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ISTC news

See you at TCUK 2014

By the time this edition of *InfoPlus*⁺ is published, TCUK14 will be upon us. It's the most exciting and comprehensive technical communication event on the UK calendar and takes place at the Thistle Hotel in Brighton. If you're attending, whether as a delegate or a contributor, we're certainly looking forward to seeing you. There's a whole host of sessions over the three days (16-18 September), including presentations, workshops, case studies, and hands-on product demonstrations, all from experts in their field.

We'll be reporting all the news and bring you feedback from the event in upcoming editions of *InfoPlus*⁺. You can also follow us on Twitter: @TCUK_conf, Facebook: Technical Communication UK 2014 and LinkedIn: Technical Communication UK Conference (TCUK).

See the full programme for TCUK 2014 which offers over thirty workshops and presentations of value to technical communicators at all stages of their careers.

See Convince your boss – TCUK 2104 for some suggestions to justify why your manager or supervisor should send you to the TCUK 2014 conference.

Enter the TCUK 2014 video contest

Are you going to the Technical Communication UK 2014 conference? Would you like to enter our video contest? The ISTC is seeking submissions for its conference video contest. To enter, create a video using footage from this year's conference, which the ISTC can use to inform people about this year's conference and to promote the TCUK 2015 conference.

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If you've got a smartphone, you can record video

Today, capturing video is easier than ever. Many modern digital cameras, and almost all smartphones, have the capability to record video built into them. YouTube enables you to edit and improve the videos you upload, and many technical communicators have access to applications that can edit video, such as Camtasia and Adobe Captivate. You don't have to be Steven Spielberg. We want

videos that capture the essence and spirit of TCUK.

Suggested video themes

Here are some suggested themes for your entry:

- A video diary of your time at TCUK
- Why I enjoy the TCUK conference
- Why people should attend the conference
- What I learnt at TCUK 2014

How to enter

The contest is open to anyone who attended TCUK 2014. Video footage used in the production of the video must be taken from the TCUK 2014 conference and related (such as the fringe) events. Please read our guide on how to enter, plus the terms and conditions on the TCUK website here: http://technicalcommunicationuk.com/index.php/archives/3859.

The TCUK 2014 video contest ends on **31 October 2014**. All submissions must be received by this time in order to be eligible.

Bronze sponsor Synchro Software: TCUK meets Sarah Draper, Director of Channel Sales and Marketing

TCUK: Why are you sponsoring TCUK 2014?

Sarah: When we commit to sponsor any conference we're not only telling our technology community we are supporting them by our attendance as by being there we're also supporting our own team by wanting to show the delegates what they have achieved in the innovative solutions they have developed. It's also a great opportunity for us and our end users to meet each other and to generate awareness to non-users of who we are, what we do and how we might perhaps be able to help them in their business environment.

TCUK: What makes TCUK different from other Technical Communication conferences?

Sarah: We have a genuine interest in the ever evolving world of technology and if we didn't we wouldn't be here! TCUK promotes and focusses on the technologies in our area so it's great that we can be part of it and help invest in the ISTC for the benefit of the technology community at large.

TCUK: What is your most memorable experience from a TCUK conference you've attended?

Sarah: There are too many to mention but maybe Sarah O'Keefe's Keynote last year - she always manages to put good humour in her delivery! Also, the sense of camaraderie at this conference is quite unlike some of the other conferences I attend which is refreshing. Last year's Gala Dinner was a good example - Julian Murfitt from Mekon scrubs up well!

TCUK: This year, our special focus is *'Technical Content in the Age of Social Media:'* Can you provide an example of how Syncro Soft's products and services can help technical authors in *'The Age of Social Media'*.

Sarah: Because we don't have a direct integration with a social network I can't give you a direct example. However oXygen allows users to mark different parts of their documentation with profiling attributes so they can use this functionality to mark an area of interest that can be automatically pushed to Twitter. For example, this could be a daily tip sent to Twitter followers that can be automatically extracted from their documentation. These ideas are not readily available but they can be developed with

oXygen and the XML standards that we support like DITA and DocBook.

TCUK: What impact has social media had on your product development at Syncro Soft?

Sarah: Social media is a great way for us to keep in touch with our customers and business partners. We've found that the tools that people are using to keep in touch on social media also help us with our service to our end users. We use Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn to promote what we're doing, engage in debate and also to keep track of the latest technological trends. For some time now our users have been able to sub-scribe to our oXygen Users List. Here they can keep up to speed with the latest topics being discussed by first line experts and stay up to date with the latest updates of our software. Our users very often help each other out as its a great forum for tips.

TCUK: Apart from the impact of social media, what do you consider the other significant factors that will affect the world of Technical Communications?

Sarah: I think that really depends on the what the evolving requirements of the audience are but I can see that the world of technical communication will require greater mobility and accessibility, on-demand

access and assistance for their content and support on different devices.

TCUK: What are you looking forward to at this year's conference?

Sarah: The same things I look forward to every year – getting the opportunity to catch up with our partners, customers and even our competitors, all in one place. It's a great forum for all of us to find out what everyone's been working on and to see the evolving trends.

TCUK: Brighton Pier and Brighton Pavilion are two of the most popular tourist des-tinations in the UK: will you be taking time out on to visit?

Sarah: I certainly will however I'd also like to spend some time walking along the beach. According to one poor chap, Dr Malcolm Cornwall, a day at the beach is anything but relaxing - it's his job to count the pebbles on Brighton Beach. He reckons there are about 100 billion along the coast of Brighton and Hove. He calculated that it would take one man about 2,500 years counting at one a second to add them all up. He uses a scientific method called Order of Magnitude, which helps estimate unimaginably vast quantities. Needless to say that I won't be counting!

ISTC local area groups

Report on Southern Area Group meeting

5 August, Winchester

A good number of us met at the Royal Oak in Winchester, in what is believed to be the oldest bar in the country, to hear Yuri Kolber talk about life in the cloud and why it matters to us.

He explained the different kinds of cloud available, ranging from IaaS (Infrastructure as a Service, where the cloud provider makes the servers available, and you do the rest), through PaaS (Platform as a Service, where the provider also provides and maintains the operating system) to SaaS (Software as a Service, where hosted software applications are also supplied, and you only need to add the users and the data).

I was fascinated to learn that some large cloud data centres have over 1 million servers, cover an area the size of a football field, and that 20,000 servers can be located in a big metal box the size of a shipping container, because each server is just a card in an array of servers.

The number of connected devices has now exceeded the number of people in the world, and with the Internet of Things well under way, the cloud is here to stay. Apparently, Yuri is looking forward to a day when the cloud can offer FCaaS (Frozen Custard as a Service) too.

Yuri's slides are here, if you would like to know more.

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

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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	irishtechnicalwriters@istc.org.uk
ISTC Irish Group	Adrian Rush	irishgroup@istc.org.uk
London	Claire Hooper	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	Katja McLaughlin	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

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.

Industry news

ASCENT offers digital site licenses for organisations with high volume training requirements

Rand Worldwide, a global leader in providing technology solutions to organisations with engineering design and information technology requirements, announced that its courseware division, ASCENT – Center for Technical Knowledge, provides digital site licenses helping organisations with volume training needs effectively control inventory management of their chosen courseware. ASCENT's digital site licenses ensure organisations have immediate access to ASCENT's Autodesk, PTC and Dassault Systèmes courseware to best suit their training needs.

'Digital site licenses are ideal for those organisations who require larger volumes of training materials such as associations, trade unions, businesses, government departments and academic institutions'

'Digital site licenses are ideal for those organisations who require larger volumes of training materials such as associations,

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—Chad Kreiger | **Policy and Procedure Analyst, Umpqua Bank**

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Matthew Ellison
UA, Europe

Derek Warren
Venafi, Inc.

Tony Self
HyperWrite

Angela Richer
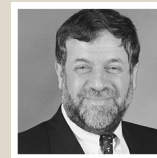*Autotask Corporation*

Laurie Pulido
eLearning Innovation LLC
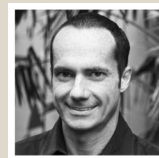
Scott DeLoach
ClickStart

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madcap software

trade unions, businesses, government departments and academic institutions,' says Ronda Wiley, business development manager for ASCENT. 'We customise our licenses for every customer so that they have access to the training guides they need, when they need them. In addition, a digital site license allows our customers to locally print the materials on-demand including the incorporation of their own custom covers, branding and binding. And on the logistics side, both shipping and inventory costs are eliminated so everyone wins: the organisation, the trainers and, of course, the students.'

Success Stories

At Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Sam Bondesen, an AutoCAD instructor, also sees tremendous benefits to using a digital site license both personally, as an instructor, and for the school.

'Our ASCENT license for the Autodesk courseware lets us print the books as we need them,' says Bondesen. 'The advantage for us is we can get them printed in house. I can order them one day and they'll be here the next day. So we can keep track of how many students we're expecting and print books directly for them.'

To learn more about the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's use of ASCENT digital site licenses, view this three minute video.

Another ASCENT customer, an international trade union, is also enjoying the benefits of a digital site license. With over 300 schools throughout North America, the union was looking for a flexible option that would allow them to standardise on a high quality Autodesk curriculum option that was easy to produce and distribute across all of their schools. As the provider of Autodesk Official Training Guides (AOTG), ASCENT was able to offer the union a digital site license option that included select titles in various quantities and allowed them to print a specified number of guides throughout the year; whenever and wherever union members needed them. The option also included access to a variety of titles and multiple release versions from which the union was able to choose specified quantities to print.

This flexible and on-demand print option allowed the union to provide its members with consistent, up-to-date, quality training materials for Autodesk software, saving both the time and cost of creating their own material. Visit ASCENT's website to read the complete success story.

About ASCENT

ASCENT- Center for Technical Knowledge develops professional training courseware and technical documentation for engineering applications including those from Autodesk, Dassault Systèmes and PTC. ASCENT is an Authorised Author, Publisher and Developer of Autodesk curriculum and the sole provider of Autodesk Official Training Guides. ASCENT training guides, eBooks, Instructor Tools and eLearning Bundles are available to educational institutions and training centers, individuals and corporations and can be purchased directly from the ASCENT eStore (for volume sales, contact an ASCENT representative). For more information visit the ASCENT website and follow ASCENT on Twitter at @ASCENT_CTK.

About Rand Worldwide

Rand Worldwide is one of the world's leading providers of professional services and technology to the engineering community, targeting organisations in the building, infrastructure and manufacturing industries. For more information, visit: www.rand.com.

Business affiliate news

Semcon acquires Norwegian product information company

Semcon has acquired the business in the Norwegian company ibruk AS, active in the area of product information. Through the acquisition, Semcon will expand its presence to also include the Norwegian market.

Semcon has acquired the business in ibruk, a company based in Kongsberg and active in the product information sector. The company has over 13 years' experience in technical documentation and Life Cycle Information (LCI) mainly for the Norwegian oil and gas industry. ibruk currently engages around 20 employees and subcontractors. Sales for 2013 totalled NOK 23.9 million. The acquisition came into effect on 1 September 2014.

'ibruk is well positioned on the Norwegian market, especially in the oil and gas industry, and we have the possibility of further building and expanding our business with new and existing customers,' says Johan Ekener, President of Semcon's Product Information business area. 'To the services that ibruk has supplied for a long time on the Norwegian market can now be added Semcon's entire offer, experience and strength as an international company.'

'Semcon's extensive expertise was one of the reasons for choosing Semcon and I am now really looking forward to introducing an extended offer to the Norwegian market,' says Stein Tore Johnsen, founder and seller of ibruk and responsible for Semcon Norway AS. "I am confident that our combined knowledge and skills can change the way companies in Norway handle their documentation and training.'

For several years Semcon has supported customers on the Norwegian market, both with engineering services and product information offerings from the Swedish organisation. With this acquisition Semcon now has a platform in Norway to offer its wide range of services to the Norwegian market.

'As we expand into Norway, it will bring new opportunities that will make Semcon an even more international service provider,' concludes Johan Ekener.

For more information about Semcon, visit: www.semcon.com.

Blog news

Ellis is enjoying a wellearned summer break, so we've no blog news for August. However, if you have a technical communication related blog you'd like to share, or you've seen an interesting post that we could include, email ellis@cherryleaf.com so it can be considered for future reports.

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.

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September

9-19   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. Further details on request.

10% discount to ISTC members

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

15-16   Introduction to Adobe After Effects
An entry-level course providing a thorough grounding in the tools and techniques used to carry out the most common tasks in After Effects, and introducing some of the more sophisticated features available including tracking, keying, 3D space and shape layers

10% discount for ISTC members

Armada, Central Birmingham, Midlands.

www.armada.co.uk/after-effects-training-course.

15-16   Introduction to Adobe Premiere Pro
This provides a thorough grounding in the key tools Premiere Pro provides for film editing and video post-production. It then goes on to explore further useful techniques including adding video effects, exporting frames, clips and sequences, and managing your projects.

10% discount for ISTC members

Armada, Central Birmingham, Midlands.

www.armada.co.uk/premiere-pro-training-course.

29-30   Introduction to Adobe Illustrator
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.

October

1-2   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.

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...October

6-7   **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.

10% discount for ISTC members

Armada, Central Birmingham, Midlands.

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

8-9   **Website creation essentials with Adobe Dreamweaver**
A course 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. During the course, delegates create a fully functioning website, and receive a copy of their files to take away.

10% discount for ISTC members.

Armada, Central Birmingham, Midlands.

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

9-10   **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.

Events listings

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.

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.

September

8-26   **tekom Europe Roadshow**
The roadshow is targeted at technical communication decision-makers and professionals. All presentations are strictly product-neutral and clearly related to the main conference theme.

Paris, Ghent, Eindhoven, Copenhagen, Warsaw, Istanbul, Bucharest, Vienna.

http://conferences.tekom.de/tekom-europe-roadshow/home/tekom-europe-roadshow-2014/.

16-18 **TCUK 2014**
Hosted by the ISTC, the Technical Communication UK conference (TCUK) brings together technical communicators, editors, illustrators and leading product vendors, for three days of workshops and presentations. Content development and content delivery, the challenges of mobile documentation, and the opportunities that exist in structured authoring will be covered across three streams of sessions.

Brighton, United Kingdom

http://technicalcommunicationuk.com.

25-27 **EuroIA 2014 (European Information Architecture Conference)**
EuroIA is Europe's premiere information architecture / user experience conference. In this, our 10th-anniversary year, we have one of the most exciting line-ups ever.

Brussels

www.euroia.org.

October

1-3 **soap!**
Learn, share knowledge, and be part of the Central European technical communication community at the second annual technical writing conference organised by soap! The focus is on content as an asset, not a requirement. Topics covered will include DITA, e-learning and modern localization tools. People from all perspectives are invited – be it project management or product development, as long as they are interested in content.

Krakow, Poland

www.soapconf.com/2014-conference.

8-10 **Where IT works**
DMS EXPO and CRM-expo, the leading trade fairs for enterprise content management, and customer relationship management, are held concurrently and show all aspects of corporate IT. The extensive exhibition and the first-class accompanying programme on the key topics of ERP, CRM, ECM and Output Management address all IT managers and decision-makers.

Messe Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany

www.messe-stuttgart.de/en/where-it-works/.

13-15 **LavaCon**
LavaCon offers expert training on content strategy and user experience. The first obstacle to rolling out a successful user experience strategy is getting executive sponsorship and funding. Another is getting stakeholder buy-in. To handle both problems, the 2014 focus is: Funding and Implementing User Experience Strategies that Reduce Costs and Generate Revenue.

Portland, Oregon, USA

http://lavacon.org/2014/.

...October

22-24   **Information Development World**
Conference dedicated to helping organisations create exceptional customer experiences centred around content. The goal is to bring together the brightest minds in the content arena—content strategists, technical communicators, content marketers, product managers, customer assistance specialists, translators, localizers, taxonomists, and user experience professionals—to demystify the methods, standards, tools and technologies needed to deliver exceptional omni-channel customer experiences.

Hilton DoubleTree Hotel, San Jose, CA, USA

http://techwhirl.com/event/information-development-world-2014/.

November

11-13   **Tekom/tcworld conference**
tekom/tcworld conferences offer premium content from the world of technical communication, which you can't find on the Internet. Our international speakers are evaluated to ensure maximum topicality, relevance and quality presentations.

Stuttgart, Germany

http://conferences.tekom.de/.

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/.

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Back page

Caption competition

Thank you to readers for keeping our regular caption competition alive and well. Here are the top three contributors for last month's photo:

Martin Ley: '*Look Dave, Minion Pro!*'

Peter Hirons: '*Look, a grocer's apostrophe!*'

Rachel Gibbons: '*Why can't I have a normal tablet like an iPad or something?*'

This month, the prize of an 8GB USB drive goes to Peter Hirons. Keep it up contributors!

© William Waddilove

Reminder of last month's photo.

© William Waddilove

This month's picture

Thanks again to William Waddilove for providing another photo for our latest caption competition. Please email your captions to newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

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.