



# Worcester County IEEE

## Newsletter

October

1998

Worcester Section - Computer Society

### **RoboHelp Help Authoring Software and Online Information Systems**

**David Locke, WordSmith, Ltd.**

**Monday, October 19th, 1998, Kronos, Inc, Waltham, MA**

At this month's meeting, David Locke, principal consultant with WordSmith, Ltd., located in Nashua, NH, will investigate the design, development and integration of useful and user friendly, online information systems. He will consider online help systems, demonstrate Blue Sky Software's RoboHelp help authoring tools, and explore the evolving help authoring formats.

Worcester County and Boston Chapters of the Power Engineering Society

### **Doble Engineering Plant Tour**

**Richard E. Kane**

**Tuesday, October 20, 1998,**

**Lunch 11:30 AM, Presentation: 12:15 PM, Tour 1:00 PM**

**Doble Engineering Company, Watertown**

Doble has been supplying diagnostic testing equipment and consulting engineering services to the electric power industry since 1920. We invite all IEEE members and their guests to participate in this plant tour preceded by lunch (sponsored by Doble) and a technical presentation at their Watertown facility. Since this is a luncheon meeting, please RSVP your attendance by October 15, 1998, to Richard E. Kane - 508/393-3619 or E-Mail [r.kane@ieee.org](mailto:r.kane@ieee.org)

## **Doble Engineering Plant Tour**

**Richard E. Kane**

The Worcester County and Boston Chapters of the Power Engineering Society are pleased to announce a plant tour at Doble Engineering Company. Located in Watertown, Massachusetts, Doble has been supplying diagnostic testing equipment and consulting engineering services to the electric power industry since 1920.

Doble's diagnostic instruments include the "TR" Circuit Breaker Dynamic Testing Series, the "M" Apparatus Insulation Testing Series and the "F" Relay Testing and Calibration Series. These products, designed to function despite adverse electrical environments and the shock and vibration of transport, have proven themselves through years of field use.

Doble Engineering Company with its 75 years of industry diagnostic experience presents and supports INSITE, a comprehensive, Expert System, continuous,

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on-line diagnostic system for circuit breakers, transformers, bushings and CTs. INSITE evaluates the condition of electrical apparatus, eliminates the need for scheduled outages and minimizes the possibility of unintentional outages thereby maximizing available system capacity. INSITE's unique Expert System detects malfunctions in the incipient stage and issues prioritized ALERTS! that communicate abnormal operation and guide maintenance decisions.

**When:** Tuesday, October 20, 1998

**Time:** Lunch 11:30 a.m. (sponsored by Doble)  
Technical Presentation: 12:15- 1:00 p.m.  
Plant Tour 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.

**Where:** Doble Engineering Company  
85 Walnut Street  
Watertown, MA 02172  
<http://www.doble.com>

We invite all IEEE members and their guests to participate in this plant tour preceded by lunch and a technical presentation at their Watertown facility. Since this is a luncheon meeting, please RSVP your attendance by October 15, 1998, to Richard E. Kane - 508/393-3619 or E-Mail [r.kane@ieee.org](mailto:r.kane@ieee.org)

Directions: I-90 to Exit 17; .1 mi. north on Centre St.; .4 mi. north on Galen St. to Watertown Square-cross the Charles river; bear right on SR16 (Mt. Auburn Street , cross Rt 20) .7mi. ; turn right on Walnut St.; .2 mile to Doble Engineering. In case you get lost Doble's phone number is 617/926-4900.

## 1998 IEEE Professional Activities Conference

**Larry G. Nelson Sr.**

The 1998 IEEE professional activities conference was held over Labor Day weekend in Phoenix AZ. As always, the activities began by 7 a.m. and continued late into the night. There were many meetings, seminars, training sessions, and cracker barrels.

One topic of great interest all those present was the status of the H1B VISA legislation. This legislation is aimed at increasing the number of foreign workers allowed into the United States to fill specific High Tech needs. There was a great deal of discussion concerning whether there was actually a shortage of engineers and programmers. From the results of the discussion, it would appear that the shortage applies to specific skills contained within one individual. An example would be for a person with 10 years of C++ experience designing process control systems for the assembly of temperature controllers. Some of the job descriptions are so narrow that they are impossible to fill leading to a shortage. There is also great concern that the numbers being quoted for shortages include jobs for low end data entry personnel.

The IEEE USA is attempting to focus on specific activities of interest primarily to United States members. Due to the fixed funding requirements, it is necessary that the IEEE USA become self-sufficient. To meet these goals, the IEEE USA is becoming more entrepreneurial. They are attempting to provide and package products and services that will not only be a benefit to members, but will also provide income. TODAY'S ENGINEER magazine is one of these products. This magazine is targeted at the working engineer and provides valuable information focused on the professional side of engineering. The format is easy to read and provides valuable information without a heavy technical focus.

Other topics discussed included pre-college education, membership retention, and how to provide services of interest to more members.

# RoboHelp Help Authoring Software and Online Information Systems

David Locke, WordSmith, Ltd.

Years ago, critics claimed about online help: "I can't find it." "If I can find it, it doesn't tell me what I need." The failures of help resulted, in part, from the absence of appropriate models or paradigms of online information. Models were borrowed from the paper world. The results we know.

From its initial roll of providing occasional user assistance and guidance, online help has evolved into sophisticated, online information systems and has become a primary resource for training and education. At this month's meeting, David Locke, principal consultant with WordSmith, Ltd., located in Nashua, NH, ([www.wordsmith.net](http://www.wordsmith.net)) will investigate the design, development and integration of useful and user friendly, online information systems. He will consider online help systems, demonstrate Blue Sky Software's RoboHelp help authoring tools ([www.blue-sky.com](http://www.blue-sky.com)), and explore the evolving help authoring formats.

Over the last seven years help evolved slowly, on a platform whose relative stability now seems remarkable. The underlying RTF format changed little, and gradually help authors began to develop models more appropriate to the medium. Context-sensitive help evolved. Help began to help.

But in February, 1996, real change struck. Ralph Walden, then lead help developer for Microsoft, announced that henceforth RTF-based WinHelp would be frozen, to be replaced within a year and a half by HTML Help.

In the time since then:

- The change has taken a lot longer than Ralph predicted
- A lot more has changed than anybody predicted

The change to HTML Help is not complete. Thanks to new standards and to XML, the HTML format is far from stable. Changes in the nature of applications themselves are forcing a re-design of the purpose, structure, and content of help.

In his presentation, David will also review with examples the evolution of help-the content and the

formats, including the good, the bad, and some ugly- and examine the challenges brought by the conversion to HTML-based formats.

David Locke has worked with computer documentation and training since 1983, specializing in online information systems. He is a member of the Society for Technical Communication and the HTML Writers Guild; serves on the faculty of Help University; and is a certified RoboHELP® consultant and trainer ([www.wordsmith.net/wordsmith\\_background.htm](http://www.wordsmith.net/wordsmith_background.htm)).

This meeting, sponsored by the Worcester County IEEE Computer Society will be held on Monday, October 19th at Kronos, Inc, Waltham, MA. For further information contact Al Reinhart, 510 Edgebrook Drive, Boylston, MA 01505, 508-869-6417 (Office), 508-869-3420 (FAX), [reinhart@discom.com](mailto:reinhart@discom.com)

## Directions:

**Heading South on Route 128:** Take Waltham Exit 27A, Totton Pond Road / Wyman Street. The exit ramp will merge with Totton Pond Road West. Merge into the left lanes and follow the signs to Totton Pond Road East towards Waltham and Route 128 (you are making a u-turn, make sure you get in the correct lane). Proceed over Route 128 and at the second traffic light (the first and second traffic light are separated by about 50 feet) turn right onto Third Avenue.

**Heading North on Route 128:** Take Waltham Exit 27A, Totton Pond Road. Proceed up the exit ramp and just before the traffic light, bear right towards the stop sign. Turn right onto Third Avenue.

**On Third Avenue:** Proceed about a 100 yards and turn left onto Fifth Avenue, the first "real" left just before the Westin Hotel. Proceed up the hill on Fifth Avenue, at the top turn (bear) right. You will pass 4 buildings (3 red brick and 1 tan brick) on your left. Kronos is located in the last (4th) building on you left, the only tan brick building in the office park.

Park in the parking lot and proceed to the main entrance of the tan brick building. Signs in the lobby will direct you the meeting room. (If you get lost, ask for directions to the Westin Hotel in Waltham.)