

# Communicator

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators  
Winter 2007

**Reviewing Adobe's  
Technical Communication Suite**

**Writing persuasively in  
proposals and justifications**

**Exploring PTC's  
Arbortext workflow**



**New directions for content**  
Exceeding audience expectations with multimedia



# Horace Hockley award given to Michael Fritz

Michael Fritz joined tekomp, the German association for technical communicators, as Executive Director in 1997. Under the guidance of a business-minded board of directors headed by Claus Noack, he has since built tekomp into the second largest association in our field (membership up from 2200 to 6200) with the largest event (tcworld, with about 3000 participants). Combine this with his involvement in the European umbrella organisation, TCeurope, and you can see why the ISTC's Council selected Michael as the recipient for this year's Horace Hockley award for his contribution to the profession.

In selecting an Executive Director, tekomp had a clear preference for experience in non-profit organisations rather than in technical communication. The aim was to observe and respond to the market, providing the benefits that members wanted. A team of dedicated volunteers had already laid the foundations in the early 1990s, putting the association onto a professional footing and raising fees to fund improved services.

After studying politics and history, Michael had spent eight years building up a body that organised seminars for young people. While there, he studied for a diploma in economics. This breadth of education and experience made him ideally suited to tekomp's requirement. With a belief in the need for us to get out of the technical communication niche, he sees organisations as communication systems filled with people needing to communicate with people—staff, colleagues and customers. He is working on a model for communication within companies, aiming to describe the processes better so that they can be managed better. He sees our core competencies as observing companies, knowing their products and conveying information about those



products to their users. These skills are transferable to other parts of the company that manage information, not limited to documentation departments. He thinks that MBA programmes with an information management component are one way in which technical communicators could broaden their careers.

Michael would like to see technical communicators being more career-oriented. He has seen a tendency for people to enjoy communicating and learning about technology, without wanting to move further up the hierarchy. The problem with this is that there are few senior managers in business with experience of what we do, leaving us short of advocates in positions of power. He would like to see some of us going beyond team or department leader positions to divisional or directorial level.

A great believer in international colla-

boration, Michael says tekomp knows how German businesses and government operate. He thinks national associations should reflect local culture and requirements (which can be significant), then work together on shared research and initiatives. This closely parallels the ISTC's policy.

Never content to rest on his laurels, Michael recently achieved a doctorate degree in communication science for his project with Claus Noack to research the history of tekomp and publish the research in book form. He hopes to continue his work with tekomp, quite possibly until retirement. He feels there is plenty more to be done when it comes to raising the profile of our profession and improving the way that organisations communicate. We wish him, and tekomp, every success. **C**

**Marian Newell FISTC**

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## Tutors required

The ISTC seeks tutors for its Open Learning Course. Tutors should be one or more of the following:

- Trained teacher or trainer of communication
- Qualified to MA in technical communication
- Qualified to C&G 5360 with authoring experience
- Experienced at publications management level

The ISTC will pay tutors for guiding students through to examinations. If you are interested, please contact Carol Hewitt at [istc@istc.org.uk](mailto:istc@istc.org.uk).

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