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The ISTC is the United Kingdom's professional association for technical authors, technical illustrators, and information designers.

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This monthly Newsletter is emailed to about 1500 people. As well as ISTC news, *InfoPlus⁺* aims to cover anything of interest to the profession. To subscribe, contact the office.

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If you're reading a printed copy of this newsletter, go to www.istc.org.uk/our-publications/infoplus-newsletter/ and open it online to explore the links mentioned.

ISTC news

Ellis Pratt takes on ISTC's marketing

Ellis Pratt, Director of Cherryleaf, has taken over the Marketing role on the ISTC's Council. He's already mapped out a number of ideas and strategies for promoting ISTC's profile.

Work is under way – you may have already seen improvements in the ISTC website – and you can read about his plans in the forthcoming Winter edition of *Communicator*.



Discover the five benefits of being an ISTC member:

[What the ISTC offers.](#)



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ISTC local area groups

Thames Valley Group social

4 November

This group will be having an informal get together at The Bird in Hand Country Inn, Knowl Hill, Reading on Tuesday 4 November 2014. This is a free social event and is open to anyone who'd like to meet and chat with other tech writers, whether or not they are members of any tech writing organisation so if you have any colleagues who are not members of the ISTC but would like to attend, please let them know about the event.

The Bird in Hand has reasonable food, good local beer and is easy to get to from M4 and M40.

So we can anticipate numbers, please register your interest using the Eventbrite link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/istc-thames-valley-group-social-tickets-13727271639>.

The organiser for this event is Darren Mitcham who may be contacted by email: thamesvalley_areagroup@istc.org.uk.

ISTC Southern Area Meeting

11 November

The next ISTC Southern Area meeting will be a pub social at The Keep in Guildford on Tuesday 11 November from 7pm. Everyone interested in technical communication is welcome.

The event is free, and is open to ISTC members and non-members. But if you are planning to come, please register on Eventbrite here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/istc-southern-area-group-social-tickets-13827005947> so we can let the venue know how much space to reserve for us and how many people are likely to want to order food.

Parking is available in the Tunsgate Multi Storey right next door to the Keep, or the Sydenham Road Multi Storey about 250 yards away, but be aware that some roads in the area are one-way streets, so check your directions carefully!

For more information, contact: southernengland_areagroup@istc.org.uk.

ISTC North West Area Group meeting

6 November

What you're missing about mobile

Although technical communicators have long realised the potential, organisations have seen mobile content delivery as a low priority, or felt that the practical challenges were insurmountable. Now, the organisational will is catching up, and the challenge has changed from 'doing mobile'

The logo for 3di, consisting of the letters '3di' in a white, sans-serif font, enclosed within a white dashed rectangular border.

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to 'doing mobile well'. However, we risk our efforts going to waste. Research on mobile behaviour challenges much of what we thought we knew. Received wisdom may be leading us down an unproductive cul-de-sac. In this presentation, Rachel Johnston explores the challenges and opportunities of small screens, big content and the surprising realities of our new, multi-screen world.

Speaker: Rachel Johnson

Bio: Rachel Johnston is a consultant for Mekon, helping businesses to negotiate the changing landscape of information development and modernise their content while keeping their sanity. As a former technical writer with over ten years' experience she's still close to the profession and understands the challenges facing

**Simplified Technical English
term checker**

www.simplified-english.co.uk



documentation teams. She regularly works with authors on the ground to understand the change management, workflow and training needs involved in the move to structured authoring. She has written content for the NHS, Expert-24 (medical algorithms) and Infor, one of the world's largest ERP providers, but also Openbravo (ERP), Donovan Data Systems, and SurfControl.

Where

MadLab

36-40 Edge St, Manchester, M4 1HN.

When

Thursday, 6 November, from 19:00 to 22:00.

Want to attend?

If you're interested in attending, please register at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/what-youre-missing-about-mobile-tickets-13726581575>.

ISTC groups on LinkedIn

The ISTC has a number of LinkedIn groups for its members. Have you joined the relevant groups?



ISTC group: www.linkedin.com/groups/Institute-Scientific-Technical-Communicators-1858546/about.

This group has a number of sub groups for:

- ISTC NW Area Group
www.linkedin.com/groups/ISTC-NW-Area-Group-2445779/about
- Southern Area Group
www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4795279
- Thames Valley Area Group
www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4805266
- ISTC Midlands Area Group
www.linkedin.com/groups/ISTC-West-Midlands-Area-Group-4835591/about
- South Wales Group
www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=5161265
- West of Scotland Area Group
www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=5081412
- ISTC Oil and Gas
www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=5023918

There are other area groups which aren't sub groups of the ISTC one:

- Cambridge Technical Communicators
www.linkedin.com/groups/Cambridge-Technical-Communicators-1805651/about
- Irish Technical Writers – An ISTC Area Group
www.linkedin.com/groups/Irish-Technical-Writers-ISTC-Area-3369559/about
- MadCap UK and Europe Users Group
www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=5081593

Using Eventbrite to register attendance at area group meetings

Some area group meetings are posted on Eventbrite and where this is the case, we asked 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.

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

Current ISTC local area groups

Contact your nearest area or special interest group on the email shown below. If you're interested in setting up either an area group or a special interest group, please contact our area groups manager Tom Dumic at: areagroupsmanager@istc.org.uk.

Area groups:

Name	Leader	Email Contact Details
Cambridge	Derek Cooper or Jeff Bronks	cambridge_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Central South	Co-ordinator wanted	areagroupsmanager@istc.org.uk
East of Scotland	George Lewis	eastscotland_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Irish Technical Writers	Patrice Fanning Yvonne Cleary, Bridget Walsh	irishtechicalwriters@istc.org.uk
ISTC Irish Group	Adrian Rush	irishgroup@istc.org.uk
London	David Farbey	london_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Midlands	John Burns	midlands_areagroup@istc.org.uk
North East England	Janine Weightman	northeastengland_areagroup@istc.org.uk
North West England	David Jones	northwestengland_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Southern	Marjorie Jones	southernengland_areagroup@istc.org.uk
South Wales	John Espirian	southwales_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Thames Valley	Darren Mitcham	thamesvalley_areagroup@istc.org.uk
West of Scotland	Charles Addison	westscotland_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Yorkshire	Nick Tonge	yorkshire_areagroup@istc.org.uk

Special interest groups:

Name	Leader	Email Contact Details
MadSIG	Marjorie Jones, Tom Bridley Kai Weber	MadSIG@istc.org.uk
Oil & Gas	Chris Knowles	oilandgas@istc.org.uk

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Industry news

WebWorks releases CloudDrafts™: A dropbox for technical communicators

WebWorks has announced the release of CloudDrafts, a collaborative file-sharing and publishing system specifically for technical communicators. In the collaborative solutions industry, there are simple solutions (for example, Dropbox, Google Drive, Box, and others) or complex version control systems like GitHub, with very little middle ground.

CloudDrafts is a solution designed to fill the gap. It is simple enough for first-time users yet has diverse version control and collaborative features that allow for a secure and efficient workflow. With the addition of features specifically for technical communicators, like the ability to publish documentation straight from Word, FrameMaker or DITA, this software will change the collaboration workflow in the technical communication industry.

CloudDrafts is a secure, on-premises cloud solution that manages technical communication department workflow and collaboration like nothing else in the industry.

Users have access to their own draft space where they can edit, create and update files to collaborate with other users or departments. CloudDrafts allows all users to push and pull their changes to the live server in a single click and to see exactly which files, and what specific content within the files have changed as they do so. CloudDrafts is an invaluable timesaving workflow management system that no technical communication team should be without.

‘CloudDrafts is truly a milestone in WebWorks’ history,’ said WebWorks CEO Tony McDow. ‘Collaboration is a vital part of any multi-writer technical communication department, but until today, writers and managers have been limited in their choice of tools. Tools like Dropbox don’t have all the necessary versioning and other features to promote a sound workflow, and version control software like GitHub was built specifically by developers for developers. We built CloudDrafts to have the best of both worlds and even included specific technical communication features, such as document management and the ability to publish documentation to multiple formats right from CloudDrafts.’

About WebWorks

WebWorks, based in Austin, Texas, builds software and creates solutions for a variety of content publishing and web-based applications. The company was incorporated in 1992 and eventually went on to graduate from the University of Texas’ prestigious Technology Incubator (ATI) program in 1996. Since its founding, the company has been a premier player in developing solutions for the Internet and related web application programs. The company has prospered since its beginning and now provides services and products to thousands of customers in over thirty-five countries worldwide. It has also partnered with numerous companies to collectively provide solutions to complex publishing and information deployment challenges.

For more information, visit: www.webworks.com/Products/CloudDrafts.

Business affiliate news

New ISTC Business Affiliate: Firehead Limited



We are large. We are small. We are virtual. We are physical. We know how to make a match in today's market.

Firehead is a boutique recruitment consultancy for digital communicators in Europe. We cover all online roles including techcomm, content strategy, usability and IA, content management, and many more. We also offer a range of content services including Content Strategy Bitesize and skills training in the field.

We are niche – we place English-speaking digital professionals across Europe.

We are networked – we are connected with the best talent in the business.

We are knowledgeable – we come from inside the communications industry and are active in its communities.

We want to get to know you as clients and candidates. So please send us an email to recruit@firehead.net – we will respond!

Visit: www.firehead.net.

Blog news

By Ginny Critcher

Hello everyone. Here is this month's blog round up for you.

Gordon Dennis discusses the issue of miscommunication with regards to maintenance of safety critical equipment in his blog on Controlled English: <http://tinyurl.com/pqnaeox>.

STC's October letter from the UK looks at documentation in a personalised world: http://notebook.stc.org/letter-from-the-uk-documentation-in-a-personalised-world/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+stc-notebook+%28STC%27s+Notebook+Feed%29.

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 Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators (ISTC).



Alyssa Fox writes about the challenges and benefits of moving to whole team approach in Agile in the first of a two-part article on Agile and tech communication:

<http://techwhirl.com/agile-tech-comm-whole-team-approach/>.

This Acrolinx team's post discusses repositioning the traditional tech communicator role. Find out why/how in this post:

www.acrolinx.com/blog/reposition-technical-communication-boss/.

Jorg Michal looks at tekoms's new guidelines for writing in English aimed at non-English native speakers:

www.technical-communication.org/news/rule-based-writing-english-for-non-native-writers.html.

Marie L Flack compares Minimalism to information Mapping in her blog:

<http://minimalist-doc.blogspot.fr/2014/10/minimalism-vs-information-mapping-whats.html>.

Steven Pinker in the Wall Street Journal writes about the curse of knowledge being the Source of Bad Writing:

<http://online.wsj.com/articles/the-cause-of-bad-writing-1411660188>.

Cherryleaf's Ellis Pratt looks at policies and procedures manuals as software:
<http://www.cherryleaf.com/blog/2014/09/your-policy-and-procedures-manual-as-software/>.

And finally – Will Reid, exasperated father, has harnessed the power of social media via a set of instructional videos for his teenagers:

<http://boingboing.net/2014/10/01/howto-videos-for-teens-by-the.html>.

Do you have a blog? Let Ginny know so she can include it in her monthly review. Simply mailto:email ginny@cherryleaf.com.

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email: info@cliffordsells.com

Training courses

If you know of a training course that will be of interest to readers, please let us know. You can send details by email to newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk. Please try to give us plenty of notice. The deadline for receiving information for *InfoPlus*⁺ is 24th of the month preceding publication.

Listings are restricted to scheduled courses that are low cost or are in some way unusual. Listings are a service to members. A listing does not imply ISTC endorsement.

If you hear of any training courses that you think might be of interest to *InfoPlus*⁺ readers, please contact the Newsletter copyeditor at newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

If you would like to promote your course or event to ISTC members, 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.

November

5-6

Simplified Technical English

This course is a practical introduction for those who will use Simplified Technical English (formerly AECMA Simplified English). The course introduces the philosophy of Simplified Technical

English, explains the underlying grammatical principles and gives delegates opportunities to use Simplified Technical English in practical exercises. These exercises can be based on your company's documentation.

10% discount to ISTC members

www.aerospace-defence.com/index.php/pages/training/asd-simplified-technical-english-specification/t-standards/.

10-11 Introduction to Adobe InDesign

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

10% discount for ISTC members

Armada, Central Birmingham, Midlands.

www.armada.co.uk/indesign-training-course.

...November

17-18 DITA Open Toolkit Customisation

This course is designed for developers who need to customise publishing systems for DITA content using the DITA Open Toolkit. Course assumes delegates are familiar with DITA Maps/Topics, XSLT (& XSL-FO), general programming techniques.

10% discount to ISTC members

www.mekon.com/index.php/pages/services/dita-open-toolkit-customisation-training/services/.

17-18 Introduction to Adobe Illustrator

This course provides you with the essential knowledge you need to create shapes, work with type and layers and apply effects and styles, giving you the basics to build on.

10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Central Birmingham, Midlands.

www.armada.co.uk/illustrator-training-course.

19-20 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.

10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Central Birmingham, Midlands.

www.armada.co.uk/photoshop-training-course.

26-27 Website creation essentials with Adobe Dreamweaver

This course is for new or novice website designers, and anyone who is responsible for creating or updating web pages. Teaches how to design, develop and maintain a professional website using Dreamweaver.

10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Central Birmingham, Midlands.

www.armada.co.uk/dreamweaver-training-course.

December

4-5 Introduction to Adobe Captivate

Learn how to develop web enabled e-learning modules and interactive software simulations.

10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.

www.armada.co.uk/captivate-training-course.

9 Trends in Technical Communication Course – Advanced Technical Writing Techniques

Our next course will be held in central London (close to South Kensington underground station).

www.cherryleaf.com/training/trends-in-technical-communication-workshop-advanced-technical-writing-techniques/.

...December

15-16 Introduction to Adobe RoboHelp

This course is for beginners and teaches how to use RoboHelp to create online help in most popular formats.

10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.

www.armada.co.uk/robohelp-training-course.

17 Intermediate Adobe RoboHelp

This course teaches the use of some of the more sophisticated features available in Adobe RoboHelp. The course covers the development of single-source projects from which you can generate both online help and high quality print documentation in Word and PDF formats, and teaches further techniques for using RoboHelp in the most efficient way.

10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.

www.armada.co.uk/robohelp-training-course.

18

Publishing to mobile devices from RoboHelp

This course teaches how to publish content to a range of different devices including – Smart phones, such as iPods, Androids, BlackBerrys and Tablets such as iPads. Delegates learn about the new multiscreen HTML5 format, used to publish contemporary content to multiple channels, formats and screens.

10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Bromsgrove, Midlands.

www.armada.co.uk/robohelp-training-course.

Event news

TCeurope 2015 Call for papers

Brussels, 17 April 2015

The TCeurope Colloquium will be hosted by [STC-France](#).

Change is nothing new. In today's world, technologies are evolving rapidly and becoming more intuitive and user-centric, changing the way users consume information. Global business continues to push changes in the way we deliver information.

We are riding waves of change that require a new mindset and a closer understanding of the user. This provides many opportunities to professional communicators. How do technical communicators navigate through all these changes and deliver value to the user and business?

The TCeurope 2015 Colloquium will offer sessions on information delivery, emerging technologies relevant to technical communicators, and methods for engaging users. Practical sessions will provide technical communicators the tools and information needed to succeed during periods of change.

Theme: Riding the Waves of Change

Recent and ongoing advances in content management and information delivery mechanisms are having a profound impact on the technical communication profession. End users are looking for more engaging and personalised content, while organisations are seeking more efficient and flexible methods to produce and deliver their information products across a range of devices and channels.

We are seeking proposals on topics that address emerging trends, technologies, and practices in information delivery and user engagement. Topic proposals should focus on providing attendees with practical, actionable advice and skills that they can begin to implement right away. As part of your proposal, you should include details of how you plan to provide these actionable take-aways (for example, a printed list of 'next steps,' an 'action plan for success,' and/or a list of recommended resources that attendees can use to learn more about the topic presented.)

[Download editable pdf call for papers.](#)

Before emailing it back to us (colloquium@tceurope.org), please rename this pdf by adding your own name to the file name.

Events listings

If you know of an event that will be of interest to readers, please let us know. You can send details by email to events@istc.org.uk. Please try to give us plenty of notice. The deadline for receiving information for *InfoPlus*⁺ is 24th of the month preceding publication.

This section introduces new events and reminders of the most relevant events in the coming months. ISTC events are highlighted. You can view previous events listings on the ISTC website's Newsletter archive at www.istc.org.uk/Publications/Newsletter/newsletter.htm.

November

4

Thames Valley Group social

An informal get together at The Bird in Hand Country Inn, Knowl Hill, Reading. This is a free and open to anyone who'd like to meet and chat with other tech writers, whether or not they are members. Please register your interest using the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/istc-thames-valley-group-social-tickets-13727271639>.

6

ISTC North West Area Group meeting

A talk entitled What you're missing about mobile. In this presentation, Rachel Johnston explores the challenges and opportunities of small screens, big content and the surprising realities of our new, multi-screen world. MadLab, 36-40 Edge St, Manchester, M4 1HN. From 19:00 to 22:00.

If you're interested in attending, please register at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/what-youre-missing-about-mobile-tickets-13726581575>.

11

ISTC Southern area group meeting

Free and open to all interested in technical communication. If you want more details and to sign up to the event, please visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/istc-southern-area-group-social-tickets-13827005947>.

...November

- 11-13 Tekom/tcworld conference**
tekomp/tcworld conferences offer premium content from the world of technical communication. Our international speakers are selected by independent tekomp committees and are evaluated to ensure maximum topicality, relevance and quality presentations. At the tekomp fairs and exhibitions relevant international providers in the software and service industries show the creation, management and the quality of structured information products.

Regular member rates apply to ISTC members for registration/attendance of the conference.

Stuttgart, Germany

<http://conferences.tekom.de/>.

18-19 10th annual Content Management Strategies/DITA Europe

Conference Organised by CIDM (www.infomanagementcenter.com). Price is \$900 (US dollars) for members or \$1,100 for non-

members; approximately €852 plus Hotel (€129 per day – if booked before 20 October).

Holiday Inn Munich, City Centre, Munich, Germany

www.infomanagementcenter.com/DITAEurope/2014/index.htm.

19-20 TechDocsUK

The premier event for all of those involved in the procurement, production, delivery or management of technical data assets within the UK MoD or UK Aerospace and Defence supply chain.

Bristol, UK

<http://techdocsuk.co.uk/>.

20 DITA-OT Day

Organised by Syncro Soft (developers of oXygen XML editor; more information at <http://oxygenxml.com>). From 08:45 to 18:00 CET. Entry is free.

Holiday Inn Munich, City Centre, Munich, Germany

http://oxygenxml.com/events/2014/dita-ot_day.html.

29-31 Localization World

Conference for international business, translation, localization and global website management. Attendees are the people responsible for communicating across the boundaries of language and culture in the global marketplace.

Vancouver, Canada

www.localizationworld.com.

December

5-6 STC India 16th Annual Conference

This is a two-day programme for the largest gathering of technical communicators in India. This year the conference will explore S1000D, Cloud, DITA, XML, structured authoring, content management systems, translation and localization. Attended by writers, managers, documentation specialists from India and across the world.

www.stc-india.org/2014/06/16th-annual-stc-india-conference/.

Back page

Caption competition

I'm grateful to Martin Ley for providing a plethora of captions for last month's photos. Clearly determined to win the prize and rightly so:

'Greg was understandably miffed that the safety warnings had been moved to the back page of "Ricin Monthly".'

*'Feeling impulsive, Doug decided to drink the contents *before* RTFM.'*

'Turns out, you shouldn't mix Blue Nun and Castrol GTX after all.'

'Let's just say the "Possible side effects" section left a bit to be desired.'

'Only Heineken can do this.'

'Bill looked in disbelief at the last page of the "Imbibers' Guide". Surely this sort of information belonged at the front?'

'In his haste to get on with things, Pete had rashly skipped a couple of vital pages in the manual.'

'While engrossed in the latest edition of InfoPlus+, Brian had committed a schoolboy error on the drinks front.'



© William Waddilove

Reminder of last month's photo.

Martin gets the 8GB USB drive prize. The Caption Competition will be taking a break for now; perhaps returning again sometime next year. Thanks to those readers who contributed over recent months.

Contributions

This newsletter is for the benefit of both ISTC members and technical communicators in the wider community. We are always pleased to hear from readers with suggestions for content, improvement and the development of *InfoPlus+*. If you have something you'd like included or any ideas for features and regular sections, please email newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

The Not a Caption Competition Picture slot!

This isn't for the captions, but thanks to Richard Hodgkinson for sending in this photo he took. He saw this on a canal boat on the Kennet and Avon Canal near Avoncliff. As Richard points out, 'I guess we could all do with some form of warning when we're about to get soaked?'.



If you've taken any amusing snaps that can brighten our Back page, please send them in. We'll run this idea for a short time in place of the Cartoon Corner.

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