Professional Seminar . . .

Following the success of its last open seminar, the ISTC will be running another one-day professional development event on **19 February 2002 in Milton Keynes.**

Expert speakers will present papers on a range of key topics of interest to the technical communicator, including those featured below. To book for this valuable event, please complete and post/fax back the booking form on page 2 as soon as possible. Prices include a three-course buffet lunch and refreshments throughout the day.

Globalisation: Maximise your impact — Nicola Humphreys

The globalisation of the economy and the fast growth in the communications market have changed the face of the language industry. Imprimatur will demonstrate how technology has helped its customers to produce their business critical documents, whilst reducing costs and speeding delivery to market.

Accessibility regulations: will you comply? — Mekon Limited

It will soon be mandatory for all published documents — including web pages — to be accessible to blind users. Will you be ready? Experts from Mekon will explain how to prepare for the challenges that lie ahead in this new communication area.

Illustrating the message more effectively — Mark Greenaway

The communication of information by pictures, although universally agreed to be superior to the written word in terms of efficiency and immediacy of communication, has its

drawbacks. The major one is cost of production. However, there is a trade-off, since illustrating resources commonly attract lower rates than, say, authoring resources. This paper will demonstrate how using cartoons, line illustrations and stylised graphics can improve the message, make it more interesting to absorb and, using current software, can provide value for money in terms of communications effectiveness per pound spent.

Legal issues for technical communicators — Paul Bakker

Technical communicators increasingly need to be aware of those legal matters that affect their work, their employers and their clients. Paul will review the main areas affecting communicators including strict product liability, tort and contract, and offer practical suggestions for steps to minimise the risks of successful legal challenges. Several case studies will be presented to illustrate both good and poor practice.

Graphics, visualisation and XML

XMLUK, the British XML and SGML users' group, is holding a one-day conference at the government's Rutherford Appleton Laboratories on 21 February 2002 on the subject of graphics and XML. In fact, the major focus of the event seems to be on the emerging SVG standard (Structured Vector Graphics). This can be seen, if you like, as an Open Source alternative to Macromedia's Shockwave format for animated and interactive content, and it has the interesting twist that SVG graphics are encoded in text form, as XML. This offers the possibility of graphics on the Web being generated "on the fly" in response to database queries.

For more information, prices, and a downloadable PDF brochure with a booking form, visit the XMLUK website: http://www.xmluk.org

Professional Seminar booking form

Please accept my booking for the ISTC Professional Development event, National Hockey Stadium, Milton Keynes on Tuesday 19 February 2002

Name _____

ISTC Member Y / N*

Company _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Tel _____

e-mail _____

Registration fee   ISTC Members £70 + VAT (=£82.25);

non-Members £95 + VAT (=£111.63)

Payment   Sterling cheque enclosed payable to ISTC Limited

or Please charge my Visa/Mastercard/Debit Card*

Card Number _____

Expiry date _____

Name on Card _____

* Please delete as applicable

When completed, please post to:
ISTC • First Floor • 17 Church Walk • ST NEOTS • PE19 1JH • England
Telephone: 01480 211550   Email: istc@istc.org.uk
Fax: 01480 211560

YOUR e-NEWSLETTER

The ISTC Council has decided to discontinue the printed version of the newsletter in a effort to keep down print and distribution costs. Also the electronic version will be distributed beyond the ISTC membership, to help promote the Institute to a wider audience.

The electronic newsletter will continue to be distributed by email - as a PDF file. If we don't already have it, please let the ISTC Office have an up-to-date email address. Alternatively, sign up via the website or return the recent membership questionnaire.

ISTC Professional Development Portfolio

Council has decided to launch a **Professional Development Portfolio** of one-day courses in both communication skills and tools training. Although these will be open to both members and non-members, the former will receive substantial discounts and may even be offered free places. Further information will appear in the February newsletter and be e-mailed out. The ISTC office is particularly interested in hearing from **members** who feel they could present training courses of interest to others.

WINTER COMMUNICATOR - FEATURES !

- Minimising barriers to reading for people with dyslexia
- A review of this year's competition and the prizewinners
- Gerry Gentle, Horace Hockley Award winner, reflects on the ISTC's history
- A technical communicator abroad
- Education - is it worth the effort?
- Printing methods
- Building your own DMS - the first of three parts to help you build a document management system
- The new MA in Technical Communication
- Exploiting Word's calculation features

Sevensteps 3.2 announced

Sevensteps has announced the beta of version 3.2 of its help authoring system. This new version allows the production of HTML Help, and the beta can be downloaded from the web at www.sevensteps.com. Also available for download are various demos and utilities — including a beautifully-executed free project planning and costing spreadsheet that runs under Microsoft Excel.

One leading international investment bank in London is using Sevensteps as the sole help authoring tool for online help in its Middle and Back Office IT functions. The bank's sole author likes it because of its:

- clean, simple, browser-independent HTML output
- topic type concept
- fast authoring environment
- responsive and capable support team.

Another key benefit of Sevensteps is that it is so easy to use. Other areas in the bank are considering adopting Sevensteps for their documentation, and early indications are that staff in those departments will be able to produce usable documents with minimal training, despite having no formal training in technical documentation. Sevenstep's structured topic types help promote good writing habits, while the authoring environment itself is well designed and easy to learn. Sevensteps has proven to be a substantially faster authoring environment than the other HATs used in the past.

Seven◀steps

join the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators . . .

If this newsletter has appealed to you, then you may like to 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 01480 211550 or e-mail to membership@istc.org.uk

. . . or just sign up for further editions of this e-newsletter

We'll be happy to keep sending you the free Adobe Acrobat version of our newsletter each month. Please send an e-mail to newsletter@istc.org.uk or sign up on the homepage of our website at www.istc.org.uk.

ISTC - the natural home for all technical communicators