

# Learning from testing

Tips for technical communicators from testers



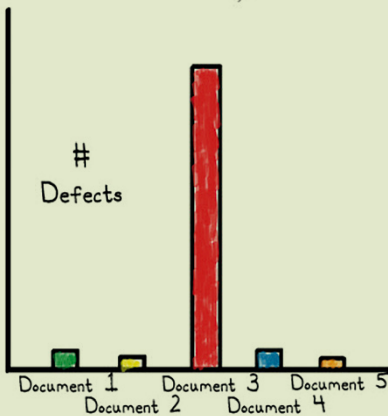
# Communicator

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators  
Spring 2016



Reduce your long-term maintenance workload

Learn how Green Technology is relevant to you



DocOps and the technical communicator

The impact of Augmented Reality for us





## President's view

I don't do New Year's resolutions as such. I find that all my good intentions last to the middle of January, if I'm lucky. I do, however, often take the slightly quieter time around the end of the year to assess where I am, what I want to be doing and where I see myself this time next year and the year after.

I've unexpectedly found myself with a lot less 'free' time than I've had before, so I've had to review my priorities. A comfortable balance between family, work, leisure and other commitments is always difficult to maintain as each has an impact on the others, and it only takes a significant change in one to force a corresponding reaction elsewhere.

Someone else who has reassessed this year is Andrew Marlow. After a number of years on Council as the Community lead, Andrew has decided to step down and in doing so is leaving a number of 'holes' to fill. As well as his Council role, Andrew has been the editor of InfoPlus+ for seven years and stood as both a Director of the ISTC and one of our bank signatories. I would like to take this opportunity to give Andrew a heartfelt 'thank you' for all he has done for the ISTC community.

We welcome Carol Leahy to ISTC Council. Carol has been volunteering on projects for some time now, and has been co-opted to Council taking the role of Community Lead. Carol will be standing for election at the next AGM.

### Our new forums

Our new forums — on the ISTC website — were launched at the end of 2015, with a few of us doing some volunteer testing before the forums went live. Since making them available to the

### Tips for using the new forums

- Subscribe to threads you are interested in – you get copies of posts delivered to your inbox.
- Sign in to the ISTC website and choose to remain logged in (so your username and password are remembered) – that way, you only need to click the link in a post to reply.
- To create a post (or reply), either type directly into the form or – if copying/pasting from anywhere else, such as a website, an email or a Word document – paste as text to prevent the formatting codes being included as part of your message.

wider ISTC Community, we have been pleased with a number of very positive comments by people who are now contributing because it is much simpler for them to do so. And it's great to see an image of the contributor as this brings more of a conversational feel to the community.

As anyone who works in a software development environment knows, no matter how much testing you do, you don't find all the issues until real people are using the system to do real things. Gordon McLean, our webmaster, has been working really hard and has ironed out just about all of the glitches. Thank you to everyone who has provided feedback.

The old Yahoo forums still exist, but new people aren't being added to them. I know from experience that the best way for me to adopt a new way of doing things is not to give myself a choice, so I have unsubscribed from the Yahoo discussion group and am only looking at website forums.

### What changes would you like to see?

Change is inevitable and we can control some of it by trying to slow the breakneck speed that throws some of us off our feet, and we're not always successful. As individuals we all approach change differently. Some of us have a greater appetite for it than others. Even the perception of 'good change' differs from person to person.

In an attempt to make changes *good* for as many people as possible, I'd like to know what you think. Is there some significant change you think we should be making? Is there some benefit you would like the ISTC to offer that we don't currently provide?

### Why am I asking?


We need to understand what encourages you to renew your membership, or to consider resigning.

One of our goals is to increase our membership: more members means more revenue, which means more purchasing power, which means more benefits, which means more members... You get the drift.

We rely heavily on volunteers, but going back to where I started, our volunteers have to balance the commitment they make with everything else going on in their lives, and we need a steady stream of 'new blood' if we're going to survive.

### Major events this year

We're hosting the annual Technical Communication UK conference<sup>1</sup> at Wyboston Lakes, Bedfordshire from 13-15 September. Make a note of the dates. We would love to see you there.

If you're in or near Portugal, the European umbrella organisation for technical communication, TCeurope, is hosting a free one day conference<sup>2</sup> in Porto on 15 April. 

### References

<sup>1</sup> [www.technicalcommunicationuk.com](http://www.technicalcommunicationuk.com)

<sup>2</sup> [www.tceurope.org/colloquia](http://www.tceurope.org/colloquia)

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