



Stet

Independent Writers of Chicago

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THERE IS NO REGULAR MEETING IN APRIL. THERE IS A WORKSHOP.

APRIL WORKSHOP PREVIEW

April workshop targets students and others new to freelancing

As most of you know, last December the board and committee chairs set some ambitious goals to keep IWOC vibrant, up to date, and more valuable to members. The redesigned website and a beefed-up *Stet* are already up and running to serve you better, but, as they say in infomercials, "There's more!" We're aiming to heighten our visibility so we can attract both potential clients and new members. On the latter front, we've targeted people who are new to freelancing and those who aspire to be freelancers for an April workshop. In particular, we're interested in making young people aware of IWOC. Hence, the workshop title "The Starter Kit."



Though the workshop is geared to freelance newbies — some of whom may be writers whose jobs disappeared in the recession — that doesn't mean all IWOCers aren't welcome, and the price is right: just \$25 for members. There will be six fast-paced sessions: setting up your business, exploring specialties, winning new and repeat business, delivering a

project from start to finish, using social media in business, and a Q&A. And we've got a stellar lineup of speakers: Jim Leman, for one. Who couldn't gain new resolve from his wonderful pep talk on cold-calling, whether you've heard it before or not? Jeff Steele and Jim Kepler also always have information we can use. In all, there will be about a dozen speakers who'll have nuts-and-bolts advice about things we may know but need a nudge to remember. So even if you're a seasoned pro, a quick brush-up couldn't hurt, and it might be just the ticket to give you a new resolve to try something different, scout for additional clients, or just pat yourself on the back that you're doing everything right.

The workshop will be held on Tuesday, April 17 from 5:45 to 9:30 p.m. at National Louis University in Room 5006, 122 S. Michigan Avenue, across from the Art Institute. A boxed dinner is included in the price. You *must* **REGISTER** in advance. (You'll also find a complete list of speakers on the website.) ■

— Joen Kinnan

Roamin' Forum

When in Rome, you simply must visit the Forum — unless you happen to be Julius Caesar on the Ides of March. Now, IWOC also has several forums —or *fora*, if you insist on pure classical Latin, but Julius was one of the masters of classical Latin, and look what happened to him!

Anyway, Roger Rueff created these forums as part of our new website, and I think members will find they are well worth visiting fairly regularly. To participate in a forum, you must subscribe to it (details explained at the end). When you subscribe, you'll have three choices of how often you wish to be notified of new posts to that forum: daily, weekly, or immediately upon posting. This lets you choose to receive only one daily or weekly e-mail alert for a forum, instead of each message as it is posted. The forums also keep track of message threads, linking replies and comments to the older messages they answer.

Unless you need to see new posts immediately—for instance, new jobs on Writers' Line—you can just check your weekly or daily alerts, deciding which to read and which to skip. That will help us all by reducing the ceaseless barrage of IWOC group e-mails and will spare us from the deadly "Reply to All" message chains, which clutter our inboxes.

You'll still want to use regular e-mail when you want to write to just one or

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Stet is published 11 times per year by the Independent Writers of Chicago, 28 East Jackson Building, Suite 1020 #W686, Chicago, IL 60604, 800/804-4962. Internet address: www.iwoc.org. Copy submissions are due by the 15th of the month preceding publication. All submissions and ideas will be considered. Copyright ©2012 by Independent Writers of Chicago.

Stet Editor

Joel Kinnan

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How *Not* to Say "Hello" on LinkedIn

When you want to make a new connection on LinkedIn, do you use the default invitation message that LinkedIn provides: "I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn." If so ...

DON'T.

Recently Sally Chapralis posted a link on the new IWOC Member Forum to a short article warning about this basic LinkedIn mistake. It's a very useful caution worth repeating in Stet. Here's the link from a Ragan Communications website: <http://www.ragan.com/Main/Articles/44608.aspx>

The author is Mic Johnson, a social media and business coach at Blue Gurus, a social media and web consulting firm based in Kansas City (bluegurus.com). He was repeating his earlier warning to avoid the generic invitation, which is often emphasized in LinkedIn advice. Here are other useful common-sense tips, partly based on Johnson's article:

Personalize

Word your LinkedIn invitations for the person you're inviting. That is, address your audience. Explain why you're inviting that particular person, whether it's someone you know with whom you are reconnecting or a new contact to whom a mutual connection has introduced you.

The default message implies you're too lazy to create your own wording, probably don't know much about the person you're inviting, and haven't bothered to find out. It suggests you may not have any good reasons for trying to connect and doesn't explain why that person should want to link up with you. It is already challenging enough to differentiate yourself from the millions of other people on LinkedIn. Don't make matters worse by sending generic invitations.

Reject Strangers

Time is valuable, so don't waste yours or other people's on collecting a meaningless network of random strangers. Before you invite a new connection (and you should have a mutual connection to introduce you), look up his/her LinkedIn public profile (and website, if available). Make sure there are good mutual reasons why the two of you should connect. Similarly, if invited by

someone you don't already know, check him or her out. If the connection does not make sense, you don't need to report the person for spamming, just click the "Ignore" button. This is not rude, just prudent and sensible.

Johnson says most people who send scattershot generic invitations aren't LinkedIn pests or spammers (although some are). They simply haven't had any LinkedIn training and don't know the etiquette.



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

If someone sends you a LinkedIn request with the default message, Johnson suggests you reply with an offer to meet for coffee to get to know each other first. You could reply with: "Thanks for the invitation. Before we connect, would you tell me more about yourself and why you think it would be helpful for us to link up with each other." Or, "It's possible we have worked together in the past, but would you remind me of the specifics?" A bit awkward, but if they really want to connect, they can and will answer.

Sometimes other generic and really dubious invitations pop up in e-mail, such as: "Since you are a person I trust, I wanted to invite you to join my network on LinkedIn." These — and others from foreign countries where I know absolutely no one — arouse my instant distrust. I click on "Ignore" and don't even offer to meet for coffee.

A friend's e-mail was recently hacked, so that all his contacts got the ever-popular distress call that he'd been mugged (this time in Bulgaria) and had lost his wallet and passport. Would his kind friends send him \$500? A (real) cousin of his replied to the scam artist, saying, "Just tell me the village where our mutual grandfather was born, and I'll be glad to send the money." In the words of President Reagan, "Trust, but verify!" ■

Editor's note: The sage advice in this column that refers to linking with people you hardly know (or don't know at all) is equally applicable to other social media, such as Facebook. You don't need to "friend" every Tom, Dick, and Harry who gloms onto your name just because you don't want to appear to be impolite.

TIPS AND TRICKS

Customize Microsoft Word so you can work faster and smarter

We've all cursed MS Word upon occasion and/or lamented the passing of WordPerfect from the majors. Nevertheless, most of us use it, but few take advantage of the richness of its features. Here are some for the PC you may not know about. (They may work on a Mac too with slight modifications, but I don't know.)

1 Smart Paste

Almost everyone uses "copy" (Control-C) and "paste" (Control-V), but there is a raft of options you can set as the defaults you would most often prefer. On the "file" menu, click on "options," then on "advanced." Under the "cut, copy, and paste" heading, set the defaults you want. For example, if you're moving text around in the same document, you probably want



to paste in the same formatting, but if you're pasting text from another document with different formatting, you probably want the pasted text to match the formatting of the document you're putting it in. You can set those defaults. You can even specify how you want pasted graphics to appear: inline, with text wrapping, etc.

2 No-Hole Justification

Do you like text justified on both the right and the left (full justification)? That looks tidy, but sometimes there is too much white space between words. You can fix that. Go to "file," "options," "advanced" again and go to the bottom of the window and expand the "layout options" entry. You'll see a mind-boggling list, but it's in alpha order. Check the box

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Roamin' Forum CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

two or a few members, rather than a whole forum group. Although Roger has also set up forums for the Board and each IWOC committee (see below), there will occasionally be times when the need for a quick decision or action may require direct e-mails to these groups rather than a slower forum chat.

Two forums are open to all IWOC members, and you will see links to them in the dark blue navigation bar at left of every web page when you log onto iwoc.org:

The **Member Forum**, which is designed to promote discussion about topics of interest and concern to IWOC members. Any IWOC member, including associate

members, can create a new topic, ask a question, comment on any existing topic, or reply to any posted comment. Feel free to use this forum to start a discussion on a subject that interests you or to ask a question when you'd like to get answers from multiple members.

The **Writers' Line Job Board** is open to all members except associate members. The Job Board is not a discussion forum, but as a forum it allows for quicker posting of new openings and gives members the option of getting immediate alerts whenever a new job is listed. As before, this forum lists assignments and jobs from employers seeking profes-

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Did you know...



More fun with the origins of phrases that people use all the time without thinking.

Work cut out for you (a tough task in front of you): Dickens used this phrase in "A Christmas Carol" (1843) but its origins go back to tailoring. The tailor's assistant would cut out all of the pieces of a pattern while the tailor stitched. If the assistant got too far ahead of the tailor, the tailor would have to sort through the pile to find the right pieces, which indeed created more work.

Off the cuff (speaking extemporaneously): The literal image implies someone glancing at notes jotted on his cuff. The phrase first appeared in the 1930s when detachable cuffs were all the rage so perhaps it's true, although laundresses of the day could not have been very happy.

The bitter end (sticking it out without regard to consequences): Thank the navy for this phrase. A "bitt" or "bitter" is a post on a ship's deck that lines ("ropes" to you landlubbers) are wound around. The end of that line is called the bitter end, as in the end of your rope. ■

— Katherine Mikkelson

KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Business cards & print brochures: Dead as a dodo bird?



Everybody knows that the poor dodo bird became prey to anything with a club, claws, or fangs and thus met its eternal demise (in 1662, for your info) because it couldn't fly like most other birds. Didn't have the right technology, you might say. Now many supposedly in-the-know people are ringing the death knell for print business cards and even print brochures. The operative — and apparently dirty — word here is *print*. Going, going, gone.

Or is it? Print obviously has acquired some pretty dodo-ish characteristics of late. Witness the exodus of print journalism in favor of online publications. But wait a minute! What good would an online business card be? I know, you can attach one to your e-mails, but most people ignore them, and they don't do you any good in hand-to-hand combat, i.e., at a networking soiree with potential clients.

Here's how to resurrect your print business card and still hold your head up as a technologically savvy pro. A very savvy pro, in fact. Put a QR code on it that leads to your website. Don't remember what a QR code is? Richard Eastline wrote an article on QR codes for *Stet* a few months ago, but to refresh your memory, a Quick Response (QR) code is a type of two-dimensional bar code that smartphone cameras can scan to automatically pull up text, photos, videos, music, and URLs (your website, for example). Presto! While

you and the would-be client you've snagged are chatting over white wine and guacamole, your snagee can peruse your samples and check out your client list. You might even get a job before you have to order more pita chips. (See the related article on how to generate QR codes on page 6.)

Now about print brochures. There's life in them thar puppies too — if you know how to use them. Experts say that direct mail marketing outperforms electronic and virtual marketing methods. This area is growing — because it works. So if you don't have the stomach for picking up the phone and cold-calling, you can lick a stamp, can't you? Put together a compelling story, not a duplication of what's on your website. You have about 9 seconds to get the reader's attention before he or she moves on to something else so make sure everything in the brochure is a grabber, and don't forget

to put a nifty QR code on it.

.....
Tips on how to update business cards and print brochures so they work for you in today's technologically advanced environment.
.....

If you're not up for doing a brochure for yourself but you do direct marketing, you can use the above arguments and statistics to convince clients that they (actu-

ally you) should do a registration brochure for their next conference. It should be an attention-getter that tells a potent story about why the reader should go to the client's website to register for the conference. ■

— Joen Kinnan

Hands-on gets thumbs-up in March

Webmaster Roger Rueff began the March meeting by walking the audience through several features of the newly redesigned IWOC website, which launched on March 17. The IWOC home page has four prominent imperatives: Find a Writer! Post a Job! Get Started! and Join Us! Links to Current Events are also displayed there and are accessible to nonmembers as well as to members.

A drop-down menu on the home page includes: "Writers," which has subsections for general resources and joining IWOC; "Employers," which can be used to find a writer or to post a job opening; "Events," where a calendar and links for upcoming events are found; "About Us," the location of Press Room, a list of officers, and our newsletter; "Contact Us"; and, "Members."

After logging into the Members section, one can search Resources (such as handouts), enter the Forum (private discussions among members), or open the Job Board. Overall, the modified website is a versatile platform for going forward.

Jennifer Peterson, co-founder of *indiemade*[®], spoke on "How Indie Writers Can Make the Most of Social Media" (accessible at <http://www.indiemade.com/resource/how-indie-writers-can-make-most-social-media>). She brings expertise on this topic from having developed a con-

tent management system designed for independent arts and creative businesses. She began her presentation with a broad brush-



stroke: broadcast media have moved into the realm of social media, a movement that can be described as the democ-

ratization of content. The focus of social media is now on CONTENT.

There are many platforms and tools available within the arena of social media, but to get involved and to

and learn; (4) Find the opportunity; (5) Get a real website—that is, get your own domain name, brand yourself, and be aware that a blog is the container for content on your website; (6) Create and publish content — again, it's all about content; (7) Become an expert — pick a niche subject area; (8) Share and engage — in this public forum share who you are; (9) Be smart — focus and use available tools; (10) Grow, thus building a clientele.

To gain familiarity with social media basics for writers, we broke into four groups for show-and-tell sessions led by four coaches: Brent Brotine (LinkedIn),

Sally Chapralis (LinkedIn), Jennifer Peterson (Facebook), and for Twitter, A. Smit (aka, The Absolutely Awesome Adam).

The discussions were informative, hands-on, lively, and at times somewhat noisy. Before we knew it, the call came to close up the workshops. It was time to

vacate the room! We want to express our gratitude to the four coaches for generating such an engaging session. ■

— Maitland Young



benefit, there are 10 steps that Jennifer said are key: (1) Go with it; give it a try; (2) Define your goals, such as get an audience to sell and show what you have; (3) Connect, listen,



Cool uses for QR code

Think the cat on the left is just a jazzy graphic? Nope. It's a highly stylized QR code that supposedly works. Lacking a smart phone, I can't say, but some tarted-up QR codes *do* work, though the failure rate is high. But you're probably not ready to tackle fine art yet. Here are a couple nifty nonstandard uses for ordinary QR codes:

When you pack up a box for storage, make a QR code listing the contents, print it on a sticky label, and slap it on the box. Then when you want to know what's in there, just scan with your smart phone and there's your list. Moving? This is a real time-saver.

Or how about putting a sticky-label QR code that leads to the manufacturer's online product manual, receipt, or warranty on your appliances? *Now* you'll be able to find those important documents. ■

— *The editor*

GETTING STARTED WITH QR CODES

How to Make Other People's Smart Phones Work for You

Using Quick Response (QR) codes is a mobile-friendly way to connect clients and others when they are off-line to your on-line resources, such as your website (or IWOC's), LinkedIn page, or contact information via a smart-phone web browser.

Though it may seem mysterious, it's actually very easy to generate the code, and you don't need to be a techie to do it. Google "QR code generator" and you'll find a ton of places where you can generate your own QR codes for free. Kaywa's site is easy to use for generating a QR code for a URL (website), text, phone number, or Short Message Service (SMS) message. Just choose the type, enter the content, pick a size that will fit your use, and click "generate." Save the code to a file on your computer, and it's ready to put on a business card or wherever else

you want to use it.

Zxing is easy too, and there are more options: add calendar event, e-mail, contact info, geographic location, and wi-fi network to your choices.

Use Delivr if you want to send people to your LinkedIn or Facebook pages or Twitter. Delivr also lets you choose a color for your code (you may need to know the hex code for your color), and it offers free extras like a personalized Delivr address, editing of your destination URL, location via Device GPS, and QR Code tracking with activity maps. (Editing is a nice feature because you can change the destination URL without having to generate another QR code.)

All the code generators we've listed are free, but you need a phone with a camera and an app that reads the codes if you want to be able to scan other people's QR codes. Some smart phones

come with apps already installed, but if not, you'll need to get one from your app store. On the iPhone, options include QuickMark, Optiscan., and Crafter, which is both a code generator and scanner. Barcode Scanner is a popular QR code reader for Android phones., and Google Goggles has apps for various phones.

Here are three tips to keep in mind when generating your QR codes:

1. Short URLs create cleaner codes. If your URL is long, use a link-shortener like bitly first.
2. Larger-sized codes are more reliable. Make the code no smaller than 1" x 1".
3. The border (quiet zone) around the QR code should be white or another light color and at least 4X the width of the code itself. ■

— *Joel Kinnan*



IWOC Welcomes New Members

Paula Dupont
Jaime Engelhart
Linda Moulton
Mary Parisoe
David Steinkraus
Catherine Ann Velasco
Maitland Young

Eat & Greet

IWORP: April 5
A&T Grill, 9am, 7030
N. Clark. Call Esther
M., 773/274-6215

IWOOP: April 24
Poor Phil's, 12pm, 139
S. Marion, Oak Park.
Barb D., 312/642-3065



Check this: not always on.

Meetings

April 17. IWOC Workshop.
A Starter-Kit for those new
to freelanceing or wanting
to brush up on skills.



Visitors are always
welcome at all events

Roamin' Forum CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3.

sional writers. Only the Writers' Line committee and IWOC's webmaster can post to it, but all professional and senior members can view it. Right now, four jobs are up on the Writers' Line Job Board.

There are currently eight other forums, but when you log on to iwoc.org, you will not see these unless you are a Board member or a member of one of IWOC's committees. As with the Member Forum and the Job Board, the links to these forums appear in the left-hand blue navigation bar of the website.

The Board Forum is open only to current Board members. As Board members get used to it, we can replace scores of e-mails with forum posts, which are easier to follow and harder to miss or get lost. This will make it much easier for Board members to discuss new ideas, topics, or matters that come up between Board meetings.

The other seven forums all come under a link titled Committee Members. There is a separate forum for each subgroup, including:

Board-Plus Forum: All Board members and others who participated in the retreat at the Carleton Hotel in

December 2011.

Next come links to the various IWOC standing committees, namely, the **Membership Forum, Programs Forum, Public Relations Forum, Seminars Forum, Social Media Forum,** and the **Writers' Line Forum.** The last link is for the Writers' Line committee members and not to be confused with the Writers' Line Job Board, where the actual job listings appear.

Like the Board Forum, the various committee forums are designed to make group communications among committee members and between various committees easier and more efficient. In general, except for urgent or special communications, committees should find it easier to exchange ideas through their forums instead of chain e-mails.

Anyone who is a member of any IWOC committee, the Board, or the Board-Plus Group can subscribe to any or all of the committee forums and can simply fol-

low the postings, or contribute their own comments where they want to.

How to subscribe to Forums

Each forum page begins with the forum title and a brief description. Just under that there is a link at the right of the screen that says Subscribe to forum.

Just click that link and it will change to Subscribed (Unsubscribe), which you can click if you later want to leave a forum.

Next, go to your Profile by clicking on the View profile link at the very top right of the IWOC screen, just under your name. Above

your Profile, there are three links, and the middle one is E-mail subscriptions. Click on this, and you'll see a list of all your forum subscriptions. Choose Edit profile at top left of the screen and you can then select for each subscribed forum whether you want to get alerts daily, weekly, or immediately.

Happy roamin' in the IWOC forums. And if you see Brutus or Cassius, duck around the corner. ■



Roman Forum — Arch of Constantine

— David Epstein



Visitors get scoop on IWOC at Creative Expo

The Creative Expo at the Chicago Cultural Center on March 24 drew a good crowd, and IWOC was right there, at Table 1 no less. We had a beautiful laminated poster listing some great reasons to join, IWOC bookmarks to give away, information sheets, and some delicious candy. The candy was a big hit, but many people actually stopped to learn about the organization. We collected a list of e-mails from about 40 folks who wanted to learn more about IWOC. So, though we didn't get anyone to join on the spot — we were offering an attractive discount — we came away feeling that it was a good marketing effort. And we'll use the list to continue to tell the IWOC story. ■

Microsoft Word Tips CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3.

labeled "Do full justification the way WordPerfect 6x for Windows Does." Then click "OK."

3 Quick Access Toolbar backup

If you've customized the QAT, you won't want to have to do *that* again should you have to reinstall Word or you move to a new computer. Word has made a backup file that you can copy to a folder or another drive. In Windows 7 or Vista, go to C:\Users\[username]\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Office. Here you'll find a backup file called "Word.qat." In XP, you'll find it at C:\Documents and Settings\[username]\Local Settings\Application Data\Microsoft\Office.

4 Adjust headline font spacing

Have a zinger headline that won't quite fit properly? No problem. Highlight your text, right click and choose "Font" from the menu. You can select a new size from the Scale drop-down menu, but you can also adjust the spacing. Use the up or down arrows in the Spacing section to expand or compress the space.

5 Paste text with the Spike

The Spike is a glorified version of copy-and-paste, and it's really useful. Too bad nobody knows about it. The Spike is a way to collect text on

the clipboard from several locations and then paste it all at once into your document. Here's how it works: Select a block of text and then use Control-F3 to copy it to the Spike. Repeat this step for each additional item you want to move to the Spike. (It works for graphics too.) To paste everything on the Spike into a document, press Control-Shift-F3.

Here are a few things to keep in mind: The Spike inserts everything in the order in which it was pasted into the Spike, so copy the text accordingly. (This feature is actually a plus: When you want to rearrange a document, put it in the Spike in the new order, paste, and presto! You have a new document!)

The Spike deletes the text from the original document, but that isn't a problem if you've saved the original. Just close it without saving, and your text is still there. When you paste the Spike's contents, it's automatically deleted from the Spike too. To insert the contents without emptying the Spike, go to Insert, Quick Parts, Autotext, and click on the Word "Spike" above the contents of the Spike.

These tips work for Word 7 and later. Don't know about the Mac. ■

In the next issue



- **April 17 workshop recap:** Get a run-down the event and perhaps a few tips from the speakers.
- **May meeting preview:** Learn details of this worthwhile program.
- **President's column:** Read Dave Epstein's always interesting and informative remarks.
- **Tips, technology, and more:** We'll have some more useful articles to help you work better and smarter.

R.I.P.

Solvate, we hardly knew ye. It wasn't that long ago that a number of IWOCers signed up for the cool service you offered that matched employers with freelancers. And now you're gone. It was a great idea, but alas, lack of capital caused you to cease operations on March 1.