

Tweeting at TCUK 2014

Read about the conference and how it was marketed



Communicator

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators
Winter 2014



Improving your
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President's view

I thought long and hard before deciding to stand for President of the ISTC. It was an important decision – for me and for the ISTC – and wasn't to be taken lightly.

The first stage was defining in my own mind what being the president of the ISTC means. I concluded that my main purpose would be to facilitate, steer and coordinate the efforts of my fellow Council members, providing feedback and direction. I would also be a spokesperson, a representative of the ISTC as a whole, representing you. That is quite a responsibility.

Building on what's been done already

When I first joined the ISTC, Gavin Ireland was president. He was followed by Simon Butler and then most recently by Paul Ballard. A lot has happened in the intervening years. Some projects have had long-lasting effects, such as the introduction of a Junior membership grade. Others were more transitory, either by design or because circumstances changed around them and we have moved on.

My job would be so much more difficult without the hard work of the previous presidents. As I'm immediately following on from him, a special 'thank you' goes to Paul for everything he has done during his time in office. Paul – don't stop... we still need your input!

Edited highlights of 2014 include:

- A very successful TCUK2014
- A re-launch of the UK Technical Communication Awards
- The first full year of our CPD Framework
- Some thriving local and special interest groups, including a new one for the Oil & Gas sector (thank you, James Bromley, for getting this off the ground).
- The ISTC was approached to discuss technical communication (specifically

Suggestions for promoting the ISTC

All members, all grades:

- Think how you would describe the ISTC and what you get from being a member so you're not having to think on your feet if the opportunity to mention us crops up
- Add the ISTC as an organisation on LinkedIn
- Create an email signature that mentions the ISTC
- Mention the ISTC on your website

Members and Fellows:

- Add the ISTC logo (and membership statement) – see the guidance notes – to your business cards, website and email signature
- Consider using the letters MISTC or FISTC after your name on your LinkedIn profile (and elsewhere)

instructions) on Radio 3's *The Verb* in October

- New Council members: Ellis Pratt takes up the reins of marketing from Rachel Potts. (Thank you: Rachel, for all your work; Ellis for volunteering.)

My vision for the future

My goal is to make the ISTC an organisation that is more 'recognised' than it is now: recognised by employers, government and, of course, by technical communicators. This isn't going to happen overnight, and some strides have been made already (think of TCUK, for a start). It also isn't going to happen on its own.

The ISTC Council – and particularly Ellis, in his marketing role – can suggest ways we can promote the ISTC, and provide some resources to help that happen...but the only people who can make sure the ISTC is promoted at every opportunity are its members. *We* are the ISTC, not the ISTC Council, the administration support staff in the office or anyone else *they* may be.

What can you do?

Be prepared to explain what the ISTC does, and what you as an individual get from being a member. You may bump into another technical communicator who has never heard of us, and that's your chance to promote us.

We can also make use of social media to make our presence known; there are some suggestions in the box at the top of the page. There is some tension here... we need to increase our visibility without leaving the ISTC open to claims of 'endorsement' or 'guarantee'. To that end, the ISTC Council has put some guidelines on the website (for Members and Fellows, specifically about the use of the logo and the use of the MISTC or FISTC). The guidelines are based on the brand guidelines that have been in place for a number of years, but focus on

members rather than the ISTC's corporate communications.

We have created an organisation page on LinkedIn. If you have a LinkedIn profile and are a member, consider adding the ISTC as an organisation. Please don't add us as a certification, even if you are a Fellow or a Member. The ISTC doesn't certify its members in the way that GAS Safe certifies gas installers. (If you added us as an organisation some time ago, revisit that part of your profile. The way organisations work has changed – you can add some detail whereas before you could only add a link to the ISTC website.)

How we use your good ideas

If you have an idea of something we can do to further to promote the ISTC, let the ISTC Council know. Our individual contact details are in *Communicator*.

The ISTC Council discusses ideas we receive either at a formal Council meeting, or informally if we feel it's something we can act on fairly quickly with minimal cost and effort. We prioritise projects based on the resources we have available and the impact they would have on the members, coupled with an awareness of the things we have to do just to function.

It's been said before, but we are a volunteer-led organisation, relying heavily on volunteer effort – and that takes time. We already pay for some things to be done by external suppliers, but we simply don't have the income to pay for many more. Maybe if we had more members... or more volunteers? **C**

References

Guidelines for ISTC Members and Fellows: www.istc.org.uk/identifying-yourself-as-a-fellow-or-member (ISTC login required)

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