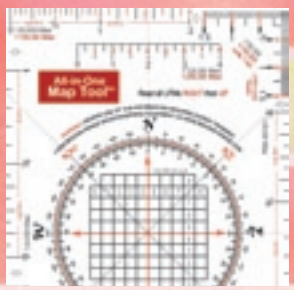
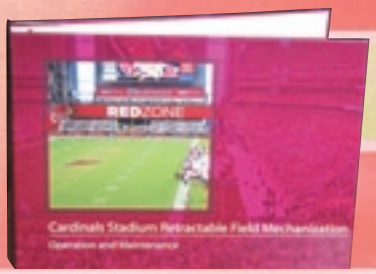
best of show

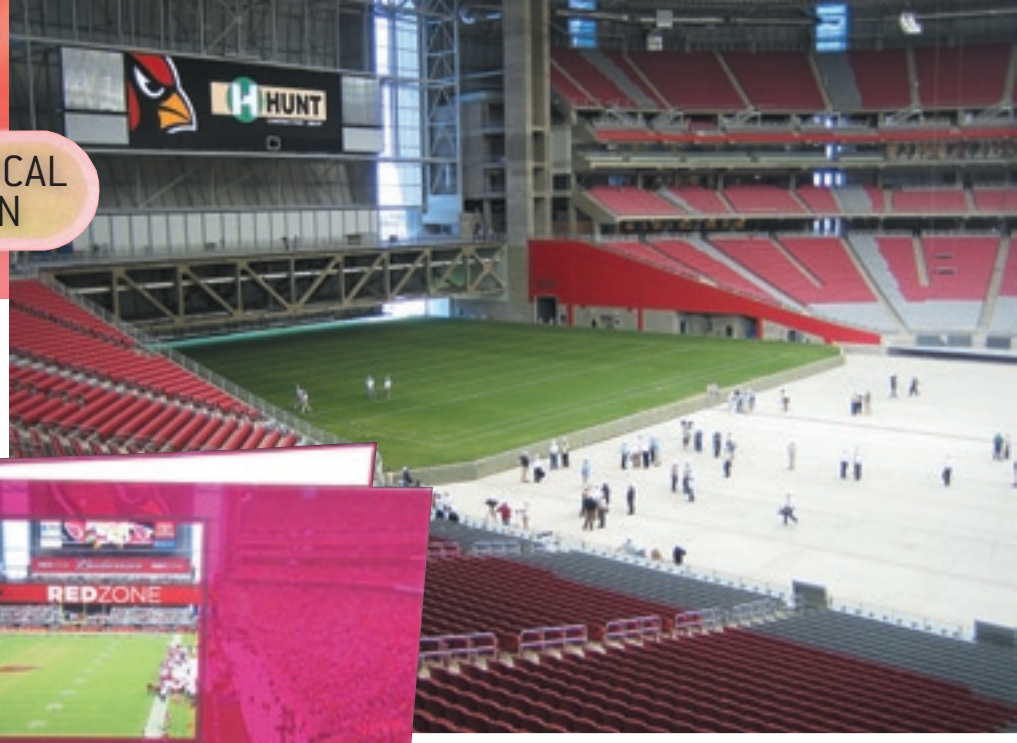


By Ed Rutkowski, *Editor*



On the following pages, ***Intercom*** salutes the Best of Show winners of STC's 2006–2007 international competitions, as well as the top winner in STC's student competition. Congratulations to the winners and to everyone who supported the premier showcase for technical communication!

2007 INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS COMPETITION



Cardinals Stadium Retractable Field Operation and Maintenance Manual

ITPC CATEGORY: NON-COMPUTER EQUIPMENT GUIDE

The field comes out of the stadium. This realization dawns slowly on readers who aren't intended users of Uni-Systems' *Cardinals Stadium Retractable Field Operation and Maintenance Manual*. A retractable field? How can that be? And why would you want one? Yet there it is, on page 1: "On football game days, the field is driven 11.5 feet [3.5m] per minute (1/8 m.p.h.) into the stadium through field doors on the south side of the facility in approximately 1 hour."

Cardinals Stadium—now known as University of Phoenix Stadium—in Glendale, Arizona, is the only stadium in North America, and one of only a handful in the world, that has a retractable field. Home of the National Football League's Arizona Cardinals, the stadium seats more than 63,000 and boasts a unique architectural design inspired by cacti. Like several NFL teams that have opened new stadiums in recent years, the Cardinals wanted both a natural grass field, which is considered safer to play on than artificial grass, and a retractable roof that could be closed on exceptionally hot days. The trouble with retractable roofs, however, is that, even when opened, they don't let in enough sun to nourish grass. Take the grass out of the stadium, apply plenty of water, and your problem is solved. And you have the flexibility to hold other events in the stadium—concerts, monster truck pulls—without destroying the field.

Of course, moving something as large as a football field is a dangerous and complicated activity, one that requires top-notch technical communication. The Cardinals' field measures 234 feet wide by 403 feet long [71m by 123m] and weighs 9,450 tons [8,573t]. According to the Uni-Systems manual, "the retractable field is driven along thirteen rails that are 1,146 feet [349m] long…. The field drive system consists of 542 wheel assemblies, including 76 drive wheels, each powered by a one-horsepower motor, 42 center row idler wheels (with guide roller assemblies), and 424 idler wheels that all ride along the thirteen rails."

When you're moving something that big, you don't want to rush things—and you want to make sure the people operating the motor stay safe. The manual is liberally sprinkled with symbols that convey a range of warnings, from *notice* to *danger*. According to Beth Frampton, who wrote the entire manual and contributed about half of the photographs, the warnings follow standards set by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). "You're much more likely to stay out of trouble following ANSI standards," Frampton says. "At Uni-Systems, there is a commitment from the top down that the manual is very important. I would be very surprised if anyone got hurt on our equipment."

In addition to the writing and photography, Frampton, a self-described "department of one," did all of the graphics and page layout work for the manual in Adobe *FrameMaker*. The manual's form—spiral bound with a hard cover, and pages printed in landscape orientation—is an in-house standard at Uni-Systems. This design provides plenty of room in the margins for pictures, and also translates well to the screen (a CD version comes with the manual).

A system with as many moving parts as the retractable field needs constant maintenance, a requirement that guided Frampton throughout. "We want to make sure we provide our clients with all of the information they need for the life of the equipment—for twenty or thirty years," Frampton says. Because employee turnover during that long a period is likely to be extremely high, the manual is designed so that novices can quickly find their way to the information they need. For example, the manual contains easy-to-follow reference information, including a list of all drawings, service bulletins, manufacturer's manuals, lubrication data, and other information needed to perform maintenance.

Since opening in August 2006, University of Phoenix stadium has become the busiest multipurpose facility in the world. No doubt the demand for these kinds of stadiums will increase, as will the demand for manuals that show how to safely operate and maintain them. That's good news for Uni-Systems—and for stadium workers, too.