

Can you measure success?

Explaining the value of documentation



Communicator

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators
Summer 2012

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survey results

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Using and implementing
HelpServer



President's view

Get some recognition

The opportunities for fame in our profession are fairly limited. Let's just say it's been a while since I've been stopped in the street by a politely surprised stranger saying "Excuse me, aren't you the same guy I've seen grinning out of the *Communicator* journal?"

Infamy is rather easier to come by. There are quite a few self-declared technical communicators out there (not reading this esteemed journal of course) who my 3di colleagues and I would rather not work with again.

You know 'good' when you see it

All of us recognise excellent work when we see it, even in surprising places. I bought a kitchen bin from a company called Simple Human a couple of years ago that came with a beautiful little user guide. There's a great Mexican restaurant on Villiers Street in London called Lupita with paper placemats that explain how to eat. Jewsons provides engaging and extremely clear instructions leaflets whenever you hire one of their heavy-duty tools.

These are all examples that the public get to see and appreciate, and some of you might argue that they are not examples of 'technical' communication. So let's look closer to home (or rather, work). What examples have you seen recently of excellent work in your day jobs? What have you or your colleagues produced in the last year that you are proud of? Answers on a postcard please. The UK Technical Communication Awards closing date is the end of June by the way.

Help others recognise it too

Do you deserve more recognition for how your work helps your organisation succeed? What could you do to spread the word, or to help demonstrate the difference you make? Aligning what you do with the teams that are getting recognition could be one option. You might even find that your contribution gets featured as one of the key reasons why someone should buy your product. This is what seems to have happened to the person who redesigned the user help for QuickBooks, an accountancy package for small businesses. Their TV ads focus on the quality of the online help to illustrate how easy the product is to use. More and more organisations focus on the usability of their software as a prime selling point (see recent confused.com TV ads), and that includes the user help and support.

Sharing what you know

Simply being an ISTC member brings its own recognition. Whether you are an Affiliate, Associate, Student, Junior, Member or Fellow, your commitment to your profession and your own professional development, whatever your specialism, has been recognised by your peers.

But the ISTC provides you with so many more opportunities:

- Mentoring Junior members, see page 7
- Presenting at TCUK or at Local Area Group meetings, see page 13
- Contributing articles to *Communicator* or InfoPlus+
- Entering the UK Technical Communication Awards
- Volunteering to be part of one of the ISTC teams.

Making a contribution in these ways is then something you can share with your colleagues at work, to get recognition from them. I've heard that leaving *Communicator* open on a page featuring your article in the coffee area works a treat.

A modern day Horace Hockley?

Horace Hockley was the founding President of the ISTC. We honour his legacy each year by recognising one person who has made a significant contribution in technical communication over many years. The award will be announced at the Gala dinner on the Wednesday night at the Technical Communication UK conference in October. We need your

nominations please. You can find more detail about the criteria and a list of all the previous awardees at www.istc.org.uk/istc-awards.

Paul Ballard FISTC

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Member news

New Members

Members

Michael Clark	Buckinghamshire
Susan Graham	Hampshire
Ian Holland	Derby
Robert Illes	Hampshire
Tom Jenks	Italy
Colin Jones	Wigan
Thomas Keogan	Ireland
Dominic Long	Gloucestershire
Paul Polwin	Hertfordshire
Jean Prince	Cambridgeshire
Mark Springthorpe	Fareham
Kai Weber	Germany

Associate

Stuart Heath	Greece
Karine Rousseau	Hampshire

Junior Members

Mark Hilton	Cambridgeshire
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Transfers

Fellow

Sandra Priestley	Suffolk
William Tobin	Lancashire

Member

Paul Honeysett	Swindon
Peter Thompson	Staffordshire

Retired Member

Frank Taylor	Israel
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Business Affiliates

Silver

3di Information Solutions
MadCap Software