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# Communicator

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators  
Autumn 2018

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*Communicator is 50!*

Manage terminology with  
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## President's view

I am extremely excited that the Autumn issue is finally here. *Communicator* is 50 years old this year, and this issue includes a special supplement to commemorate this milestone. Articles include experienced technical communicators looking back over the last 50 years to see what has changed. I am honoured to have been asked to contribute to a collaborative article and talk about what has changed during my own years as a technical communicator.

Writing this article made me think back to my childhood. Some part of me must have always known that my future career would be in technical writing. I was always a big fan of following instructions, even when it came to furnishing my doll house. The furniture was put into the same rooms as the picture on the box showed. When my sister tried to get me to do something different I was appalled. I think my response was 'That's not what the picture shows'. I remember asking for a Petite 990 typewriter for Christmas one year, and I was so excited to find it under the tree Christmas morning. The first thing I ever typed on it was a recipe for rock cakes. At the time, my older sister was learning to cook in school, and I remember propping up her cooking notepad so I could see her hand-written recipe as I typed it out. That was the first of many recipes I typed using that typewriter. I stapled them all together and I still use them from time to time when I'm baking.

My first experience of computers was in primary school. It was obvious that the teachers were nervous about

us using the computers, as we only ever used them to play a computer game called *Granny's Garden*. By play, I mean we responded to questions on the screen by pressing the 'Y', 'N', or 'spacebar' keys on the keyboard. We weren't allowed to touch anything else on the computer for fear we would break them.

Even in secondary school, my experience of computers was limited to a 40-minute class once a week to learn how to type. It wasn't until University that I got my first real experience of computers and the world wide web. Everything was saved on floppy disks, which could be temperamental. I ended up saving the same material on more than one disk just to make sure I didn't lose anything. How things have changed now where everything can be stored in the cloud and you can now access this content from any device any time anywhere

### 70th anniversary of the ISTC

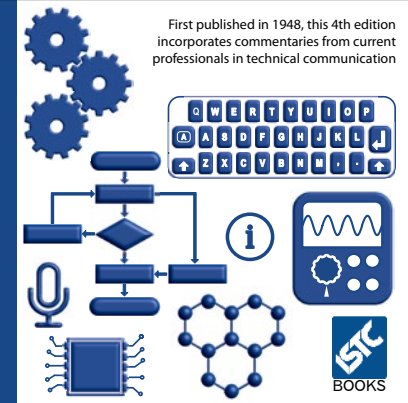
This year also marks the 70th anniversary of the ISTC. We are the largest UK body for people engaged with and working in technical communication. The ISTC was formed in 1972 from the merger of three bodies: The Presentation of Technical Information Group (established in 1948), the Technical Publications Association (established in 1953), and the Institute of Technical Publicity and Publications (established in 1963).

In 1948 Reginald Kapp, the founder of the Presentation of Technical Information Group, published a book called *The Presentation of Technical Information*. The book was based on a series of public lectures aimed to help engineering students learn how to effectively present, write, and communicate technical information. It proved popular among students, indicating there was a demand for help and guidance in this area.

To mark our 70th anniversary, we have decided to republish this book. This edition reprints Reginald Kapp's original material, and includes commentaries by experienced technical communicators that compare today's practices with those of 70 years ago. Alison Peck has been responsible for this project and she has done a truly amazing job of working with all contributors in putting this book together. We are extremely grateful to

## THE PRESENTATION OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION

By REGINALD KAPP  
FOUNDER OF THE PTI GROUP, A PRECURSOR OF THE ISTC  
(INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL COMMUNICATORS)



Provisional book cover

her, and to all those who contributed to the book. It will be officially launched at TCUK this year, so make sure you order your copy there. We hope you enjoy reading this book as much as we have enjoyed putting it together.

### Technical Communication news

TCUK 2018 is on the 25th-27th September 2018 at the De Vere Hotel in the Staverton Estate in Daventry, Northamptonshire. TCUK is always a great conference and well worth adding to your conference calendar. I have been watching the TCUK website for updates to the conference programme like a hawk for the past few months. All of the talks look interesting and I'm already in a conundrum over which ones to attend. For more information on the conference itself and the programme, see the TCUK website. **C**

### References

- Granny's Garden  
[www.bbcmicrogames.com/bestrest.html](http://www.bbcmicrogames.com/bestrest.html)
- Kapp RO (1948) *The Presentation of Technical Information*. London. Constable.
- TCUK website  
<http://technicalcommunicationuk.com>

Carol Leahy MISTC

E: [president@istc.org.uk](mailto:president@istc.org.uk)