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ISTC news

Survey for ISTC Members — extended deadline

by Simon Butler, ISTC President

The deadline for completing the continued professional development (CPD) survey organised by the Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) has been extended to 30 September.

If you have not already completed this, please do so. Your answers are important as they will help to shape the future of CPD and the direction of online technologies. We really value your opinions, and I ask you to please take 15 minutes to complete the survey. Your responses will be reported back to the ISTC anonymously.

This is an important survey which is being sent to about 1,000,000 individual professionals. Here is your chance to have your say: www.parnglobal.com/surveys/onlinecpdmemberssurvey.htm



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

ISTC Office: Airport House, Purley Way, Croydon, Surrey CR0 0XZ
Tel: +44 (0)20 8253 4506
Fax: +44 (0)20 8253 4510.
Email: istc@istc.org.uk
Web: www.istc.org.uk

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If you're reading a printed copy of this newsletter, go to www.istc.org.uk/Publications/Newsletter/newsletter.htm and open it on-line to explore the links mentioned.

Talking teamwork for technical authors

by Jeff Bronks MISTC

In August, the ISTC Cambridge Area Group held a themed meeting, hosted by Red Gate Software. Five of the 13 attendees gave short presentations on their experiences of working with teams of technical communicators and the rest of the time was used for questions and answers.

The speakers described a broad range of working conditions, from being a lone technical author to collaborating with several teams of information professionals. A common theme was the importance of meetings between the product developers and the technical communicators. These ranged from daily informal chats to cutting-edge management systems, such as “[Scrum](#)”.

Some of us told tales of working as contractors alongside permanent staff, and struggling to gain access to the product developers and technical experts. Another interesting point was the question of how to divide work between the authors in a team: should the expert on that subject always be chosen, or would a fresh writer find it easier to imagine herself in the customer’s shoes?

One member neatly summarised the typical tech communicator’s personality as that of the [masonry bee](#): self-sufficient, yet usually found working alongside others.

Free ticket to Documentation and Training East 2008

To continue to produce even better quality content, you need to maintain pace with the latest industry trends and tools. Attending workshops and conferences is key to keeping up in our fast paced industry. That’s why the ISTC and the organisers of Documentation and Training East 2008 are offering you a chance to win a free ticket



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- Reducing both internal and external costs

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Date:
18th September 2008

Time:
Registration opens 08:00
Event closes at 15:00

Location:
Kensington Roof Gardens
London

For more information and to register visit
www.sdl.com/london-2008



to this event taking place from 29 October until 1 November.

Enter our lucky draw to win a ticket worth as much as US\$1295 (excludes travel and accommodation).

Documentation and Training East 2008 will be held in Burlington, Massachusetts in the USA. It will cover software documentation, project best practice as well as translation and localisation issues. In addition, registration includes two days of software training workshops. These workshops cover Adobe Technical Communication Suite, MadCap Software, Author-it, and XMetal.

To stand a chance of winning the ticket, please email istc@istc.org.uk before 15 September. Type DOCUMENTATION AND TRAINING EAST 2008 FREE TICKET DRAW as the subject line and include your name and contact details in the email.

To learn more about the event go to www.doctrain.com/east

For a full list of the ISTC's current Business Affiliates, see www.istc.org.uk/Business_affiliates/ba_home.htm.

You can read more about the scheme at www.istc.org.uk/Membership/business_affiliates.htm.

Affiliate news

Indian farming community benefits from Pro/ENGINEER®

PTC, the Product Development Company, reports that Kirloskar Brothers Ltd, a leading manufacturer and exporter of centrifugal pumps and valves, has used Pro/ENGINEER to design a pump engineering solution based on its unique siphon design for the Saurashtra Branch canal. This canal is part of the strategic Narmada Dam project in the Western Indian state of Gujarat.

Sophisticated technology coupled with design innovation helped overcome significant terrain, engineering and financial challenges, resulting in successful completion of the project and provision of irrigation and drinking water to a large population of rural farmers in the state. In recognition, Kirloskar Brothers were

awarded a Technology Innovation award by the Government of Gujarat as well as a US Patent.



The primary challenge was to negotiate the difficult topography in the largest branch canal of the Narmada Project canal system. This would ensure a continuous and smooth flow of water for irrigation requirements in more than 4,000 drought affected towns and villages in the ascending Saurashtra region.

To overcome this challenge, KBL designed the world's largest pumping scheme which included three power stations and five pumping stations. Faced by the additional challenge of a vacuum created in the curvature of the pipeline which reduced the flow of water, Pro/ENGINEER was used to conduct a volume analysis, design and develop a prototype of the siphon. It was also used to accurately determine the exact placement of the siphon on the pump.



Industry news

Monster Meets LinkedIn on Whoscreative.Com

WhosCreative.com has announced the launch of its comprehensive online portfolio/social networking service for creative professionals.

WhosCreative allows users to point their own domain names to their portfolios and when the portfolio is accessed through its own domain name, it becomes an independent site without WhosCreative branding. Additionally, WhosCreative offers a client access extranet component for those who need to present their work in-progress and share files with clients in a password-protected area.

The GALA board calls for candidates

The Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) is currently accepting candidates for three open positions on the Board of Directors. The association is inviting individuals from member companies to submit their candidacy by 12 September. The term of office is for two years: 1 January 2009 through 31 December 2010.

Candidates should be at the decision-maker level and endorsed by their company.

The GALA Board is responsible for overall policy and direction of the association. It has final and complete control over decisions made by the association, including the areas of finance, legal matters, administration and personnel. The Board of Directors meets regularly to discuss the association's affairs and to make decisions on its business. Candidates for the board member positions must be able to commit to:

- Two phone conferences each month (though they may conduct more frequent meetings as deemed necessary)
- In-person board meetings at least twice a year at an agreed upon time and place
- Participation in at least one association committee
- Leadership on specific association projects.

Candidate statements and brief biographies will be posted to the GALA website in September. GALA will submit ballots to GALA member primary contacts at the end of September to elect the three Board members by the majority of votes cast (one vote per member company).

As a worldwide organisation, GALA

strives to have as broad a geographic representation as possible on the Board. Members interested in running for office should obtain a candidacy form from aephrem@gala-global.org and submit it, along with a photo, to the same email by 12 September.

Looking for a new job?

Dr Mike Unwalla FISTC has published an interesting article analysing job vacancies www.techscribe.co.uk/ta/iasig-spring08.htm. He addresses some key issues such as whether the term 'technical author' or 'technical writer' is more prevalent in job postings, and which you should search for. His article also takes a look at contract rates, permanent salaries and more.



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Blog news

Surfing trends and lessons

By Gordon McLean MISTC

As part of my research for these columns I tend to spend a lot of time clicking links. Back in the day (when it was all fields round these parts) that was known as web surfing, following information from website to website, unravelling a never-ending string. Over time you start to unveil threads of common ideas, and this month is no different.

It started off in a post by Tom Johnson where he was answering the question [How do I get training in Technical Writing](#), in which he touches on the idea of mentoring. A few days later Scott Nesbitt picks up the baton and gives his thoughts on [Mentoring](#) another writer and in the spirit of full disclosure Scott does name check yours truly in his post (I responded with a post titled [Modest Mentoring](#)). The very same day the first of two posts on mentoring, written by Lain Chroust Ehamm and titled [Making the Mentor Partnership Work](#) appeared on the TechWR-L website. Part 1 looks at things from the mentee side, with Part 2 discussing [the partnership from the perspective of the mentor](#).

If you manage a team of writers or are looking for some ideas on how to tap into the knowledge of a more senior member of your team, then all of the above articles on mentoring are well worth a read.

Elsewhere [Michael Hughes confesses that he hates PDFs](#), specifically user manuals distributed as PDFs and provides some good arguments as to why we need to be breaking away from the printed book mindset: 'They carry so much book overhead: book front cover pages, book back cover pages, inside cover pages, chapter cover pages. It takes me three clicks to get to a topic that actually says something.'

Back to the TechWR-L website and [Bruce Byfield picks a fight with prescriptive grammar](#) suggesting that: 'Prescriptive grammar is useful for teaching English as a second language, but it has little value for the practicing writer. Clinging to it may provide emotional security, but only at the expense of making writing harder than it needs to be.'

It's sometimes easy to forget that you were a beginner at some point but thankfully Heidi Hansen took some time to write up [how she approaches writing Help for a topic-based help system](#). Even if you are not a beginner

Quick links to the bloggers and their blogs

Tom Johnson:
<http://www.idratherbewriting.com/2008/08/03/reader-question-how-do-i-get-training-in-technical-writing/>

Scott Nesbitt:
<http://www.dmncommunications.com/weblog/?p=474>

Gordon McLean:
<http://www.onemanwrites.co.uk/2008/08/19/modest-mentoring/>

Lain Chroust Ehamm:
<http://www.techwr-l.com/node/772> and <http://www.techwr-l.com/node/773>

Michael Hughes:
<http://user-assistance.blogspot.com/2008/08/why-i-hate-pdfs.html>

Bruce Byfield:
<http://www.techwr-l.com/node/688>

Heidi Hansen:
<http://heidilhansen.blogspot.com/2008/07/how-i-write-help-for-topic-based-help.html>

HCI Journal:
<http://www.hci.com.au/hcisite3/journal/Subject%20matter%20interview%20techniques%20for%20technical%20writers.htm>

Jono:
<http://jonoscript.wordpress.com/2008/07/17/these-things-i-believe/>

it's a good reminder of the approach with some useful tips as well.

Turning to other matters, I stumbled across an excellent post on [Subject matter interview techniques for technical writers](#) courtesy of the *Human-Computer Interaction* (HCI) journal. It's an older article but again a good read that refreshes the basics and provides some insight from a different point of view.

And finally, something I actually emailed around the development group I work in, and which prompted some excellent discussions. Written by Jono, a developer at Mozilla, it outlines his [thoughts and beliefs around software development and user interface design](#), and is something I've considered pinning up on the wall of our office.

All of the blogs linked to have archives full of useful and interesting information, as well as links to other relevant blogs so do have a look around.

If you spot anything that may be of interest to others let me know: blogs@istc.org.uk.

A technical writer for almost 14 years, Gordon has been blogging for more than eight. He monitors a large breadth of blogs covering most aspects of both technical communications and software development.

Software news

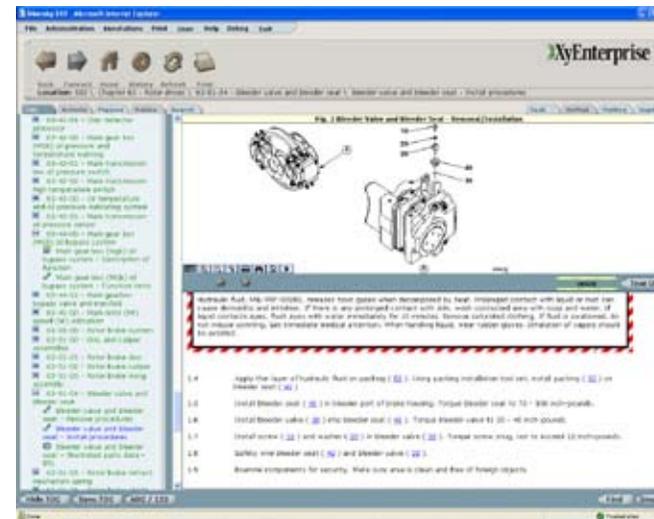
ContentaView V3.6 with web-based features

Developer of award-winning XML content management and multi-channel delivery solutions XyEnterprise has released ContentaView 3.6, an update to its software solution suite for the intelligent delivery of interactive, textual and multimedia content via CD-ROM or the web. This new version now features a powerful web-based update server, providing a universal means for updating all digital publications with a simple Internet connection.

The update server in ContentaView 3.6 makes it fast and easy to push content updates from the server to the desktop and ensures that users are working with the correct version of their publication. It also allows for unattended updates to be performed at pre-



Photo: Andrew Trese



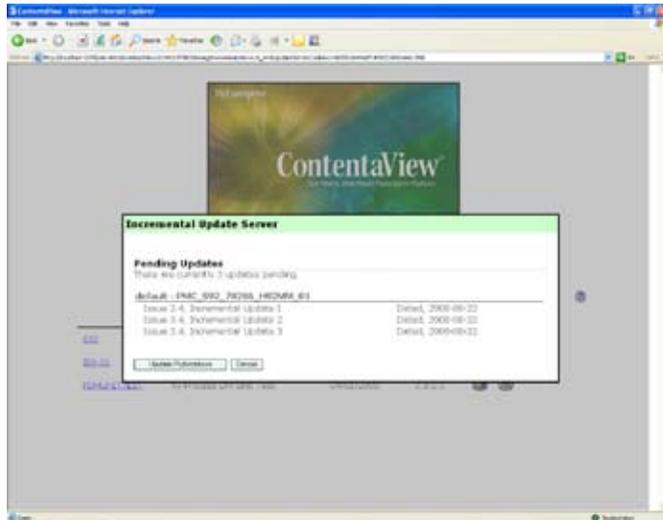
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All links are provided with the intent of meeting the mission of the ISTC and its Newsletter, and the ISTC disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy, completeness and availability of any linked site.

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.

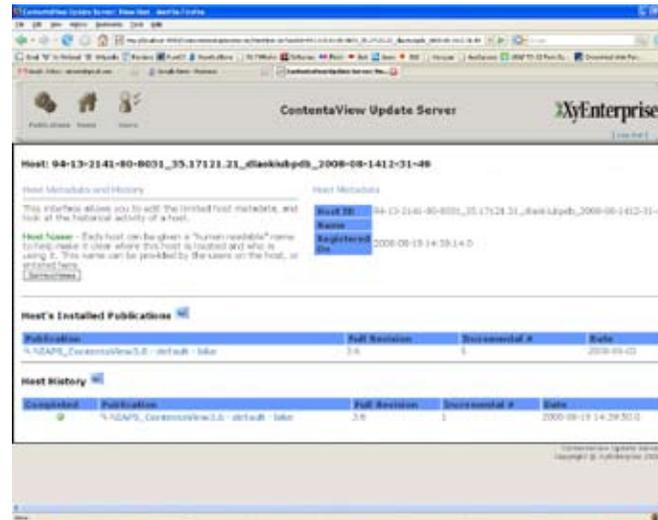
determined intervals. Because these new features in ContentaView 3.6 are web-based, they do not require any additional hardware or software.



Also included in ContentaView 3.6 is a tracking mechanism that compiles an audit trail of every user who connects to the server and every update that is downloaded. This tracking mechanism provides up-to-date information about all end users along with the publications, versions, and historical information in each client record.

‘We continue to expand ContentaView’s footprint to meet the needs of a larger group of information distributors, including manufacturing and legal publishers’, says Andrew Trese, Technical Product

Manager for XyEnterprise. ‘This feature release is just one example of how sharing requirements between industries such as military, aerospace, manufacturing and legal publishing can positively impact the development of the technology, making it easier for just about anyone to deliver data on the web.’



Additional capabilities of ContentaView 3.6 include a new generic export tool that allows a user to export the XML into any desired file format, such as RTF, Excel, Word, CSV and plain text, making it easier to update files and accommodating users not familiar with XML. The new release of ContentaView features an improved robust search capability that permits end-users to search for full text or categorical content using

phrase searching, search stemming, search excerpts or saved searches.

Support for the S1000D process data module in ContentaView 3.6 means users can perform dynamic troubleshooting using the product’s built-in logic engine and can create their own data set based on a sample data set, provided by XyEnterprise, which shows the major components of the process data module in action. ContentaView 3.6 features an expansion of the ContentaView API, which is extremely useful in integrating and customising the product into external systems.

The new features in ContentaView 3.6 build upon the existing adaptive publishing environment of the product, including its powerful search, navigation and assembly elements and the real-time presentation of content as XML components.

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Tools and resources

Using FrameMaker generated lists to help with various documentation tasks

By Steve Thompson MISTC

If you're using unstructured FrameMaker to produce documents, you can generate special indexes and tables of content to make some of your processes easier:

- ▶ Tracking progress
- ▶ Getting better reviews
- ▶ Checking large translated documents
- ▶ Managing archiving and printing

Tracking progress

As you collect each nugget of information that takes one product release onto the next, it's useful to know your progress. Is the description of the XYZ feature complete? Where did you decide last week to insert the text that fixed Bug 1435?

You can keep reminders on scraps of paper, a diary or a database. Alternatively, you can keep the information inside the document as you write it. You probably already have index markers in your guide. You can also

add your own type of marker, or just adopt any unused ones, such as Author, Comment and Subject. Do not use the special markers like Index, Cross-ref, Conditional text and Hypertext.

For the content of each marker, write something like the "XYZ feature, call John for a demo". Include a date too, if you need a reminder of when you finished a piece of work. If you haven't started the work, but know where it will fit, write something like "Bug 1435 fits here".

Finally, generate an Index of Markers (IOM) or List of Markers (LOM), placing these two useful lists at the end of your guide.

Getting better reviews

It's difficult enough to persuade the subject-matter experts to review a large document but when you see "and the rest looks OK to me" at page 51 of your cherished 300-page tome, your heart sinks. Reviewers, initially full of enthusiasm, enthusiastically comment on the first 50 pages until tiredness sets in, they lose concentration, and your carefully rewritten appendix is ignored.

If most of your work added small changes throughout a large document, you need to direct the reviewers to those changed parts only. Change bars help but they are not

always easy to find, especially if the change affects only one line. Now, although it's best if reviewers can read the guide in its entirety, such luxury is often lost to the project deadlines. This technique provides "targeted reviewing".

For the content of each marker, use (say) a keyword that you or your reviewers will recognise, such as Database plug-in, the

Localization into all main languages

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AZX feature, or BUG 345. Include a date too, if you need a reminder of when you did the work.

Finally, generate an Index of Markers (IOM) and List of Markers (LOM), placing them at the end of your guide. You'll have two useful lists for your reviewers.

The IOM orders by name, so reviewers can quickly find their own subject area.

Bug 233, 7 July 08 99

Bug 299, 21 Dec 07 55

Bug 345, 15 Aug 08 87

Database plug-in 58

The LOM orders by page, so reviewers can quickly jump to relevant pages.

Bug 299, 21 Dec 07 55

Database plug-in 58

Bug 345, 15 Aug 08 87

Bug 233, 7 July 08 99

Checking large translated documents

Checking translated documents is a tedious task. After all, you probably do not know the languages, be they Chinese, French or German. You rely on the translators for the word-by-word conversion. You can check only that the English document and

localised documents are identical paragraph for paragraph. Does Chapter 3 contain a heading followed by two normal paragraphs, then three bullets, and so on in each language? If the translation has suffered last-minute changes, unwanted paragraphs removed correctly from some translated guides might inadvertently still remain in others. Furthermore, the length of text varies between languages, so pages do not keep in step, making comparison difficult across page breaks.

To make the paragraph by paragraph checking easier, you can create a special, second Table of Contents, attaching it to the end of each document. Normally a TOC repeats the name of a heading and gives its page number, like this:

Database entry 3

Starting the engine.... 5

To create this layout, the Reference page of the TOC contains lines for each type of heading. They look like this:

<\$paratext> <\$pagenum>

To your new TOC, add more paragraph types (like bullets, steps and ordinary paragraphs) to this list. Next replace each line by <\$paratag> alone.

When you generate the new TOC, it shows a list with contents like this:

Chapter

Heading1

NormalBody

Bullet1

Bullet1

The TOC should be the same for every language, and will be easy to compare by eye, or even electronically.

Managing archiving and printing

When it's time to archive or print a document, it's useful to know what's in each file. Typically you have one file per chapter. To produce the list of file contents, create a TOC, placing it at the end of the document, where it cannot upset existing page numbering.

A typical TOC uses a layout on the Reference page which looks like this:

<\$paratext> ... <\$pagenum>

Remove the lines for the lower headings, to leave only those for the chapters.

Rewrite the line as:

<\$paratext> ... <\$filename>

On generating this TOC, you will produce a list like this:

- Introduction intr.fm
- Installing the product prod-install.fm
- Configuration of device devcfg1.fm

Closing

The techniques described here are taken from the FrameMaker documentation and combined with some of my own experimentation.

Look out for Steve's next article on interesting uses of cross-references in FrameMaker in the next issue of *InfoPlus*⁺.

Steve Thompson has been a software technical author for over twenty years.

He has used FrameMaker for ten years, and currently works for a computer security company.

Email: authorst@googlemail.com

The value of the *Oxford Guide to Plain English*

by Marian Newell FISTC

Oxford Guide to Plain English

Martin Cutts

ISBN: 978-0-19-923345-8

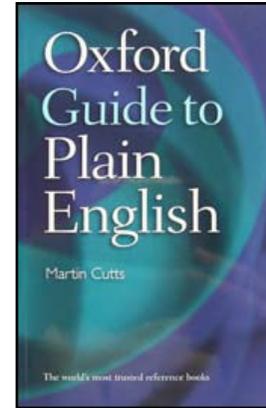
Oxford University Press

£5.99

Paperback, 202 pages,
2nd edition, reissued with new cover in 2007

Why would you consider this book?

As Martin Cutts, Research Director of the Plain Language Commission, concedes, plain English is undoubtedly a woolly term. Most ISTC members surely try to write plainly and clearly, so the question when assessing a book such as this is whether it really helps writers to achieve that goal. I've seen the kinds of stylistic questions that writers ask on the ISTC Discussion Group and I'm confident that this book provides useful answers to many of them, along with evidence to defend decisions to colleagues and managers alike. Cutts uses focus groups to test different writing styles, and includes four pages of sources and notes, so



his recommendations have some authority.

What does the book cover?

The opening pages provide some background to the development and use of plain English but then the book cuts to the chase, first listing 21 guidelines and then explaining them in 21 sections. The titles of the sections often emphasise the intention to guide rather than prescribe: *Preferring plain words* and *Favouring the active voice*. Some contribute to the book's pleasant lightness of style: *Writing shorter sentences... or chopping up snakes and Conquering grammarphobia*.

Particularly useful in my mind is the section, *Seven writing myths explored and exploded*. This discusses the simple rules that many of us were taught at school and encourages us to be flexible about applying them. For example, the so-called rule about not splitting infinitives has its roots in the nineteenth century, 'when grammarians sought to impose Latin rules on English', and Cutts advises: 'If you can't bring yourself to split an infinitive, at least allow others the freedom to do so.'

Another interesting section is *Negative to positive*, only three pages but still an effective demonstration of the clarity that

can be achieved by recasting a sentence. As Cutts says: 'Clearly there can be a difference in meaning between an action being "not unreasonable" and just plain "reasonable". But always ask yourself whether such distinctions are worth making in the particular case.'

Why impoverish our rich language?

The greatest surprise to me was the pragmatic stance taken by Cutts, who writes in a friendly tone and offers guidelines rather than rules. Anyone who has bridled at the notion of simplifying the English language can relax. Rather than suggest that every piece of writing should use plain language, the point is that writing intended to inform should do so as clearly as possible. A technical author can hardly argue with that!

Why choose this plain language title?

Where this book triumphs over another plain language title that I read is its focus on the 21 guidelines. It doesn't try to address all aspects of writing and, having set the context at the start, it doesn't keep returning to justifications or background to the use of plain English. Having said that, three of the guidelines cover alternatives to text (such as tables and charts), layout and managing colleagues' writing.

Does the book's style support its case?

As another ISTC member said to me: 'Cutts' writing exemplifies plain English best practice and proves that "plain" doesn't have to be "dull".' Having found the other plain language title somewhat chatty, I warmed to the economy of Cutts' style. Although friendly and informal, it doesn't waste words on trying to simulate a conversation with the reader. On reflection, I think this is more than a stylistic issue: Cutts puts as much emphasis on the reactions of sample readers in his focus groups as on the aims of writers reading his book. It's an important reminder that we should be making the stylistic choices that best serve our readers rather than following our personal preferences without justification.

Would I recommend it?

This is an excellent little book: only 172mm x 110mm and yet packed with useful pointers on writing plainly and clearly. Along with *New Hart's Rules*, itself a little book, this title more than earns its place on a technical author's bookshelf and is almost indispensable to anyone compiling a style guide. The multitude of real-life examples demonstrating the practices described make the book equally useful to experienced writers checking specific points and to novices needing broader guidance.

The ISTC Oxford Reference Online facility: Use it to gain more than information

By Peter Fountain FISTC, LCGI

This free online service to ISTC members is such a valuable resource that can deliver both information and professional credibility that I thought it may benefit from being highlighted. So, pen to paper, I set to.

The ISTC Oxford Reference Online (ORO) enables up-to-date investigation of words through a variety of authoritative reference material, namely the:

- Dictionaries of: Computing, the Internet, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Ecology, Physics, Plant Sciences, Psychology, Statistics, Zoology, Accounting, and Finance and Banking
- Concise Oxford Dictionaries of: Linguistics, Proverbs, Quotations, English Etymology, and Mathematics
- Oxford Dictionaries of: Abbreviations, English Grammar, and Idioms
- *Concise Oxford Companion to The English Language*
- *Oxford Paperback Thesaurus*
- *Oxford Essential Dictionary of Foreign*

Terms in English

- Pocket Fowler's *Modern English Usage*
- *World Encyclopedia*
- *Concise Medical Dictionary*
- *New Dictionary of Eponyms*
- ... and on its own, the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

Of course we all have our own selection of reference material and text books to help with the decisions required in our day-to-day work and although this is of great importance, there is something about the online ORO that engenders a great feeling of completeness. Not only that, but the interface is swift, enabling a fast route to answers. This facility, provided at a cost of over £3000 a year, is available free to all existing members and can only be accessed via www.istc.org.uk in the Members Area. Many of us will be familiar with the above and will have benefited from the information accordingly – but there are other benefits too.

Although access to this data is extremely useful in its own right, I have found significant advantages can be obtained when using the ORO while on clients' and other out-of-office premises (both in the

UK and abroad). When I find myself in such situations, I rarely have my preferred dictionary with me, and I never have all the other reference and text books that I use in my office. Given this, it is really useful to be able to continue to get access to information and ensure that the decisions I am making are with some authority (particularly as my dictionary of choice is the OED).

I also believe that the simple act of accessing this member-only information says something to a client about me as an individual. It helps demonstrate that I am sufficiently interested in the profession to be a member of the ISTC and that there are tangible benefits to be gained from my membership, above and beyond the letters after my name (which I use). It often starts a small discussion with the client about the ISTC, membership qualification requirements, and professionalism in general and – by association – provides clients with the reassurance that they have sourced a professional who has the full support of, and access to, the resources of the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators behind them. It is just as useful in other situations such as when with peers, in front of a decision maker, in another department, or with a client at your premises.

This facet of the ORO may not, in itself, seem advantageous but I believe that all good differentiators are worth having. Naturally, your experience, qualifications and above all competency are more important. But when these things are either equal or unknown, as is often the case, other things will contribute to the perception of which supplier or member of staff is likely to be the most able to deliver a requisite level of expertise.

**Accurate information is critical
to the success of any business...**

**...and finding the right personnel
to develop and deliver the
information is where we fit in.**

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within the documentation skills sector.**

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Training news

50 Open University courses on offer

New courses offered by The Open University Centre for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) mean that ISTC members have even more discounted courses to choose from. As an ISTC member, you can get a 10% price reduction on these new flexible online courses. You can see a full list of courses at www.open.ac.uk/cpd/index.php?q=node/49

Each course, which is designed to help you develop your professional skills when facing a specific work issue or challenge, is conveniently chunked into one to two hour bite-size learning portions with the flexibility to learn around working patterns. The package of learning builds over the weeks into about 20 hours and the course completes with a work-based assignment that reinforces learning to give a total of up to 30 hours. A certificate of successful completion gives members the evidence for CPD. Click [here](#) for an example of how this works.

Are you faced with continual conflict in your work? [Managing Conflict](#) will give you the knowledge and skills to resolve the conflict

more effectively. Take a look at [Working Together Across Professional Boundaries](#) and [Working Across Cultures](#). These are two courses that help your skills development in a more integrated and collaborative way with colleagues within their own organisation and in other organisations or cultures. [Creative Problem Solving](#) helps you to learn how creativity can help you employ the best people, use resources efficiently, stay ahead of the competition and save costs.

Free webinars

SDL are running a number of free webinars exploring various aspects of creating and managing global content:

9 September: Web Content Management

16 September: Translation Management

23 September: Automated Translation

For more details visit: www.sdl.com/events

Training courses

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 (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

September

15–16 Basic/Intermediate Adobe FrameMaker 8

This course provides beginners with a thorough grounding in FrameMaker. Starting from first principles, delegates learn how to create new documents, modify existing ones and use FrameMaker's most popular features. 10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
www.armadaonline.co.uk/adobettraining

- 16 Introduction to the Across Personal Edition v4.0**
This free freelancer online training is for all beginners who would like to learn more about the structure and functions of Across.
Across Systems. Online
www.my-across.net/en/free_trainings.html
- 17 Advanced Adobe FrameMaker 8**
Learn FrameMaker's advanced features when working in unstructured mode. This course also covers variables, books, contents, index and cross-references. 10% discount for ISTC members.
Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
www.armadaonline.co.uk/adobettraining
- 18 Introduction to Technical Authoring**
This intensive one-day course is ideal for people who are not career technical authors, but who need to carry out such work. The training covers project planning, writing from a design, structuring documents, good writing practice, punctuation and grammar, navigation techniques,

proofreading and standards. 10% discount for ISTC members.
Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
www.armadaonline.co.uk/adobettraining

- 19 Introduction to Adobe Captivate 3**
In this course for beginners, you will learn how to create software simulations, demos and tutorials for your application. 10% discount for ISTC members.
Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.
www.armadaonline.co.uk/adobettraining
- 20 Starting Your Own Technical Authorship Business**
Do you want to start your own technical authoring business? If you have the technical communication skills but are unsure about business fundamentals, then this one-day course will equip you with the knowledge you need to get started.
A J Marlow (Business Development), Peterborough.
www.bookmycourse.co.uk/course/starting_your_own_technical_authoring_business_35641/

REGISTRATION INCLUDES 2 DAYS OF SOFTWARE TRAINING WORKSHOPS - **FREE!** CHOOSE FROM ADOBE TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION SUITE, MADCAP SOFTWARE, AUTHOR-IT, XMETAL



DOCTRIN EAST
PRODUCING QUALITY CONTENT
OCT 29 - NOV 1, 2008
BURLINGTON, MA
WWW.DOCTRIN.COM/EAST/



29 Advanced Technical Authoring Techniques

This is an 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. www.armadaonline.co.uk/techauthortraining

October

6 Getting Research Published: How to Develop a Publication Strategy in Biomedicine

This new 10-week online course runs from 6 October until 12 December. It covers the ethics, conventions and often unwritten rules of publishing in peer-reviewed journals and at conferences. University of Oxford, UK. cpd.conted.ox.ac.uk/personaldev/courses/getting_research_published.asp

9–10 Introduction to Adobe RoboHelp 7

This beginners' course teaches you how to use RoboHelp to create online help in most popular formats, and produce hard copy guides in Word and PDF format from the same project. It covers advanced features including templates, style sheets, skins and conditional tags. 10% discount for ISTC members. Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands. www.armadaonline.co.uk/techauthortraining

22 SDL Trados Seminars: Terminology Management

Let the guidance of an experienced, hands-on trainer unlock the full power of this translation management tool. Questions submitted before the seminar will be addressed in the class. The Localization Institute, Seattle, USA. localizationinstitute.com/switchboard.cfm?category=public&isplay=title&ID=53

27 Introduction to Technical Authoring

This is an intensive one-day course ideal for people who are not career technical authors, but who need to carry out such work. It covers project planning, writing from a design, structuring documents, good writing practice, punctuation and grammar, navigation techniques, proofreading and standards. 10% discount for ISTC members. Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands. www.armadaonline.co.uk/techauthortraining

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Visit the certificate program page at extension.ucsd.edu/techcomm



28 Introduction to Adobe Captivate 3

Learn how to create software simulations, demos and tutorials for your application on this course for beginners. 10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.

www.armadaonline.co.uk/techauthortraining

November

5 Engaging with the Environment: Finding Quality eInformation Resources

This course will help you find authoritative sources of environmental information. It will cover government departments and committees, influential groups and bodies, news sources, and research. UK eInformation Group, London

www.ukeig.org.uk/training/2008/November/EnvironmentallInformation.html

19–20 Mental Models: Aligning Web Design Strategy with Human Behaviour

During this two-day intensive

master class, Indi Young (USA) will give you a deep understanding of people's motivations and thought-processes, along with the emotional and philosophical landscape in which they are operating. Indi is an applications and navigation guru whose work spans a number of decades, from the mid-80s. Her mental models have helped an impressive collection of clients from both start-ups and large corporations to align their design strategy with how people work. Key Forums, Sydney.

www.keyforums.com.au

December

3–5 Effective Writing for Biomedical Professionals

Suitable for professionals working in the pharmaceutical and biotech industries, in healthcare or in scientific research and development. University of Oxford, UK

<http://tinyurl.com/4jsvqc>

Events news

Announcing the First European Summit on Measurement

The International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) has announced that Berlin will be the venue of the first European Summit on Measurement organised with the US Institute for Public Relations. The Summit will be held from 10–12 June 2009.

Barry Leggetter, Executive Director of AMEC, said: "Holding the event outside the UK is an important message we wanted to give to our fast growing international membership".

PTC announces its biggest annual event

PTC World UK 2008 is now open for registration. To accommodate the growing numbers of attendees the conference has moved to the award winning Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, Warwickshire which is just two minutes off M40 Junction 12. This conference is free to attend and will be held on 18 November.

PTC World will bring together technology and business minds from PTC with the best talents from your organisation. The goal is to advance the knowledge and decision-making success of anyone who purchases, evaluates, implements, administers or applies PTC technology in their organisation—from Managing Director to end user—even to prospects looking to invest in the latest product lifecycle management (PLM) technology.

Attendees to PTC World will benefit from a host of topics, including:

- ▶ PTC corporate update, technology vision and acquisition strategy
- ▶ Delivering business value through process optimisation
- ▶ Ensuring success through technology and process adoption
- ▶ Business and technology customer case studies
- ▶ Product updates and demonstrations
- ▶ Learning centre
- ▶ PTC technology partner solutions
- ▶ Networking reception

More information at www.ptcworld.org/uki

Events listings

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 www.istc.org.uk/Publications/Newsletter/newsletter.htm.

To include an event in the listings, please email events@istc.org.uk.

September

- 4 Sign Design Society September talk: The design of a navigation system for public transport in Santiago, Chile.**
This is a talk by Rodrigo Ramirez, of Reading University, on a controversial re-definition of public transport in this Latin American City. London, UK.
www.signdesignsociety.co.uk/content.php?folder_id=21
- 8–9 SfEP AGM and 19th Annual Conference**
This event marks the 20th anniversary of The Society for Proofreaders and Editors and

explores the topic, 'Twenty-twenty vision – Looking forward, looking back.' The conference programme will be a mix of workshops, seminars, plenary sessions and panel discussions and, of course, networking and socialising. Oxford, UK.

www.sfep.org.uk/pub/confs/conf08/conf2008_advance.asp

9–11 3rd Annual Global Information Industry Summit

This event provides you with access to industry executives gathering to address global industry trends, identify new market opportunities, and share best practices. London, UK.

siii.net/giis/2008/overview.asp#about

16–19 Tenth EASE General Assembly and Conference

The topic of this conference organised by the European Association of Science Editors is integrity in science communication. Pisa, Italy.

www.ease.org.uk/meetings/index.shtml

18 Global Information Management Conference
SDL will be hosting a conference to explore the challenges of creating and managing multilingual content. Aimed at companies that need to support a global market, attendees will learn how to reduce the cost and improve the quality and consistency of multilingual content.

For more information visit www.sdl.com/en/sites/gim-london-2008/

18–19 User Assistance Conference — Europe 2008

This annual event provides user assistance professionals with the latest Help technology news, design trends, and skills updates. Edinburgh, Scotland.

www.uaconference.eu/

21–23 Localization Project Managers Roundtable

The roundtable opens channels of open communication for project managers to discuss specific issues of localisation project management outside the client-vendor relationship.

tinyurl.com/6a9ank

29–30 World Social Marketing Conference

The first international event where delegates, exhibitors and speakers from around the world will meet to discuss the application of social marketing.

Brighton, UK.

tcp-events.co.uk/wsmc/

23–25 ISTC Conference 2008 – Technical Communication: Past, Present and Future

ISTC Conference 2008 will be the largest UK event for technical communicators this year. The format has changed significantly to reflect delegate feedback from last year and the changing needs of our members and affiliates. Speakers this year include Matthew Ellison (keynote speaker), Joe Welinske (WritersUA), Chris Clenton (Royal Bank of Scotland), David Black (Symbian) and Audrey Philbrooks (Alliance and Leicester).

Eastwood Hall, Nottingham.

www.istc.org.uk/Events/istc-conference.htm.

October

2–4 2008 Annual Conference of the CPTSC. Programs in Context: Past, Present, and Future

The Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC) will hold its 2008 conference at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis – where CPTSC began.

USA.

www.unomaha.edu/cptsc2008/

13–15 Localization World Twelfth Conference

‘Innovating Localization Business Models’ is the theme for both the European and the North American Localization World conferences this year.

Madison, Wisconsin.

www.localizationworld.com/lwmadison2008/cfp.php

29–1 DocTrain East 2008

The theme of the 10th Annual Documentation and Training East Conference is producing quality content. This event focuses on software documentation project best

practices as well as translation and localisation issues.
Burlington, Massachusetts, USA.
www.doctrain.com/east/

November

3–4 The Future of Web Design
A line-up of designers explores the future of web design, web application interface design and web typography.
New York.
futureofwebdesign.com/2008/newyork/

18 PTC World 2008
The conference will give you the opportunity to learn more about PTC's latest solutions for optimising the product development process and improving electronic content management. Attendees will also gain insight into techniques for streamlining the development cycle, stimulating new product innovation and improving competitive advantage.
Gaydon, Warwickshire (UK).
www.ptcworld.org/UKI

18–20 Localization Latin America
This international conference is dedicated to the business of localisation in and for Latin America and other Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking markets.
Buenos Aires, Argentina.
www.localizationlatinamerica.com/

December

3–5 Tactile Graphics 2008
This is the fourth international conference on tactile diagrams, maps and pictures for blind and partially sighted children and adults in education, work and daily life.
Birmingham, UK.
www.nctd.org.uk/conference/

4 Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) Conference
The conference will present a range of speakers from industry and government, and launch version 4 of SFIA, the framework that underpins so much work in the area of capability management in IT. The management and implementation streams will address strategic

and tactical issues concerning the management of improving IT capability.
London, UK.
www.sfia.org.uk

8–12 LISA Forum Europe
The topic of this forum will be 'the business impact of not operating with standards'. The forum will focus attention on the executive issues, skill sets and business challenges associated with implementing standards to meet worldwide customer requirements. LISA invites you to submit proposals.
Dublin, Ireland.
www.lisa.org/SpeakerProposal.812.0.html

January

28–29 The Retail Business Show
The conference will provide insight into how to assess the business cases and return on investment (ROI) models available in the emerging digital signage market.
Olympia, London.
www.retailer-events.co.uk/trbs2009/index.html

Back page

Alternative meanings of common words

Sophie Watson FISTC has brought our attention to some alternative meanings to frequently used words.

The *Washington Post* asked readers to supply alternate meanings for common words and published these winning submissions:

1. **Coffee** (n.): the person upon whom one coughs
2. **Flabbergasted** (adj.): appalled over how much weight you have gained
3. **Abdicate** (v.): to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach
4. **Esplanade** (v.): to attempt an explanation while drunk
5. **Willy-nilly** (adj.): impotent
6. **Negligent** (adj.): describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown
7. **Lymph** (v.): to walk with a lisp
8. **Gargoyle** (n.): olive-flavoured mouthwash

9. **Flatulence** (n.): emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller
10. **Balderdash** (n.): a rapidly receding hairline
11. **Testicle** (n.): a humorous question on an exam
12. **Rectitude** (n.), the formal, dignified bearing adopted by proctologists
13. **Pokemon** (n): a Rastafarian proctologist
14. **Oyster** (n.): a person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms
15. **Frisbeetarianism** (n.) (back by popular demand): The belief that, when you die, your soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there
16. **Circumvent** (n.): an opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men

The *Washington Post's* also asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition. Here are some of this year's winners:

Bozone (n.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of

breaking down in the near future

Cashtration (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period

Giraffiti (n): Vandalism spray-painted very, very high

Sarchasm (n): The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it

Inoculate (v): To take coffee intravenously when you are running late

Hipatitis (n): Terminal coolness

Osteopornosis (n): A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)

Karmageddon (n): It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer

Decafalon (n.): The gruelling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you

Glibido (v): All talk and no action

If you have any material suitable for the back page, please submit it to: newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.