



**GUIDELINES
FOR
FRANK R. SMITH
AWARD**

Society for Technical Communication

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Guidelines for the Frank R. Smith Outstanding Journal Article Award

Introduction

The Outstanding Journal Article Award was established by the board of directors in 1966 to recognize authors of superior articles which appeared in the Society's journal. It was renamed in honor of longtime editor, Frank R. Smith, on his retirement in 1995.

Eligibility

Any article that appears in the journal during the calendar year is automatically entered in that year's competition. There is no entry fee.

Award Committee Chair

November 1

On or about November 1 of each year, the journal editor asks the STC Board President to initiate the process for the Frank R. Smith Award.

Judging Team Selection

November 15

The Chair appoints four to six members to the Award Committee. Traditionally, this committee includes at least one fellow of the Society, at least one academic member, and at least one practitioner. If possible, a prior year's winner of the competition is invited to serve as a judge.

The journal editor advises the chair on eligibility of judges. Authors of eligible articles are ineligible to serve as judges. Individuals cited in acknowledgments or anonymous reviewers of eligible articles could also be considered ineligible to serve.

The Chair submits the proposed list of judges to the STC Board of Directors for approval.

The journal editor provides digital copies of the eligible articles to the Chair of the Award Committee for distribution to the members of the committee.

Award Levels

Outstanding Article

Only one Outstanding Article award may be given each year.

Distinguished Technical Communication

One or more Distinguished Technical Communication awards

may be given each year to recognize the merits of the top contenders in the competition that were not selected for the outstanding article

Judging Procedure and Criteria

Procedure

Each year's Award Committee is free to determine its own process for selecting the winners in the competition. The following procedure has often been employed

February 1

The judges agree to complete their initial reading and individual evaluations of the articles by a mutually accepted date following the publication of the last issue of the year. On that date, the Chair of the Award Committee asks the other members to identify their top three or four contenders, along with a short statement explaining the reasons for their selections.

The judges continue their discussion of the top contenders until they reach consensus on the Outstanding Article and any Distinguished Technical Communication winners.

February 15

The Chair of the Award Committee reports the committee's choice(s) to the STC Board of Directors for approval

March 1

As soon as the STC Board of Directors approves the committee's choice(s), the Chair of the Award Committee notifies the award recipient(s) and encourages participation in the Honors Event at the STC Summit.

March 15

The Chair of the Award Committee reports to the STC staff:

- the title of the winning article(s)
- the award citation(s)
- the name and address of the award recipient(s)
- whether the award recipient(s) will attend the Summit Honors Event

Criteria

The criteria used to evaluate entries in this competition are similar to those used by peer reviewers in deciding whether to accept a manuscript submitted to *Technical Communication*.

Audience Awareness

- Does the topic address the interests of a majority of the journal's readers? (A topic need not appeal to the entire readership, but it should not be so specialized that it fails to appeal to most of the readership.)
- Is the method of development appropriate for active practitioners of technical communication?
- Are the examples and illustrations appropriate for the audience as well as the topic?
- Does the article appeal to an international audience?

Originality and Use of Sources

- Does the article make a significant original contribution to the field of technical communication?

Research Methodology

- If the article is not an original contribution, does it summarize existing knowledge in a particularly significant, effective, or cogent way?
- If the article is research-based, does it briefly explain the methodology used for the benefit of practitioners who lack research design experience?
- If the article is research-based, are the results reported and interpreted in such a way that practitioners can appreciate their significance and applicability to their own work?

Structure and Style

- Does the organization effectively contribute to readers' understanding of the ideas the article contains?
- Does the writing significantly exceed expectations for articles published in *Technical Communication*?

Applicability to Practitioners and Ultimate Value

- Whether theoretical or research-based, does the article do an exemplary job of tying the theory or research results to practical strategies that practitioners can implement on their jobs?
- If the article is a case study, is it applicable to a

significant number of technical communication practitioners?

- If the article is a tutorial, is the process or procedure relevant to a significant number of practitioners?
- Ultimately, is the article of such value to practitioners and other members of the *Technical Communication* audience that it deserves to be honored as the outstanding article published in STC's journal during the past year?

Recognition of Winning Entries

Each author of a winning article in this competition receives a certificate.

The winner of the Outstanding Article award is recognized at the Honors event at the STC Summit.

Winning entries are displayed at the STC Summit

Appendix

Suggested Timeline

November 1

The journal editor asks the STC Board president to initiate the process for the Frank R. Smith Award.

November 15

The STC Board of Directors appoints a member of STC as Chair of the Award Committee.

December 1

- The Chair appoints four to six members to the Award Committee
- The Chair submits the proposed list of judges to the STC Board of Directors for approval
- The journal editor provides digital copies of the eligible articles to the Chair of the Award Committee for distribution to the members of the committee

February 1

The judges complete their initial reading and individual evaluations of the articles and identify their top three or four contenders, along with a short statement explaining the reasons for their selections. The judges continue their discussion until they reach consensus on the Outstanding Article and any Distinguished Technical Communication winners.

February 15

The Chair of the Award Committee reports the committee's choice(s) to the STC Board of Directors for approval.

March 1

- The STC Board of Directors approves the committee's choice(s)
- The Chair of the Award Committee notifies the award recipient(s) and encourages participation in the Honors Event at the STC Summit

March 15

The Chair of the Award Committee reports to the STC staff

- the title of the winning article(s)
- the award citation(s)
- the name and address of the award recipient(s)
- whether the award recipient(s) will attend the Honors Event