



October 2002

the newsletter

New London Area Group

Following on from previous suggestions that members may wish to involve themselves more actively within the ISTC by forming (or perhaps in some cases by re-forming) Area Groups, former council member Alan Fisk has set the ball rolling for a new London Area Group. Already at least a dozen members have expressed an interest and the inaugural meeting of the London Area Group, which is open to anyone living or working in Greater London, will be held at the following address on Wednesday 6th. November at 7 p.m.:

DHL, Great West Road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9AU.

Stations: Kew Bridge, Gunnersbury Tube: Gunnersbury Buses: 65 (for map, email Alan Fisk at afisk@Counterp.Com.)

The meeting will end by 9 p.m. If you want to attend, please e-mail Jane Gibson at jjgibson@lhr-sys.dhl.com

Perhaps members in other regions – the North West for one always used to be a major centre for the production of Technical Documentation – would be interested in following Alan's example? Why not contact the ISTC to express an interest (without necessarily forming a commitment, we hasten to add).

Novartis Awards!

On 17 September, Alan Fisk attended the 2002 Novartis "Visions of Science" awards at the Royal Society in London, as the ISTC representative.

These awards are for images in various categories, such as "Science in Action" and "Science as Art". You can see the winning images on <http://www.visions-of-science.co.uk>.

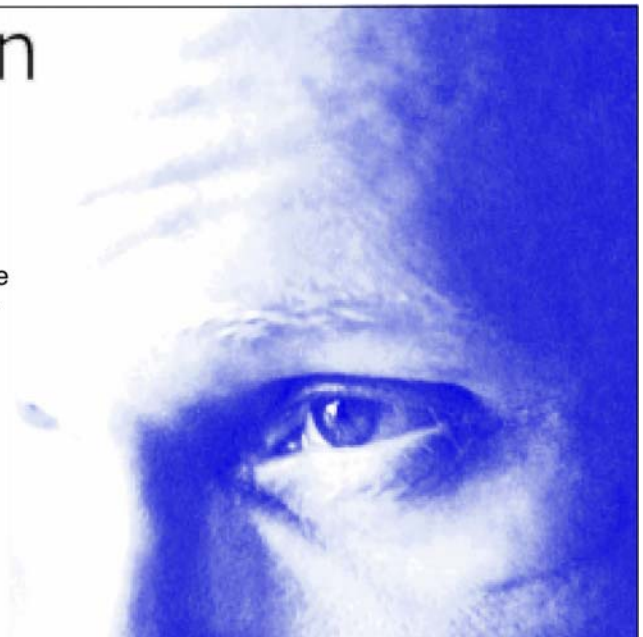
The awards were presented by Dr. Adam Hart-Davis, well known for his fast-talking popular science TV programmes.

The striking and memorable images remind us that there are more ways to communicate scientific and technical information than by an austere printed manual. Perhaps some of our visually-gifted members will consider entering for the 2003 awards; they're open to anyone.

Focus on training

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

Tel 01483 453500



News from communicators' organisations

ISTC Conference 2002

Our recent conference was a success despite being arranged at much shorter notice than in previous years. Around 90 people attended and the conference will bring some much needed income. Congratulations and thanks to the organisers Martin Block, Carol Hewitt, Ann Little, and everyone else who helped.

A report and some articles based on the talks will appear in the next *Communicator*.

IABC Research Foundation grants

The International Association of Business Communicators Research Foundation is offering research grants from \$1,000 to \$30,000. See their site at:

<http://www.iabc.com/fdnweb/index.html>

International Institute for Information Design

This body organises conferences and seminars. See <http://www.iiid.net>

TCeurope's new site

TCeurope is the European umbrella organisation for technical communicators, to which the ISTC affiliates. Its objectives include:

- promoting the exchange of information and knowledge between specialists in technical communication in Europe
- standardising qualifications for technical communicators in Europe and to improve vocational, academic and further training in all European countries
- developing and sharing a European market for jobs and services in technical communication
- promoting and supporting societies for technical communication in those European countries where national societies are still lacking or where existing organisations need assistance.

See their new site at:

<http://tceurope.cognitas.de/index.php?lang=en&mdir=1>

Events

November

1st. **Single Sourcing Seminar**. Thame. See http://www.digitext.com/briefing/single_sourcing.php.

4–7. **The LISA Forum Europe**. Heidelberg. See www.lisa.org.

6. **Manual Design Seminar 2002**. Maelardalen University. Eskilstuna. Sweden. See <http://www.iiid.net/MDSeminar.pdf>

6. **TICAD 2002**. National Motorcycle Museum. This event is aimed specifically at Technical Publications Managers. See www.ticad.org

20–22. **tekomp annual conference**. Wiesbaden Rhein-Main-Hallen, Germany. See <http://www.tekom.de/englisch/frameset/gesellsc.htm>

December

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

Forthcoming Courses

A number of courses and seminars are forthcoming, that may be of benefit to those in the technical communication profession.

We have listed those courses below for your reference – if you do attend, perhaps you may wish to share your views and experiences of the course(s) with us!

October

- 24-25. **Adobe FrameMaker 7.0 Advanced. Unstructured documentation.** Imprimatur.
- 24. **Acrobat 5.0. Basic – Creating and Delivering PDFs.** Mekon.
- 25. **Acrobat 5.0. Intermediate – Refining and Distributing PDFs.** Mekon.
- 28–29. **Illustrator 1.0. Basic / Intermediate.** Mekon.
- 29–30. **HDK Foundation.** Digitext.
- 30. **Illustrator 1.0. Advanced.** Mekon.
- 31–1st Nov. **RoboHELP for WinHelp: Official eHelp Curriculum (Foundation/Intermediate) Part 1.** Digitext.

November

- 4–5. **Developing HTML Help with HDK.** Digitext.
- 4–5. **Framemaker 7.0. Working with Unstructured Documents and Books.** Mekon.
- 6–8. **Framemaker 7.0. Template Design Workshop.** Mekon.
- 8. **Web Accessibility Workshop.** Digitext.
- 11–12. **WebWorks 7.0. Mastering WebWorks.** Mekon/Digitext
- 11–14. **XML for Information Lifecycle Management and Delivery.** Also as individual courses: Days 1 and 2 (11–12) **Hands-on Introduction to XML for Information Management.** Day 3 (13) **Information Lifecycle Management and Delivery with XML Databases** Day 4 (14) **A Practical Overview of XML Database Technology.** Course provider is Technology Appraisals.
- 13. **WebWorks 7.0. Using WebWorks Publisher for Single Sourcing Online Help.** Digitext/Mekon.
- 13. **Designing and Writing Online Information.** Digitext.
- 14. **Acrobat 5.0. Basic – Creating and Delivering PDFs.** Mekon.
- 15. **Acrobat 5.0. Intermediate – Refining and Distributing PDFs.** Mekon.
- 15. **Further CSS.** Digitext.
- 18–20. **XML for Enterprise Applications and Interoperability.** Technology Appraisals.
- 20. **RoboHELP for HTML-based Help: Official eHelp Curriculum (Foundation/Intermediate) Part 2.** Digitext.
- 21. **Further DHTML.** Digitext.
- 22. **Adobe Illustrator 10.0 Basic.** Imprimatur.
- 25–26. **RoboHELP for HTML-based Help: Official eHelp Curriculum (Foundation/Intermediate) Part 1.** Digitext.
- 27. **Essential Web Technologies for Help Authors.** Digitext.
- 27–28. **Photoshop 7.0. Basic / Intermediate.** Mekon.
- 29. **Photoshop 7.0. Advanced.** Mekon.

December

- 2nd. **RoboHELP for WinHelp: (Foundation/Intermediate) Part 2.** Digitext.
- 2–3. **Framemaker 7.0. Working with Unstructured Documents and Books.** Mekon.
- 3–4. **DreamWeaver.** Digitext.
- 4–5. **Framemaker 7.0. Working with Structured Documents and Books.** Mekon.

- 5–6. **AuthorIT. Digitext**
- 11. **HDK Advanced Techniques. Digitext.**
- 10. **Adobe Acrobat 5.0. Basic. Imprimatur.**
- 11. **Adobe Acrobat 5.0 Intermediate. Imprimatur.**
- 13. **Web Graphics. Digitext.**
- 16–17. **JavaScript, CSS and DHTML Foundation. Digitext.**
- 18. **Help for Web-based Applications. Digitext.**
- 19. **RoboHELP for HTML-based Help: Official eHelp Curriculum (Foundation/Intermediate) Part 2. Digitext.**

Course Providers

Digitext: Digitext House, Upper High Street, Thame, Oxfordshire, OX9 3EX **Tel:** 01844 214690
Fax: 01844 213434 **Email:** training@digitext.com **URL:** <http://www.digitext.com/training/>

Imprimatur: 62 Chertsey Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4HL **Tel:** 01483 453500 **Fax:** 01483 560643
Email: training@imprimatur.co.uk **URL:** <http://www.imprimatur-software.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>

Technology Appraisals: 82 Hampton Road, Twickenham, TW2 5QS. **Tel:** 020 8893 3986 **Fax:** 020 8744 1149 **Email:** techapp@cix.co.uk **URL:** <http://www.techapps.co.uk/semdates02xml.htm>

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

Handy links

Word tools

Levit & James offer some specialist Word tools. See <http://www.levitjames.com/>

FTP software

BlueZone FTP <http://www.seagullsw.com/>

Terrapin FTP <http://www.tpin.com/>

WS FTP Pro <http://www.ipswitch.com/>

Bugbear worm

Many members were affected by this worm and the following were mentioned in dispatches.

Early warning e-mail service at <http://www.pandasoftware.com/com/uk/>. Warns of new viruses, Trojans, and worms that are on the loose. There is also an online virus checker and tools to download to delete viruses.

AVG free anti-virus package: www.grisoft.com

“There’s a book within all of us”

ISTC member Alan Fisk will be giving a weekend residential course on “Story Theory” at Belstead House in Suffolk, from Friday 14th. February to Sunday 16th. February 2003.

Many writers don’t know that there is a large body of theory on how stories work. This weekend will show how these models can be applied to your own writing – and it isn’t as complicated and frightening as it looks! The course will cover models all the way from Aristotle to High Concept.

The course will start after dinner on the Friday and finish in mid-afternoon on the Sunday. Belstead House is on the outskirts of Ipswich, which is easily accessible by car, rail, or coach. The cost is £98 including accommodation and all meals.

For details, please contact Belstead House directly: Courses Secretary, Belstead House, Belstead, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP8 3NA

Telephone: 01473 686321 Fax: 01473 686664 E-mail: belsteadhouse@talk21.com

3di – a TMS for the 21st Century?

Many of you will know Paul Ballard from ISTC Conferences down the years, first as a representative of TMS and then Parity. Paul and some colleagues have just formed a new company, 3di, which hopes to become the TMS of tomorrow. We asked him to give us the gen.

“My colleagues and I spent several happy years working for TMS, so establishing 3di (basically a mini-TMS) in Ripley has felt like coming home after an enforced absence. I make no apologies for the TMS imitation. It was a great company to work for that knew exactly what it was selling, to whom, and why.

“Even at this tough time, there are customers out there who have serious enough information problems to want to spend money on solving them. Generally, they would rather spend that money with a specialist company. You just have to let them know you are there and demonstrate your ability to deliver! So that is what my colleagues and I are focussing on doing.

“So far, so good. We have been trading for seven weeks and we have projects and proposals underway in each of our three main business areas: Information Mapping® consultancy, technical authoring, and translation. 3di is starting small and we will grow as our sales allow. Another familiar name to many of you will be Lisa Willis (formerly Lisa Clarke). Lisa had been a successful international sales person and project manager for TMS and Parity for four years and joined me at 3di after Parity closed what was left of the TMS team in July. My hope is that other former colleagues will come onboard during the next year.”



Paul with some of his 3di and Pacific Blue colleagues: Alida, Ian, Sherryl, and Lisa.

Information Mapping

“Our partnership with Information Mapping (IMAP) has been a big boost. As a methodology for non-professional writers, it is still the best in the market and the US operation has made some great innovations with the course portfolio and applications in the last year. However, it has been neglected in the UK from a sales and marketing perspective and it was an opportunity we couldn’t turn down. This renewed commitment to IMAP has a great deal to do with the enthusiasm of Sherryl Abrahart and Andrew Jackson, who also worked at TMS and who left Parity Training at the same time I left Parity Solutions.

“They have created a separate company, Pacific Blue Solutions, and they share our offices in Ripley. We are working together to develop the UK IMAP market, with Pacific Blue providing the seminars and 3di providing the consultancy and IMAP trained authors.

“If you haven’t visited our website (www.3di-info.com) yet, then please do. We will be updating it regularly and there is still time to win a prize if you complete and submit an entry to our quiz. None of the entries so far have been completely correct and you will notice that some of the questions allow for some creative answers! HINT: most of the answers can be found on our site or linked sites.”

3di Information Solutions Ltd. High Street, Ripley, Woking, Surrey, GU23 6AF Tel: 01483 211533
Fax: 01483 479635 Email: info@3di-info.com Web: www.3di-info.com

3di are becoming Affiliates to the ISTC.

Style Guides on the Net

Finally this month, if you're struggling with the finer points of English, try these...

Bartleby. <http://www.bartleby.com/usage/> Many guides here, including Fowler and Strunk. (Note that some are for American English users).

Economist. <http://www.economist.com/research/StyleGuide/index.cfm>

European Commission. <http://europa.eu.int/comm/translation/en/stygd/index.htm>

Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide>

Times. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/section/0,,2941,00.html>

IT-oriented

These are more useful for guidance with software manuals:

GNOME. <http://developer.gnome.org/documents/style-guide/>

Taligent.

http://pccroot.cern.ch/TaligentDocs/TaligentOnline/DocumentRoot/1.0/Docs/books/S/G/SG_1.html

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 +44 (0) 1733 390141 or e-mail 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 PDF 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

Publications. The ISTC's journal, *Communicator*, is published quarterly and this newsletter is distributed by email to both ISTC members and interested non-members. Newsletters are also available on our web site.

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