



Message from the President



*Message from Beth English,
President SCTC*

Thanks to all who participated in making the Seattle conference great! Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with favorable reviews on everything from the speaker lineup to the evening event at the Living

Computer Museum. I saw several attendees “geeking out” on Commodore PET, Apple II, Atari and the like. As always, the networking and comradery kept us going until the wee hours nightly and re-energized us in spite of the sleep deprivation.

The Board held a strategic planning session prior to the start of the conference, facilitated by Tom Cote of Cap Hill. We are continuing to build on the previous strategic plan, developing tactical steps that align with our top priorities. Our primary strategic goals fall into 4 main categories:

- Branding, Marketing and Public Relations
- Membership and Member Value
- Budget and Finance
- Global Expansion

By ensuring every task undertaken is aligned with one of these values, we are able to focus resources on areas with the most impact.

Some examples of initiatives currently underway include: developing a speaker’s bureau, researching discounted SCTC affiliated insurance plans, distribution of the monthly newsletter “Quipz”, monthly VAC webinars, consultant led “Fireside Chats”, and improving the consultant search engine.

We are also trialing a new application process. While we aren’t lowering our standards for membership, we are using an interview process to walk potential members through the application.

I hope you were able to attend the successful Canadian Regional Group event this week. More Regional meetings are scheduled for several regions early next year!

Check out the calendar on the SCTC web site to stay abreast of important industry events. If there is an industry event you are aware of that isn’t on the calendar, let Meagan know and we will get it added.

As we move into the holiday season, I am reminded how grateful I am to be a part of SCTC and count each of you among my friends!

Beth K English

Upcoming Events

West Regional Meeting

January 22, 2018
Courtyard Marriott, San Jose, CA

Southwest Regional Meeting

April 19, 2018
Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce, Irving, TX

Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting

May 7, 2018
Lorien Hotel & Spa, 1600 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia

Member Profile

Maggie McAuliffe

Unify

Background Information

Maggie McAuliffe currently leads the Consultant Relations program for Unify, a role she has held for 16 years. In her role, Maggie is responsible for driving all interactions with the consultant community, to ensure they are up to speed on Unify's latest products and capabilities. Maggie has been a member of the SCTC for about 15 years. Prior to taking on the role of Consultant Relations, Maggie held sales and service management positions with ROLM, IBM, and Siemens.

What products and services does Unify offer and how has it transitioned during your time there?

During Maggie's tenure, both Unify and the market have undergone a major shift. Her career began when the company was ROLM, and she has seen the company through several mergers, acquisitions and name changes. Today, Unify is a member of the Atos family, as the Atos brand for communications software and services, and a key component of the Atos Digital Workplace. Through its changes the Unify product portfolio has shifted as the market demand has evolved, moving from pure telephony solutions to Unified Communications and contact center, to today's holistic collaboration platforms and cloud solutions. Importantly, Unify refuses to abandon long-time customers so continues to support many of its older products and designs its newer solutions to offer a migration path that meets the needs and pace of change that is right for our customers. Unify's OpenScape portfolio offers a full breadth of voice and UC capabilities for businesses of all sizes. Circuit, Unify's industry-leading collaboration platform, provides the foundation for rich and meaningful collaboration across different media and devices.

How does the SCTC membership provide value to Unify?

The SCTC is the only organization that brings together this breadth of communications technology consultants, so participating in the SCTC has been important for Unify to meet key influencers and build relationships with them.

Can you share a situation where your relationship with the SCTC helped you secure or maintain a client?

During one very competitive bid for a large university and hospital customer, Unify's long-term relationship with SCTC member Steve Leaden, who was acting as a consultant on the project, was instrumental in helping keep a level playing field. The vendor review was extensive and highly competitive. But thanks to Unify's relationship with Leaden, cultivated through the SCTC, Unify was able to truly understand the customer's requirements and offer a solution that fit their needs. Additionally, Leaden's familiarity with Unify's products and services meant that he was able to more effectively advise the customer through their decision-making process.

In your spare time what are your interests?

I spend a great deal of time with my 3 grandsons, Owen, James and Nathan. I do some volunteer work with a charitable organization, 100 Women Who Care About Long Island and COPE, a foundation devoted to helping grieving parents. However, if it's a sunny Sunday, I'll probably be on the golf course.



Society of Communications
Technology Consultants International
230 Washington Ave. Ext. Suite 101
Albany, NY 12203
518-254-8024
<http://www.sctcconsultants.org>



Legal Update from Martha Buyer

I am licensed to practice law in 4 states (New York, Colorado, Wisconsin and Massachusetts). Each has its own set of requirements that I'm required to follow, including, for 3 of the 4, mandatory continuing legal education (CLE). Sometimes these sessions are really not terribly interesting. Other times, they're so fascinating that I keep thinking about what I learned for days and weeks after the session. This has never been more true than the recent program put on by the Silicon Flatirons Program at the University of Colorado Law School, titled "The Social Implications of Technological Change." It was as thought-provoking as any CLE I've ever attended, and while I didn't learn new tricks of the trade, throughout the session, I was constantly prompted to think about the larger issues of social change that technology has wrought upon us as a society.

For most of the first hour, the conversation involved the building out of the telegraph from St. Louis to the west coast. Sounds fascinating, right? It was. Without replaying the entire event (*although if you want to, it's in two separate YouTube videos* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hw05caPanU&list=PLTAvIPZGMUXMoOFGjge dZ_ZB3w2862G43, beginning at 4:50; and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7t1PXvWY1M&list=PLTAvIPZGMUXMoOFGjedZ_ZB3w2862G43&index=2), one of the key takeaways was simply how efficient the builders were without anything other than their own hands and hand tools. They were concerned about finding enough wood to create poles to support the telegraphs and then protecting those installed poles from Native American attack. But it's extremely unlikely that as focused as they were on getting the job done (*which they did in an amazingly brief 5 months*), they had no idea what the impact of this amazing installation would have on the generations to follow.

Beyond the history lesson, the real questions that were posed involve the extent of consideration—if any—given by technology designers as they set about the business of innovating and creating products and services that will revolutionize the word as we know it? As designers worked on the earliest iterations of electronic mail, as an example, were they

considering the cost of such innovation (*in terms of a \$0.49 first class stamp or the fact that it now takes 2 days for a letter to get from me to someone else who lives in the town next to mine*)? Were the technologists behind the development of text messaging considering how many more auto accidents there would be as a result of distracted drivers? Probably not. But cause and effect are plain as day.

In 2005, the State of Colorado enacted Senate Bill 152 (SB 152), a state law whose effect has been to make it difficult for municipalities within the state to both invest in internet infrastructure and provide services either themselves, or in a public-private partnership without the blessing and/or participation of the incumbent. Although there is a work-around in the form of a local ballot initiative which thus far 98 Colorado municipalities have voted to approve, the 12 year old law has served to largely insulate the incumbents from pesky start-ups that want to offer better service (read: faster). Essentially, this has meant that within Colorado, if CenturyLink opts to provide the something less than the best service (*for economic reasons, primarily*), and a local entity is willing to make the investment to offer the highest quality service, the smaller company is prevented from doing so without a successful vote by the municipalities residents.

When the law was enacted, was the intention to preserve the market for the incumbents? Absolutely. But as technologies have evolved, and rural communities have found themselves treated as second class citizens in the name of "shareholder return" and cost models that will NEVER make such investment appealing, let alone justifiable. The only successful model is the public-private partnership, and that only works when other factors beyond simply Rate of Return are exploited for the benefit of the community as a whole.

Specifically, in late October, the newspaper in Grand Junction ran an article about precisely this problem. A small ISP won a significant grant that would have it enabled it to connect a rural town to fiber, thus improving broadband access to many. The company, Clearnetworx, lost the grant because CenturyLink relied on a "right

of first refusal" provision contained in SB 152 available to entities already providing service in underserved areas like this one. As a result, CenturyLink will continue to provide DSL (*we know how fast that is*) while Clearnetworx was offering fiber connectivity (*with greater flexibility and speed*).

Why is this relevant if you don't live in rural Colorado? Because the issue of municipal broadband, particularly to underserved areas, is a critical one. When those in underserved communities continue to receive second class treatment because of their lack of population density and wealth, the gap between the "haves" and "have nots" only continues to grow. Further, if you've read J.D. Vance's thought-provoking book *Hillbilly Elegy*, you know that this lack of technological support to rural and often economically disadvantaged communities does nothing to help sustain those people who live, work, and go to school in rural communities.

When incumbents claim that they want to abandon traditional copper because it's expensive to maintain, they're not misspeaking. But they're also not telling the whole story. Copper and other traditional technologies require often robust physical support, often provided by skilled union labor. Such labor comes at a cost. Circuitry that's hardwired fails and requires ongoing maintenance, and IP and other newer technologies offer more features at a lower cost than do traditional services. But the argument for building out networks to support few consumers will always fail the financial viability test. It's only when public-private partnerships are created that rural consumers will not be subjected to the whims of disinterested incumbents

One more thing. This is not an issue of allowing governments to compete with private industry. It's about leveling the playing field that allows businesses and students and governments to have timely access to information that most of us take for granted.

Was this an outcome that the drafters of Colorado Senate Bill 152 envisioned 12 years ago? I doubt it, but the consequences of the law are very real for those whose only option is DSL—or less.

SCTC Trending Thoughts

By Dennis Goodhart

For those of us who remember George Carlin, he wrote and published a best seller titled "Brain Droppings." As could be anticipated it contained many of his monologues and thoughts about the state of the world. While I'm no George Carlin, I wanted to share some of my thoughts about how our industry and our professional association is evolving. I fully encourage our members to dialog about my thoughts on the list serve.

Evolution of SCTC

As we are all aware, our industry has changed over the last few years and seems to be changing more rapidly every day. The good news is our leadership recognized this trend and did something about it. A task force made up of board members, consultant members, VACs and past presidents did an in depth analysis of what was happening that resulted in our strategic plan.

The first noticeable outcome of that plan was the changing of our name from the Society of Telecommunications Consultants (STC) to the Society of Communications Technology Consultants (SCTC).

There are several things we as professionals and as members of the SCTC can do to help ensure that we are seen and recognized as valuable members and contributors to our industry.

- If you are still calling yourself a "Telecommunications Consultant" consider making a change to call yourself a "Communications Technology Consultant" or a "Business Communications Technology Consultant."
- Use the listserv and member profiles to find other SCTC consultants whom you can partner with to help bid on and win those more technical or farther-reaching RFPs.
- Look at complementary ways to make yourself a valuable professional. Consider partnering with other consultants or services providers who can provide related services while not violating the SCTC ethics.
- Get yourself out there; offer to speak at local technology shows, seminars, educational fairs or even your local business organizations. The SCTC will be implementing a Speaker's Bureau to help you identify some of these opportunities.
- Attend trade shows and vendor events.
- Call and ask our VAC members questions about their products and let other vendors know who you are and that you are part of the SCTC.
- Build the SCTC brand; Help the SCTC help you. Help promote and publicize the SCTC on your web-site, in your proposals, on your business cards, speaking engagements, etc.

Liability Insurance getting you down?

The SCTC is researching if we can offer business insurance to our members at discounted rates. So far we have contacted to a few brokers, sent a survey to our members to better understand our member needs and hope to have details back in January.

If your current General Liability or Errors or Omissions Insurance Policy is on an annual renewal in December or January **please contact Sara Uzel Suzel@ttg-it.com**. She is looking to use some real-life examples to price for this research.

New Member Benefit!

On behalf of the SCTC Board of Directors, we are pleased to announce a new benefit to all members!

The publication "Talking Pointz Quipz" authored by analyst Dave Michels, will be distributed monthly to all SCTC consultants. The articles published in Quipz are based on extensive research and do an excellent job summarizing important issues in our industry.

This publication would cost \$4,950 annually if purchased individually, but is being offered free of charge to SCTC consultants.

Look for the distribution from SCTC memberclicks monthly. And if you run into Dave Michels, please thank him for sharing his insights!

Conferences & Regional Conferences

Our next annual conference will be September 24-27, 2018 in Annapolis, MD.

SCTC Regional Meetings provide members an opportunity to network and share knowledge with other members in their region. They are generally day-long events held in convenient locations.

- **West Regional Meeting**
January 22, 2018
Courtyard Marriott, San Jose, CA
- **Southwest Regional Meeting**
April 19, 2018
Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce, Irving, TX
- **Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting**
May 7, 2018
Lorien Hotel & Spa, 1600 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia

Text Messaging - The New Security Risk

By Peter Aggus

When was the last time you were sent a text message as part of a password reset request? It's a common occurrence—social media and banking sites use SMS Text Messages as a secure way of verifying that the person requesting a password reset is authorized to receive it. Unfortunately, things have changed. Traditionally, only cell phone companies could control your cell phone calls and text messages. Now, players on the dark web have commercialized access to the telephone network control systems so that, for a few hundred dollars, a fraudster can take control of your phone, change your password and empty your bank account.

Alarm Bells

The US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) recently warned that “security verification using SMS messages is no longer considered secure and its use is deprecated”.

The problem arises because of a service on the ‘Dark Web’ that allows anyone to purchase access to a covert server and send control messages over the global telephony signaling system—SS7. Fraudsters can take control of mobile phones that were previously considered fairly secure.

Hi-Jacking Phones

Using the Dark Web API, fraudsters can issue a remote call forward request to tell a cellular switch to forward your phone to a 3rd party. This forwarding includes text messages—so, the fraudster will first hi-jack your phone and then request a password reset from any service that uses text messaging as a ‘security protection’ (like your bank).

The bank sends the one-time key to complete the reset and the fraudster takes control of your online service.

Signaling System #7

When the global digital phone network was designed in the ‘70s, the signaling system, known as SS7, allowed phone switches to control new services, such as number portability. While SS7 has been in use for decades, some of the features are quite new and arise from demands created by the new competitive telecom environment of today.

An ‘unintended consequence’ of competition is that it exposes SS7 to a new open environment that it was never designed for. With SS7 control nodes now outside the secure large phone company networks, the opportunity for hackers to penetrate the network is very real – as has been shown with the Dark Web SS7 API. Now, anyone with Dark Web knowledge can issue commands to phone switches to monitor or divert service.

How to be More Secure

As NIST recommends, don't use Text Messaging as a single security check. Either use e-mail (if you want to be really safe, use an e-mail address set up just for this purpose so it is less likely to be known to a hacker) or, even better, use dual authentication with both text messaging and e-mail.

Better still, there are security apps that can be accessed over the data network on your phone. They will request an unlock key from you before decrypting the one-time passcode. Not only will the fraudster not know the unlock key, SS7 cannot control the data network because it is a signaling system for voice and SMS only. Hence, they cannot divert the data call...at least not yet.

VAC Corner

By Marsha Bailey

Leverage the VAC Expertise - Consultant Liaison Programs

As a benefit of the SCTC organization – at your fingertips you have access to the entire VAC (*Vendor Advisory Council*) members. These members provide programs to facilitate the dissemination of their company proprietary information and resources. Tap into them anytime you need industry or product information.

The vehicles available to you may vary slightly by vendor, but the Vendors that are providing Consultant programs generally provide portals, webinars, education resources and access to their entire support staff and much more. And access to the information is one easy step. Simply contact the Consultant Liaison contact. This individual has one job – to connect to independent consultants and provide the conduit to their company at any level.

VAC members are identified on the SCTC website. They are waiting to hear from you to help you and your customer obtain the information and resources needed. Or just give them a call and update them anytime –

**we are a team that works well
when we do what our industry is
all about – COMMUNICATION.**

Financial Report

As a year of transition comes to a close, it is good to be able to report a “tidy” end to the year financially. Membership additions and attrition were in line with projections, expenses were kept in check and the annual conference came in just under budget, so we will have a little bit of money to spend on membership expansion efforts next year and a little bit to put into the organizations’ reserves.

At the strategic planning session held in Seattle in September, we had a healthy discussion around balancing the need to keep enough money in reserves to protect the organization from shocks and spending money to help grow the organization. With current reserves at about 70% of an ideal reserve amount, there is a bit of pressure to increase reserves but not to the extent that it is necessary to pass on viable opportunities to expand and enhance the organization. As we look toward 2018, the Board’s primary focus is to increase the value of the organization to members and to increase our visibility to both attract and retain members. While money is necessary for these efforts, the need is even greater for volunteer time and energy to get things done.

The 2018 budget will be prepared assuming that most dues will be paid in full before the end of 2017 so that members can take advantage of 2017 rates. Anyone who does not pay in full for 2018 by December 31, 2017 will be subject to the increased dues in 2018 so be sure to pay your dues in full right away to take advantage of the lower rate.

If you would like more information on the SCTC’s finances, year to date financials through the end of third quarter are posted on the website <https://sctc.memberclicks.net/financials> or you can reach out to me directly with questions or suggestions.

Molly Zraik
SCTC Treasurer



Society of Communications
Technology Consultants International
230 Washington Ave. Ext. Suite 101
Albany, NY 12203
518-254-8024
<http://www.sctcconsultants.org>

