Notes.net Exposed: And the winners are…

by Susan Florio

[Editor's note: This article resides in "Iris Today", the technical Webzine located on the http://www.notes.net Web site produced by Iris Associates, the developers of Domino and Notes.]

The Notes.net team is proud to announce that we recently received two awards from the **Society of Technical Communications** (STC). The STC runs a yearly competition that evaluates the quality of the writing and the overall presentation of various types of technical communication, including Web sites, online documentation, and marketing material. We entered our webzine *Iris Today* in the Web site category, and our "**History of Notes and Domino**" in the technical marketing category. Both entries received merit awards.

What is the STC?

The STC is the largest professional organization for technical communicators. Technical communication involves the gathering, analyzing, and distributing of technical information efficiently and accurately for specific audiences. One example of a technical communicator is a writer whose job consists of writing policy and procedure manuals, software documentation, and information packets, or newsletters, technical articles, or marketing materials.

The STC includes more than one hundred local chapters around the world. It publishes the magazine *Intercom*, as well as several books. It also offers programs and workshops where professional technical communicators can meet and learn from one another. Members of the STC include:

- Technical writers
- Editors
- Illustrators
- Trainers
- Managers
- Interface designers
- Human factors specialists

About the competition

Our awards came from the **Boston Chapter** of the STC. We entered both *Iris Today* and "The History of Notes and Domino" in the Electronic Documentation competition. Electronic documentation entries are judged on their integration of text and graphics and the use of layout, screen design, writing, and editing to achieve their stated objective.

On our entry form for *Iris Today*, we state that the objective for *Iris Today* is to tap into the user communities and publish articles that directly meet their needs. Our articles describe the concepts or tasks that are not ordinarily described in depth (or at all) in the regular documentation. We want to explain how to apply Domino and Notes technology as a solution to real-world problems. On our entry form for "The History of Notes and Domino," we state that the objective of the "History of Notes and Domino" is to help both existing users and potential new users understand better exactly what is Notes and Domino. Our entry form for each also contained a brief description of the entry and a short scenario that walked the judges through each entry.

In each category, the STC gives awards for four different levels of achievement:

- Distinction

- Excellence

- Merit

- Achievement

There are many entries that do not achieve any of these awards, and the judges do not need to give out a certain number of awards in a particular category or at a particular level. The judges present one Best of Show award for the entire competition. The standards for judging are high, as is the quality of the entries.

Your feedback is the real reward

Given these high standards, and the reputation that the STC has for running a well-respected competition, we are extremely pleased to receive these awards. While it is great to receive validation from an organization dedicated to technical communication, it is the wonderful feedback that we get everyday from you that prompted us to enter the competition and keeps us on our toes.

Some of your feedback for *Iris Today* includes:

- "As a certified Notes instructor, I have been struggling to find information to support the materials provided with the new Domino Application Administration course," writes Ian James, a CLI and CLP from PPI in Ottawa. "This article, and a number of other articles on your site, have proven to be an invaluable resource. I actually include some of the articles with the course materials and I make sure the students know where to find your site. Thank you very much for the information and keep it coming!"

- "Thank you so much for this article!" says Suellen Maloney. "I had a very short turn-around on a project that needed to be done in frames. I had never done them in Notes and had very little documentation relating to the subject. Thankfully, I found your article, followed the steps contained within and by the end of the day, had a demo product well worth showing. The article was very clear, concise and didn't cloud the subject with a lot of extraneous information. Again, thank you! You saved my butt!"

Regarding our "History of Notes and Domino":

- "The History of Notes is fascinating," enthuses Simon Mooney, a CLP from Com Tech Communications in Australia. "When is the book coming out?" He then continues to praise our entire site saying, "I use Notes.net as my first point of call for Notes information. I find the site easy to use, has stacks of info, and there is always lots of new stuff every month. Keep up the good work."

- "This is an excellent article!" exclaims Marc Croteau.

About our entire site, Carolyn Weissberg of Virtual-Paper Consulting says, "I can't tell you how much I appreciate using Notes.net!" We appreciate all of your feedback here at Notes.net and we continually look to all of you for ways to make our site even more useful and informative. Thanks to all our customers and the STC for making us an award-winning Web site.