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Communicator

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators
Winter 2013

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President's view

Overall, 2013 has been a steady year of continuing improvement and investment for the ISTC. The quality of our presentation and the consistency of how we deliver our benefits is something we can now be proud of across the board. Our framework for supporting your Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has made significant progress.

New members joined Council at the AGM (thanks and welcome to Edward, Amanda and Colum) and the wider volunteer team is also growing. Many thanks to Theresa for her many years on Council in the International role, and to Rachel who will be stepping down from the Marketing lead at the end of 2013. I will be stepping down from the President role at next year's AGM, although I hope to continue on Council in some useful capacity.

Professional Development and Recognition

The ISTC course accreditation scheme has continued to grow, but formalising the ISTC's CPD policy has been the major undertaking in 2013. We are hoping to encourage as many members as possible to begin recording the CPD activity they already undertake as a voluntary activity, and intend to make the maintenance of a valid CPD record compulsory for those who want to transfer to Fellow or to maintain that grade of membership. We strongly recommend that everyone looks at the CPD section on the website, which contains some examples and guidance on what constitutes valid CPD activity and how it can be recorded.

Communicator Journal

We believe that the quality and variety of articles in *Communicator* continues

to be high, and there are regular contributors who write excellent articles. Katherine is trying to keep the articles interesting for all members and to cover all areas of the ISTC, so is always looking for contributions about new subjects, new areas or case studies, in particular on the topic of scientific communication. Overall, it has been a good year for *Communicator*, and many thanks for everyone's support and contributions.

Technical Communication UK Conference

The TCUK team delivered another excellent conference, and numbers of attendees were up on 2012. The keynote speakers provided insight into technical communication's influence within organisations, the role of technical communication in large organisations and the future of technical communication. One of the goals in recent years has been to make the event feel more accessible to ISTC members around the country by selecting venues in different regions. After Oxford, Newcastle and Bristol in the last three years, any guesses for 2014...?

Community

During 2013 most of the activities for the Community area have been business as usual. There are some positive points and changes to report, while there are some ambitious plans yet to be implemented.

InfoPlus+ in its current format remains a useful vehicle for consolidating ISTC and area group information, together with some event and industry news. It continues to fulfil this role and generate significant advertising income. There remains scope for the development of the news hub of the ISTC website and plenty more work to be planned this year to move it forward.

There's been improved feedback and reporting from area group meetings throughout the year to date. This has helped give members a flavour of what goes on at meetings. This is to be expanded further, especially as new groups are established. Special interest group meetings linked to or integrated with corporate events remain on the agenda.

Resources

Thanks to Amanda Atkin for taking on the Resources lead position; she has many good ideas for improving the scope of our offerings; she also

welcomes suggestions from members so that we can continue to improve.

Membership

This year we have continued to receive applications from a wider range of roles in technical communication, and our junior membership continues to grow. The standard of those accepted as members this year has been high and augurs well for our quality of ISTC membership.

The Mentoring scheme has continued to develop with experience; and we recognise that formality and frequency will vary according to the specific requirements of individual junior members. Our objective is to provide the right type of service at the right time. As the ISTC's CPD and Recognition activities become more established, we will link in the mentoring scheme so that we can better measure the progression towards membership.

Marketing

During the year we have continued to roll out our plan of gradually refreshing our image across all our communications. Gordon McLean has done a fantastic job of continuing to develop the website. A lot of his work this year has been at the back end of the site, in particular implementing the "shop" to enable online membership subscription renewal and sorting out the way we hold data about members. Although these aren't glamorous pieces of work, in the longer term they will make it possible to offer more benefits to members.

Every year we select specific groups to target with marketing. This year, we've been working on employers, agencies and potential individual members, through specific improved website content, the increased profile and quality of the CPD offer, and direct phone calling to large employers.

International

The ISTC continues to be a prominent and active member of the international technical communication community. ISTC members attend and present at international and European conferences, collaborate in projects with our partners in TCEurope, and frequently demonstrate technical communication excellence beyond UK borders. **C**

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