

INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

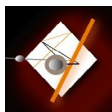
Yesterday < Today > Tomorrow

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As the editor of a sister journal, *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* (JBTC), I congratulate *connexions* on its birth, exactly 25 years after JBTC was born^[1]. The title *connexions* summarizes for me the great movement of the last 25 years and, if I may presume, the movement of the next 25 years, toward greater interconnectedness of international professional communication. Many in this issue will doubtless speak of the ways technology has transformed professional communication itself. It certainly has, and will.

But a key factor in this technological revolution in communication is that it connects—even at times merges—communication with knowledge. Professional communication is now inseparable from databases, and professional communicators, increasingly, are inseparable from programmers. A major conference in North America for professional communicators has become SIGDOC, the Special Interest



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Group on Design of Communication of ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery.

This vast change has been termed the IText revolution, a term coined a decade ago in JBTC to describe the impact of information technologies with texts at their core. These ITexts, its original manifesto claimed, represented “a new page in the story of the coevolution of humanity, culture, and technology,” promising to change both the nature of texts and their role in society (Geisler 2011). That change has occurred, is occurring, and will continue to occur, as social networks, data harvesting, and a thousand other technologies have text at their core. This is revolutionizing communication by connecting text with all other semiotic modes, with vast databases capable of tremendous good (e.g., democratic revolutions mediated through social networks) and tremendous evil (e.g., global invasions of privacy). The revolution connects the private with the professional, the home with work and, at bottom, the I with the Other, as never before. And for all of this there must be research to make sense of this impact of IText on all of us. And that is why *connexions* and journals like it are so important.

A second meaning of *connexions*—the journal and the concept—is terribly important for the future. And that is the connection among people who speak different languages and come from different cultures. English has become, ironically, the lingua franca (Latin for French language) of the professional world. Fortunately, in the US, where I work, there is an increasing recognition that English is becoming an international language, that native speakers no longer “own” English—as if they ever did. Speakers of English as a mother tongue are a minority

of English speakers in the world, and in professional workplaces and organizations worldwide, it is likely that in any given meeting, speakers of English as a mother tongue are the minority. And through the professional and cultural connections, English is being transformed. That is a very good thing. And this is true, increasingly, in professional communication research and teaching as well. We minority speakers of English as a mother tongue must cede to the world our language, to find the *connexions* we need.

So Viva *connexions*! ■

Editor's Note

^[1] This article was written in 2012, when the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* was 25 years old.

References

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