

Call for Proposals

Language, Access, and Power in Technical Communication

Overview

Proposal submission deadline: October 25, 2019

The Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) invites proposals for papers, posters, and workshops to be delivered at its 23rd annual conference. The ATTW conference will be held at the [Hilton Milwaukee City Center](#) in Milwaukee, WI, March 24-25, 2020, immediately preceding the Conference on College Composition and Communication. The ATTW conference includes a plenary session presented by a local community partner, concurrent sessions, research workshops, book exhibits, an editor's roundtable, and opportunities for exchanging ideas and networking.

Theme

Stemming from early definitions of technical communicators as translators who transform techno-scientific information for lay audiences (Slack, Miller, & Doak, 1993; Weiss, 1997) to more recent acknowledgements of the role that community expertise plays in leading scientific and technological change (Blythe, Grabill, & Riley, 2008; Durá, Singhal, & Elias, 2013; Rose et al., 2017; Simmons & Grabill, 2007), it is clear that language, access, and power matter to the field of technical communication. Indeed, language, access, and power are at the heart of our ever-expanding, increasingly globalized work (Haas & Eble, 2018), which includes

- facilitating communication in risk environments (Boiarsky, 2016),
- building experiences and infrastructures for collaboration and participation across languages and contexts (Batova & Clark, 2015; Potts, 2014),
- working against injustice through intercultural and international knowledges (Agboka, 2013; Yu & Savage, 2013),
- developing critical power tools (Scott, Longo, & Wills, 2006),
- designing pedagogies that expand what counts as technical communication and information (Banks, 2006; Del Hierro, 2018),
- critically examining agency in legal literacies (Hannah, 2010),
- centering disability and difference (Zdenek, 2018; Oswal & Melonçon, 2014), and
- intervening in equity and access in healthcare contexts (Frost & Haas, 2017; Kennedy, 2018; Teston, 2017).

Enacting our roles as agents of accessibility, social justice, and change (Jones, 2016; Jones, Walton, & Moore, 2016), technical communicators can leverage languages to build and break access and to foster and disrupt established power structures (Jones & Williams, 2017; Kynell-Hunt & Savage, 2004; Williams & Pimentel, 2016).

While much of our work in technical communication has focused on language, access, and/or power independently, the 2020 ATTW conference call invites researchers and teachers in the field to make intentional connections among these areas to recognize how they interlock and intersect (Crenshaw, 1990; Medina & Haas, 2018). For example, we invite presenters to consider intersections between and among language, access, and power in relation to race and disability, risk and agency, healthcare and globalization, user-experience and community engagement, and more. Through these connections, we encourage technical communicators to use our 2020 annual gathering space to build community and, as Cecilia Shelton (2019) argues, “shift out of neutral,” specifically by recognizing the material impacts, consequences, and intersectional possibilities of the languages we use, develop, include, exclude, and sustain in our work.

Our gathering space, Milwaukee, has a rich history of community making and organizing. Stewarded by Indigenous communities such as the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Odawa (Ottawa), Fox, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sauk, and Oneida people, who identify this land as the “gathering place by the waters” (Native Milwaukee, 2016), Black and Latinx organizers have also described Milwaukee as a site of important immigrant and migrant activism (Rodriguez et al., 2000). At the same time, Milwaukee faces issues related to racial segregation, wealth disparity, and racial profiling that impact the lived realities of marginalized people within and beyond the city (Frey, 2018; Spicuzza, 2019). Recognizing both the polarizing and communing potential of language, access, and power, we invite you to join us in this place and in acknowledging our positionalities and responsibilities as we develop better relationships, possibilities, knowledges, and practices through our work in technical communication.

Questions to Consider

We welcome a range of approaches that discuss your engagement at the intersections of language, access, and power as an educator, practitioner, scholar, administrator, civic advocate, and more. These discussions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How do you engage the intersections of language, access, and power in your teaching, research, community engagement, practice, and/or program administration?
 - What pedagogical approaches engage the intersections of language, access, and power?
 - What theoretical and methodological frameworks engage the intersections of language, access, and power?
 - What service and community engagement models engage the intersections of language, access, and power?
 - What program models engage the intersections of language, access, and power?
 - What assessment approaches engage the intersections of language, access, and power?
- How, why, and when do you change or challenge approaches to engaging the intersections of language, access, and power?

- How have current cultural contexts affected the way we conceptualize and engage the intersections of language, access, and power? Who and what have such contexts called to the forefront, and whom and what have they marginalized? Why and to what end(s)?

Proposal Format

Attendees may have only one speaking role, and proposal submissions must specify one of the following formats:

- Regular Session—Individual proposals: Individuals may submit proposals for 15-minute talks on panels created by the conference organizers. These proposals should be no more than 300 words.
- Regular Session—Panel proposals: Groups may submit proposals for 75-minute panel presentations. These proposals should be no more than 200 words per presentation plus a 150-word contextualization/justification of the panel (800 words max.).
- Poster Presentations: Posters will be on display throughout the day with special times dedicated for conversations about this work. Proposals for poster presentations should be no more than 300 words.

Although we acknowledge that nothing is fully accessible, we also acknowledge that access in any community space is everyone's responsibility and should be considered throughout presentation preparation. We ask you to take this responsibility up at every stage of your participation in the ATTW conference, from planning and writing your proposal to delivering your presentation. Please also contact the conference co-chairs with any questions, requests, or comments regarding accessibility preparations for the conference.

Proposals should not include any identifying information, including the names and institutions of presenters.

All rooms will have a projector. Please bring your own laptop and Mac connectors.

Submission

Please submit proposals via Submittable at <http://attw.submittable.com>. Submission deadline is October 25, 2019.

Intended Audiences

All teachers, researchers, community members, students, and industry professionals interested in technical communication are welcome. Lower registration rates are available for students, contingent faculty, and community presenters. Additional registration information is forthcoming.

Contact

For additional information about this CFP and the conference theme, please contact the conference co-chairs, Laura Gonzales (gonzalesl@ufl.edu) or Ann Shivers-McNair (shiversmcnair@email.arizona.edu).

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