



November 2002

the newsletter

Digitext goes into receivership

After 18 years as one of the UK's leading documentation companies, Digitext ceased trading on 10 October. Its Online Help Conferences were usually a big source of income but the 2002 conference made only a £7 profit. The lower than expected attendance was probably due to the economic downturn and the reluctance by some to travel by air. Digitext had tried to get finance to take it through to next year's conference but could not get it on acceptable terms.

The ISTC was owed a manageable £82 by Digitext. Digitext's Liquidator is Mercer and Hole <http://www.mercerhole.co.uk/>; contact Suzanne Roland on 01908 605552.

The Digitext website, <http://www.digitext.com>, is still running. It has a number of useful articles that you might want to look at before it disappears.

London Area Group

Alan Fisk

The London Area Group has now been activated. All ISTC members living or working in London are welcome to join us. Contact the Secretary, Alan Fisk, at afisk@counterp.com, or the Chair, Adrian Toole, at adrian@sweetbriar.demon.co.uk. If you haven't got email, call Alan at home on 020 8670 4290.

We plan to meet every two months, on a midweek evening (Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday).

Stephen Helms has kindly offered us his house as the venue for the next meeting, which will be on Tuesday 14th January from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. The address is 55 Chelverton Road, London, SW15 1RW, close to Putney rail station and East Putney Underground station. If you will be coming, please let us know.

HTML Help security problem

Microsoft has issued a Security Bulletin (Severity Rating: Critical) which can be found at:

<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/treeview/default.asp?url=/technet/security/bulletin/MS02-055.asp>

See http://www.digitext.com/knowledge/articles/microsoft_help_security.php and http://www.cherryleaf.com/html_help_security_alert.htm, which both include a link to a safe test.

More Style Guides on the net

Further to last month's article, here are some downloadable guides for software writers.

Microsoft Manual of Style for Technical Publications. Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/mspress/education/> and follow the link at the bottom of the page.

Apple Publications Style Guide: February 2000 direct from: http://developer.apple.com/techpubs/macos8/pdf/apple_styleguide00.pdf

(This guide seems to move about a bit so download it before the URL changes again.)

ISTC news

Salary and Benefits Survey

Results of the ISTC 2002 Salary and Benefits Survey will be published soon.

Apologies for lateness

Hardware problems have forced us to rebuild our mailing list. So that's why you'll have received this newsletter at the very end of November. If we've got you in the list by mistake, email us at newsletter@istc.org.uk.

Education prize for Galyna

The ISTC has awarded Galyna Key its higher education academic prize for her dissertation *Applying Minimalist Theory to Complex Domains*. The dissertation was part of her MA at Sheffield Hallam University. More details in the next *Communicator*.

Office holiday

Our office will be closed from the 4th to 18th December. Emails to istc@istc.org.uk will be rerouted during this period.

Membership – time to upgrade?

Your membership renewal form should have arrived by now. It's worth taking a moment to see whether your current grade is still the most appropriate. For example, if you've been an Associate Member for a number of years, you may well qualify to be a Member. For details of grades, see <http://www.istc.org.uk/site/q-membrs.asp>.

Membership fees are unchanged this year.

Conference 2003: weekdays or weekend?

On the questionnaire with your renewal form, you're invited for your views on whether next year's Conference should be at a weekend or on a couple of weekdays. Conferences have been at the weekend in recent years but we're seeing if a weekday Conference would be as, or more, popular. When the results are collated, a decision will be made and the Conference dates will be published.

If you'd like to help with Conference, contact the office.

Caltek affiliates to the ISTC

Caltek Technical Services has recently affiliated to the ISTC. Here's its profile.



Since its establishment in 1987, Caltek Technical Services has gained an enviable reputation for developing technically accurate, detailed and readable end-user documentation. Its customers include blue-chip and multinational companies, ranging from the largest engineering group in the UK to Government establishments and small software houses. Clients are located throughout the UK and abroad.

Specialising in documentation for the software and electronics industries, Caltek's projects span a huge range of applications. Its in-house authors all have degrees in subjects such as Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Physics, and have a well-proven track record in the development of online and hard-copy documentation, including HTML Help, WebHelp and WinHelp, user, reference, engineering and training guides, installation instructions and operating manuals.

Caltek's authors work closely with development engineers and are often asked to test systems and to draw on their experience of user interfaces to influence system design. Personal attention and investment in knowledge, together with the ability to grasp complex technical concepts and communicate them effectively have resulted in many repeat orders from satisfied customers.

Caltek Technical Services, 4 Greenfields Road, Upton upon Severn, Worcs, WR8 0QL

Tel: 01684 593360 Email: sales@CaltekTS.co.uk URL: <http://www.caltekts.co.uk>

Miscellany

New release of XML revision tracking tool

Palstar have announced the latest release of RevXml, which tracks revisions of XML/ SGML/ XHTML-tagged documents and data.

http://www.palstar.nl/productbrief_revxml.htm

SFEP 2003 members' directory

The Society for Editors and Proofreaders have produced their annual directory, available at http://www.sfep.org.uk/dir2003/dir_index.html

The curse of single sourcing?

October's Single Sourcing Conference listed in the August newsletter was postponed at the last minute (see <http://www.cm-strategies.com>).

And November's Single Sourcing Seminar listed in the October newsletter was a non-event after Digitext went bust.

So the moral is clear. Never organise a single sourcing event and on no account get it listed in the ISTC newsletter.

Trawlings from the net

Labanotation

Labanotation is a method of recording people's movements, which must surely be the solution to someone's problem. See <http://www.rz.uni-frankfurt.de/~griesbec/LABANE.HTML>

Doris Lessing on falling standards

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2368997.stm>

Avoid clichés like the plague

Tired of writing clear, concise prose? Go to the Cliché Finder <http://www.westegg.com/cliche/> for inspiration. (Click Refresh in your browser to make the Ten Random Clichés page work fully.)

The ultimate digital clock

<http://www.yugop.com/ver3/stuff/03/fla.html>

Domain name scam

Watch out for a scam that pressurises businesses to buy domain names (for example, www.yourbusinessname.co.uk or .com or .biz or .info or .net).

The companies Anet and Domain Registrar Services (DRS) are being investigated by the Office of Fair Trading (see contact details below). The caller usually tells you that somebody has tried to register your name but they want to give you the opportunity first. These companies play upon people's fears and you are advised not to take up their 'offer' as their prices are exceptionally high.

Further reading

<http://www.vnunet.com/Analysis/1136338>, <http://www.internetters.com/scam.htm>, and <http://www.nic.uk/news/bogus.html>

Who to complain to

Office of Fair Trading (Public Liaison Unit): 08457 22 44 99, email enquiries@oft.gsi.gov.uk

Nominet (if the company contacting you are members and are trying to sell you a .uk domain, visit www.nominet.co.uk and search the members list.)

Also for news of a text scam, see: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/2446363.stm>

Events

December

3–5. **Online Information 2002**. Olympia Grand Hall. Conference and exhibition. See www.online-information.co.uk

Scheduled Courses

A rather shorter list this month, because of Christmas and Digitext's demise. Cherryleaf will be offering many courses similar to Digitext's, but only a couple of scheduled courses take place in the period covered by this edition of the newsletter.

Course providers

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>

Soft/Export <http://www.softexport.com/d2htrain.htm> offer Doc-to-Help training but none in the period covered by this edition of the newsletter.

December

- 2–3 **Framemaker 7.0. Working with Unstructured Documents and Books.** Mekon.
- 4–5 **Framemaker 7.0. Working with Structured Documents and Books.** Mekon.
- 10 **Adobe Acrobat 5.0. Basic.** Imprimatur
- 11 **Adobe Acrobat 5.0. Intermediate.** Imprimatur
- 11–13 **RoboHelp.** Cherryleaf (Venue is Stockport)

January

- 8–10 **RoboHelp.** Cherryleaf (Venue is Dublin)
- 13–14 **Framemaker 7.0. Working with Unstructured Documents and Books.** Mekon.
- 15–17 **Framemaker 7.0. Template Design Workshop.** Mekon.
- 20 **Acrobat 5.0. Basic – Creating and Delivering PDFs.** Mekon.
- 21 **Acrobat 5.0. Intermediate – Refining and Distributing PDFs.** Mekon.
- 27–28 **Illustrator 1.0. Basic / Intermediate.** Mekon.
- 29 **Illustrator 1.0. Advanced.** Mekon.

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

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. All dates are 2003.

- 13–18 Feb American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting and Science Innovation Exposition. Denver. <http://www.aaas.org/meetings/>
- 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/>
- 30/6–1/7 Forum 2003. Milan. <http://www.intecom.org>

Cherryleaf arises from the ashes of Digitext

The developers and trainers who lost their jobs when Digitext collapsed have now formed their own company, Cherryleaf. Here's their inaugural news release.

Cherryleaf, an information design, training and consultancy company announced its launch on 1st November. The company will be offering services to organisations looking to develop software documentation and Help files and FTSE 250 companies looking to improve their corporate documents.

Technical writers and online Help developers will be able to turn to Cherryleaf's web site, www.cherryleaf.com, for the latest news in this specialised market place.

"Microsoft issued two security alerts relating to its online Help program in October, yet few people seem to know about these. Our aim is to provide a useful resource for this type of specialist information," said Ellis Pratt, Sales Director of Cherryleaf.



Cherryleaf's Ellis Pratt

RoboHelp

Cherryleaf announced that it had signed an agreement with eHelp Corporation to provide training courses in the use of RoboHelp, the World's most popular Help authoring tool. Cherryleaf will be offering public courses in or near Oxford and Aylesbury from December onwards.

RepubliCorp

It also announced its partnership with RepubliCorp to promote the RePublico suite. RePublico enables an organisation to capture its knowledge assets and deliver them effectively through an intranet or on paper. Through this methodology, organisations get better results from the investment made in existing knowledge systems.

"We will also be working with corporate organisations to help them address their information delivery issues. Regulations are impinging increasingly on businesses that need a way to efficiently achieve compliance without requiring a complete business remodelling. Many successful businesses understand the power that a good knowledge system gives them. They see direct improvements in productivity and a reduction of operating costs by arming their staff with all the information they need to fulfil their roles. We want to help organisations create the information systems that make this happen," said Ellis Pratt.

Cherryleaf has locations in or near Brighton, Heathrow, and Oxford. The company is focusing on the UK market, but will also offer services throughout Europe.

Contact details

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

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>

Focus on training

Imprimatur now offers a wide range of training courses for technical communicators

Tel 01483 453500



The Institute of
Scientific &
Technical
Communicators

PO Box 522,
PETERBOROUGH,
PE2 5WX
England

Tel:
+44 (0)1733 390141

Fax:
+44 (0)1733 390126

email
istc@istc.org.uk

Web site:
www.istc.org.uk

Somebody appreciates us

The following sites have PDFs of different types of manuals.

Charles Hyde http://www.chsinteractive.co.uk/site01/shop/ret_instruction_book.asp

Instruction Manuals (UK) <http://www.instruction-manuals.co.uk/>

ServiceForce http://www.serviceforce.co.uk/pdf_search.asp

The Service Centre <http://www.theservicecentre.co.uk/Service/inst.html>

Join the ISTC

If you liked this newsletter, then consider joining the ISTC.

Both individual and business affiliate memberships are available.

ISTC is the professional association for technical and scientific communicators in the UK. Benefits include a quarterly journal, monthly newsletter, annual conference and several active member-only discussion lists. Interested? Please call the ISTC office on 01733 390141 or email membership@istc.org.uk or just sign up for further editions of this newsletter.

We'll be happy to keep sending you the free PDF version of our newsletter each month. Send an e-mail to newsletter@istc.org.uk or sign up on our website at <http://www.istc.org.uk/site/newsletters.asp>

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Call the Office on 01733 390141 for rates, dates, and other details.

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