

Horace Hockley Award



Ian Kemble accepting his award from Paul Ballard, ISTC President

Ian Kemble, course leader of the MA Technical Communication and the MA Translation and Technical Communication at the University of Portsmouth is this year's Horace Hockley Award winner. Ian was nominated by three graduates of the technical communication programme for:

- His contribution to the education and training of future technical communicators
- The collaborative links that he is promoting between academia and industry through student placements in the workplace
- The active role that he is encouraging future technical communicators to

play in their professional community, for example, through membership of professional bodies and contributions to *Communicator*.

In his acceptance speech at the 2010 ISTC conference Ian stressed the collaborative nature of the MA Technical Communication degree, a feature that distinguishes the degree scheme from all other degree schemes with which he has been associated in his 40 years in Higher Education. Contributions to the teaching of the degree come from a range of departments within the University and from a number of outside consultants, including Richard Hodgkinson and Matthew Ellison, themselves recipients of the Horace Hockley Award in 2004 and 2008 respectively.

Ian thanked the ISTC for their support over the past five years. Members of the ISTC played a key role in the development of the degree from 2005-2006 and, more recently, collaboration with the ISTC has found articulation in a series of article contributions to *Communicator*. A pioneering pilot study into user assistance, the result of a joint venture between Matthew Ellison and James Windebank, a 2010 graduate, is featured on page 18.

A further highlight of the degree from an academic perspective was the

award in 2009 of a prestigious PhD bursary to Stephen Crabbe by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Each year, two awards only are made to applicants with an interest in language and communication, and are fiercely competed for.

Looking to the future, Ian reflected on continuing issues with the marketing of 'technical communication' as a subject area. In Higher Education, as elsewhere, the challenges of the current economic situation are considerable, and the future of technical communication as a postgraduate degree scheme lay, in his view, in its incorporation into a professional communication context.

Just as there are arguments for treating technical translation as a part of technical communication, so there are arguments for technical communication itself to be considered a major constituent of professional communication. The future requires us all to be flexible and creative on the one hand, but not to lose sight of fundamentals on the other. In Ian's view, achieving a balance between the two will stand us in good stead in facing the future with confidence and optimism. **C**

Ian Kemble


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