If you've read this space in the past, you will recall that I have been posing a number of initiatives for the SDTG to undertake. We recently put the list of potential initiatives to a vote of the SDTG officers, and the top 3 vote getters (actually the only initiatives receiving multiple votes) were (in order of number of votes):

1) building the SDTG membership
2) presenting to the SDTG membership in the newsletter a Question of the Quarter for additional discussion;
3) preparing a strategic plan for the SDTG.

Membership Growth Is Key for SDTG Survival

1) The SDTG Officers felt that the most important issue confronting the Technical Group today is that of membership growth: how can we increase the number of members, and how can we enhance their interest and involvement in the Technical Group and its activities. The trend of the TG membership over the past couple of years has been slowly upward, but we need to dramatically increase the rate of growth. Given the central role of system development in most of what we as human factors/ergonomics specialists do in our professional lives, the Systems Development Technical Group should be the largest TG in the HFES. At the publication of the latest HFES Directory, the SDTG had 209 members, making it one of the smaller TGs. The largest was the Internet TG with 2,500 members. There were several TGs in the 500 to 700 range, including Computer Systems (680); Industrial Ergonomics (674); Safety (662); and Consumer Products (512). So we have some room to grow.

First Question of the Quarter Posed

2) In sticking with the issue of growing the TG, I’d like to pose the first Question of the Quarter to the membership as:

What can be done to increase the membership of the SDTG, and the involvement of the membership in the activities of the SDTG?

This question has a number of subsidiary queries, such as:

◊ What should the SDTG be doing to attract new members?
◊ What should the SDTG be doing to retain current members?
◊ How can we enhance the perceived value of membership in the SDTG?
◊ How can we enhance the involvement of SDTG members in activities of the TG?

The response to requests for input from the membership in the past has been rather poor. I think this reflects the fact that we're all busy rather than that SDTG members are apathetic, but I could be wrong on that. If membership in the SDTG has any importance to you in your professional life, I would ask you to respond to my request for input. If, however,
Dear SDTG members,

The SDTG web site (http://www.humancentrictech.com/SDTG/) is fully functional and we are trying to populate it with information that would be useful to the membership and to the general public. Here are some items that might be of interest...

Member bios:
We have just added a feature where we can link member bios from their name on the Directory page. You may want to check for this information in the future to learn more about your fellow TG members. Members who would like to submit a description of their background, expertise, and/or publications can send their descriptions to me and I will forward them to be posted on the web site. This is totally voluntary.

We need the electronic bio in MS Word, MS Works or text format (please no .pdf for this; we are trying to stick to a single format). The general suggested format is: Member name, credentials/titles, contact information, personal human factors-related web site if any (some members have designed their own HF web sites), expertise, background and other narrative desired, publications. This format is strictly a guide and not a requirement. Any or all sections can be used, and other headings can be added.

We need announcements and articles:
Do you know of an upcoming conference or a job opening that may be of interest to the SDTG? We want to post this information on the web site, but what we provide would be much more thorough if all the members alerted us to these items. With your help, we can really enhance the content and utility of the web site.

What about research or articles that would be of interest to others? We now have a link to some of the Tactical Decision Making Under Stress (TADMUS) research Under Articles on the Documents page. We would like to have more research to add value to the site.

If you have other comments, ideas or suggestions that you would like to provide, we are always open to new ideas. If you have input on the formatting, please contact our Webmaster Teresa Alley at talley@dticam.dtic.mil. If you have input on the content, you can contact me at melissa_dugger@teambci.com.

Please keep checking back on the website to see the new items that are added.

Thanks, Melissa

Melissa Dugger
Secretary-Treasurer – SDTG
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society

Follow-up Call For Papers
CybErg’2002, The Third International Cyberspace Conference on Ergonomics

This is a Call for Short Communications papers for CybErg’2002, the 3rd International Cyberspace Conference on Ergonomics. CybErg’2002 is an international virtual conference that uses the WWW as a conference venue. The dates when the conference will be active have changed slightly. The conference will now be interactive from 15 September to 15 October 2002. The reason for the change is to allow for us to connect with the Human Factors & Ergonomic annual meeting (whose dates have just changed recently) at the beginning of October. We are planning a number of exciting initiatives including a live synchronous chat session and a CybErg’2002 web room at the HFES annual meeting. There are also discounts at CybErg’2002 for those delegates who are registered at both conferences. The changing of the conference dates also means that we are able to extend the first deadline for the submission of research papers and symposium proposals.

The Call for Papers is encouraging (Continued on page 4)
Prevention Through People (PTP)

Due to the recent focus on Homeland Security post September 11, Melissa Dugger thought the following information would be of interest to the SDTG membership. There has been an increase in awareness and information about the US Coast Guard Services. Please consult http://www.uscg.mil/ if you are interested in further information about the PTP.

The US Coast Guard and industry have worked together closely to ensure that both government and industry needs are met. A PTP Quality Action Team was chartered by the Coast Guard in 1994 to “develop a long-term strategy to rebalance the safety equation by refocusing prevention efforts on casualties caused by human error.” The QAT found that about 80% of all accidents have their root cause in the human element.

As part of its PTP implementation effort, the Coast Guard has developed Quality Partnerships with some marine organizations, furthering PTP action in the field. These partnerships show how PTP can be applied successfully within the different segments of the marine industry.

PTP remains focused on people and their organizations, the human element in every action. Without eliminating or decreasing the technical portion of the marine industry, PTP works with the people to make operations safer. It is an approach that can be applied equally by government and business, large organizations and individuals, regulatory and non-regulatory programs. Essentially, PTP is a new way of looking at the industry - a view that looks for safer operations and environmental protection with a constant focus on the people of the marine community.

Though initiated by the Coast Guard, PTP is a marine industry development. It is a cooperative effort to reduce deaths, injuries, and pollution. PTP will succeed only with the involvement of everyone in the marine community. PTP is a dynamic program that strives for continuous improvement. To help us in this effort, please share your experiences with us.

PTP is an approach to marine safety and environmental protection that systematically addresses the root cause of most accidents - the human element. It recognizes that the major portion of these problems come from organizational errors and promotes a cultural change to develop a “do it right” mindset.

View some of the PTP speeches and accompanying presentation slides on PTP from the Coast Guard’s Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection. Each speech has been tailored to its audience, but delivers the same message of paying attention to the human element. The first item, PTP 101, is a speaking package provided to help you develop your own introductory PTP presentation. You can download the presentation package from http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/mmc/ptp/aboutptp.htm following the Tools and Resources link.

Tom’s 3 Initiatives Proposed
Build SDTG membership
Presenting a Question of the Quarter
Preparing a strategic SDTG plan

Votes and Proposed Approaches for the 2002 SDTG Initiatives

Ongoing Activities Planned in 2002:
1) Continuation of efforts to enhance the image of the SDTG, and of human factors and ergonomics in general as applied to systems development.

2) Supporting John Lee in program development - annual meeting paper review.

3) Supporting Brian Gore and Dennis White in publishing the newsletter.

4) Supporting Teresa Alley in maintaining and contributing to the SDTG web site

5) Enhance the content of the web site (1 vote).

Proposed approach:
The web site could be one of our best features if we can figure out how to maximize its potential.

• Secretary-Treasurer should review the content once a month and provide updates to the webmaster.

• An article should be included in the newsletter following up on the listserv message about the web site and requesting input.

• Officers and members should all consider helpful features that could be added, such as the new “bio” capability. When the membership is updated on improvements such as these we can easily solicit content instead of having to “nag” the membership.

6) Foster greater use of the SDTG Listserv for dissemination of information relevant to the TG and dialogs between the membership.

Initiatives Planned in 2002:
7) Formalization and continuation of efforts to build the membership (4 votes)

Proposed approach:

• Suggest that each quarterly roster be scrutinized by the webmaster (since he/she have to do it anyway to keep the web site updated). Any changes

(Continued on page 5)
The following is some information that came across my screen that I would pass on due to its possible application to the SDTG membership. Jason King, from the ASTG, forwarded the following information from Arnie Lund.

Colleagues,

There are a lot of topical e-mail lists in the user experience area (e.g., UTEST), but there aren't really any lists for people to share challenges and insights around managing a human factors, usability, user experience, information architecture, or similar group; selling a program within a company, and so on. So guess what? I thought I'd start one. There isn't much traffic yet (although we are starting to build up an excellent collection of managers), don't worry about being flooded. But in case you are interested (you don't actually have to be a manager), I thought I would pass this invitation on...

Let me know what you think!

ARNIE

To join this group, go to http://www.smartgroups.com/joingroup

u=15830385&GID=1176722

uemanagers: mailto:alund@acm.org

SMARTGROUPS.COM QUESTIONS: http://www.smartgroups.com/text/helpcenter.cfm

SMARTGROUPS.COM POLICIES: http://www.smartgroups.com

(MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

the suitability of the review paper to the conference is interactive, and to participate in discussions on their paper. The suitability of all papers will be assessed according to their international appeal and their advancement of scientific knowledge.

3) The third initiative receiving votes from the TG officers was to prepare a strategic plan for the SDTG. It has been suggested that this issue be handled with a brainstorming session at this year's Annual Meeting in Baltimore. I agree that would be a good approach to airing out opinions and recommendations for a strategic plan. If any of the members has a suggestion to make with regard to a strategic plan, I'd like to hear it.

Tom Malone

-------

(MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

member in the SDTG has no impact whatsoever in your life as a human factors professional, then it is critical that you respond, because, in this case, the TG is not doing what it should be doing. Either way, I ask you to get back to me with your suggestions, comments, criticisms, heartburn, etc., at tbmalone@carlow.com, or respond via the listserv (http://hfes-sdtg@listserv.hfes.org). And let me know in which group you fall: that the SDTG does have value for your professional experience, or it doesn't.

There are numerous publication opportunities emanating from papers presented at CyErg'2002. All papers will be published on the CD-Rom conference proceedings. A selection of papers dealing with industrially developing countries' issues will be published in the journal ergonomics SA, and a selection of the best papers from the conference may be published in the International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics. In addition to the publication opportunities, Elsevier Science Publishers will also be providing prizes for the best papers at the conference.

For more information on the conference, please visit the conference website at:

http://cyberg.wits.ac.za/
(SDTG Annual Business Continued from page 3)

produce:

- For new members: a form welcoming letter for the Chair's signature and for the Chair to mail.
- Any dropped members: a form “oh no, come back” letter for the Chair's signature and for the Chair to mail.
- An SDTG flyer to be distributed at HFES which includes web site and meeting time/date. This will be designed by Theresa and Melissa, and printed using SDTG funds; it will be brought to the first day of HFES and put on the 'public' table; also suggest that our meeting at the conference be determined well in advance and publicized in any HFES materials they will except (e.g. can we get it in the Bulletin?).
- The annual SDTG meeting notice will go out via hardcopy newsletter, web site and listserver with a well publicized encouragement for all members to bring a friend to our meeting (I suggest all distribution methods for the meeting announcement just to be sure we have gotten to everyone).
- A by-laws change which formally assigns a specific officer, e.g. past-chair, the duty of member recruitment/retention with a standing committee under him/her to implement recruitment activities during the year.

'a' and 'b' could be done now. 'c' could be done in the next few months based on the SDTG budget for printing. 'd' is a general discussion that also get to the issue of when we produce electronic vs. hardcopy newsletters. 'e' is related to Larry's call on Initiative 6 - officer duties and the By-Laws.

8) Begin a “Question of the Quarter” program to get member's input and discussion (3 votes).

Proposed Approach:
We have been discussing this but I'll summarize for the other officers. This is more of a discussion than suggestions.

“It's a great idea; execution is a complex issue.”

- Need the right questions to get participation more heads rather than one person would probably help. Poll the officers, or assign a committee?
- How to encourage/cajole participation; as Tom noted, members don't seem to jump right in frequently do a follow up email if no participation? Officers are specifically encouraged to submit at least one response? Do we want to consider a 'guest' response (someone well known in the area the question addresses, but who is not a SDTG member)?
- Which officer should be responsible for generating the questions and supervising or monitoring the process to be sure it happens?

Since it is a request (even summons) for all-member participation, suggest the Chair be designated. He/she can always ask for help.

- Posting responses. Responses do not magically get posted to a bulletin board or web site - that takes either hand input or application software. Our web site is all volunteer (i.e., constrained) - webmaster, system administrator and host server. It could be done with a running listserver email, but Melissa had concerns, previously expressed by some members, about not wanting their mail box filled with chat or discussion.
- This could be a labor intensive task that requires regular attention, like the quarterly newsletter. Can the officers take this on?

9) Preparing a strategic plan for the SDTG, including a definition of future directions for the TG to pursue (2 votes)

Proposed Approach:
- Since having full discussions over email is so difficult, recommend that a brainstorming session on this issue be held with the officers during the HFES Conference this year.
- One officer could volunteer for writing up the conclusions of the group.
- If there were issues that were determined to require further study a committee could be stood up at the SDTG business meeting.

10) Contribution to the SDTG initiative on the human factors and ergonomics systems approach to reducing medical error (1 vote).

11) Develop the success stories database - situations where human factors made a demonstrable and quantifiable contribution to the usability, operability, supportability, maintainability, safety, or affordability of a complex system.

12) Publishing of the SDTG yearbook and a directory which defines the skills resident in the TG membership.

13) Amend, if necessary, the by-laws to include suggestions from the membership and formalize the positions of past-chair and chair-elect.

Retired and Updated Initiatives from 2001

Retired and Updated Initiatives/Activities from 2001:

1) Update officers in support activities.
2) SDTG By-Laws initiative completed with a revision in 2001.
The System Development Group fosters research and the exchange of information for integrating human factors into the development of systems.