

Learning from the writer Mark Twain

Applying his writing advice today



Communicator

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators
Winter 2012

**Read about Technical
Communication UK 2012**

**Develop your API and SDK
knowledge**

**Manage projects with
Scrum and PRINCE2**

**How to apply copyright law
to technical communication**



President's view

A team at work on your behalf

Many thanks to my fellow Council members for leading the efforts to deliver such a wide range of services to the members. We hope each of you feels you have had the opportunity to benefit from those efforts, and more importantly, that you have on occasions acted on the opportunity and made some small step in your on-going professional development.

Whether it has been reading articles in *Communicator*, catching up on the ISTC Discussion forum weekly or monthly summaries, logging on to the TCUK website and watching one of the more than 30 available videos of presentations, however you do it, thank you! It's what all of us on Council are here for.

Communicator journal

The past year has seen a steady flow of high-quality content for *Communicator*, with bumper 64-page issues, and a Special Supplement on technical illustration in last Winter's issue. Our advertisers have continued their consistent commitment and investment in advertising and the planned trial to e-book PDFs has started. *Communicator* also won a third APEX Award of Excellence this year. *Communicator* continues to be one of the ISTC's most valuable and highest profile assets, and Katherine and the team welcome any feedback about articles you have read.

Community

We needed some new volunteer support to help keep the momentum going, and I am pleased to say that we have injected some excellent new blood into this team, with all our

Community initiatives now managed by Andrew Marlow. Andrew has been leading the *InfoPlus+* editorial team for a few years now and this monthly e-newsletter continues to be widely read, by members and non-members alike, and consistently supported by advertisers. Changes already happening and planned for the website will also support Community activities.

More than any other area of what the ISTC does, our Community offer relies on the active participation and involvement of members. Many thanks to Richard Truscott for taking on the Area Groups coordination, and to James Bromley, who has started to get an Oil & Gas industry group together. Emma Bayne has also continued to organise and report on the ISTC Survey.

Technical Communication UK conference

David Farbey took on the TCUK leadership role this year and with the help of the wider volunteer team and the conference team at ASL (our administration team), a high-quality programme provided three streams of workshops, discussions and presentations to over 160 delegates from more than 10 countries. Significantly, in more than 15 years of hosting a conference, this is the first time the ISTC has ventured to the North East. Let David know now where you think TCUK should be in 2013.

Professional development and recognition

The new ISTC course accreditation scheme got off to a good start, with three courses being accredited in the first half of 2012 and with enquiries from other providers. We hope to widen the scope of the process to identify and accredit courses that would be of benefit to more experienced practitioners in our field.

Alison Peck and her team have also been actively contacting universities and other education providers to raise the profile of technical communication as a career choice. With college and university careers offices still playing such a key role in helping shape students' ideas, if you have any contacts, do point them at the ISTC, or let Alison know.

Resources

I will take this opportunity to ask if you could help pick up this area of the ISTC's activities and help drive it forward. We have so much available

to offer members but it needs a dedicated volunteer. Let me know. Any contribution you can make would be much appreciated.

In other news...

A key achievement for Rachel Potts and the Marketing team has been the availability of the new and significantly improved website platform and structure. We do still need to make improvements to some of the old content, and this we expect to have completed in the coming weeks.

During the web platform development project, Gordon McLean has also had input from some of the members and this has helped us to identify and specify a handful of future projects for the website.

In the last year we have been ramping up our attendance at non-ISTC events, with us exhibiting at UA Europe in Dublin (software audience), and at TechDocs UK (defence audience).

The ASL team has just started more liaising on our behalf with related professional institutes, to help identify new channels.

We have kicked off the project to start improving the data the ISTC has at its disposal about the UK technical communications market. Many thanks to Richard Pineger for responding to the request to help with that project.

New members continue to join the ISTC and we have had a number of teams join and take advantage of savings we can pass on when processing multiple applications at the same time. If you and your colleagues would like to take advantage of a group discount, please let me know.

Finally, grateful thanks to the many of you who wished Rachel and I well when we got married in September. We got to know each other while working on the conference re-launch in 2009. Maybe we should add 'Potential to meet your future spouse' as another benefit of ISTC membership. Have a great Christmas, and a rewarding 2013. **C**

Paul Ballard FISTC

E: president@istc.org.uk