His first book, *Familiar History*, is currently available from Finishing Line Press.

Missy F. Hannah (SAS Institute – Digital Marketing Specialist)
Missy is a Ph.D. student in the Communication, Rhetoric & Digital Media program at NC State University and a Digital Marketing Specialist at SAS Institute. Missy's research interests include queer & feminist activism, ethics in technical professional communication (TPC), game studies, and TPC pedagogy. At her work, she specializes in organizing and conducting digital marketing campaigns.

Alex Heath (Bank of America – SVP, Editor-in-Chief)
Alex is SVP, Editor-in-Chief at Bank of America, where she works globally to increase alignment and consistency across digital products while also developing content standards and best practices for digital. She has nearly a decade of experience working in digital strategy, along with her MS in Technical Communication degree from NC State, where she focused on user experience. She has worked for leading tech giants in the Silicon Valley, including Google, where she sought to enhance the out-of-box experiences for products and implemented the first quick-start guides for eight different hardware products.

Ralph Hudson (Novo Nordisk – Sr. Technical Writer)
Ralph has experience as a technical writer in the biotech/pharmaceutical/health care industry, both in manufacturing and R&D. He has also been certified as an internal auditor in the banking industry, with a total of a decade of experience in the financial industry.

Jessica Kainu (Kroger – UX Designer)
Jessica is the UX Designer for the voice team at Kroger in Charlotte, NC. She received her MS in Information Architecture from Kent State University in 2017. That same year, she moved from Detroit, MI, down to Charlotte, NC, where she experienced her first southern summer. She has been working in design since 2011 with regards to the automotive industry, financial services, and retail. Outside of loving user testing and storyboards, she likes to hang out with her corgi, Squiggles.

Ashley Katz (Lenovo – User Experience Designer)
Ashley is a UX Designer at Lenovo, a global leader in providing innovative consumer, commercial, and data center technology. As a designer on the World Wide eCommerce team, her role consists of diving through user research and updating Lenovo's website with new experiences. She is an active board member of AIGA Raleigh, serving as Director of Student Engagement and organizing their annual Student Portfolio Review for design seniors from local universities.

Yeqing Kong (NC State University – Doctoral Student)
Yeqing is a second-year Ph.D. student and graduate teaching assistant. Her research interests include technical and professional communication, digital rhetoric, visual communication, and intercultural communication. Her current research focuses on the practice of data visualization through the lens of technical communication.

Diana Levey (SAS – Senior Marketing Director)
A communications professional since 1989, Diana is currently Senior Marketing Director for SAS. She works to get JMP statistical discovery software into the hands of people who need to understand their data. Diana and her team of world-class marketers manage the JMP brand and communications and marketing programs, while also supporting JMP sales teams around the globe. In her 20 years at SAS, Diana has been integral in launching a sales incentive program, two corporate magazines, and a global interest group for professional women. She is also on the board of directors for WildTrack. Diana received a Bachelor of Arts in English with a Biology Minor from Barton College in Wilson, NC, in 1988, and earned a Master's of Technical and Professional Writing from Northeastern University, Boston, in 1991.

Sabrina Lonigro (Agilent Technologies – UI/UX Design Lead)
From a degree in graphic design to switching fields to technology, Sabrina has found her happy middle ground with everything she knows and loves to do in user experience design. She is currently working at Agilent Technologies as a Lead UI/UX Designer. With over 12 years in the field, starting off as a consultant and moving over in-house, Sabrina brings a diverse range of project experience to her plate.

Christina Mayr (Epic Games – Sr. Technical Writer)
Christina is a DITA enthusiast with over six years' experience creating and managing DITA content and structure, templates, workflows, and publishing pipelines, and administrating DITA authoring tools. She is also the tools instructor for the Duke University Technical Writing Program. A graduate of the East Carolina University Technical & Professional Communication Master's program, Christina is an active

leader in the STC Carolina Chapter and has worked as a technical writer in central North Carolina since 2007.

Craig McKerlie (Raytheon Technologies – Cyber Security Technical Writer)
Craig is a technical writer/editor with broad experience creating quality software and hardware documentation within many industries (software, electronics, industrial), primarily in Research Triangle Park. He is experienced in document design (ArborTXT, FrameMaker, PageMaker, Single Source Authoring, Word) and in leveraging a consistent tone and style across product documentation sets. He is also adept at researching, organizing, and bringing to timely completion projects of varying complexity and scope, including operator manuals, hardware installation and configuration manuals, and programming language documentation.

Willamina O'Keeffe (NC State University – Master's Student)
Willamina is a user experience enthusiast with a passion for simplifying interactions. She has worked designing conversations and chatbots for several years and is always excited to help other people get started with their first chatbot. Willamina is interested in the ways in which AI and humanized technology shape our experiences as humans. She is currently a first-year student in the MSTC program at NC State University.

Nupoor Ranade (NC State University – Doctoral Student)
Nupoor is a Ph.D. student in the Communication, Rhetoric & Digital Media program at NC State University with a focus on technical communication, usability analysis, data analysis, and rhetorical studies in artificial Intelligence and the IoT domains. She has a background in computer engineering and has earned an MS in Technical Communication from NC State University. She is interested in exploring the field of human-computer interaction and the role it plays in behavioral studies, which impacts pedagogical approaches.

LeAndra Spicer (Bank of America – Content Strategist, Experience Design)
LeAndra began her content career writing for small websites, slowly transitioning into digital marketing before landing in user experience. She has a Bachelor's in Psychology and a Master's in Social Work from Ohio State University and a Master's in Business Administration from University of Florida. She appreciates how simple words can communicate complex ideas and disapproves when we obscure simple ideas with too many complex words.

Melissa Stone (NC State University – Doctoral Student)
Melissa is a Ph.D. student in the Communication, Rhetoric & Digital Media program at NC State University. Her research typically focuses on gender construction and how it intersects with rhetorics of technology. Specifically, she is interested in how gendered health technologies are presented and understood through various media. More recently, she has become interested in object-orientated studies, wearable technologies, feminist rhetorics of embodiment, and the question of how technologies old and new become gendered. She is also interested in the theory and practice of composition and technical and professional communication pedagogies.

Jason Swarts (NC State University – Professor & Associate Head of the Department of English)
Jason is a professor of technical communication in the Department of English at NC State University. He teaches courses on structured authoring, community-based approaches to knowledge work, networks, and discourse analysis. His research focuses on interrelated areas of genre studies, computer-mediated communication, networks, knowledge work, and knowledge communities. His most recent book,

Wicked, Incomplete, and Uncertain: User Support in the Wild and the Role of Technical Communication was published by Utah State University Press in late 2018.

Susan Tacker (Oracle + Bronto – Manager, Technical Communication and Courseware)
Susan manages the technical communication and courseware team at Oracle + Bronto in Durham, NC. Her background includes degrees in English, journalism, and human factors in information design, as well as extensive experience in managing high-performing teams in software development organizations. She is founder of the Houston chapter of the User Experience Professionals' Association, past president of Triangle UXPA, and last year's co-chair of Raleigh's UX Y'all conference. She enjoys hiking, canoeing, and camping with her husband, Chuck Fleming, and their dog, Tucker T. Fleming.

Douglas Walls (NC State University – Assistant Professor)
Douglas is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at NC State University. His research interest is in digital rhetorics and user experience, particularly in social networks and social justice contexts. His work has appeared in both traditional and new media forms in *Computers and Composition, Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, and *The Journal of Business and Technical Communication*. He is the co-editor of *Social Writing/Social Media: Publics, Presentations, and Pedagogies* by the WAC Clearinghouse at Colordo State. His article "Access(ing) the Coordination of Writing Networks," received Honorable Recognition for the 2016 Ellen Nold Award for the Best Article in Computers and Composition Studies while his article "The Professional Work of 'Unprofessional' Tweets: Microblogging Career Situations in African American Hush Harbors," was nominated for Best Article Reporting Qualitative or Quantitative Research in Technical or Scientific Communication for 2017.

Summer Walls (NC State University – Master's Student)
Summer started the MS in Technical Communication to catalyze a technical writing career in aerospace or software engineering. Her professional background is rooted in book publishing, journalism, and all things editorial. She hopes to combine her editing expertise with specialization in user-centered design, technical documentation, and systems thinking. She graduated from UNC Charlotte with a BA in English and Communication Studies. At NC State, she serves as the Technical Communication Association Event Planner and works at NC Sea Grant and McClatchy.

Jennifer Willard (State of North Carolina – Sr. Technical Writer)
Jennifer is a Senior Technical Writer and Documentation Specialist with over 20 years of experience. She is also a Certified Professional Procedures Association (PPA) technical writer. She is currently contracting with the State of North Carolina, Department of Information Technology (DIT), and writing Federal and State IT cybersecurity compliance governance policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs). The SOPs are multi-purpose and are used in disaster recovery, business continuity, and training of current and new employees. Jennifer also works with the NCID Identity Management DEV team, does application testing, and writes end-user training materials. Jennifer worked many years with US Power Grid and electric utilities. She enjoys creating Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Visio workflow templates and style guides that are effective technical writing tools for project management.

Shane Williams (Lenovo – Project Manager)
Shane is a Project Manager on the Optimization and Personalization Team at Lenovo. Shane and the other members on the team devise and implement A/B tests and personalization campaigns to determine business impact and create unique experiences for users. Shane took the long road to working in tech, moving from working in film and television and group/personal fitness training. Prior to

joining Lenovo, Shane attended an 18-month online user experience design program through Bloc. When not working, Shane can be found devouring an absurd amount of cat videos.

Tyler Williamson (SAS Institute – Test Engineer)
Tyler is a Raleigh native that graduated from NC State University in 2005 with a BA in English, and in 2008 with an MS in Technical Communication. He has worked at in R&D at SAS Institute since 2006. In that time, he has worked in accessibility and helping products become more accessible to all users.

Kelly Woodfin (Bank of America – Senior Content Strategist)
Kelly is a graduate of the MBA program at Queens University, currently working in the field of user experience. She has practical experience with content strategy, marketing/public relations, and coaching.

Chenxing Xie (NC State University – Master's Student)
Chenxing is a first-year Master's student in the Technical Communication program. She currently serves as the communication coordinator of the Technical Communication Association at NC State University. Her research interests include technical and professional communication, health communication, and digital rhetoric. She holds a BA in English from Tsinghua University.