



Society for Technical Communication

SIG Policy, Creation Process, and Charter

Revised Edition, 2019

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STC Special Interest Group (SIG) Policy

Policy Approved by BOD: 23 July 2014

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are important virtual communities within STC. SIGs are organized around current, unique, or professionally vital topics under the large umbrella of technical communication.

SIGs are grassroots knowledge aggregators. Within them, we expect to find experienced members and subject matter experts engaged in an active conversation with other SIG members. These discussions are curated into content. Ideally, the SIG should be quickly surfacing best practices or generating some new knowledge, insight, or technique to share with the rest of the STC membership and the profession.

SIG content is used to populate and update the Technical Communication Body of Knowledge (TC-BoK) and is selectively shared across the STC online organization. SIG discussions can lead to articles for Intercom magazine and the Technical Communication journal. SIGs might contribute to STC education offerings. For this reason, the role of aggregating and curating discussions into usable content is critical. Traditionally, much of the discussion within SIGs has occurred in email. This content needs to be elevated by SIG volunteers to clear, concise content and made available through the SIG website. The ability to access this information and participate in SIG discussions is one way in which STC fulfills its mission of fostering the means and opportunity for technical communication professionals to succeed in today's workforce and to grow into related career fields.

In order to fulfill the vision described above, to ensure the input from the SIGs to the larger STC content strategy and to contribute to the STC mission, it is necessary that the SIGs operate in accordance with the following policies:

1. Special Interest Groups are an STC entity. Their operations are controlled by STC. The policies controlling SIG operations are developed by STC.
2. All SIGs will be chartered and approved by the STC Board of Directors. The purpose of this approval is primarily to ensure that their discussions align with their name and a topic within the TC-BoK. A secondary purpose is to ensure activity and health. Therefore, SIG titles should adequately reflect their focus and their descriptions should describe the limits of their scope. A SIG charter lasts two years. SIGs can re-charter, and may take re-chartering as an opportunity to shift their focus and/or name.
3. SIGs may request funding from STC annually, based on membership. To request funding, each SIG must submit a budget that details the activities and/or outputs and deliverables that will be accomplished with the funds. STC will provide funding to SIGs at its discretion, but retains final control over all SIG-related funds, and administers the SIG's funds. In addition, any funds the SIG holds are the property of the parent organization (STC) and must be returned to the Society if the SIG disbands or upon request.
4. All SIGs will have a website. The primary purpose of the website is to communicate with SIG members, to communicate to STC membership at large, and to be the primary vehicle for delivery and reuse of content. STC wants to ease the burden of Web development for SIGs and make it easier to maintain an active SIG. To support this idea, STC has promulgated a common technology (currently WordPress), common functions, and shared branding guidelines across SIG websites. This is enabled by use of the common template developed by STC.

5. All SIG websites will be hosted through STC and will have domain names in compliance with the standard format promulgated by STC. This significantly increases the amount of information STC can gather about usage and enables us to increase SIG site functionality and traffic. It also enables the ability to easily share content across the STC online organization.
6. Members pay to belong to SIGs and expect to find unique value there. Therefore, SIGs may only include paid members of their SIG in member mailing lists unless explicitly allowed to do otherwise by STC. SIGs may have one mailing list that includes non-STC members to be used only for purposes of advertising SIG events or promoting STC and SIG membership. SIGs may have LinkedIn and social media sites; however, STC encourages SIGs to limit these discussions to members as well and to transfer useful information or data to their STC website so that it can be shared within the Society.
7. Each SIG will fill four positions. SIG Manager, SIG Treasurer, SIG Content Curator, and SIG Webmaster. The content curator position will be responsible for monitoring online discussions, guiding discussion, coalescing ideas, and transforming discussion into usable content to be posted on the website. This is the most critical position of each SIG. If the content is not developed in a manner that allows reuse, the SIGs are not fulfilling their role in the STC online enterprise.
8. STC, as the owner of each SIG, periodically reviews the operations and vitality of the SIGs. At the approval of the STC Board of Directors, STC may disband a SIG at any time or remove and replace any person from management responsibility for failure to properly execute their responsibilities.

STC Special Interest Group (SIG) Creation Process

Policy Approved by BOD: 23 July 2014

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are important virtual communities within the STC. SIGs are organized around current, unique, or professionally vital topics under the large umbrella of technical communication. Their titles should adequately reflect their focus and their descriptions should describe the limits of their scope. Within them, we expect to find experienced members and subject matter experts engaged in an active conversation with other SIG members.

If the SIG is vital and active discussion and learning are occurring, the SIG should be generating some new knowledge, insight, or technique to share with the rest of the STC membership and the profession. Ideally, SIG activity can be more tightly linked to the Technical Communication Body of Knowledge (TC-BoK), and SIG discussions would be content generators for their members as well as producers of articles for Intercom magazine and the Technical Communication journal. SIGs might also contribute to our education offerings.

However, no topic is popular forever. At some point, tools, training, and common knowledge subsume the conversation. The practice of the profession moves on, combining disciplines or focusing on higher value techniques.

Therefore, we are introducing a process that requires all SIGs to re-charter after a period of two years, so that leaders may re-evaluate their focus and title, re-energize their activities, consider merging with other SIGs if conversations are overlapping, or simply disband if interest and activity is low. At the same time, we are introducing a fairly easy process for starting new SIGs. This process is designed to make SIGs the agile vanguard for STC, able to quickly respond to changes in our constantly evolving profession in a way that will be of significant value to our members.

This document describes the process for starting a new STC Special Interest Group.

1. Download the STC Special Interest Group (SIG) Charter document from the community resource page or request it from the STC Community Affairs Committee (CAC) or STC community liaison. Fill out with the name and provide a detailed objective/purpose/scope and output of the proposed SIG.

Note the names of the manager, treasurer, content curator, and webmaster.

2. The purpose and scope of the proposed SIG will be reviewed. A representative from the Body of Knowledge team will determine if the purpose aligns with the profession of technical communication, if the scope is bounded, and if the name appropriately describes the purpose of the SIG. All SIG topics should have links to the Technical Communication Body of Knowledge.
3. Once the purpose and scope are approved, STC will announce the intent to create a new SIG on its blog and website. The organizer of the proposed SIG will provide a contact (an email address) where interested members can supply their name, STC ID, and email address. Interest in the new SIG must be supported by 50 STC members. The new SIG will have four months in which to collect the signatures. If 50 names are not collected within four months, the proposal expires. STC envisions providing a simpler, one-click expression of interest on the prospective SIG's front page.

4. If the required number of interested members is achieved, the proposed SIG charter will be presented to the STC Board of Directors for approval.
5. Once approved, STC will take the following actions:
 - a. add the SIG to the list of communities on its website
 - b. offer the purchase of membership in the SIG as an option
 - c. set up a URL and template Web page for the SIG
 - d. give appropriate access to the Web page to the new SIG webmaster
 - e. set up a mailing list and/or Adobe Connect access as needed

Charters are valid for two years after approval by the STC Board of Directors, or until 31 December of the second full year after charter. At that time, the members of the SIG have the option to re-charter, disband, or merge with another SIG. SIGs may vote to disband or merge before two years if there is a lack of interest or activity.

Special Interest Group Charter

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) offers members the opportunity to join various Special Interest Groups (SIGs). These are virtual communities of members who want to engage in conversation around a particular subject or learn from subject matter experts. Interaction is generally virtual—through webinars, meet-ups, and phone conversations.

Each SIG will be allowed to maintain a Web presence under www.STC.org hosting. There is no charge for hosting; however, it is the SIG leaders' responsibility to update content on their website. It is important to note that members are paying to participate in SIGs, which are sanctioned by the STC and operate under the STC logo. Therefore, although SIGs may have LinkedIn and social media sites, STC encourages SIGs to limit these discussions to members and to transfer useful information or data to their STC website so that it can be shared within the Society. SIGs may have one mailing list that includes non-STC members to be used only for purposes of advertising SIG events or promoting STC and SIG membership.

SIGs may request funds from STC. Budget requests must detail the activities and/or outputs and deliverables that will be accomplished with the funds. STC will provide funds to SIGs at its discretion.

All SIGs must be chartered and approved by the STC Board of Directors. Charters are valid for two years after approval, or until 31 December of the second full year after charter. At that time, the members of the SIG have the option to re-charter, disband, or merge with another SIG. SIGs may vote to disband or merge before two years if there is a lack of interest or activity. If re-chartering, the members are encouraged to consider the name of the SIG to ensure it continues to accurately reflect the topics currently being discussed.

Special Interest Group Charter Application

Special Interest Group (SIG) Name:

Objectives/Purpose/Scope of the SIG:

Describe the output of the SIG—its benefit to SIG members and to STC membership at large. Describe what areas of the Technical Communication Body of Knowledge (TC-BoK) this SIG aligns with or whether areas of the BOK will be developed by the SIG.

SIG Positions

SIG Manager

Name:

STC Member ID:

Email address:

SIG Treasurer

Name:

STC Member ID:

Email address:

SIG Content Curator

Name:

STC Member ID:

Email address:

SIG Webmaster

Name:

STC Member ID:

Email address:

Chartering Membership—50 STC members

	Name	STC ID	Email Address
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SIG members will be expected to purchase membership in this SIG once approved. The names listed here are solely to demonstrate interest.

Date Approved by the STC Board of Directors:

Society for Technical Communication - SIG Policy, Charter, and Creation Process

Selection of SIG Leaders

Approved by the Board of Directors 24 Aug. 2009

Purpose

This policy describes the selection of a responsible officer for newly recognized STC Special Interest Groups (SIGs) or for existing SIGs without current leadership in place. An Interim Manager or Co-Managers will be recruited and approved until an election can be held.

Policy

For **newly approved** STC SIGs, the Society's SIG liaison shall be responsible for recommending and recruiting an interim SIG Manager or Co-Managers from the list of SIG members who signed and submitted the business case petition for creation of the new SIG. The Board President shall be responsible for approving the appointment.

For **existing SIGs** that require a replacement Manager or Co-Managers and are not organized or prepared to hold an election immediately, the Society's SIG liaison shall notify all SIG members of the availability of the position. The SIG liaison shall be responsible for recruiting and nominating for appointment an Interim Manager or Co-Managers and will request approval of the appointment of the STC Board President.

In either case, a serving interim SIG Manager or Co-Manager may run for elected office. Only Society members in good standing may be officers of SIGs.

Discussion

The companion to this policy, the New SIG Approval Policy, requires submittal to the Society Board of Directors of a business case that includes a list of at least twenty-five STC members who agree to support actively the new SIG for at least one year. The business case may include the name of a leader or leaders to serve as Interim SIG Manager or Co-Managers for the first year, after which an election may be held.

For existing SIGs, if a SIG Manager is no longer able to lead or to assist in the recruitment of a replacement Manager/Co-Managers, the Society SIG liaison is likely to be familiar with the SIG's operation and to have access to communication resources needed to recruit an Interim.

Once the appointment of an Interim Manager (or Co-Managers) is confirmed, the Society SIG liaison and Interim Manager(s) will negotiate the duration that an interim may serve before an election must be held. The Interim Manager/Co-Managers may then announce their eligibility for elected office if nominated by the SIG's impartial Nominating Committee and consistent with all STC and SIG bylaws, policies, and procedures.