
POV: SIGs and STC Communities

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To SIG or not to SIG? That is a question that each of us considered as we renewed our STC membership this year.

Significant interest groups (SIGs) are made up of far-flung members and tend to concentrate on a specific area of technical communication. STC offers membership choices that range from a traditional community (formerly chapter) membership with the option of also belonging to two SIGs, to a SIG-only membership.

It was apparent to anyone attending the 2006 STC Conference that a major focus of the con-

ference was SIGs. The tables at luncheons were divided into SIGs, a number of sessions were presented by or had the involvement of SIGs, and there was quite a bit of promotion by some members to persuade attendees to join their particular SIG.

I enjoyed sitting in on an editing SIG session during Leadership Day and found the Lone Writers SIG to be a very interesting group to network with during one of the luncheons at the conference.

Although I belong to the management and contract writer SIGs, I don't feel that they can supply everything to an STC member. The mailing lists and web sites around which most SIGs are or-

ganized provide some sense of community. However, this is no substitute for human interaction.

The success of SIGs, just like any other endeavor, will be based on the value that they provide members. Any SIGs that do not meet this criteria will not survive. One SIG has already ceased to exist due to a lack of interest.

My feeling is that SIGs have a place as a complement to traditional membership, but not as a complete replacement. Each can serve side-by-side as valuable resources to augment the other.

