London Area Group meeting

The London Area Group's next meeting will be on Tuesday 14 January from 7 pm to 9 pm. The venue is Stephen Helms' house at 55 Chelverton Road, London, SW15 1RW, close to Putney rail station and East Putney Underground station. (Map links: Multimap, Streetmap, and TfL bus map.)

The meeting will be an informal discussion with drinks and nibbles. All ISTC members living or working in London are welcome to join us. If you will be coming, please contact the Secretary, Alan Fisk, at afisk@counterp.com. If you haven't got email, call Alan at home on 020 8670 4290.

Our work in Europe   Alan Fisk

The last week of November saw a hectic period of activity on the international front. Two EU-sponsored projects in which the ISTC is a partner, TecDoc and SecureDoc, formally got under way at meetings in Paris and Stuttgart.

TecDoc

The aims of TecDoc are to:

- collect existing material and information on vocational and further training for technical communications
- collect information on study programmes, courses, and expert speakers

Several other technical communication societies are involved, as well as universities and private companies within industry.

TecDoc will create an information brochure, one for each country in its own language, which will be available online and in printed form. It will also have its own website where the information collected will be available, and each partner will have access to the database to update it.

There will be regular meetings (colloquia) in Brussels throughout the project, as well as other meetings in different locations.

SecureDoc

The aim of SecureDoc is to create guidelines for writing manuals for consumer goods.

The first step was to produce a questionnaire, in all the applicable languages, to find out what consumers actually want from user manuals. The English version is now on the ISTC website; please fill in and return it!

The guidelines will then be drafted and reviewed.

The final guidelines will be available for distribution within industry and to other interested parties.

There will be regular meetings (colloquia) and workshops throughout the project, in various European locations.

The questionnaire is at http://www.istc.org.uk/site/secureDocQ.asp and is aimed at all consumers, not just technical authors. Please encourage anyone you know to fill it in. Respondents get a chance to win a CD player.

If you would like to help with either of these projects, please contact the ISTC Administrator.

Suggestions and contributions wanted!

We're looking for suggestions for how you'd like to see this newsletter develop. Send them to: newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk. Also, if you see any snippets you think would interest our readership, send them in. If you have an idea for an article, send in an outline.

Treasurer's update   Peter Fountain

This is my first report as Treasurer and I would like to start off by thanking those who voted for me to take on the role. I am not too sure how much competition there was for the post, but nevertheless …

The first task I undertook was to establish the financial position of the ISTC as at the date of the AGM (or a few days afterwards). This proved to be a little tricky as we had thousands of pounds of unpaid invoices outstanding from conference goers and a heap of bills to be paid. Things have moved on, with only a few outstanding sums to be paid to us.

The second task was to begin setting the budgets for the forthcoming year. You may think this would simply be a repeat of previous budgets, with some adjustments. It turns out that budget-setting to the extent that I would like to see it is rather a new thing for the Institute, and this has taken some time. The result is that in the next few weeks, I should be able to present an outline of our main budgets for the year and look forward to any comments.

Thirdly, the bit that has already involved you – subscriptions. This year's ones have now been sent, and you will have noticed that the charges for this year have remained the same as last year. The Institute requires some funding to be run and to provide a reasonable level of service to its members, with the largest income coming from subscriptions. It would help us to complete the budget-setting stage if these could be paid as soon as possible. We are still collecting some subscriptions from last December's requests, and this does add to our costs and reduces our cash flow. As the Institute is broadly run to break even each year, all subscriptions are most economically collected if they are dealt with at the same time.

Finally, the salary survey is nearly complete but has not yet been finalised. This will be with you all soon, in time for the next edition of the monthly newsletter.

ISTC news

Conference 2003 update

We're currently examining different venues for Conference. If you'd like to help with Conference, contact the office.

Quality Independent Authors' site

Many of the ISTC's freelance members have banded together on the Quality Independent Authors' site, http://www.qualityauthors.co.uk. A recent innovation is the Articles page, which has several articles that should interest all authors.

More list woes

Having rebuilt our newsletter mailing list after a hardware failure, we found we couldn't use it for our November issue. Despite mass mailing being a requirement when we switched ISP, we found we were blocked.

Consequently, our President had to split the list into penny packets and ended up sending the newsletter out in the small hours of a Monday morning. If we've got you in the list by mistake, email us at newsletter@istc.org.uk.

Spread the word

This newsletter is not just for ISTC members. If you think a friend or colleague would be interested, why not forward them a copy? People can subscribe by sending an email to newsletter@istc.org.uk or signing up on the ISTC website at http://www.istc.org.uk/site/newsletters.asp

Kindred spirits

Indexers get new URL

The Society of Indexers now have a more easily remembered URL: http://www.indexers.org.uk/.

author.co.uk

This site at http://www.author.co.uk/ is for aspiring and published authors. Fortnightly ezine.

Golden Bull awards

The Plain English Campaign have made their annual awards, including the Golden Bull awards for gobbledygook. It's difficult to disagree with their verdict on Anadrom.

See the campaign's site at: http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/awards.html

Miscellany

Passolo 4.0 released

A new version of Passolo, the software localisation tool, has been released; see http://www.passolo.com/site/us/features/highlights.htm A trial version can be downloaded from http://www.passolo.com/site/us/try/download.htm.

AutoReply hazard?

Could over-informative 'Out of Office' messages be a security risk? See http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/2540307.stm.

Copyright law set to change

By the end of March, copyright law will change in response to an EU Directive. The British Library site is a good source of information. http://www.bl.uk/services/information/copyright.html

Dilbert the writer

Dilbert's prediction may strike a chord.

http://www.comics.com/comics/dilbert/archive/dilbert-20021215.html

Translation conference – updated call for papers

The European Association for Machine Translation has extended its timetable for its conference. The new dates are as follows. Paper Submissions: 10 January (extended). Reviews due: 14 February. Notification of Acceptance: 28 February. Camera-ready papers and pre registration due: 31 March.

The programme committee will select a set of up to four 'best papers' (best MT, best Controlled Language, best Controlled Translation, Best Student Submission), whose authors will have their registration fees waived.

Officially titled the "Joint Conference combining the 7th International Workshop of the European Association for Machine Translation and the 4th Controlled Language Applications Workshop", the conference takes place in Dublin on 15th–17th May. Its main theme is Controlled Language Translation. See http://www.eamt.org/eamt-claw03/. (At time of writing, this site still gives the old dates.)

Looking ahead

Each newsletter aims to give a comprehensive listing for the next couple of months. For conferences and suchlike, we'll give you more notice.

15–17 May   Controlled Language Translation. Dublin. http://www.eamt.org/eamt-claw03/

1–3 June   Online Help Conference. London http://www.winwriters.com/europe-ohc/

27–29 June   Society of Indexers Conference. Glasgow. http://www.socind.demon.co.uk/confern/conf03pr.htm

30/6–1/7   Forum 2003. Milan. http://www.intecom.org

Training courses

This section of the newsletter lists forthcoming scheduled courses. Many other organisations also provide bespoke training. See the ISTC's booklet *Technical Communications: A Guide to Courses* at http://www.istc.org.uk/shared/downloads/courses_2002.pdf

Course providers

ALPSP (Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers) South House, The Street, Clapham, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 3UU, UK **Tel**: 01903 871686 **Fax**: 01903 871457 **Email**: sec-gen@alpsp.org **URL**: http://www.alpsp.org/training.htm

British Library. **Tel:** 01937 546465 **Fax:** 01937 546128 **Email**: tracy.bentley@bl.uk **URL:** http://www.bl.uk/services/information/copyright.html

Cherryleaf. Cherryleaf House, 31 Arlington Road, Ashford, Middlesex, TW15 2LS. **Tel**: 01784 258672 **Email**: info@cherryleaf.com **URL**: http://www.cherryleaf.com/training_courses.htm

Imprimatur. 62 Chertsey Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4HL **Tel**: 01483 453500 **Email**: adrian.barry@imprimatur.co.uk **URL**: http://www.imprimatur.co.uk/

Mekon. Mekon House, 31–35 St Nicholas Way, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1JN. **Tel**: 020 8722 8400 **Fax**: 020 8722 8500. **Email**: info@mekon.com **URL**: http://www.mekon.com/training/index.htm

Pacific Blue. High Street, Ripley, Woking, Surrey, GU23 6AF **Tel**: 01483 212612 **Email**: sherryl@pacificblue.co.uk **URL**: http://www.3di-info.com/pacificblue.shtml

PopComm Training. 60 High Street, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 4DX **Tel**: 01746 765605 **Fax:** 01746 767482 **Email**: training@popcomm.co.uk **URL:** http://www.popcomm.co.uk

PTC (Peterborough Technical Communication). 8 Whitewater, Orton Wistow, Peterborough, PE2 6FB **Tel**: 01733 237037 **Email**: help@petecom.co.uk **URL**: http://www.petecom.co.uk/courses.htm

SfEP (Society for Editors and Proofreaders). Contact details vary from course to course. See their **URL**: http://www.sfep.org.uk/training/training_index.html

SoI (Society of Indexers). Workshops Administrator: Julie Miller julie@markmiller.freeserve.co.uk, 6 Hall Street, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA15 8RS. **Tel**: 01229 464878 (preferably early evening, weekdays) **URL**: http://www.socind.demon.co.uk/trquals/workshop.htm

January (weekend dates in bold)

13–14 **Framemaker 7.0. Working with Unstructured Documents and Books**. Mekon.

15–17 **Framemaker 7.0. Template Design Workshop**. Mekon.

17 **Acrobat. Basic**. Imprimatur.

18 **Negotiating effectively**. SfEP.

20 **Acrobat 5.0. Basic – Creating and Delivering PDFs**. Mekon.

20–22 **Developing Usable Content and Documentation**. Pacific Blue.

21 **Acrobat 5.0. Intermediate – Refining and Distributing PDFs**. Mekon.

23 **Getting into Grammar**. PopComm.

27–29 **Illustrator 10. Basic / Intermediate / Advanced**. Mekon.

29 **Introduction to proofreading**. SfEP.

February

3–4 **Framemaker 7.0. Working with Structured Documents and Books**. Mekon.

3–5 **RoboHelp for HTML-based Help: Foundation/Intermediate**. Cherryleaf.

Listings are provided as a service to our members. A listing does not imply endorsement by the ISTC.

Project management links

Most technical authors get involved with project management at some stage, either documenting the processes, or just through being managed. Here are a few sources, with an emphasis on the glossaries and downloads that may speed your work.

The Association for Project Management http://www.apm.org.uk/ is the British professional body. Note the glossary at http://www.apm.org.uk/pub/glossary.htm.

PRINCE2 is the Government's preferred methodology. The official site is http://www.ogc.gov.uk/prince/onlineindex.htm. A set of templates for common project management documents can be downloaded or viewed from http://www.ogc.gov.uk/prince/onlineindex.htm.

A public domain site, http://www.prince2.com/, features a download page http://www.prince2.com/downloads.html and multi-lingual glossaries http://www.prince2.com/glossaries.html.

The British Computer Project Management Specialist Group's site, http://www.bcs.org/proms-g/, has a list of events and even a page of jokes.

The Project Management Institute, http://www.pmi.org/info/default.asp is the US organisation. Their *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge* (*PMBOK Guide*) 2000 is now an ANSI standard (ANSI/PMI 99-001-2000) and is being adopted by the IEEE. Excerpts, including a glossary, are available under licence to everyone at http://www.pmi.org/info/PP_PMBOK2000Excerpts.asp. PMI members can download the whole book.

The International Project Management Association http://www.ipma.ch/ is the worldwide body, of which most national organisations are members.

Advertise with the ISTC

Reach a clearly defined target audience of professional technical communicators through the ISTC. The ISTC's journal, *Communicator*, is published quarterly and this newsletter is emailed monthly to both ISTC members and interested non-members. Newsletters are also posted on our web site. For *Communicator*, contact Sarah Bosworth. For the newsletter, call the Office on 01733 390141.