

AICN Newsletter

The quarterly publication of the Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks

Spring 2011

AICN Welcomes the Southern Minnesota and Cedar Rapids Consultants Networks

The Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks Coordinating Committee congratulates Steve Kerchberger, and the IEEE Southern Minnesota Consultants Network, on forming an Affinity Group. The AICNCC would also like to congratulate Raman Aravamudhan, and the IEEE Cedar Rapids Consultants Network, on forming an Affinity Group. These newest Consultants Networks were approved at the 19 February, MGA Board meeting. If you want to welcome our newest networks, check IEEE-USA's Web site for contact information for both the Southern Minnesota Consultants Network and the Cedar Rapids Consultants Networks.



If other groups want to form a consultant's network, IEEE-USA's Web site also contains step-by-step instructions on how to become a formal network. We encourage new consultants networks to register as Affinity Groups. After groups form a network, they can take advantage of IEEE's branding and resources, and also qualify for funding through IEEE Section rebates.



If you don't see contact information listed on our Web site for your Consultants Network, contact [Daryll Griffin](mailto:Daryll.Griffin@ieee.org) at d.r.griffin@ieee.org.

IEEE vTools Can Help You!

What is vTools and how can it help an IEEE-USA Consultants Network? vTools is sponsored by IEEE Membership and Geographic Activities (MGA) and developed to simplify the administration of posting meetings, maintaining local websites, managing local activities, and assisting in member development.

The vision for **vTools – Meetings** is to build a meeting tool to assist local IEEE units in organizing their meeting schedule, while at the same time providing data to IEEE so that all synergies can be taken advantage of. **vTools – Meetings** allows officers to create meeting announcements with no dependence on webmaster availability. IEEE members and the public can see and register for the upcoming IEEE meetings. Please visit the project [WIKI page](#) for more information.



The **vTools – WebInABox** application is aimed toward sections, sub-sections, chapters, and affinity groups that do not have a webmaster to create and maintain an up-to-date website, but just need a very simple wizard to publish a site. We encourage organizational units that only need a simple website with automatically updated information to take advantage of the **vTools – WebInABox**. Again, **visit the project [WIKI page](#)** for more information.

Other vTools application include **vTools – Voting**, **DimDim** (a web conferencing service) and **vTools – Student Branch Reporting**. IEEE is planning to introduce more tools in the next few years. Among the tools, they will have: Awards, Section Dashboard, Communications, Prospective Members, Membership Development, Off-Line Join, Agendas, and more.

MGA, responsible for IEEE membership and membership development, believes vTools will help serve the needs of IEEE members by supporting IEEE Sections, Chapters and Branches.

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The AICN is now on Facebook. Check us out at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/IEEE-Consultants-Network/116356868419773>

For questions, comments or submissions please contact Daryll Griffin at +1 202 530 8337 or d.r.griffin@ieee.org.

www.ieeeusa.org/business



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Overhaul of Consultants Database Could Boost Chances of Getting Hired

By John R. Platt

If you've hung out your shingle as a consultant, or you're an employer looking for one, check out several new features and tools recently added to the [IEEE-USA Consultants Database](#). They can help both parties improve their chances of finding each other.

"This upgrade is very exciting because it gives members new tools to help market their services," says Gary Blank, vice president for IEEE-USA Career and Member Services.

The Consultants Database is a paid service that lets IEEE members anywhere in the world create profiles listing their fields of expertise, skills and availability. Employers can search the database for people that meet criteria such as expertise, location, type of license and certification, and languages spoken. Employers also can list their needs on the database, and have consultants contact them.



One new feature provided through the upgrade is that consultants listed in the database automatically have their profiles also appear on Google and other search engines.

"Let's say an employer is searching for a consultant in Arizona who's experienced with smart grids," Blank said. "They could go directly to the IEEE-USA Consultants Database to find that person, but now the same information will come up if they do a search from their favorite search engine. This is a very attractive feature."

To safeguard consultants against receiving unwanted e-mail, the upgraded database does not list their e-mail address in the search results. Instead, would-be employers must fill out a form to get in contact.

"This keeps e-mail addresses from being harvested by spambots," Blank says.

Useful Stats

Other new features include a monthly report that shows consultants how often their listings showed up in search results, and how often their name was clicked on, as well as broader statistics about all searches conducted in the database.

"Consultants can review their statistics and see how often someone searched by a specific keyword and how many times their profile showed up as a result," says IEEE Senior Member Leslie Haggerty, the database's primary developer. "They can then revise their listing to try to improve the number of hits."

Giving consultants the information they need to improve their marketability is an important feature, Blank says. "If my name came up in search results but nobody contacted me, I know something is wrong," he points out. "Now you can fix that. If you've done a good job with your listing, you shouldn't have any difficulty getting responses."

Company Listings, Too

Another new feature is the ability for would-be employers to add their own consulting needs to the database, through a service called Assignment Postings. Although the service existed before, it had been automated, and inappropriate job listings made their way into the database. Now IEEE-USA staff members review each listing before it is posted.

IEEE-USA staff might also contact the companies posting the assignments and offer feedback on improving postings to attract more responses, Haggerty says. "This makes the database more valuable to all users," she said. "If consultants see good job listings, they'll keep using the database."

The database has come a long way since its original incarnation in the 1990s as an annual directory, printed at some expense by IEEE. Transforming it to a Web site in 2001 was a phenomenal breakthrough, Blank says. "We've seen tremendous growth and use," he says. "Now people who couldn't find jobs as consultants in other ways are constantly telling me they found work through the database. It's a very exciting thing to hear."

There are currently about 275 consultants listed in the database, with more joining every month.

Being listed in the database is an excellent way to bring credibility to your business, Haggerty says. "If you get just one contract from it, it's great," she adds.

It costs \$79 to create a profile in the database. Employers may list their assignments for free.

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Writing for Success – An Engineer’s Guide (Volume 1): Designing for Success

By Sharon C. Richardson

Writing for Success – An Engineer’s Guide (Volume 1): Designing for Success, is the first in this new series of e-books by author Tom Moran, professor at the Center for Multidisciplinary Studies at Rochester Institute of Technology.

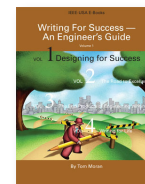
Designing for Success is not a technical writing text. Its purpose is to serve as an inspiration and guide to help engineers approach their writing tasks with the same confidence and skill that they take to the technical problems that confront them – so that e-mails, reports, test-plans, and other documents they write are as useful and successful and valued as their engineering efforts.

Writing for Success – An Engineer’s Guide (Volume 1): Designing for Success can be downloaded at www.ieeeusa.org/communications/ebooks/ for the **IEEE Member price: \$9.95. Non-member price is \$14.95.**

To purchase IEEE Members-only products and to receive the Member discount on eligible products, Members must log in with their IEEE Web Account.

Call for Authors

IEEE-USA E-Books seeks authors to write an e-book, or a series of e-books on career guidance and development topics. If you have an idea for an e-book that will educate other IEEE members on a particular topic of expertise, e-mail your e-book proposal to IEEE-USA Publishing Manager Georgia Stelluto, at g.stelluto@ieee.org.



One Place for Member Discounts; Financial Advantage Program Changes Name

In response to IEEE members who wanted to quickly and easily identify their membership benefits, a cross-functional team of employees is developing a portal to all IEEE membership discounts and offers, making them more easily searchable by members and prospective members.

See the [IEEE Member Discounts page](#) on the [IEEE main site](#). This page includes:

- IEEE discounted products (including books/e-Books, conferences and events, IEEE eLearning Library, society memberships, digital library subscriptions, journals and magazines, standards, and more)
- IEEE sponsored discounts (on insurance, travel-related vendors/services, technology, and home/office needs)
- Current offers/latest news

As part of this change, the Financial Advantage Program is now referred to as IEEE Member Discounts.

IEEE Region and Section Chairs have been informed of these changes. They will be updating their Web pages accordingly with online banners and buttons of IEEE Member Discounts.

For further information or questions, contact [Lynn Koblin](#) at +1 732 562 5327 or [Mila Thelen](#) at +1 732 562 6589.

Get Interactive: IEEE-USA in ACTION

The latest issue of IEEE-USA’s award-winning online publication, *IEEE-USA in ACTION*, is always available online. Made possible by the U.S. dues assessment, this quarterly publication is free to all IEEE members. *IEEE-USA in ACTION* is your source for learning about IEEE-USA’s programs, products, services and activities, and to find out what IEEE-USA is doing on behalf of U.S. IEEE members. View the latest issue at: www.nxtbook.com/tx/mags/lastissue.php?mp=/nxtbooks/ieeeusa/ieeeusa



ieee-usa today's engineer

A Dozen Reasons Why You Should Obtain Your P.E. License

By Aaron Collins, Ph.D., P.E.; George Dean, P.E.; and John Steadman, Ph.D., P.E.

Many engineers obtain their professional engineer (P.E.) license because it is a specific job requirement. Many others choose **not** to obtain a P.E. license because it is **not** a direct job requirement. Meanwhile, some reasons for becoming a licensed professional engineer are larger than the immediate minimal needs of a current job. IEEE Senior Member Cameron Wright, P.E., states:

"It is easy to fall back on the industrial exemption as a rationalization for avoiding the moderate effort required to obtain a P.E. license. It then becomes easy as well to assume the company will take care of any safety and ethical issues associated with the company's products. It is my contention that through the pursuit and attainment of a P.E. license, the individual engineer becomes much more aware of the need to take personal responsibility for the ramification of his or her engineering efforts...a powerful advantage of licensure to society is in the greater concern for engineering safety and for the ethics cultivated with the license."

Read the rest of the article in the August 2010 issue of *IEEE-USA Today's Engineer* at: www.todaysengineer.org/2010/aug/licensure.asp

Send in Your Recommendation for an IEEE-USA Award

The 2011 Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks Coordinating Committee (AICNCC) is encouraging Consultants Networks and Consultants Network members to think about who may be deserving of one of IEEE-USA's many awards. IEEE-USA Awards are given to recognize professionalism, technical achievement, **entrepreneurism** and literary contributions that increase public awareness and understanding of the engineering profession in the United States. IEEE-USA gives awards and recognition to recognize excellence, outstanding service, and contributions furthering its objectives.



IEEE-USA's Awards and Recognition Committee administers the awards program, and announce award recipients each year at a special Awards Ceremony, held in conjunction with IEEE-USA's Annual Professional Activities Conference. The 2011 AICNCC wants to promote Consultants Networks — and nominate members who have added value to the consulting profession; who have helped build and maintain active networks; and who have made significant technical and literary contributions to increase public awareness and understanding of the engineering profession in the United States. 31 July is the deadline for submitting awards nominations.

For more information about IEEE-USA's Awards and Recognitions, visit: www.ieeeusa.org/volunteers/awards/

2010 Profile of IEEE Consultants

IEEE-USA has released its *2010 Profile of IEEE Consultants*. This annual e-book has been hailed as a great resource for independent consultants — to help them decide how much to charge when they are preparing proposals, or negotiate contracts. Past readers have shared that they believe this publication helps them establish a fixed price or fee that is both competitive and fair, because the up-to-date data provides consultants with need-to-know information about what other consultants working in similar fields are charging. The data contained in this e-book comes from a national fee survey of IEEE members. This survey was conducted in the early summer of 2010, so the data is the most recent information you'll be able to find regarding consultants' fees. To purchase, go to: www.ieeeusa.org/communications/ebooks/.

