




Happy Holidays!

 @nuclear_journal

Edited by Rachel Brooks & Ashley Humphrey

As we close out 2021, we look forward to more publications!

IJNS will publish the Student Competition Winner of 2021, Halima Jemmal, in Vol. 7 Issue 1. Editorial Liaison for the Special Issue on Women in Nuclear Security, Ashley Humphrey, is wrapping up the final details before publishing the issue. We are excited to soon publish these articles!

Reminder: Call for Survey Participants

By Rachel Brooks, Principal Investigator of the research project and Davis Fellow/Associate Editor at IJNS

I am writing to ask you to participate in a survey study for a thesis project about English language usage in English language publications in the nuclear security field. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your participation! If not, I would love to have more participants complete the survey by the end of December 2021. The goal of this study is to better understand the English language-related elements that reviewers in this field look for in manuscripts submitted for publication. If you have reviewed a manuscript for the *International Journal of Nuclear Security* or other similar journals before, I would appreciate your response to these survey questions. The survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. Please read the Informed Consent section at the beginning of the survey carefully. I am the current Davis Editorial Fellow for the *International Journal of Nuclear Security*, but this research is occurring outside of my role with the journal. The survey is entirely anonymous, and so I will not be able to identify any participants. Participation in this survey will not affect your relationship to IJNS in any way. The journal manager of IJNS, Dr. Russel Hirst, has kindly allowed me to put this request in our bimonthly newsletter for this personal thesis project. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact Rachel Brooks (rbrook31@vols.utk.edu) and Tanita Saenkhum (tsaenkhum@utk.edu). Thank you for participating in this survey study!

Survey link:

https://utk.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6ScILaBFo7pKjBk

OVERVIEW:

- Upcoming Events
- Reminder: Call for Survey Participants
- Technical Communication for Nuclear Security

This newsletter is designed to keep students, staff, and journal supporters up-to-date on how the journal is impacting global efforts to encourage diversity in theoretical foundations, research methods, and approaches.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan. 21-23: American Physical Society (APS) Conferences for Undergraduate Women in Physics (CUWIP) (organized in cooperation with the IAEA); Washington, D.C.
- Feb. 8: University of Tennessee Baker Center Global Security Lecture with Lt. Col. Michael Stefanovic (details TBA)
- Feb. 7-11: IAEA First International Conference on Nuclear Law: The Global Debate; Vienna, Austria
- Feb. 23-25: IAEA International Seminar on the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials (CPPNM) and Its Amendment; Vienna, Austria

Technical Communication for Nuclear Security: Emily Huckabay Shares Her Journey

By Ethan Barlow
Assistant Editor

It's not often that a student—new to the field of technical communication—gets to listen to a technical communication expert tell her story. But last summer, that's exactly what I got to do. Emily Huckabay is not only a scientific/technical writer and editor for the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) in Tennessee, USA, but also the president of the Society for Technical Communication's East Tennessee Chapter (STC-ETC). She's just the kind of person you want to learn from if you're hoping to pave a way into STEM as a communications aficionado. At ORNL, nuclear scientists and engineers—from the Isotope and Fuel Cycle Technology Division and from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Division—look to Emily for writing and editing support. How did she get here? In my interview with her, Emily discussed her career path and shared some valuable insights.

Initially, she wanted to be an academic librarian. Plans, of course, often change. And although she has a Master of Arts in English from Texas Tech University (2005) and a Master of Library Science from Emporia State University (2009), she considers her work experience, rather than her degree choice, to be the main catalyst for her career. She highlights her job as a program assistant (2007-12) at the University of Kansas' Office for Diversity in Science Training, where she provided services such as writing grant reports and press releases. "I wouldn't be where I am today," she says, "without that

position." Later, Emily would move to Tennessee and teach English as an adjunct professor (2013-14) for Pellissippi State Community College. Then, for the University of Tennessee Press, she served as an editorial assistant (2014-16). When looking back at these past experiences, she notes, "It was the whole package that prepared me for what I'm doing now." In particular, having both her editing and science backgrounds, she says, is vital for her current position at ORNL. And her science background comes especially in handy because she's working with technical experts, whose vocabulary and terms are unfamiliar to the layperson's ear.



What does a technical communicator have to offer scientists and engineers? At ORNL, Emily's services are invaluable. For internal and external publications, she cleans up documents—the way only an English specialist can—before they go on to the authors' peers, saving both the authors and the readers precious time. Whether she's dealing with reports, proposals, research documents, journal articles, conference papers, posters, or even letters, they're all in need of her editorial eye. And still at the forefront of her mind, she says, is the question one learns in English Composition I, "Who is the

audience, and what is the purpose?" This principle, while basic, is the foundation for an editor's work. However, there wouldn't be a need for editors if it were this simple; one must learn the techniques necessary to apply this foundational principle. As Emily indicates, part of the editorial process is identifying jargon, proofreading, trimming fat, and clarifying the authors' writing. Her technical colleagues are thankful for it, too. After all, their eyes aren't as trained to notice these kinds of mistakes, and scientists and engineers often don't have the language expertise to know *how* to fix them.

In addition to knowing these language techniques, Emily suggests it's also practical to have a basic understanding of the subject matter. A technical editor doesn't have to be a subject matter expert (SME), but a familiarity with SMEs' vocabulary certainly helps. "You never want to introduce an error in your changes," she cautions. As someone around nuclear scientists and engineers, she knows that her role, as a communications specialist, involves staying true to their original content.

Nevertheless, after working with SMEs long enough, "you learn to speak their language," she says. Emily has worked for ORNL for nearly 5 years now (2017-present).

What advice does she have for the aspiring technical communicator trying to get his/her foot in the door at a place like ORNL? "Get as much diverse experience as you can," she emphasizes; "you never know what experience is going to help you land your next job." It was that variety of experience, Emily says, that got her where she is today.