

forms of research (remote card sorting, task elicitation, surveys) an example of which is a comparison of the Club Med and Beaches.com Web sites. Chapter 8 is a guide to the tools and services that are available for conducting remote research. Interestingly, I found a few automated tools missing from the list, like iPerception and WebIQ (which I have used many times).

Of great interest were the discussions of mobile device research and what they term “reverse screen sharing.” At work, we use reverse screen sharing often, as we test many prototypes long before the software upgrades have been developed and integrated into our program.

*Remote Research* presents the challenges of remote testing with the authors discussing the issues of not being able to see the participants’ faces through the challenges of online recruiting. A highlight in chapter 10 is the troubleshooting table that outlines problems and solutions for technological issues that might occur during the testing process.

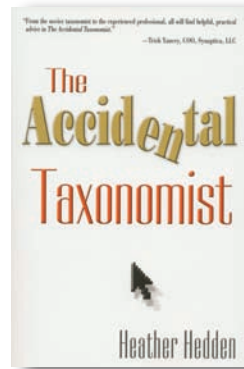
Overall, I found this book to be an excellent addition to my library of usability books and references. The case studies, tables, figures, and chapter summaries effectively support the text. If you are new to usability testing or to conducting tests remotely, this book is a fairly complete guide. I highly recommend it.

### Elisa Miller

Elisa Miller, an STC Associate Fellow, is a Senior User Experience Engineer for GE Healthcare. She is a past president of the Lone Star Community and is an active member of the STC Usability & User Experience SIG.

## The Accidental Taxonomist

Heather Hedden. 2010. Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc. [ISBN 978-1-57387-397-0. 442 pages, including index. US\$39.50 (softcover).]



Heather Hedden, a taxonomist and web indexer, has written an in-depth guide to the professional world of taxonomy, aiming to educate the person who perhaps has been required to work in the field without having intentionally decided to move in that direction—hence the title *The Accidental Taxonomist*. Nonetheless, this

work can be fruitfully used to guide the already practicing taxonomist as well, as is evident from the wealth of information it contains. Its most salient features, however, reflect Hedden’s assumption that the reader will have had no previous experience in the field and will need a full and comprehensive introduction.

Copiously illustrated with screenshots, tables, and other figures, the work is especially detailed and clearly written. Hedden gives us 12 chapters that define the field (“What Are Taxonomies?”); introduce its practitioners, their duties, and training (“Who Are Taxonomists?”); explain and define terms and their relationships (“Creating Terms,” “Creating Relationships”); investigate software (“Software for Taxonomy Creation and Management”); differentiate human versus automated indexing (“Taxonomies for Human Indexing,” “Taxonomies for Automated Indexing”); elucidate structure (“Taxonomy Structures”); present the display of thesauri and hierarchical taxonomies (“Taxonomy Displays”); introduce the steps in planning and implementing taxonomies (“Taxonomy Planning, Design, and Creation,” “Taxonomy Implementation and Evolution”); and review taxonomy as a profession (“Taxonomy Work and the Profession”). In addition, four appendixes (Survey of Taxonomists, Glossary, Recommended Reading, and Websites) supplement the main text. A biography of the author and a serviceable index round out the volume. Hedden also supplies an online version of the links mentioned

in the book, which she expects to update as online addresses change or disappear.

In a work of this length, it should not be surprising that the information contained goes down to a fine level of detail. For those who have less knowledge of the field, it can serve not only as an in-depth introduction to familiarize new practitioners with the basics but also as a desk reference for those who need the occasional refresher or as a reference work to check best practice or the meaning of a term. For that reason, the glossary and index become especially important as reader aids in locating partially remembered information. These are generally well executed, but would have been even better had Hedden included a few more abbreviations as entries in the glossary. For example, “related term” is an entry in the glossary, but the reader who looks for “RT” will not find it. In the index, “RT” is listed in parentheses (“related term (RT)”), which it could have been its listing in the glossary, too. On the other hand, “OWL” is an entry in the glossary, but “Web Ontology Language” is not.

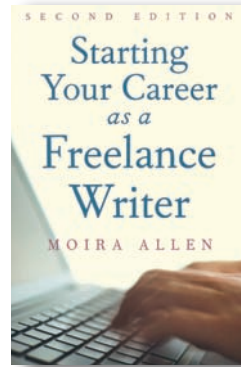
These are very minor complaints about a useful and usable volume, one that fills a gap in addressing a field that becomes more important as the world’s data explosion challenges us to access information that is increasingly difficult to tame.

### Karen Lane

Karen Lane is a freelance technical editor, indexer, and coauthor of a technical communication textbook, *Technical Communication: Strategies for College and the Workplace*. She is an STC Fellow and has served on several Society-level committees, as well as serving as program manager for the 2008 STC Technical Summit.

## Starting Your Career as a Freelance Writer

Moira Allen. 2011. New York City, NY: Allworth Press. [ISBN 978-1-58115-760-4. 317 pages, including index. US\$24.95 (softcover).]



So you want to be a writer and you think you have what it takes. But you’re not sure. *Starting Your Career as a Freelance Writer* tells you everything you need to know to launch your freelance career.

According to Moira Allen, being a successful freelancer takes writing ability, business sense, professionalism, motivation, perseverance, and discipline. In this 300-plus page book, Allen details the steps to writing an article and locating the right market, explains the query and submission process, and walks you through a contract and your rights as an author. Other sections give you more information on growing your writing career and “commercial” freelancing. The final chapter urges you to take the plunge into the brave new world of freelancing.

Allen has guest contributors pen the chapters on writing for businesses, social networking, writing for newspapers and making cold calls. All the writers include numerous examples. Each chapter (a total of 39) is fairly short with lots of sections. You can read from start to finish or hop around based on your interests or the current state of your career. The information is up to date; the text covers online outlets and resources, e-mail communications, and Facebook and Twitter.

Allen has a friendly conversation style that makes her work easy to read. In chapter 14, for example, she writes about special-interest publications that are “always hungry for new writers” (p. 97). Ah, but you say you aren’t an expert? Fear not. According to Allen, being an enthusiast about fly fishing or quilting helps you ask the right questions, means you know the vocabulary of your specialty, and provides you with a keen interest in the topic. The chapter details the types of articles you could consider writing (think personal profiles, current controversies, or how-to), and whether you should specialize as a writer or be a generalist. She covers all this