



The ISTC is the United Kingdom's professional association for technical authors, technical illustrators, and information designers.

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This monthly Newsletter is emailed to about 1500 people. As well as ISTC news, *InfoPlus⁺* aims to cover anything of interest to the profession. To subscribe, contact the office.

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If you're reading a printed copy of this newsletter, go to <http://istc.org>.

ISTC news

Welcome to 2011

Happy New Year to all our readers. Once again 2010 demonstrated the success of the ISTC's annual conference *TCUK10* and 2011 dates are already confirmed for 20-22 September. We will be back at the Oxford Belfry. They looked after us so well in 2010 – the mix of facilities suited everyone very well, and their rates remain competitive.

A call for papers will go out in February, and booking for delegates will open in April. Keep an eye on what's planned via the dedicated website www.technicalcommunicationuk.com, and look out for updates in this newsletter and in *Communicator*.

There has been some interesting predictions in the news recently that the role of the technical communicator is set to become even more in demand throughout 2011, so let's hope we all have a prosperous year ahead!

Don't forget to renew your ISTC membership!

Renewal invoices for 2011 have been sent to all members and are due for payment by the end of January, unless the fees are being paid by direct debit. If you haven't received your invoice or would like to upgrade please contact the office. You can also renew online. Just go to: www.istc.org.uk/Online_Shop/shop_front.php.

E-mail communications, etc.

Please don't forget to advise the ISTC office when you change your e-mail or other contact details address by contacting istc@istc.org.uk.

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Changes to ISTC education policy

The ISTC Council has begun a review of our provision of educational services to both new entrants to the field and to experienced practitioners. To this end, the ISTC plans to introduce a new modular education syllabus during 2011.

As a result of this planned change the current programme of courses, known as the ISTC Open Learning Courses, will no longer be offered to new students after 31 December 2010. In order to accommodate the needs of our existing students, we will be holding exams for our current syllabus on two dates in 2011, on Wednesday 11 May 2011 and Wednesday 12 October 2011. These will be the last examination dates for the current syllabus. Tutorial support for all students will end on 30th September 2011.

Details of the new syllabus will be published on the ISTC web site as they become available. If you would like more information, or would like to be involved in helping to develop the new syllabus, please contact David Farbey, MA, FISTC, by email at education-policy@istc.org.uk.

Questions and Answers about the changes in ISTC Education Policy

Why has the ISTC taken the decision to withdraw the current course?

The current ISTC Open Learning Course materials were based on a City & Guilds syllabus originally developed before the dawn of the 'Information Age'. To many of our students and potential students our course materials were no longer considered engaging or adequate. The ISTC Council wants to reform our educational provision and make it relevant for technical writers in the 21st century.

When is it anticipated that the new courses will be up and running?

We hope to introduce the first modules of the new syllabus by July 2011. It may take some time after that for all modules to be available.

Hyperlinks disclaimer

The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the ISTC of the linked websites, or the information, products or services contained on those sites. All external hyperlinks were accurate and working at the time of writing. However, the ISTC does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations, so the ISTC cannot be responsible for changes to content found at these locations or any material on those sites that may be inaccurate, misleading or offensive to you. All links are provided with the intent of meeting the mission of the ISTC and its Newsletter, and the ISTC disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy, completeness and availability of any linked site. Please let us know about existing external links which you believe are inappropriate or inaccurate and about specific additional external links which you believe ought to be included.

Documentation lost in translation?

3di can help you provide effective information to your international customers by managing the translation of the information supporting your products, processes and services.

Typical translation projects undertaken by 3di include:

- Software user guides
- Medical device manuals
- EU regulatory information
- Compliance documentation
- Marketing, white papers & sales information
- Process & procedural documents



Call us: 01483 211533
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www.3di-info.com

Will the new syllabus be compatible with the current courses, that is, could someone take course 01 of the current course and course 02 of the revised course?

Students who have completed Course 01 will be given appropriate academic credit so they can continue with more advanced modules. Students who need to take some modules to complete their qualification may be entitled to a discounted fee.

Will the ISTC be offering more courses for experienced members not just for newcomers to the field?

We recognise that educational courses and continuing professional development (CPD) is an important concern for all our members, not just for people who are new to our profession. Our intention with this change of policy is to ensure that we are able to address all these needs. It may take time to achieve, but enhancing the professional development of all our members is a strategic goal we are determined to reach.

ISTC local area group news

London Area Group

Professor David Farkas: Dissecting Troubleshooting Procedures

The ISTC and the London Technical Writers Group are delighted to announce that Professor David Farkas of the Department of Human Centered Design & Engineering at the University of Washington will address a special ISTC meeting on 27 January 2011 at St Bride Foundation, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 8EQ, from 18:30 to 21:00.

David Farkas is a leading expert in information design and technical communication. In 1995, he co-authored, together with Joe Welinske and Scott Bogan, *Developing Online Help for Windows*, one of the very first serious treatments of help authoring, which became an instant classic. Since then he has written and taught extensively, and is the recipient of many honours and awards.

For his talk to the ISTC, Professor Farkas will speak on *Dissecting Troubleshooting Procedures*, in which he gives a broad overview of design issues and presents arguments in favour of a modular writing process. This promises to be

a particularly interesting and exciting event, so please book now at: <http://istcdavidfarkaslondonareagroup.eventbrite.com>.

For this event, a small charge is payable towards refreshments and venue hire: £4 for ISTC and INTECOM members and £8 for non-members.

London Tech Writers New Year Social Evening

Get the New Year off to a great start by joining your colleagues for the London Tech Writers New Year Social evening on Thursday 6 January, 2011. This is a free social event which is open to anyone who'd like to meet and chat with other tech writers, whether or not they are members of any tech writing organisation.

It takes place from 18:00 at the Foyer Bar, Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre. If you are among the first to arrive, or can get there before this time, please try and 'grab' a couple of tables for the rest of us!

We generally find somewhere to sit towards the back of the Foyer hall (that is, the side furthest from the river), and over on the left-

hand side when you are standing with your back to the bar itself.

You can buy your own refreshments at the RFH licensed bar and Foyer Cafe

The organisers for this event are Claire Hooper and David Farbey. Please email london_areagroup@istc.org.uk if you'd like more information about this event or about the London group, or if you'd like to help organise future events.

Please come along to meet up with old professional friends and to make new ones! We look forward to seeing you!

News about area group events

Keep an eye on the *Events listings* section of the newsletter for information about ISTC local area group meetings and events.

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Affiliate news

From the editor

Business Affiliates are company patrons of the ISTC and the profession. There are three grades of Business Affiliate membership, which are indicative of the size of the company or its contribution to the ISTC. The larger the contribution, the bigger the benefits.

Companies that register as a Business Affiliate of the ISTC demonstrate to others a belief in the need for good communication and support for its continuous improvement.

Sponsoring companies can may use the Business Affiliate logo in their publications and enjoy a wide range of benefits. If your organisation is interested, you can find more details on the ISTC web site at www.istc.org.uk/Membership/business_affiliates.htm. A list of existing business affiliates is available at www.istc.org.uk/Business_affiliates/ba_home.htm.

For existing affiliates, we welcome contributions to this section of InfoPlus+ including company news or events that may be of interest to our readers. Please send your press releases to newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk. In general, the copy deadline is around the 24th of the month preceding publication.

Industry news

LinkedIn Software User Assistance Group Seeking Members

The Software User Assistance group on LinkedIn now has over 1,600 members. The group has an active discussion and news list. To join, visit: www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1276817&trk=hb_side_g.

The group is a useful resource for networking, news, jobs, and discussions. There are no restrictions or fees associated with the group. Basic LinkedIn membership is free.

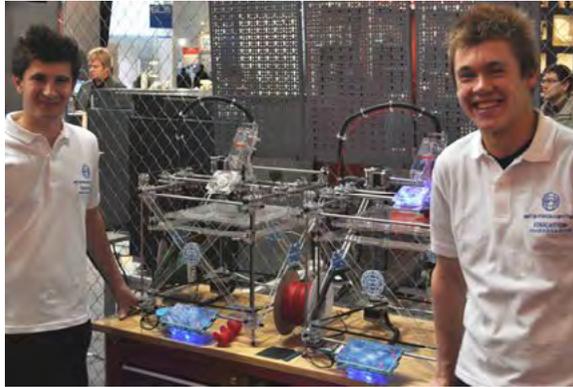
Students showcase South West technology at international exhibition

Students from Clevedon School attended an international exhibition in Frankfurt, Germany where they demonstrated how they are making use of revolutionary new technology that has been developed in the South West.

A level students Aaron Thorogood and Elliot Symes along with teacher Dave White were at the Euromold Exhibition for four days where they showed delegates how they are using 3D printing technology in the classroom.

The group were involved in a number of activities including supporting a number of

German universities in a competition to assemble RapMan 3D printers from UK-based Bits from Bytes, as well as explaining how they are using the unique printer in subjects such as Design and Technology, Geography and Science. Over the course of the exhibition Dave gave a series of presentations to the public highlighting the impact this new technology can have on the school curriculum.



Ambassadors Elliot Symes and Aaron Thorogood

A relatively new technology within the education sector, up until now 3D printing has always been cost prohibitive to schools, colleges and universities, however thanks to advances made by Bits from Bytes, educational establishments can now purchase the technology for under £800.

It means students can develop their knowledge in the area of computer aided design (CAD) and Design & Technology as well as applying it to other subjects.

Dave White, who teaches at Clevedon School and is a one of North Somerset's Advanced

Skills Teachers said: 'It was a fantastic experience for the students to be at such a big event and they learnt such a lot.'

'There was also a considerable amount of interest in the 3D printers we were assembling and demonstrating during the exhibition. For Clevedon School to be at such a prestigious event and

showing how we are pioneering the use of this technology in the curricular was great testimony to Aaron and Elliot.

'CAD and computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) is a core part of the Design and Technology curriculum, yet many schools struggle to deliver the manufacturing side because to date equipment has proved too expensive.

'It's vital that students have access to equipment like Bits from Bytes' RapMan so that they can learn the processes that take place in industry but the cost prohibitive nature of 3D printers meant they were losing out on a key element of their learning.'

Bringing affordable 3D printing to the home, classroom and business Bits from Bytes

manufactures two types of printers including the RapMan and pre-assembled BFB 3000 both of which are used as a rapid prototyper or rapid manufacturer.

Andy McLaren, sales director at Bits from Bytes said: 'Euromold is a major exhibition in the industry and it was great to have the team from Clevedon School showing how they have made the most of our technology.'

'The democratisation of 3D printing means businesses, those in the education sector and hobbyists can transform their CAD based drawings into real three-dimensional models.'

For more information about Bits and Bytes, visit: www.bitsfrombytes.com.

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Book review

Globish: How the English Language Became the World's Language by Robert McCrum

Reviewed by Mike Unwalla, FISTC

The Roman invasion of Britain is the start of McCrum's story of English. McCrum then continues to tell interesting stories about the history of English.

At the end of the book, McCrum writes that Globish 'is the residue of empire, but reinvigorated by its traffic with the global community. In the twenty-first century Globish will continue to develop the supranational momentum it exhibits today... In this new world, some people may even begin to ask themselves, Is this the fulfillment of an age-old dream, the end of Babel?'

Although I learnt new things, the book disappoints me. My primary criticisms are as follows:

- McCrum does not clearly explain what Globish is or how Globish is different from English.
- Some text is too abstract for me to understand.

Globish means different things

McCrums Globish is different from both Nerrière's Globish (www.globish.com) and Gogate's Globish (www.mngogate.com/e02.htm).

When McCrum initially uses the word Globish, he means the things that follow:

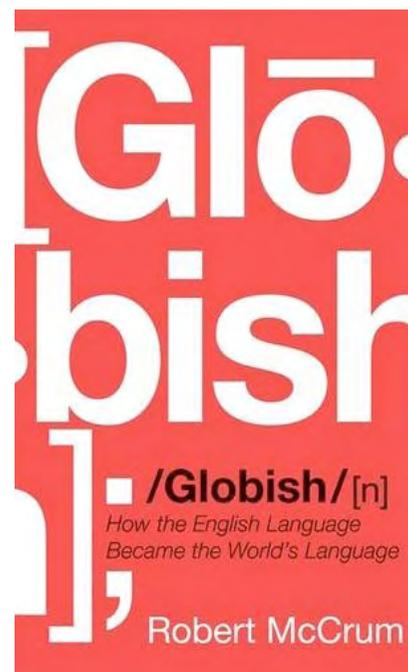
- Globish is a language [English] that is shared by people who speak different languages. In 2007, McCrum interviewed Nerrière. McCrum writes, 'I reflected that [Nerrière's] "Globish" was more than just a new word for a dialect or an international communications tool. It was a description of a lingua franca, but with a difference.'
- Globish is '... a metaphor for the novelty of global English culture today.' (I do not understand the meaning of this phrase.)
- Globish is Europeanized English. '... we find that the Goethe Institute now advocates promoting German culture through the medium of a Europeanized English, for which Globish, "the worldwide

dialect of the third millennium", is an apt description.' McCrum does not explain the difference between Europeanized

English and other types of English, such as British English or American English.

Near the end of Globish, McCrum writes, 'Every time protestors parade English-language placards in front of television cameras they are advancing the cause of Globish.'

McCrums does not explain the difference between Globish and English. Usually, when McCrum writes the word "Globish", the word "English" is apparently an equivalent alternative.



Some text is too abstract

Some text is very abstract. Therefore, sometimes, I do not understand what McCrum wants to say. For example, McCrum writes, 'Language, it cannot be stressed too strongly, is intrinsically neutral, but it is no contradiction to claim that English – by virtue of its origins and history – is unique.'

McCrum does not explain what he means by the term “neutral” in the context of language. Near the end of the book, McCrum apparently contradicts the statement that language is neutral. McCrum writes, ‘Those who want to characterize Globish as a kind of benign virus that has worked its way into every corner of daily life must also acknowledge its imperial and colonial past.’ If language is neutral, why must I ‘acknowledge its imperial and colonial past’?

Change ‘English’ to ‘French’ or to ‘Arabic’ or to ‘Cantonese’. Without knowledge of the criteria that are used to evaluate uniqueness, the languages are interchangeable. For example, “Language, it cannot be stressed too strongly, is intrinsically neutral, but it is no contradiction to claim that Arabic – by virtue of its origins and history – is unique.’

The following combinations of neutrality and uniqueness are possible:

- Neutral and unique
- Neutral and not unique
- Not neutral and unique
- Not neutral and not unique.

To emphasise that neutrality and uniqueness are not contradictory is not necessary, because neutrality and uniqueness are not related. Unfortunately, too much of the text

in Globish is similar to the example sentence. The words flow, but the text does not give much useful information. (I can write, ‘Language is neutral. English is unique.’)

Sometimes, when I read the text in context, I struggle to understand what the text means. Two examples are shown below:

- ‘At the interface of technology and global capitalism, the world’s English responds to specific, local imperatives, as Jean-Paul Nerrière understood when he coined “Globish” in 1995.’
- ‘So viral is its [Globish’s] ceaseless expression round the world that to separate cause and effect is virtually impossible. With a supranational momentum, above and beyond American and British influences, Globish sustains itself as both chicken and egg.’

Although I enjoyed McCrum’s history of English, I do not understand McCrum’s message about ‘Globish’.

Details

Globish: How the English Language Became the World’s Language by Robert McCrum. ISBN 978-0-670-91887-4, 310 pages, £14.99. Published by Penguin Group (2010).

Training courses

January

20-21 Introduction to Adobe InDesign CS5

Provides a comprehensive introduction to the powerful capabilities of InDesign, including setting up new documents, shapes, frames and using InDesign’s most popular features.

10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
armada.co.uk/techauthortraining.

Listings are restricted to scheduled courses that are low cost or are in some way unusual. Listings are a service to members. A listing does not imply ISTC endorsement.

If you hear of any training courses that you think might be of interest to *InfoPlus*⁺ readers, please contact the Newsletter copyeditor at newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

If you would like to promote your course or event to ISTC members, why not consider giving ISTC members a discount for courses and events listed in our newsletter. For more information, please email istc@istc.org.uk.

...January

**24-25 Introduction to
Adobe Photoshop CS5**

Course for beginners. Provides delegates with essential knowledge including repairing photos, selections and layers, compositing images, and vector drawing techniques.

10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
armada.co.uk/printdesigntraining.

24 Introduction to technical authoring

Short course for new technical authors and people in other roles who need to carry out technical authoring work. Covers audience analysis, structuring and designing documents, writing in plain English, punctuation and grammar, designing an effective layout, reviewing and proofreading.

10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
armada.co.uk/techauthortraining.

25-26 Intermediate technical authoring

Builds on the basic course. Learn to use a detailed end-to-end writing process to design, draft, and improve technical documents, create more effective technical documents, and present a consistent and homogenous documents.

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...January

27-28 Advanced technical authoring
Intensive course for career technical authors who want to improve their skill set and the quality and effectiveness of the documentation they produce.

10% discount for ISTC members.
Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
armada.co.uk/techauthortraining.

February

3-4 Introduction to Adobe Captivate
Course for beginners, teaches how to create web enabled simulations, demos and tutorials for software applications.

10% discount for ISTC members.
Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
armada.co.uk/coursecaptivate.htm.

3-4 Website creation essentials with Adobe Dreamweaver
Course for new or novice website designers, and anyone who is responsible for creating or updating web pages. Teaches how to design, develop and maintain a professional website using Dreamweaver. During the course, delegates create a fully functioning website, and receive a copy of their files to take away.

10% discount for ISTC members.
Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
armada.co.uk/coursedreamweaver.htm.

14-15 Basic and Intermediate Adobe FrameMaker
Course providing thorough grounding in FrameMaker used in unstructured (standard) mode covering most popular features and a wide range of techniques for generating printed documents of a high standard.

10% discount for ISTC members.
Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
armada.co.uk/courseframe.htm.

16 Advanced Adobe FrameMaker
Teaches the use of FrameMaker's advanced and difficult-to-grasp features when working in unstructured mode (standard FrameMaker). Learn how to produce books comprised of multiple documents, generate a table of contents and index, and insert cross-references.

10% discount for ISTC members.
Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
armada.co.uk/courseframe.htm.

Event news

TCeurope Colloquium 2011: Call for papers

The impact of European directives and standards on technical communication

Friday 29 April 2011, Brussels, Belgium.

The EU Machinery Directive concisely defines requirements for the content and structure of user manuals. The Directive leaves much scope for interpretation, discussion, and justification. Machines and plants produced in Europe may include components not only from Europe but from all over the world. The documentation, seen as an integral part of a machine or plant, is often not in conformance with the Directive.

The purpose of this year's Colloquium is to discuss the role of technical communicators in meeting the demands of the Machinery Directive and other European directives and standards.

We are inviting speakers on topics such as:

- the exact scope of the Machinery Directive
- the information process all the way from sales to acceptance of the machinery by the end customer

- required language versions in documentation deliveries
- integration of supplier information into the overall documentation of a component, machine or plant
- non-EU suppliers and CE conformity of documentation

If you are interested in speaking at the Colloquium, please send your proposal to the organising committee at colloquium@tceurope.org no later than 15 January, 2011. We will get back to you in February, 2011.

For more information, visit: www.tceurope.org.

Evolving English: An exhibition at the British Library

In this ground-breaking exhibition, the roots of Old English, slang dictionaries, medieval manuscripts, advertisements and newspapers from around the world come together – alongside everyday texts and dialect sound recordings. You can follow the social, cultural and historical influences on the English language and see how it's still evolving today.

The free exhibition is on until April 2011, at The British Library, 96 Euston Road London, NW1 2DB. For more information, visit: www.bl.uk/evolvingenglish.

Events listings

January

6 London Tech Writers New Year Social evening

This is a free social event which is open to anyone who'd like to meet and chat with other tech writers, whether or not they are members of any tech writing organisation. Time: from 18:00 (If you are among the first to arrive, or can get there before this time, please try and 'grab' a couple of tables for the rest of us!). It takes place at the Foyer Bar, Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre. Contact David Farbey or Claire Hooper for more details, email london_areagroup@istc.org.uk. See also the ISTC local area groups news section of the newsletter for more information.

This section introduces new events and reminders of the most relevant events in the coming months. ISTC events are highlighted. You can view previous events listings on the ISTC website's Newsletter archive at <http://istc.org.uk/Publications & Downloads/Newsletter/About the Newsletter.html>. To include an event in the listings, please email events@istc.org.uk

...January

11 Financial Project Management
One of three of a series of 90-minute online seminars entitled Localization Project Management. The session which takes place at 11:00 am CDT, presented by Willem Stoeller: a Certified Project Management Professional. It covers budgeting and the impact of change on budgets, localisation services provider's profit and loss, critical success factors and other financial metric.
www.localizationinstitute.com/seminarregister/register.cfm.

18 New Year Networking Event in Newcastle
An opportunity to get together with fellow technical communicators in the Newcastle area. The event is from 18:00 to 20:00 at Newcastle City Library. For more details, contact Janine Weightman at: Janine.weightman@wellstream.com.

20 North West area group meeting
The North West area group's meeting will be at MadLab. Ted Osuch of Tidal Fire will be giving a talk on Adobe Captivate. Time: 19:00 to 21:00 at Madlab, 36-40 Edge Street, Manchester, M4 1HN. Contact David Jones at northwestengland_areagroup@istc.org.uk. Book your ticket now: <http://nwtcgjan.eventbrite.com>.

24 Cambridge area group
An opportunity to get together with fellow technical communicators in the Cambridge area. This social meeting takes place at CB2 Bistro (www.cb2bistro.com) in Central Cambridge from 19:00 hours. 5/7 Norfolk Street, CB1 2LD.
cambridge_areagroup@istc.org.uk.
[cambridge_techcomms@googlegroups.com](http://groups.google.com/group/cambridge_techcomms/).
http://groups.google.com/group/cambridge_techcomms/.

25 Lessons Learned
One of three of a series of 90-minute online seminars entitled Localization Project Management. The session which takes place at 11:00 am CDT, presented by Willem Stoeller: a Certified Project Management Professional. It covers conducting a post mortem meeting during the close process, lessons learned and best practices in the localisation industry and managing stakeholder expectations.
www.localizationinstitute.com/seminarregister/register.cfm.

27 London Tech Writers Group
Guest lecture by Professor David Farkas, University of Washington, on Dissecting Troubleshooting Procedures. See more about Professor Farkas' visit in the ISTC local area group news section of the newsletter. Make your booking at: <http://istcdavidfarkaslondonareagroup.eventbrite.com>. Contact David Farbey or Claire Hooper for more details, email london_areagroup@istc.org.uk.

February

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West of Scotland Technical Communicators

The West of Scotland Technical Communicators meeting at Waxy O'Connors Pub, 44 West George Street, Glasgow, G2 1DH.

For more information, please contact Katja McLaughlin at: westscotland_areagroup@istc.org.uk.

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Cambridge area group

Talk by James Valentine Technical Translations – a view from the front line at 19:00 hours at Arm Ltd, 110 Fulbourn Road, Cambridge, CB1 9NJ.

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cambridge_techcomms@googlegroups.com.
http://groups.google.com/group/cambridge_techcomms/.

June

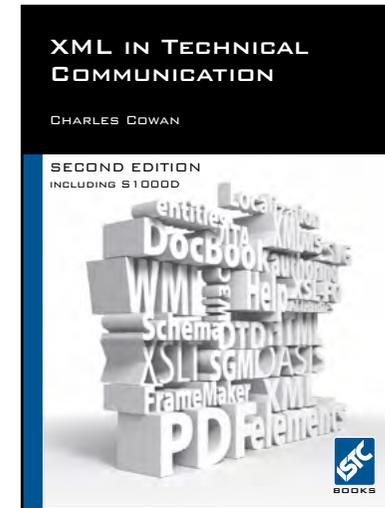
8-10

11th EASE conference

European Association of Science Editor's conference: Science Editing in the Digital World

Tallinn, Estonia.

www.ease.org.uk.



NEW EDITION

REVISED AND UPDATED

WITH A NEW SECTION ON S1000D

This revised and updated second edition now includes a section about S1000D, the international specification for the production of technical publications that is widely used in the aerospace and defence industries. Other additions include more information about how XML facilitates common technical communication tasks and more material about DocBook.

Still only £20, plus postage and packaging
25% discount for ISTC members and affiliates

Contact the ISTC office
(istc@istc.org.uk)



Back page

Caption competition no. 2

Here's another chance to win a small prize (by which we mean modestly priced!) by winning our second caption competition. All you have to do is submit your caption for the following image. The 'best' one wins on the basis of whether it's crazy enough to make the editor laugh – or at least smile – more than other entries.

Assuming there's at least one amusing caption submitted, the winner will be announced in next month's *InfoPlus+*, so please get your entries in by 24 January 2010.

Please send your captions to newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk. We'd also like your submissions for photos that can be used for the caption competition too. Please ensure that any images you send in for publication will not infringe any copyrights.



InfoPlus+ submission deadlines

If you have an article or other content you want to submit for inclusion in *InfoPlus+*, please note the following: For feature articles, press releases, affiliate news and other general content, please ensure your submission arrives by 20th of the month prior to publication. For example, in the case of a June publication, copy should arrive by 20 May. For ISTC news or event details, please ensure your submission arrives by 24th of the month prior to publication. For example, in the case of a June publication, news should arrive by 24 May. Every effort is made to ensure that *InfoPlus+* is published and distributed as early as possible in the month to which it relates. However, last-minute entries, adverts or cancellations can result in an issue being distributed up to a week into that month. Please bear this in mind when submitting time-sensitive information; especially if it concerns an event occurring in the first few days of the month.