

IPCC 2008: Montréal

On 13 July 2008, CPTSC conducted the fourth in its series of international roundtables for technical communication educators. Organized alongside the International Professional Communication Conference (IPCC) in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, this year's roundtable drew 13 technical communication educators from five countries, including two never before represented: Mexico and Switzerland. Canada, Denmark, and the USA were represented as well. The roundtable series began in 2000 in London, followed by ones in 2003 in Milan and 2005 in Limerick. Altogether, the series has attracted participants from 15 nations.

First taking up initiatives growing out of the Limerick2005 Roundtable, participants described the many types of international exchanges that they have established in recent years and discussed how they had succeeded at overcoming inevitable challenges. Most of the meeting, however, focused on a proposal brought forth by Kathryn O'Donnell, of Metropolitan State College in Denver, to establish a CPTSC-sponsored database of international contacts, with an eye to promoting cross-cultural exchanges. In particular, the database could be used to match classes in different countries for collaborative teaching-learning projects.

An enthusiastic discussion brought to light various options for constructing the database and making it available. Consensus was reached that the proposal had merit and the endorsement of this year's roundtable attendees. Kathryn O'Donnell said that she would be happy to shepherd the proposal onto the CPTSC business agenda for the 2008 meeting in Minneapolis.

The value of a database, the international roundtables, and CPTSC was perhaps best summed up by a participant from the host country. The University of Toronto's Peter Weiss observed that "Nascent programs like those in Canada need a database and CPTSC to learn how to create minors, then majors and degree programs beyond engineering communication."

Indeed, this sentiment has been common at all the CPTSC international roundtables, especially among directors of new programs in Europe. As this year's roundtable drew to a close, Connie Kampf, of Aarhus University, Denmark, gave an enthusiastic invitation for all to come to the 2009 CPTSC conference that she and her colleagues will be hosting.