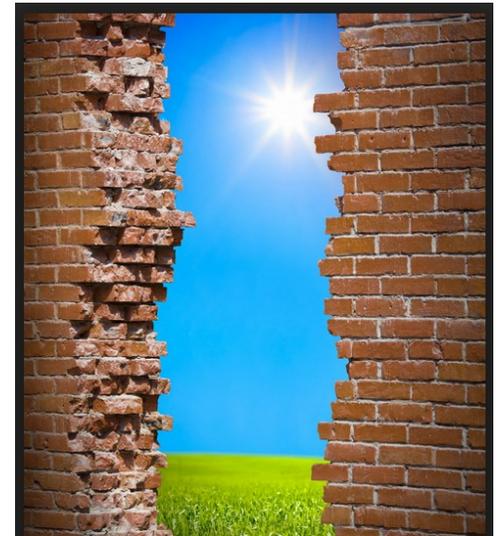

Breaking Our Own Boundaries



Who Am I?



- ◆ Neil Perlin - Hyper/Word Services.
 - Internationally recognized content consultant.
 - Help clients create effective, efficient, flexible content in anything from hard-copy to mobile.
 - Certified – Flare, RoboHelp, Mimic, Viziapps.
 - Teach/have taught HTML, XML, CSS, mobile, app development, project management, writing...
 - STC's lead rep to W3C in early 2000s.
 - Started and ran the “Beyond the Bleeding Edge” sessions at the STC conference.

Some of My Back History

- ◆ Started in Feb. 1979 – paper and pencil.
- ◆ Got a word-processor in 1980.
- ◆ Working with WindowBook in 1987.
- ◆ ... Windows Help in 1990.
- ◆ Learned HTML in 1991.
- ◆ Working with HTML Help in 1997.

More Back History

- ◆ ... “mobile” in 1998.
 - ◆ ... CSS in 1998(?).
 - ◆ ... structured, topic-based authoring ~2005
 - ◆ ... apps in 2010.
-
- ◆ Some boundaries during that period...

Our Boundaries



- ◆ *“Technical writers don’t use computers.”*
 - 1980, from two tech writers who turned down job offers from Digital Equipment Corp.
- ◆ *“Should Technical Writers Be Allowed To Use Computers?”*
 - 1981 speech by STC member Andy Malcolm and one of my favorite “Bleeding Edge” sessions in the mid-2000s.

Our Boundaries



- ◆ *“I’d never take a job where I had to use Word.”*
 - Many people...
- ◆ *“Content is key. Tools aren’t important.”*
 - 1994 onward, from multiple people.

Our Boundaries



- ◆ *“I’m not involved in the business side of my company’s operations.”*
 - Many people...
- ◆ *“Social media? Over my dead body.”*
 - Late 2000s onward, from multiple people.

-
- ◆ Every job has boundaries.
 - ◆ But many of them are of our own making.
 - ◆ It's natural to stay with what we know.
 - ◆ But that can limit a career in a time of change.
 - ◆ Like now.
 - ◆ So how can we break boundaries?
 - ◆ Some thoughts, mainly on the techie side...

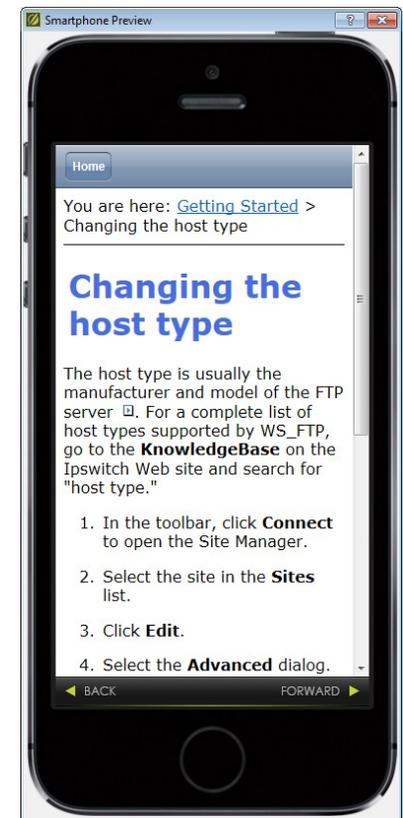
Expand – Your Current Skills

- ◆ The easiest option.
- ◆ For example:
 - Are you good with tools like Flare or RoboHelp at the GUI level?
 - Then learn CSS or XHTML to be able to work with the tool at the code level to troubleshoot or extend it.
 - Small investment in time and effort = greater employability.
- ◆ Not a codehead? That doesn't mean you can't turn yourself into one.

Extend Into – Mobile



- ◆ Whatever “mobile” means...
 - Ebooks.
 - Responsive output.
 - Mobile-optimized online help.
 - Wearables...

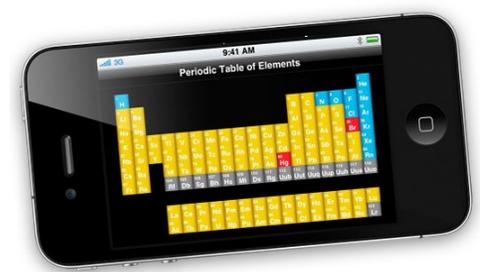


Extend Into – Mobile



- ◆ Takes a challenging direction – the “undesktop”:
 - Content analysis, re-evaluation of legacy material.
 - Content analysis, re-evaluation for different platforms and devices.
 - » Analysis – Identifying what content goes on what platform and doing so in an understandable, future-proofed way.
 - » Re-evaluation – For example, traditional use of Flash for Captivate movies won’t work under iOS.
 - » Gets you into responsive design.

Extend Into – Mobile



- ◆ ... challenging new directions:
 - Adopting a “mobile first” strategy for new content.
 - Cross-format code equivalency limitations – For example, what works in HTML may not in Word.
 - Single sourcing and content strategy – Fitting all the above into one source manageably.

“Mobile First”



- ◆ “More often than not, the mobile experience for a Web application or site is designed and built *after* the PC version is complete. Here's three reasons why Web applications should be designed for **mobile first** instead.”
 - 1. Mobile is exploding
 - 2. Mobile forces you to focus
 - 3. Mobile extends your capabilities
 - » *Mobile First*, Luke Wroblewski
 - » <http://www.lukew.com/ff/entry.asp?933>

Extend Into – Apps



- ◆ Re “mobile extends your capabilities” – So your next step may be apps.
- ◆ We don’t think of apps as content-based, but consider a few examples...



The Elements: A Visual Exploration

[View More by This Developer](#)

By Touch Press

Essentials

Open iTunes to buy and download apps.



Description

Of all the periodic table apps, there is only one which Stephen Fry described as "Alone worth the price of an iPad!". The Elements: A Visual Exploration is not just a reference app, it is a rich and engaging love story of the periodic table, told in words and pictures, and allowing you to experience the beauty and fascination of the building blocks of

[Touch Press Web Site](#) [The Elements: A Visual Exploration Support](#) [...More](#)

What's New in Version 2.0.1

Minor Bug Fixes

[View in iTunes](#)

+ This app is designed for both iPhone and iPad

\$13.99

Category: Books
Updated: Jun 30, 2014
Version: 2.0.1
Size: 1.64 GB
Languages: English, Catalan, Croatian, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish
Seller: Touch Press LLP
© 2013 Theodore Gray and Touch Press LLP
[Rated 4+](#)

Compatibility: Requires iOS
[al-exploration/id364147847?mt=8](#)

Screenshots

iPhone | iPad





True Ghost Stories From Around the World

By Joe Kwon, Inc

Open iTunes to buy and download apps.



[View in iTunes](#)

\$0.99

Category: [Books](#)

Updated: Dec 03, 2012

Version: 6.41

Size: 24.2 MB

Language: English

Seller: Joe Kwon, Inc

© 2009, 2013 Joe Kwon, Inc

Rated 12+ for the following:

Frequent/Intense Horror/Fear Themes

Infrequent/Mild

Mature/Suggestive Themes

Compatibility: Requires iOS

4.3 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. This app is optimized for iPhone 5.

Customer Ratings

Description

Wow!! -- Now Includes STREAMING AUDIO GHOST STORIES!

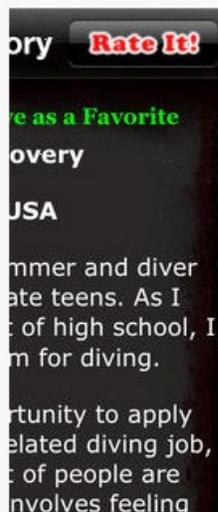
NEW GHOST STORIES ADDED DAILY! COUNTLESS SCARY STORIES SHARED AND READ

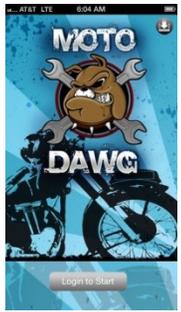
[Joe Kwon, Inc Web Site](#) ▶ [True Ghost Stories From Around the World Support](#)

What's New in Version 6.41

- Fixed a bug that caused a white gap along the bottom of one of the story menus (th reported this issue, it got resolved quickly! Keep the suggestions coming! support@k

iPhone Screenshot





LawStack

By Tekk Innovations LLC

Open iTunes to buy and download apps.



[View in iTunes](#)

+ This app is designed for both iPhone and iPad

Free

Category: [Reference](#)
Updated: Aug 09, 2014
Version: 5.140.20140807
Size: 13.0 MB
Language: English
Seller: Tekk Innovations LLC
© 2009 - 2014 Tekk Innovations LLC
[Rated 4+](#)

Compatibility: Requires iOS 7.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. This app is optimized for iPhone 5.

Customer Ratings

We have not received enough

[View More by This Developer](#)

Description

A legal library in your pocket.

LawStack comes preloaded with the following:

[Tekk Innovations LLC Web Site](#) > [LawStack Support](#) >

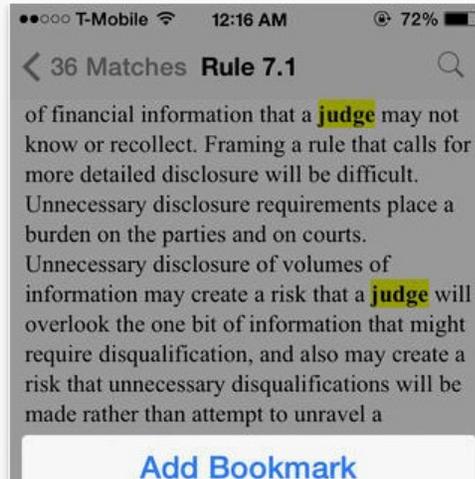
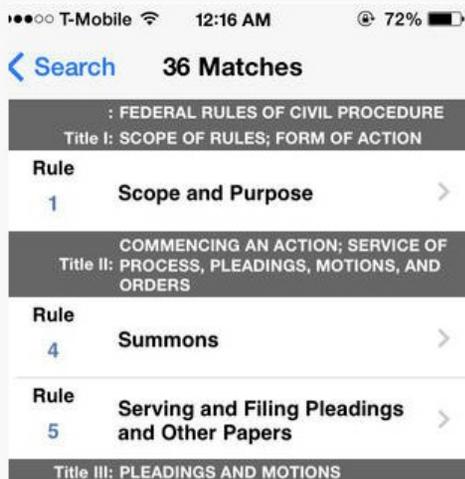
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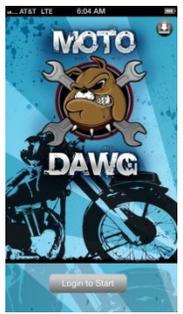
What's New in Version 5.140.20140807

Improved Bookmarks UI
Show item counts in store

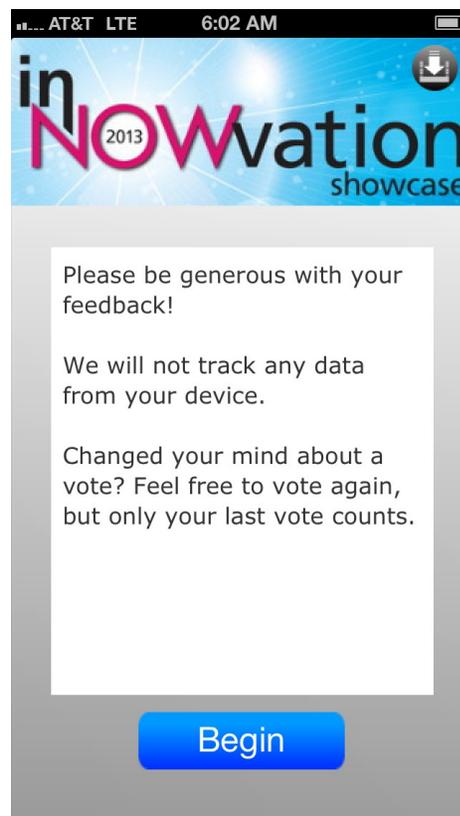
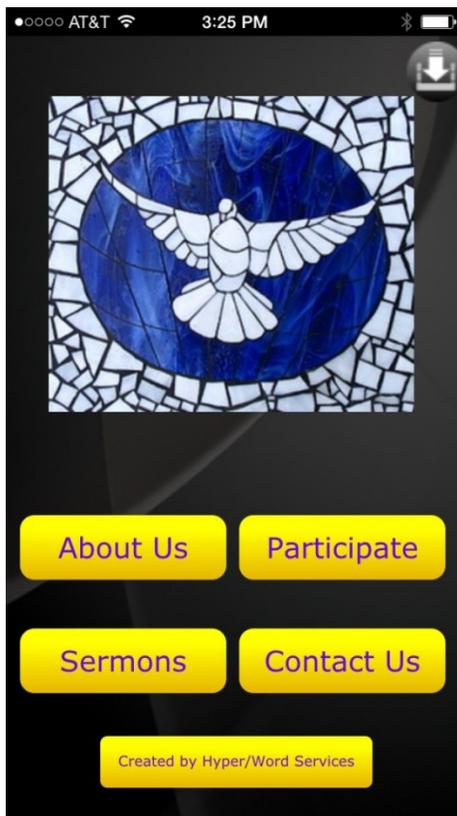
Screenshots

iPhone | iPad



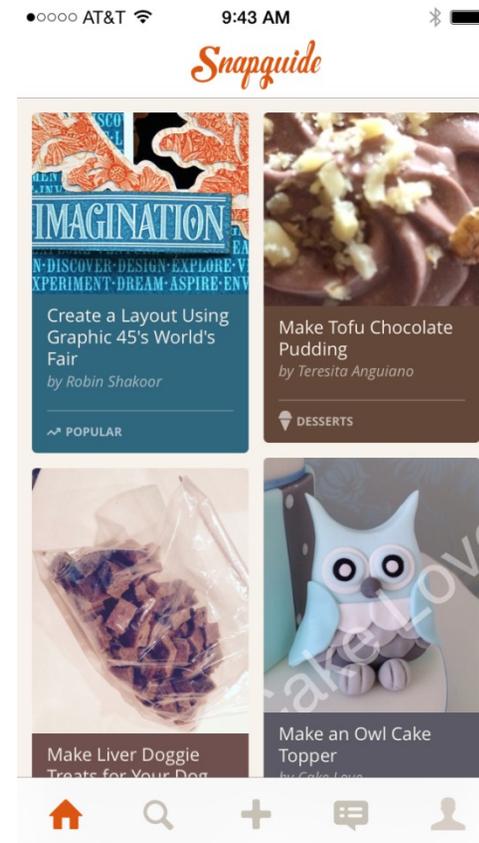
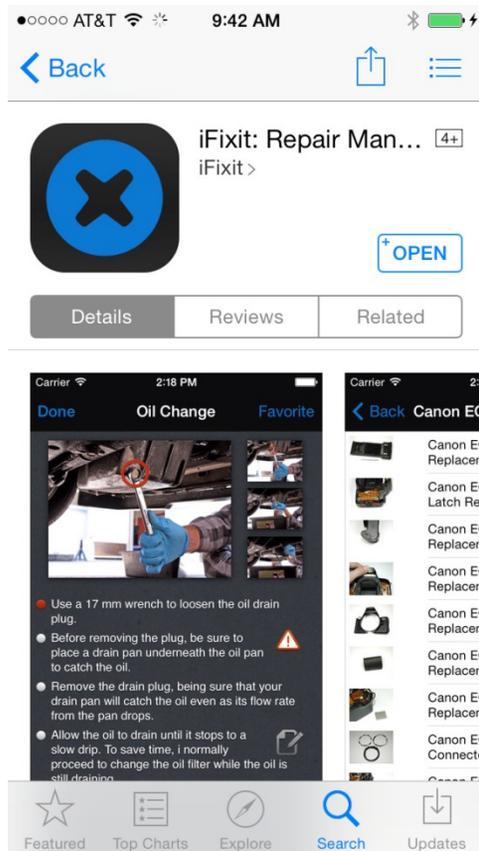


- ◆ And we may go in directions that don't include traditional content.
- ◆ Some non-content based apps I've done.





◆ And some other intriguing ones.





- ◆ Not sure you can develop apps?
- ◆ Here's a GUI development tool - ViziApps.

A screenshot of the ViziApps Studio web interface. The browser address bar shows 'viziapps.mobi/portal/TabDesignHybrid.aspx'. The interface has a blue header with the 'VIZIAPPS Studio' logo and navigation buttons like 'Overview', 'Design OverView', '1 Minute Quick Start', 'Your First App', and 'ViziApps Book'. Below the header, there are tabs for 'Design', 'Publish', and 'My Profile'. The main workspace is divided into several sections: a left sidebar with a 'Select App Property' dropdown and a list of UI components (HTML Header, Javascript, Edit Field, Copy Field, Paste Field, Delete Field, Bring To Front, Send To Back, Snap to Grid, App Themes, HTML Panel, Label, Text Field, Text Area, Image, Button, Image Button, Switch, CheckBox, Table, Grid, RSS, Chart, Picker, Slide Panel, Slider, GPS, Alert, Hidden Field); a central mobile device preview showing a screen with the title 'InterChange '15', a photo of a sign, and buttons for 'Friday', 'Eats', 'Saturday', 'NE STC', 'Photos', and 'Video Demo'; a right sidebar with 'Current App' (InterChange 2015 (hybrid)), 'App Page' (homePage), and a 'homePage' design tree listing elements like 'title_page_label', 'title_page_image', 'btn_eats', 'btn_friday_sessions', 'btn_saturday_sessions', 'btn_nests', 'btn_photos', 'btn_video_demo', and 'btn_hws_link_page'. There are also buttons for 'Preview App', 'Share This App', 'Restore Archived App', 'Download App Design as PDF File', and 'View Large Story Board'.

Extend Into – VR and AR



- ◆ *Virtual reality* puts you in new worlds, like Jurassic Dino:





- ◆ And Sisters:





- ◆ You can try it inexpensively if you have an Android phone and Google Cardboard.
- ◆ US\$9.99 on Amazon.



Extend Into – AR and VR



- ◆ *Augmented reality* keeps you in this world and adds to it, like Theodolite

iPhone Screenshots



AR (cont'd)



- ◆ And Star Walk





- ◆ VR and AR *development* still calls for coding skills but the SDKs are worth looking at.
 - Wikitude (<http://www.wikitude.com/>)
 - Oculus Rift - <https://www.oculus.com/en-us/dk2/>
 - Microsoft HoloLens - [https://
www.microsoft.com/microsoft-hololens/en-us](https://www.microsoft.com/microsoft-hololens/en-us)
- ◆ And there's support for AR in one surprising, tech comm-related place – MadCap Flare 11.
- ◆ For example, using Flare and an AR tool called Metaio Creator...



SCAN WITH JUNAIO APP FOR AUGMENTED REALITY CONTENT

madcap FLARE™

The Most Efficient Way to Create, Manage and Publish Content.

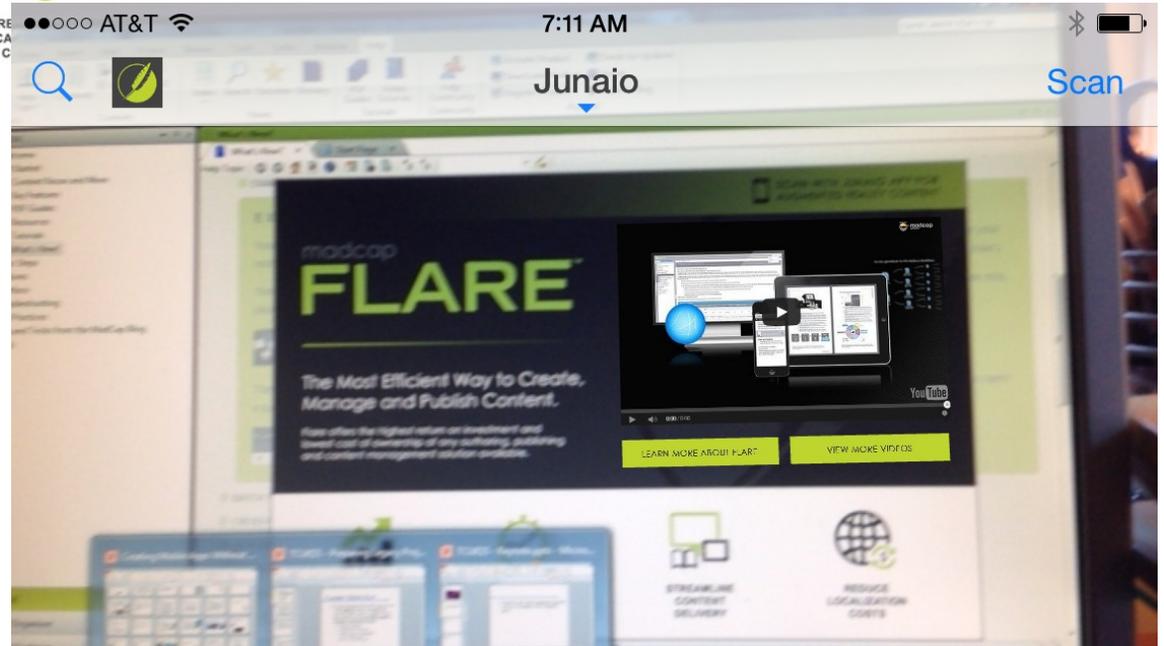
Flare offers the highest return on investment and lowest cost of ownership of any authoring, publishing and content management solution available.

**INCREASE
PRODUCTIVITY**

**REDUCE
PROJECT TIME**

**STREAMLINE
CONTENT
DELIVERY**

**REDUCE
LOCALIZATION
COSTS**



Extend Into – IoT



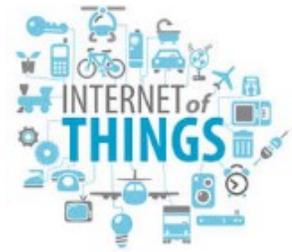
- ◆ “... environment in which objects, animals or people are provided with unique identifiers and the ability to transfer data over a network *without requiring human-to-human or human-to-computer interaction.*”
 - whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Internet-of-Things

Extend Into – IoT



- ◆ See “The Internet of Things Is Far Bigger Than Anyone Realizes” at <http://www.wired.com/insights/2014/11/the-internet-of-things-bigger>
/ and
<http://www.wired.com/insights/2014/11/iot-bigger-than-anyone-realizes-part-2>
/

Extend Into – IoT



- ◆ I don't see a role here for *traditional* tech comm based on the definition, but I do see a role for:
 - SDK and API documentation.
 - Analytics.
 - Some design work creating install wizards, **maybe...**
- ◆ Others disagree with that assessment and see a lot of work for tech comm.
 - I'd like them to prove me wrong – we'll see...

Extend Into...

- ◆ Tech comm's programmatic sides:
 - Javascript – Light scripting/programming language.
 - PhoneGap – To build hybrid mobile phone apps using HTML5, CSS, and Javascript rather than platform-specific APIs.
 - Google Analytics.
 - HTML5.
 - Geofencing – To vary information on mobile devices based on the user's location.

Extend Into – Business



- ◆ Tech comm is irrelevant unless it furthers the company's strategy and/or makes money.
- ◆ We need to speak “business-ish” to understand and work within those goals.
 - Speaking “business-ish” also lets us compete against the outside consultants.
- ◆ Need to learn the basics of accounting, finance, marketing, strategic planning, etc.

Avoid Brawls and Pigeonholes



... Brawls and Pigeonholes

- ◆ Word vs. FrameMaker.
 - “... never...”
- ◆ DITA vs. non-DITA.
 - DITA often presented as synonymous with structured, topic-based authoring.
 - But you can do structured, topic-based authoring using topic templates and a CSS.

... Brawls and Pigeonholes

- ◆ Content vs. technology.
 - Since 1994, it's been argued that technology is a minor issue and that content is everything.
 - In fact, both are important.
 - Without content to publish, technology is irrelevant.
 - But without technology to publish the content, the content is pointless.
- ◆ Adhering to *any* extreme in any brawl pigeonholes you and limits your options.

How to Break Out



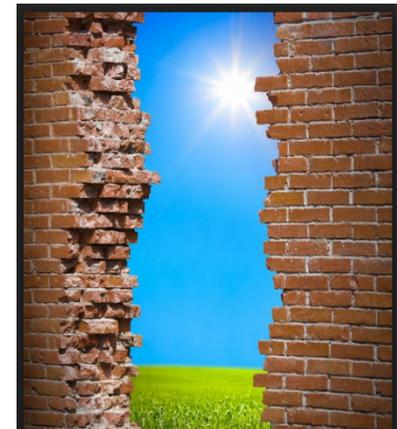
CURIOSITY

How to Break Out



- ◆ Cliché alert – Move out of your comfort zone.
- ◆ Learn about new subjects that relate directly and indirectly to technical communication.
 - Go to ISTC meetings but also...
 - Professional societies related to your work.
 - Local groups equivalent to Boston’s WebInno (<http://webinnovatorsgroup.com/>).
 - Global groups like Mobile Monday (<http://www.mobilemonday.net/>).
 - Meetups (see <http://www.meetup.com/cities/gb/>).

-
- ◆ There's angst over the increasingly technical nature of tech comm.
 - ◆ But that techiness simply represents new ways to present content.
 - ◆ Which represent new opportunities, more value, and more employability, if we break our boundaries...



Hyper/Word Services Offers...

Training • Consulting • Development

- Flare • Flare CSS • Flare Single Sourcing
- RoboHelp • RoboHelp CSS • RoboHelp HTML5
- ViziApps
- Single sourcing • Structured authoring



Thank you... Questions?



978-657-5464

nperlin@nperlin.cnc.net

www.hyperword.com

Twitter: NeilEric

