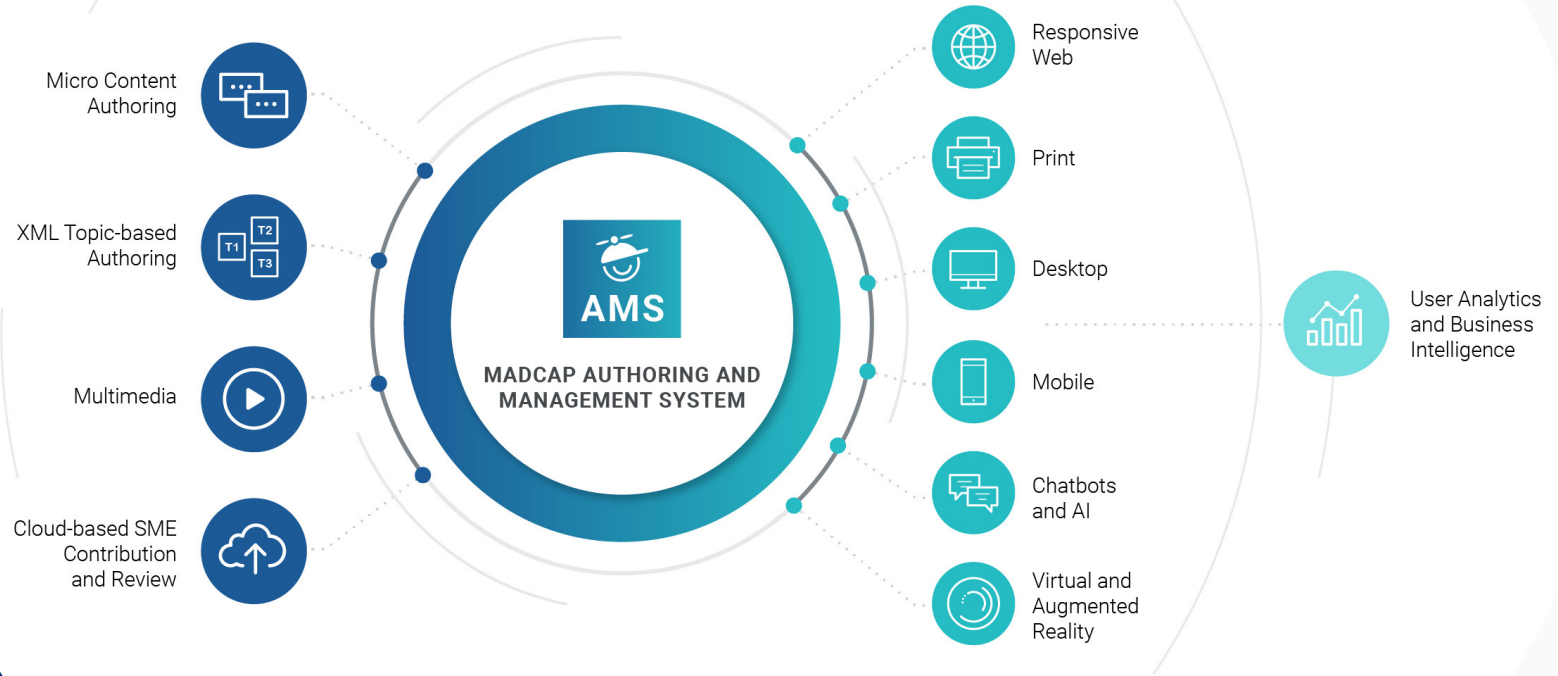


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# InfoPlus

Monthly newsletter from the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

March 2020

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The ISTC is the largest UK body representing scientific and technical communicators. If you are involved in technical writing, technical illustration, or communicating technical information in other ways, it's the professional association that can support your career. Interested in membership? Find out more [here](#).

This free newsletter is emailed to about 1500 people. As well as ISTC news, *InfoPlus* contains listings and articles of general interest to the profession. Subscribe [here](#).

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## Welcome!

Spring is in the air and lots of opportunities to get involved with the ISTC are emerging.

We are seeking volunteers for a number of projects, and entries are being invited for this year's UK Technical Communication Awards too. Read on to find out more.

## ISTC news

### Careers and student outreach visit to Cambridge University's comms and creative career event

*By Liz Gregory*

On Wednesday 5 March, Darren Mitcham and I took a road trip to Cambridge University. We wanted to talk to some students about careers in scientific and technical communication and joining the ISTC. The event was well-run and professionally publicised by the student services centre. Darren felt the attendance was down on previous years, possibly due to a new venue.

This new venue was in the heart of biology territory next to the David Attenborough building, and the first wave of students all seemed to be studying subjects such as cell biology and zoology. Some interesting conversations for me, due to my background in science. Unsurprisingly, many of these students were interested in science

communication. Many students hadn't heard of technical communication and seemed interested to learn about this new career path – I love that moment when you see a lightbulb come on in someone's head and I saw it a few times over the afternoon.

After the biologists came politics, humanities, and languages, including some students with less clearly defined career plans. More lightbulbs, as we earnestly explained that their subjects were teaching them communication skills that they could employ in communication roles. We saw students in their earlier years of undergraduate study, and some well into an academic career as post-doc researchers. This caused a dilemma, as we now offer a reduced joining fee on the day only at career events. Does a post-doc researcher count as a student? We thought not and suggested junior membership.

All the students we met were polite, well-

spoken, and intelligent. It was a privilege to talk to them about careers in scientific and technical communication, especially where we could see doors opening. Most of the students expressed concerns about the future of the job market. They seemed reassured that there is plenty of work available for communicators, and research shows that the core skills of our jobs aren't at high risk of automation in the next 20 years.

We came away feeling lighter, as many students took leaflets, chocolate, and copies of *Communicator*, and hopeful for the future of scientific and technical communication. Our key message – evidence of communication skills in your portfolio can get you hired – was strong and clear. Oh, and a few students joined us, so please join me in welcoming our new ISTC student members!

### Attention ISTC members

Membership subscriptions are now overdue. If you haven't renewed yet, please do so as soon as possible to continue receiving the benefits reserved for members.

Please contact the [ISTC office](#) to discuss your payment options.

## Volunteers needed

Our first outing went well, but we found some areas for improvement and you can help. We want to build a library of *Communicator* articles that are of particular interest or relevance to specific degree subjects. It would be great to print out collated groups of articles for science students, humanities students, language students, engineering students, and any other subject areas you can think of that match an article.

We also thought it would be interesting to create packs of day-in-the-life articles, but these are already collated on our website so leave that with us.

We need volunteers to look through the web archive or their own back issues of *Communicator*, mark up articles by subject area, and send the details by email or on the forum.

We also need volunteers from the scientific communication area of the ISTC to talk to students on our discussion forums about their roles.

If you're interested in visiting a careers fair or would like to nominate one you think would be worth visiting, let me know.

Don't forget, these activities count towards



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your CPD. If you'd like to help out, or a particular article has sprung to mind, please drop me a line at [careers@istc.org.uk](mailto:careers@istc.org.uk).

## TCUK Metro and CPD

Some of our members have asked whether attending TCUK Metro will count towards their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for the year.

In the past, attending the whole three-day TCUK conference counted as a years' worth

of CPD. TCUK Metro, as a one-day conference, will still count towards your CPD for the year, but it won't count for the whole year's worth. The actual amount of points that it's worth comes down to how much value you get out of attending the conference and reflecting on it afterwards. Therefore, you will need to record other activities, such as attending training courses or reading journal articles on technical communication, for your CPD this year.

For more information on our CPD policy see our [website](#).

## ISTC marketing activities update

*By Ellis Pratt*

Here's a brief update on what has been happening on the marketing front at the ISTC.

Work is still going on in developing the new ISTC website. Tony Dzumaga has been reporting on this, so I won't go into too much detail here, apart from saying there are a lot of technical aspects that Tony and Gordon are working through to make sure the new site will have all the functionality that it needs to have.

To make the marketing role more manageable in scope, there's a new role on the ISTC's Council that is focused on outreach and evangelising the role of technical communication. They'll be working on creating content that promotes the technical communication profession to the wider public.

The marketing role is now focused on the website and its content, membership drives, and our Business Affiliates. To that end, we've been sending out quarterly emails to people



## TCUK Metro Conference 29th September 2020

*Hallam Conference Centre, London*

We are pleased to announce that this year's Technical Communication UK Metro Conference will take place at the Hallam Conference Centre, Marylebone, London.

**Make sure you save the date.**

Located in the West End, adjacent to the BBC and the Langham hotel, the Hallam Conference centre is near Great Portland Street, Regent's Park, and Oxford Circus tube stations. The Hallam Conference Centre has been the recipient of numerous customer service standard awards and we are very excited to be holding the first ever TCUK Metro here.

Along with several presentations and workshops, we intend to include the ISTC AGM and the UKTC Awards presentations as part of this event.

Contact the ISTC office if your company is interested in being a sponsor at TCUK Metro, or email our team at [tcuk@istc.org.uk](mailto:tcuk@istc.org.uk).

See our website for information - [www.technicalcommunicationuk.com](http://www.technicalcommunicationuk.com)

on the database who are not yet members explaining [the benefits of being a member](#). We've also introduced some time-limited offers to encourage people to join. For example, **new members who join before 31 March 2020** can download an audio presentation explaining how to signpost your Help content.

We'd like to publish the ISTC's podcast on a more regular basis, and we're looking for someone to volunteer to manage that. If you're interested [send me a message](#).



My time as marketing lead on the ISTC Council will come to an end in September 2020, and the ISTC will be looking for someone to take over from me. If you're interested in joining the ISTC Council and helping out, contact the [ISTC office](#).

### Let's communicate

What would you like to see in our newsletter?

If you're reading this, it's likely that the desire to communicate is part of your genetic makeup so please let me know your thoughts! Feedback regarding content and ideas for new features are always welcome. Similarly, if you would like to submit an article I would love to hear from you.

Email me at any time: [newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk).

*Lisa*



## UK Technical Communication Awards

The UK Technical Communication Awards are open to all technical communicators in the UK and abroad, members and non-members.



Gain recognition  
Receive professional feedback  
Start planning your 2020 entry now!



[awards@istc.org.uk](mailto:awards@istc.org.uk)

[www.uktcawards.com](http://www.uktcawards.com)

### UK Technical Communication Awards 2020

Reminder: Closing date for entries: 31 July 2020

*By Linda Robins*

Just a reminder to submit your entries for the UK Technical Communication (UKTC) Awards 2020 via the dedicated [UKTC Awards website](#).

The annual UKTC Awards recognise best practices and outstanding contributions to technical communication. Each year we invite entries from individuals or teams (or their sponsors) so we can recognise and

reward the best examples.

The UKTC Awards are open to any individual or team, whether employed, self-employed, contracting, volunteering, permanent, temporary, full-time or part-time.

Anyone can enter. We encourage entries of all types, from traditional documentation to those demonstrating technical innovation – anything that displays, encourages or helps the production of high-quality technical communication.

There were six winners of awards in 2019, and one of these was declared overall winner. Details of these entries and their authors are given on the website [here](#).

## ISTC local area and special interest groups

The ISTC groups offer an opportunity for technical communicators to network and share knowledge and expertise. They are open to everyone (you don't need to be an ISTC member) and are free to attend. The groups meet at intervals during the year and hold talks, peer discussions, demonstrations and social evenings. Joining a group is an excellent way to meet like-minded people in your area and get to know fellow specialists.

### Latest news

#### East of Scotland Area Group

The East of Scotland group's January meeting was held a day later than planned due to a scheduling mishap (entirely Holli's fault). While that did unfortunately cause trouble for a few of our regulars, the silver lining is that it opened up the group to a few people who normally aren't able to make a Thursday meeting. The theme of the conversation was loosely based around how technical writing is perceived within companies and how it fits around family life as a career choice.

#### Next meeting

The next meet-up is scheduled for the end of April. Date and time will be announced in the coming weeks as Holli is going on

maternity leave around that time. The lovely writers from Craneware Edinburgh have offered to take over hosting these meet-ups until she's back. They have guest-hosted before and have an excellent social office space to hold the gatherings.

Information on the April meet-up and beyond will be available on our [LinkedIn group](#), or by emailing [eastscotland\\_areagroup@istc.org.uk](mailto:eastscotland_areagroup@istc.org.uk) and asking to be added to the mailing list. Information will also be available in this newsletter as soon as specific dates are set.

#### Midlands Area Group

##### Next meeting

The next Midlands meet-up will be on Saturday 28 March, 18:30, at the Littleover Lodge Bar, Derby, DE23 4AN. Non-members are welcome. As a relatively new group,

please don't be shy – we're all still getting to know each other.

The topic will be "how we blend art and science in our work".

To find out more about the group contact James Bartley via [midlands\\_areagroup@istc.org.uk](mailto:midlands_areagroup@istc.org.uk).

#### Thames Valley Area Group

At the February meeting of the Thames Valley group, we discussed what would appeal to potential new student members.

##### Next meeting

At the next meeting, on Tuesday 3 March, we look at outliers – the things we should and shouldn't do as part of our TechComm roles. Our usual venue will have a new look as it will be rebranded as a smoke house. If you enjoy smoked meats come along!

Venue: Bird in Hand, Bath Road, Knowl Hill, Reading, RG10 9UP from 19:30.

For more information, email Darren Mitcham: [thamesvalley\\_areagroup@istc.org.uk](mailto:thamesvalley_areagroup@istc.org.uk).

## Current ISTC groups

If you'd like to attend one of the groups, please get in touch with the leader or email [istc@istc.org.uk](mailto:istc@istc.org.uk). If you're interested in setting up either a new area group or a special interest group, contact our Area Groups Manager, Tom Dunic, at [areagroupsmanager@istc.org.uk](mailto:areagroupsmanager@istc.org.uk).

Area groups:

Name	Leader	Email Contact Details
Cambridge	Zsuzsanna Nagy	<a href="mailto:cambridge_areagroup@istc.org.uk">cambridge_areagroup@istc.org.uk</a>
Irish Technical Writers	Yvonne Cleary, Bridget Walsh	<a href="mailto:irishtechwriters@istc.org.uk">irishtechwriters@istc.org.uk</a>
ISTC Irish Group	Adrian Rush	<a href="mailto:irishgroup@istc.org.uk">irishgroup@istc.org.uk</a>
London	Bridget Rooney	<a href="mailto:london_areagroup@istc.org.uk">london_areagroup@istc.org.uk</a>
Midlands	James Bartley	<a href="mailto:midlands_areagroup@istc.org.uk">midlands_areagroup@istc.org.uk</a>
North East England	Joanna Suau	<a href="mailto:northeastengland_areagroup@istc.org.uk">northeastengland_areagroup@istc.org.uk</a>
North West England	Group leader required	<a href="mailto:istc@istc.org.uk">istc@istc.org.uk</a>
Southern	Group leader required	<a href="mailto:istc@istc.org.uk">istc@istc.org.uk</a>
South Wales	Group leader required	<a href="mailto:istc@istc.org.uk">istc@istc.org.uk</a>
Thames Valley	Darren Mitcham	<a href="mailto:thamesvalley_areagroup@istc.org.uk">thamesvalley_areagroup@istc.org.uk</a>
West of Scotland	Group leader required	<a href="mailto:istc@istc.org.uk">istc@istc.org.uk</a>
East of Scotland	Holli Hamilton	<a href="mailto:eastscotland_areagroup@istc.org.uk">eastscotland_areagroup@istc.org.uk</a>
Yorkshire	Dee Vincent-Day	<a href="mailto:yorkshire_areagroup@istc.org.uk">yorkshire_areagroup@istc.org.uk</a>

Special interest groups:

Name	Leader	Email Contact Details
MadSIG	Group leader required	<a href="mailto:istc@istc.org.uk">istc@istc.org.uk</a>

## Using Eventbrite to register attendance at area group meetings

Some area group meetings are posted on Eventbrite. Where this is the case, we ask anyone expecting to attend to register online using this event management service. You can see a list of ISTC related events by visiting: [www.eventbrite.com/org/495786380](http://www.eventbrite.com/org/495786380).

*A plea: if you know you're not going to be able to attend a meeting that you've registered for, please contact the organiser, even if it is at short notice.*

## ISTC online groups

### ISTC on LinkedIn

There are a number of LinkedIn groups for ISTC members, and we invite you to join the relevant ones.

- Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators [www.linkedin.com/groups/1858546](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/1858546)

### England

- Cambridge Technical Communicators [www.linkedin.com/groups/1805651](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/1805651)
- London – N/A
- ISTC Midlands Area Group [www.linkedin.com/groups/4835591](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/4835591)
- North East England – N/A
- ISTC NW England [www.linkedin.com/groups/2445779](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/2445779)
- Thames Valley Area Group [www.linkedin.com/groups/4805266](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/4805266)



- Yorkshire  
[www.linkedin.com/groups/4662452](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/4662452)

#### Scotland

- East of Scotland  
[www.linkedin.com/groups/13536907](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/13536907)

#### Ireland

- ISTC Irish Group – N/A
- Irish Technical Writers – An ISTC Area Group  
[www.linkedin.com/groups/3369559](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/3369559)

#### Special interest group

- MadCap UK and Europe Users Group  
[www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=5081593](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=5081593)

### InfoPlus copy deadline

Submissions to the newsletter are always welcome. If you have an article or other content you would like to see included in the April edition of *InfoPlus*, please email your copy to [newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk) by **21 March 2020**.

Every effort is made to ensure that *InfoPlus* is published and distributed as early as possible in the month to which it relates, generally on the first working day. However, occasionally it may not be distributed up to a week into that month. Please bear this in mind when submitting time-sensitive information.

### ISTC on social media

Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and Instagram, and watch us on YouTube to keep up to date with news, events and activities, and to chat with your TechComm colleagues.

If you're new to the ISTC and are wondering what TCUK is, it's our excellent (yes, we're biased, but it is) annual conference.

#### Our Facebook presence:

The ISTC page:  
[www.facebook.com/istccommunity](http://www.facebook.com/istccommunity)

The ISTC group: [www.facebook.com/groups/490570891153888](http://www.facebook.com/groups/490570891153888)

The TCUK page:  
[www.facebook.com/techcommuk/](http://www.facebook.com/techcommuk/)

#### Our Twitter presence:

ISTC: [@ISTC\\_org](https://twitter.com/ISTC_org)

TCUK: [@TCUK\\_conf](https://twitter.com/TCUK_conf)

#### Our Instagram presence:

[ISTC\\_org](https://www.instagram.com/ISTC_org)

#### Our YouTube channel:

[www.youtube.com/user/istctechcomm](http://www.youtube.com/user/istctechcomm)



## Business affiliate news

### Writing instructional video scripts: eight top tips

“When you are creating an instructional video, whether it is about a product or a concept, it is important that you first write a script,” explains Claire Walsh on the TWi blog. “A script will keep you on topic and will inform the visual elements of your video,” Claire adds before outlining TWi’s top tips for writing such scripts.



These tips include:

- Plan before you begin writing.
- Keep the video visuals in mind.
- Use a friendly and conversational tone.
- Avoid humour and clichés.
- Keep the sentences short.
- Use clear and simple language.
- Use a story structure.
- Read your script out loud.

You can read the entire blogpost [here](#).



### About the ISTC's Business Affiliates

Our Business Affiliate programme has been in place for over 16 years. It enables organisations to take advantage of a range of benefits, and to contribute to promoting technical communication as a profession. Find out more [here](#).

A full list of our current Business Affiliates is found [here](#).

## Industry and general news

### UK-built device boosts astronauts' internet speeds

We've all experienced how frustrating it can be when the internet connection is slow. Imagine encountering this while circling the Earth on the International Space Station (ISS). You want to contact your family and disseminate the results from your latest experiments, but the radio links are slow.

The situation is about to improve, however. The ISS communications system is about to be upgraded thanks to the UK's first industrial contribution to the space station:

a communications antenna, which was successfully delivered last month.

Once installed, the antenna, called the Columbus Ka-band Terminal (COLKa), promises speeds of up to 50mbps, allowing astronauts and researchers to benefit from a direct link with Europe at home broadband speeds. The new fridge-sized terminal will route video, voice and data to the ground through satellites that are actually higher in the sky than the ISS.

Libby Jackson, the human exploration programme manager at the UK Space Agency, said scientists would be delighted with the new connection.



"The amount of science data that's been able to come down has been quite limited," she told [BBC News](#).

"Scientists have been having to wait months for all their images, all of the science data to arrive on hard disks – never mind 'dial up speeds'. It's sort of like waiting for the old floppy disks to arrive in the post. This is going to really allow those scientists to get the data in real time."

You can read more about this development [here](#).

### Hyperlinks disclaimer

The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the ISTC of the linked websites, or the information, products or services contained on those sites. All external hyperlinks were accurate and working at the time of writing. However, the ISTC does not exercise editorial control over the information you may find at these locations so cannot be responsible for changes to content. The ISTC disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy, completeness and availability of any linked site.

## How do you usefully communicate the spread of a new virus such as Covid 2019?

The article below, first published on [The Conversation](#), describes a new tool that provides more context to the daily headlines and offers a fresh perspective on key turning points in the disease's history. It's an interesting development in the field of scientific communication which we might be able to learn from.

### Coronavirus outbreak: a new mapping tool that lets you scroll through timeline

*By Edward Parker, Research Fellow in Systems Biology, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine*

In the final weeks of 2019, a virus slipped furtively from animal to human somewhere in the Chinese city of Wuhan. This inauspicious moment marked the sounding of a starting pistol, unheard at first but now echoing deafeningly across the globe. The race to stop a pandemic had begun.

We have been trying to keep up with the novel coronavirus ever since. Each day, we are faced with worrying headlines reporting the latest twists and turns of this outbreak.



Coronavirus outbreak mapper

We have seen the virus spill over China's borders and spread to at least 25 countries worldwide, and watched with mounting anxiety as the number of cases creeps ever higher. We wait apprehensively to see where the virus shows up next.

[You can access the real-time map here.](#)

At the time of writing, there have been 75,204 confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus and the death toll stands at

2,009. Both of these numbers will be out of date by the time you read this.

In isolation, the daily headlines can be difficult to interpret, offering a static snapshot of a moving target. It is hard, for instance, to tell if the situation is getting better or worse, and to what extent control efforts are having any effect.

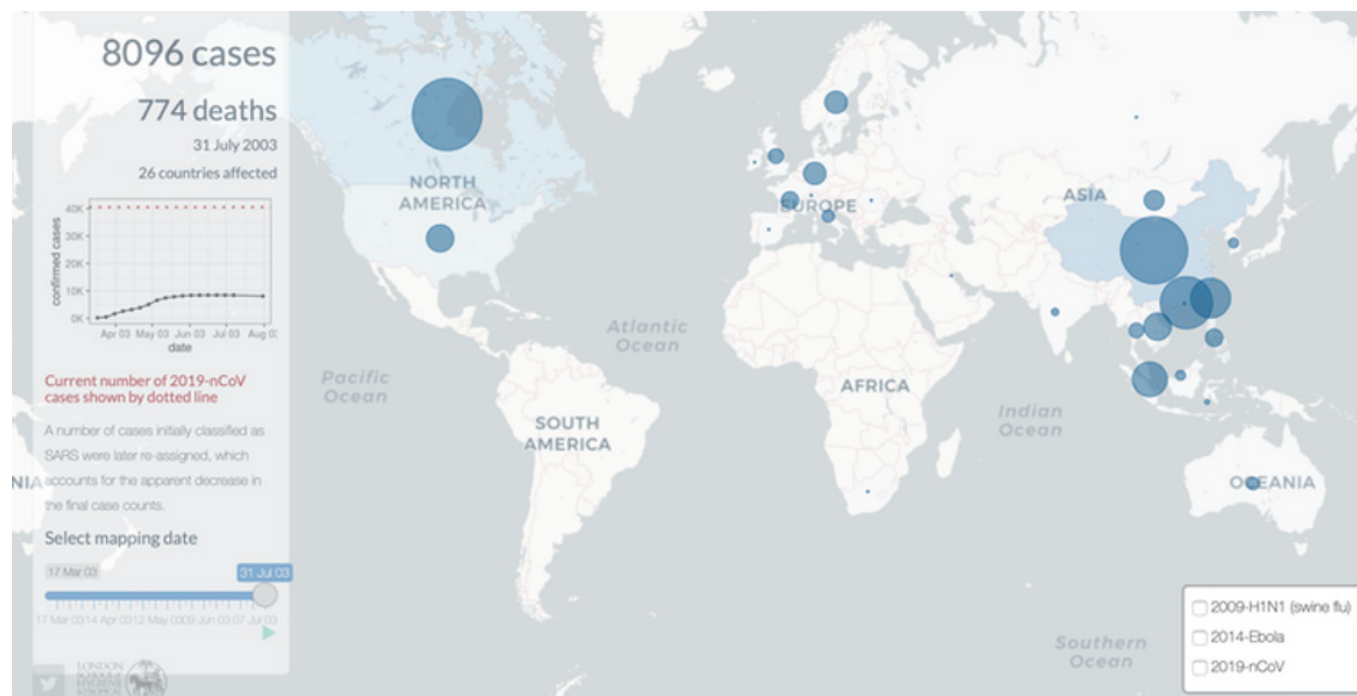
To provide a clearer picture of this evolving story, at the London School of Hygiene &

Tropical Medicine, we have developed a new outbreak mapping tool.

The site is updated daily based on [figures published](#) by the World Health Organization (WHO). While other live trackers developed by [Johns Hopkins University](#) and the [WHO](#) are updated more frequently, our tool enables users to wind back the clock and view the global situation on any given day of the coronavirus outbreak. It also enables the unfolding situation to be compared with other recent outbreaks, including the epidemic of severe acute respiratory syndrome (Sars) in 2003 (also caused by a coronavirus), the 2009 swine flu pandemic, and the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

### Providing context

Our hope is that this tool will provide more context to the daily headlines and a fresh perspective on key turning points in the disease's history. For instance, by tracing the course of the outbreak, it is clear that the last week of January was pivotal for the international spread of the virus. In the space of a few days, the number of affected countries increased from seven to 20, while the number of confirmed cases outside China increased almost tenfold (from 11 to 106).



The 2003 Sars outbreak

On the other hand, confirmed coronavirus cases have been reported in just four new countries since the start of February – a testament to the rapid, coordinated international response to this new threat. One can only hope that things stay this way, though mounting evidence that people [can carry the virus without showing symptoms](#) is worrying.

The situation in China is clearly rather different. Not only has the country seen more than 99% of the confirmed infections,

but the total number of cases doubled every three to four days throughout January. Yet there is room for optimism – while caution must be taken when attempting to anticipate the future trajectory of this virus, [recent predictions](#) from mathematical modellers at our university suggest that the outbreak could peak in mid to late February if current trends continue.

Comparisons with other recent outbreaks are also revealing. At one end of the spectrum, the 2014 Ebola epidemic can be



distinguished by its devastating virulence (killing nearly 40% of the [28,600 people infected](#)) but narrow geographic range (the virus was largely confined to three countries in West Africa). On the other hand, the 2009 swine flu pandemic was far less virulent (with an estimated mortality rate of less than 0.1%), but reached every corner of the globe. All in all, swine flu is thought to have infected more than 60 million people, causing somewhere [between 123,000 and 203,000 deaths](#).

The novel coronavirus outbreak currently sits somewhere between these two extremes. Its geographic distribution is most similar to that of Sars, with China at the epicentre and smaller clusters cropping up across Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America. While the mortality rate of the novel coronavirus (currently estimated at 2%) is well below that of Sars (10%), it already far outstrips the 8,096 confirmed cases of Sars, and the death toll of the novel coronavirus recently surpassed that of Sars.

The critical question now is whether the situation will turn into a full-blown pandemic. The novel coronavirus virus is clearly adept at passing from person to person, but outside of China, it has yet to ignite. We must do everything in our power to keep it that way.

## Tricks of the trade

### Email rules

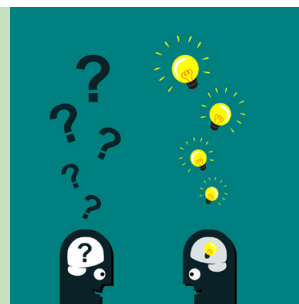
*By Jean Rollinson*

I guess it's something that most office-based workers do, but I find the rules option in Microsoft Outlook really useful. I set up folders for different areas of work and I can get emails sent to the right folder as they arrive. It's not perfect, but it means I don't feel overwhelmed when I open my emails in the morning.

*Note from Editor: if you'd like to try this out, here's a helpful [link](#).*

Do you have a TechComm trick or tip to share? Have you recently come across something that made you exclaim, "If only I'd known that sooner!"?

Please send an overview of your insight, and a short description of who you are, to [newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk) and I will publish it in a future edition. Let's put our heads together and help each other out.



## Blog news

*By Ginny Critcher*

Hello again! Here's the latest blog round up from the popular blogs on technical communication.

On the I'd Rather Be Writing blog, Tom Johnson looks at how to reconcile the needs for enterprise content strategy in a current software development model where the Agile methodology dominates:

<https://idratherbewriting.com/blog/agile-teams-and-enterprise-content-strategy/>.

Sarah Maddox has been blogging about GitHub. In her recent post, she explains how to download a Pull Request from GitHub to your computer:

<https://ffeathers.wordpress.com/2020/01/06/how-to-download-a-pr-from-github-to-your-computer/>.

On the Cherryleaf blog, we've posted a transcript of our podcast on trends in technical communication for 2020 and beyond:

<https://www.cherryleaf.com/2020/02/transcript-of-podcast-76-trends-in-technical-communication-for-2020-and-beyond/>.



Microsoft's Den Delimarsky has written a blog post on how you can build your own version of docs.microsoft.com:

<https://den.dev/blog/docs-in-cloud/>.

KellyAnn Fitzpatrick has written a blog post on what makes API documentation good:

<https://redmonk.com/kfitzpatrick/2020/01/31/docs-roundup-1-0/>.

Do you have a blog? Seen an interesting post? Let me know so I can include it in my monthly review. Email [ginny@cherryleaf.com](mailto:ginny@cherryleaf.com).

Ginny has a background as a skilled trainer and information designer, and is responsible for the development of Cherryleaf's training courses. In addition to her skills in information design, she has over twenty years' experience in teaching and training throughout the world. She is Cherryleaf's representative to the ISTC.



## Training courses

Do you know of a training course that will be of interest to readers? If so, please send details to [newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk). If you would like to promote your course or event, why not consider giving ISTC members a discount for courses and events listed in our newsletter. For more information, please email [istc@istc.org.uk](mailto:istc@istc.org.uk). Please note that listings are a service to members; a listing does not imply ISTC endorsement.



Courses run by ISTC Business Affiliates\* that are notified to us by the copy deadline will be listed. For others, we cannot guarantee listing if space is limited and details may be abridged.

\*Armada, Cherryleaf, ESTON Training, Firehead, and MadCap Software.

### Armada

Armada is offering a 10% discount for ISTC members on all the following courses (coupon code ISTC10).

#### March

##### 2-3 Introduction to Adobe FrameMaker

Provides a thorough grounding in standard FrameMaker (unstructured mode), covering the essential techniques for generating high standard printed documents. Includes master pages, graphics,

tables and FrameMaker's document revision features.

Armada, Newbury.

[www.armada.co.uk/course/framemaker-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/framemaker-training).

4-5

##### Introduction to Adobe InDesign

Provides a comprehensive introduction to the powerful capabilities of InDesign, including setting up new documents, shapes, frames and using InDesign's most popular features.

Armada, Bromsgrove

[www.armada.co.uk/course/indesign-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/indesign-training).

9-10

##### Authoring structured FrameMaker documents

Covers the fundamentals of using of FrameMaker in structured mode, teaching how to create and edit documents using structured FrameMaker templates.

Armada, Newbury.

[www.armada.co.uk/course/authoring-structured-framemaker-documents-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/authoring-structured-framemaker-documents-training).

**...Armada  
...March**

**12-13 Introduction to Adobe Photoshop**

Learn how to create and edit images using the de facto standard in the graphics industry. Techniques covered include colour correction, working with layers, compositing images and preparing images for use on the Web.

Armada, Reading.

[www.armada.co.uk/course/photoshop-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/photoshop-training).

**12-13 Introduction to Adobe Captivate**

This course teaches everything you need to create professional standard e-learning tutorials and high quality demos.

Armada, Sheffield.

[www.armada.co.uk/course/captivate-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/captivate-training).

**19-20 Introduction to Adobe InDesign**

Provides a comprehensive introduction to the powerful capabilities of InDesign, including setting up new documents, shapes, frames and using InDesign's most popular features.

Armada, Milton Keynes.

[www.armada.co.uk/course/indesign-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/indesign-training).

**23-27 Technical Authoring Training Programme**

ISTC-accredited programme comprising:

- Introduction to technical authoring (1 day)
- Intermediate technical authoring (2 days)
- Advanced technical authoring (2 days)

Training in core technical authoring skills for new and experienced technical authors.

Attend the complete programme, or just the module(s) relevant to your experience.

Armada, Bromsgrove.

[www.armada.co.uk/course/technical-author-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/technical-author-training).



**23-24 Introduction to Adobe Photoshop**

Learn how to create and edit images using the de facto standard in the graphics industry. Techniques covered include colour correction, working with layers, compositing images and preparing images for use on the Web.

Armada, Bromsgrove.

[www.armada.co.uk/course/photoshop-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/photoshop-training).

**April**

**2-3 Introduction to Adobe Photoshop**

Learn how to create and edit images using the de facto standard in the graphics industry. Techniques covered include colour correction, working with layers, compositing images and preparing images for use on the Web.

Armada, Milton Keynes.

[www.armada.co.uk/course/photoshop-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/photoshop-training).

...Armada  
...April

**14-15 Creating Element Definition Documents (EDDs)**

Teaches how to:

- Build an Element Definition Document
- Link elements using formatting rules to a FrameMaker template
- Convert legacy data to a Structured FrameMaker file using a conversion table

Armada, Newbury.

[www.armada.co.uk/course/creating-element-definition-documents-edds-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/creating-element-definition-documents-edds-training).

**15-16 Introduction to Adobe InDesign**

Provides a comprehensive introduction to the powerful capabilities of InDesign, including setting up new documents, shapes, frames and using InDesign's most popular features.

Armada, Bristol

[www.armada.co.uk/course/indesign-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/indesign-training).

**16-17 Introduction to Adobe InDesign**

Provides a comprehensive introduction to the powerful capabilities of InDesign, including setting up new documents, shapes, frames and using InDesign's most popular features.

Armada, Bromsgrove

[www.armada.co.uk/course/indesign-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/indesign-training).

**27-28 Introduction to Adobe Photoshop**

Learn how to create and edit images using the de facto standard in the graphics industry. Techniques covered include colour correction, working with layers, compositing images and preparing images for use on the Web.

Armada, Bristol.

[www.armada.co.uk/course/photoshop-training](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/photoshop-training).

**Training and event reviews**

Have you recently attended a training course or event that you think would be of interest to our community of readers? Why not submit a short review? Email [newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk).

**Feedback and contributions**

This newsletter is produced for the benefit of both ISTC members and technical communicators in the wider community. We are always pleased to hear from our readers. Send your feedback and any ideas for articles, new features or regular sections to [newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk).

## Cherryleaf

We offer online training courses in:

ACCREDITED  
TRAINING  
COURSE



### Technical Author/Technical Writing:

<https://www.cherryleaf.com/training/technical-author-basicinduction-training-course/>.

Cherryleaf is offering a 10% discount to ISTC members for this course.

<https://www.cherryleaf.com/training/technical-copywriting-training-course/>.

This online technical copywriting training course teaches you how to write clear and effective marketing copy, in a straightforward and efficient way. Let us share with you the best practices we've developed for writing copy for software (SaaS and desktop) and other technical products.

### Training and events – discounts for ISTC members

To see all the discounts currently available to our members, log on to the Discussion Forum on the ISTC website – [www.istc.org.uk/our-community/discussion-forums](http://www.istc.org.uk/our-community/discussion-forums) (you **must** be logged on to see the forums) – and go to the “Training and Events - Membership Discounts” thread in The Lobby.

## Advanced Technical Communication:

<https://cherryleaf.teachable.com/p/advanced-technical-communication>.

Cherryleaf's advanced technical communication skills course provides you with access to a collection of online modules in technical communication, under a low-cost monthly subscription plan. Each module is self-contained, so you can choose to take just a single module, if you wish.

It contains:

- DITA Fundamentals
- Single Sourcing and Content Reuse
- Introduction to Content Strategy
- Documenting REST APIs
- Managing Software Documentation Projects
- Writing and Designing Embedded Help
- Markdown
- Revising and Editing Content
- Trends in Technical Communication

## ESTON Training

ACCREDITED  
TRAINING  
COURSE



### Technical/Commercial Authorship (Former ISTC Syllabus

Parts 1 & 2):

<http://www.estontrg.com/technicalcommercial-authorship/>.

A £50 discount is offered to ISTC members for this course.

### Simplified English:

<http://www.estontrg.com/english-language-courses/>.

### Standard Generalised Mark-up Language (SGML):

<http://www.estontrg.com/standard-generalised-mark-language-sgml-course/>.

### Editing and Publishing Magazines:

<http://www.estontrg.com/editing-publishing-magazine-course/>.

### Report Writing:

<http://www.estontrg.com/report-writing-course/>.

### Business English:

<http://www.estontrg.com/business-english-course/>.



## Firehead

### Learn FrameMaker 2019:

<https://firehead.net/course/framemaker-2019-training-technical-authors/>.

### Learn Adaptive Content Modelling:

<http://firehead.net/training/learn-adaptive-content-modelling/>.

### Creating Mobile Apps without Coding:

<http://firehead.net/training/creating-mobile-apps-without-coding/>.

### Customer Journey Mapping:

<http://firehead.net/training/customer-journey-mapping/>.

## MadCap Software

For details of the latest MadCap Software training schedule (both on-site and online) visit: [www.madcapsoftware.com/services/training/](http://www.madcapsoftware.com/services/training/).

## Events listings

If you know of an event that will be of interest to readers, please email [newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk).

ISTC events are highlighted.

### March

2-3

#### The UX Conference

Design conference that's not about trends and buzzwords, but collaboration between UX, UI and Content Designers.

London, UK.

<https://theuxconf.com/>.

3

#### ISTC Thames Valley Area Group Meeting

This month it's outliers – the things we should and shouldn't do as part of our TC roles.

Everyone welcome!

Email [thamesvalley\\_areagroup@istc.org.uk](mailto:thamesvalley_areagroup@istc.org.uk).

Bird in Hand Hotel, Bath Road, Reading, RG10 9UP at 19:30.

### 17-18 AI and Big Data Expo Global

This global showcase brings together more than 4,000 visitors over the two days, and four dedicated AI/big data tracks: enterprise AI, data analytics for AI & IoT, big data solutions, and AI technology solutions.

London, UK.

<https://www.ai-expo.net/global/>.

### 18-19 NORDIC TechKomm Stockholm

Conference theme: Technical information knows no borders.

Helio Kungsholmen, Sweden.

<https://nordic-techkomm.com>.

28

#### ISTC Midlands Area Group Meeting

The discussion will be about how we blend art and science in our work. Non-members are welcome.

[Littleover Lodge, Derby](#) at 18:30.

## ...March

- 31 National Indexing Day**  
A half-day event and a range of online activities. You can join in on social media with #indexday. London, UK, and online.  
<https://www.indexers.org.uk/news/events-announcement-for-2020/>.

## April

- 1-2 COMtecnica Conference**  
A two-day focusing on everything that can support the world of SMEs and industry in the areas of communication, technical documentation and intelligent information. Rimini, Italy.  
<https://www.comtecnica.eu/en/>.

- 3-4 University of Strasbourg Symposium on Usability and Design**  
Academic event presenting the latest research and theories in usability and design, technical communication and localisation. The theme for 2020 is "Re-thinking

Usability and Design: Examining Connections to Technical Communication and Localization". Strasbourg, France.  
<https://usability-conference.weebly.com>.

- 20-22 API Conference**  
The conference for web APIs, API design & management. Three days with more than 25 sessions, keynotes and talks. The Hague, Netherlands.  
<https://apiconference.net/>.

## Upcoming webinars

If you know of a webinar that will be of interest to readers, please email [newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk).

## March

- 11 DITA Satisfaction: Preparing for Success**  
Join Scott Abel, The Content Wrangler, for a discussion with content strategy gurus Rob

Hanna (Precision Content) and Val Swisher (Content Rules) about the findings from the 2020 DITA Satisfaction Survey. Rob and Val will explore several of the trends uncovered in the report and their impact on satisfaction in technical documentation shops that leverage the Darwin Information Typing Architecture to create technical documentation content.  
<https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/9273/375648>.

- 19 Snippets, Conditions, and Variables in MadCap Flare – A Powerful Trio**  
Learn how snippets make full use of conditions to automatically show or hide content, depending on the topic in which they are used, and how the content itself changes with the use of variables. In this webinar, Ken De Wachter will show you how the team at Collibra uses MadCap Flare to make their documentation more efficient and flexible.  
<https://www.madcapsoftware.com/demos/signup.aspx?id=1158084741413405999>.

## Back page

### In an emergency

*From Martin Ley*

I wonder how many other like-minded information designers would let the petrol station burn to the ground while wrestling internally with the dilemmas posed by this sign?

It hurts me every time I look at it!

### Cats and dogs

*From William Waddilove*

In a bookshop I asked if they had a book about Pavlov's dogs and Schrödinger's cat.

They said it rang a bell but weren't sure if it was there or not.

### Seeking light-hearted content

Love Back Page? Help keep it healthy by sending in:

- ▶ Amusing signs.
- ▶ Unfortunate translations.
- ▶ Awkward instructions.
- ▶ Funny layouts.
- ▶ Anything else that made you chuckle and is vaguely TechComm-related.

Guest editors are always welcome too if you fancy creating a whole page. Email [newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk).

