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InfoPlus

Monthly newsletter from the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

February 2019

The ISTC is the largest UK body representing scientific and technical communicators. If you are involved in technical writing, technical illustration, or communicating technical information in other ways, it's the professional association that can support your career. Interested in membership? Find out more here.

This free newsletter is emailed to about 1500 people. As well as ISTC news, *InfoPlus* contains listings and articles of general interest to the profession. Subscribe here.

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Welcome!

According to the tradition of Saint Valentine's Day, February is the month to focus on love. There's plenty to love about this edition of *InfoPlus*. Opportunities to get involved with our annual conference, TCUK, and this year's UK Technical Communication Awards are announced. Plans to improve the ISTC website are revealed. An online tool to assist your proofreading is reviewed. You want more? Of course, there is more. Enjoy the read!

ISTC news

TCUK 2019 update
Opportunities to contribute to *your* conference

By Derek Cooper

"10"

Yes, that's the conference title! You're free to interpret it as you wish, and the most innovative and imaginative use of the theme accepted by the Programme Committee wins a prize.

The deadline for you to submit your proposal is **26 April 2019**, after which we will inform successful applicants by 17 May.

The search is already on for keynote speakers, and this year we are widening the net to find speakers who might not be directly involved with technical communication but who certainly have something of interest to tell us that is related to communication in one form or another.

It's your conference!

Since I took responsibility for chairing the TCUK Conference at the end of 2015, it has been one of my ambitions to somehow give greater ownership of the conference to the ISTC membership and to the conference delegates.

Your opinions, expressed in the surveys that follow each conference, are important to us and we always take notice of them. As far as possible we use them to steer our choices and plans for the conference, but with a careful eye on the costs and the criteria that I explained in my article in last month's issue of *InfoPlus*.

Once again, I wish to extend my personal gratitude to the many companies and organisations that have sponsored and supported our conference during the past ten years, and who continue to do so in these commercially difficult times. We would not have been able to plan and organise our conference without their financial support each year, and I urge all those who attend the conference to meet and network with the sponsors' representatives while you are attending TCUK. Our sponsors learn more about the practices of technical communication when they meet you, and those conversations help them to develop new product enhancements to make your lives easier and more efficient. While you attend TCUK, please be sure to give them the benefit of your time and experience in recognition of the support they give for our conference.

This year, for the first time, in addition to the sponsorship invitations that we are sending we are also opening a very basic level of sponsorship to the ISTC membership, and to non-member delegates and technical communication contractors who attend the conference. We're calling it a Supporters' Package, for which we ask only £150. In return for that small investment we give:

▶ Recognition in the conference programme.

▶ Named listing and acknowledgement on the TCUK website.

▶ Named listing of all supporters on conference pop-up display banners.

▶ Acknowledgement and recognition as a joint sponsor of the Exhibitors' Drinks Reception.

We know that many of the delegates have their attendance costs paid for by their employers. We are extremely grateful that there are so many far-sighted and supportive employers out there who allow their technical communicators the time and freedom to do this and who in return benefit from employees who are better informed, more highly motivated, and consequently more engaged and productive. However, for the Supporters' Package we ask that the person attending the conference pays for this recognition themselves rather than passing on the cost to their employer. That makes the supporting contribution a more meaningful and personal statement of commitment and ownership of a part of the conference.

Where and when

TCUK 2019 is from **10 to 12 September 2019** at Chesford Grange Hotel (https://www.qhotels.co.uk/our-locations/chesford-grange), near Kenilworth in Warwickshire.

We'll be updating our website and sending information through the social media channels when the booking opens and, as usual, we'll be offering an early-bird price reduction for delegates who book their place early.

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The ISTC joins Instagram

By Darren Doyle

We've recently added to the list of social media platforms you can find us on. In addition to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, you can now get ISTC updates on Instagram as well.

We all know a picture is worth a thousand words and we technical communicators are no strangers to written content. So, it's no wonder the ISTC feels so at home on Instagram!

If you haven't yet, be sure to follow us by searching for ISTC_org on Instagram, and if you're not on Instagram why not use this as an excuse to join and see what all the fuss is about? We'll be using the platform to tell our story in the months and years to come. Look out in particular for pictures from our excellent TCUK Conference which takes place every year.

You can also get involved by talking about the ISTC on Instagram. We're currently asking followers to join in the conversation with a picture of their ISTC sticker using the hashtag #ISTCCertifiedMember. So, if you've got a sticker why not show it off to all of your followers?

We encourage you to spread the word about the ISTC on Instagram with your fellow technical communicators. Whether you mention it on other social media platforms or in an informal chat with your colleagues, we'll appreciate your help in growing our following.

Improving the ISTC website

By Tony Dzumaga

There are plans to improve the ISTC website this year to ensure that it continues to be a useful resource for members, and raises the profile of the technical communication profession in general.

Ellis Pratt, the Marketing Lead on the ISTC Council, has outlined some capability measures to give direction to the website redesign. These are:

1. **Data is secure**

   Communicator articles can only be accessed by members.

   Membership data is still stored securely.

   The ISTC still complies with GDPR.

2. **Improves satisfaction of members**

   Content is easy to find.

   Website is easy to navigate.

3. **Promotes the profession**

   Improves awareness of the profession.

   Provides a professional impression.

4. **Is usable and accessible to all**

   Website is accessible.

   Website is mobile-friendly.

With these points in mind we are going to update all aspects of the ISTC website; this includes the presentation, structure and security as well as ensuring it is mobile-friendly.

We want the website to represent the ISTC as "the home of technical communication excellence in the UK" and to:

▶ promote the value of technical communication.

▶ promote the importance of professional technical communicators.

▶ communicate the benefits of ISTC membership and affiliation.

▶ provide channels for communicating with members and other parties.

I have recently joined the team as the website owner to help deliver the project and want to ensure we achieve these goals.

Having the correct site structure is one of the most important parts of building a site. I have experience of creating large commercial sites and I am looking forward to working with the existing team to improve the website to complement our excellent publications, *Communicator* and *InfoPlus*.

We are very keen to use the best web platform available. Currently, WordPress v5 with the Gutenberg block editor in conjunction with an HTML5 responsive theme is our favourite. It is a major improvement on the previous content editor and has been completely re-engineered by WordPress (see https://wordpress.org/gutenberg/ for more information).

As you can imagine, there's a lot to do. I will be working hard with the rest of the team to help bring about the changes over the coming months. If you have suggestions regarding this project you can contact me via email: antoni.dzumaga@btinternet.com.

InfoPlus copy deadline

Submissions to the newsletter are always welcome. If you have an article or other content you would like to see included in the March edition of *InfoPlus*, please email your copy to newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk by **19 February 2019**.

Every effort is made to ensure that *InfoPlus* is published and distributed as early as possible in the month to which it relates, generally on the first working day. However, occasionally it may not be distributed up to a week into that month. Please bear this in mind when submitting time-sensitive information.

This is a free monthly online newsletter for scientific and technical communicators.
InfoPlus is posted at www.istc.org.uk/our-publications/infoplus-newsletter/.

Start thinking about entering for the UK Technical Communication Awards 2019

By Paul Ballard

The purpose of the UK Technical Communication Awards is to recognise the value of clear, concise and effective information products. Whether online or printed, the impact of highly effective documentation is felt by industry, commerce, academia and most of all, users. Individuals and teams that develop excellent information products deserve to have their efforts recognised, as do the companies that invest in them.

The UK Technical Communication Awards are open to any individual or team, whether employed, self-employed, contracting,

volunteering, permanent, temporary, full-time or part-time. You do NOT have to be a member of the ISTC to nominate someone, and the nominee doesn't have to be to a member of the ISTC either. You can

nominate yourself if you wish; the judges' decisions will be made solely on the merits of the entries, not on who nominated the entries.

We encourage entries of product/process documentation and technical innovation – the "traditional" entries – as well as entries such as blog posts, books, training material, e-learning and anything that displays, encourages or helps the production of high-quality technical communication.

Four teams won awards in 2018. Their stories are in the Winter 2018 issue of the ISTC's *Communicator* journal, and they will shortly be on the dedicated UKTC Awards website where you can also find information to help you prepare for entering the 2019 Awards.

Let's communicate

What would you like to see in our newsletter?

If you're reading this, it's likely that the desire to communicate is part of your genetic makeup so please let me know your thoughts! Feedback regarding content and ideas for new features are always welcome. Similarly, if you would like to submit an article I would love to hear from you.

Email me at any time: newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

Lisa

ISTC community

ISTC local area and special interest groups

The ISTC groups offer an opportunity for technical communicators to network and share knowledge and expertise. They are open to everyone (you don't need to be an ISTC member) and are free to attend. The groups meet at intervals during the year and hold talks, peer discussions, demonstrations and social evenings. Joining a group is an excellent way to meet like-minded people in your area and get to know fellow specialists.

Latest news

North East England Area Group

The group met in Newcastle upon Tyne on Tuesday 15 January in the local pub, Town Wall, to discuss usability testing. We all agreed it is a vital part of the content creation process whether you document hardware or software. Relying on one SME to outline the entire process introduces too much potential for human error. A focus group tasked with recreating the steps makes sure your content is usable and of high quality.

Next meeting

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 5 February from 18:00 – 20:30. We will discuss authoring tools. Venue: The Town Wall, Pink Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5HX. Please register via Eventbrite if you would like to attend.

If you need more information, have an idea for a future meet-up, or would like to suggest a topic for discussion please email Joanna Suau: northeastengland_areagroup@istc.org.uk.

Thames Valley Area Group

At the January Thames Valley local group meeting we looked at job interviews. Some volunteered to be interviewers and some as interviewees. Clearly it is a skill worth keeping fresh as a few of us were somewhat rusty at answering fairly basic questions.

Next meeting

At our gathering on Tuesday 5 February it will be all about translation. Pick a piece of work, translate it into a random language in Google Translate or BabelFish, then translate it back to English. Bring along the results so we can see how good the translators are.

Usual venue: Bird in Hand, Bath Road, Knowl Hill, Reading, RG10 9UP from 19:30.

We also have exciting news about the following meeting on 5 March. Jen Lambourne from Government Document Services (GDS) will be joining us to talk about "Docs as Code". Put the date in your diary!

For more information, email Darren Mitcham: thamesvalley_areagroup@istc.org.uk.

Current ISTC groups

If you'd like to attend one of the groups, please get in touch with the leader or email istc@istc.org.uk. If you're interested in setting up either a new area group or a special interest group, contact our Area Groups Manager, Tom Dumic, at areagroupsmanager@istc.org.uk.

Area groups:

Name	Leader	Email Contact Details
Cambridge	Zsuza Nagy	cambridge_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Irish Technical Writers	Yvonne Cleary, Bridget Walsh	irishtechnicalwriters@istc.org.uk
ISTC Irish Group	Adrian Rush	irishgroup@istc.org.uk
London	Bridget Rooney	london_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Midlands	John Burns	midlands_areagroup@istc.org.uk
North East England	Joanna Suau	northeastengland_areagroup@istc.org.uk
North West England	David Jones	northwestengland_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Southern	Group leader required	istc@istc.org.uk
South Wales	John Espirian	southwales_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Thames Valley	Darren Mitcham	thamesvalley_areagroup@istc.org.uk
West of Scotland	Group leader required	istc@istc.org.uk
East of Scotland	Holli Hamilton	eastscotland_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Yorkshire	Dee Vincent-Day	yorkshire_areagroup@istc.org.uk

Special interest groups:

Name	Leader	Email Contact Details
MadSIG	Group leader required	istc@istc.org.uk

Using Eventbrite to register attendance at area group meetings

Some area group meetings are posted on Eventbrite. Where this is the case, we ask 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, please contact the organiser, even if it is at short notice.

ISTC online groups

ISTC on LinkedIn

There are a number of LinkedIn groups for ISTC members, and we invite you to join the relevant ones.

■ Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators www.linkedin.com/groups/1858546

England

■ Cambridge Technical Communicators www.linkedin.com/groups/1805651

■ London – N/A

■ ISTC Midlands Area Group www.linkedin.com/groups/4835591

■ North East England – N/A

■ ISTC NW England www.linkedin.com/groups/2445779

- Southern Area Group www.linkedin.com/groups/4795279
- ISTC South West England www.linkedin.com/groups/8269000
- Thames Valley Area Group www.linkedin.com/groups/4805266
- Yorkshire www.linkedin.com/groups/4662452

Wales
- South Wales Group www.linkedin.com/groups/5161265

Scotland
- East of Scotland www.linkedin.com/groups/13536907
- West of Scotland Area Group www.linkedin.com/groups/5081412

Ireland
- ISTC Irish Group – N/A
- Irish Technical Writers – An ISTC Area Group www.linkedin.com/groups/3369559

Special interest group
- MadCap UK and Europe Users Group www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=5081593

ISTC on social media

Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and Instagram, and watch us on YouTube to keep up to date with news, events and activities, and to chat with your TechComm colleagues.

If you're new to the ISTC and are wondering what TCUK is, it's our excellent (yes, we're biased, but it is) annual conference.

Our Facebook presence:
The ISTC page:
www.facebook.com/istccommunity

The ISTC group: www.facebook.com/groups/490570891153888

The TCUK page:
www.facebook.com/techcommuk/

Our Twitter presence:
ISTC: @ISTC_org

TCUK: @TCUK_conf

Our Instagram presence:
ISTC_org

Our YouTube channel:
www.youtube.com/user/istctechcomm

Business affiliate news

kothes and 3di found kothes UK Ltd

Following the successful completion of recent projects together, 3di and kothes have established a joint venture company in the UK to make it easier to deliver for customers.

3di is an ISTC Silver Business Affiliate and kothes is a regular exhibitor and contributor to the ISTC's TCUK Conference.

Building on their complementary strengths, the new kothes UK Ltd company will enable 3di and kothes to collaborate to meet the English language documentation and specialist technical consultancy needs of kothes and 3di customers across Europe.

Lars Kothes, kothes CEO, explains: "The 3di team provides kothes and our customers with outstanding English language technical communicators, across a wide range of industry disciplines. They also offer particular expertise and innovation in designing technical information solutions for software users and developers. Their delivery capability in the UK and Poland, and their experience with customers worldwide adds new and creative elements to the suite of kothes services."

Paul Ballard, 3di Managing Director, comments: "kothes have an unrivalled team of technical communication consultants and documentation system engineers. Our UK customers will benefit from their proven experience of delivering for manufacturing and engineering industries; and of designing content management and content delivery solutions that integrate with product lifecycle management and improve the user experience."

Both kothes and 3di approach delivering high quality for customers in very similar

Paul Ballard and Lars Kothes

ways. This will help ensure that working together, deploying resources and scaling up to meet customer needs will be easier and more efficient. The new kothes UK company will control and organise projects so that each customer receives the optimal solution.

More information about this collaboration is available here.
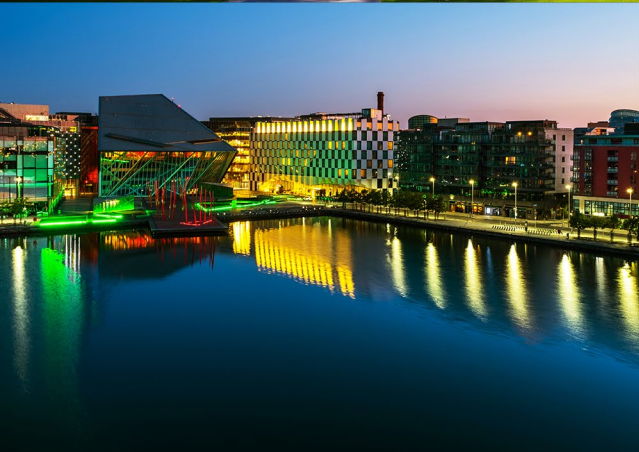
Inspiring language of maths education project made possible after securing Erasmus+ funding

Cherryleaf Ltd has recently announced that it is part of a transnational partnership that has been successful in gaining EU Erasmus+ funding for the Mathspeak education project.

Cherryleaf Ltd is acting as project coordinator for the Mathspeak project which the Erasmus+ programme announced, at the end of December 2018, had received its funding.

The Mathspeak project aims to provide non-native language speaking students with the means by which they can do maths better. When students study mathematics in a foreign language, the language itself adds layers of difficulty to something that is already abstract and opaque. Research shows that students don't perform at mathematics as well as they could. This is because they need words and grammar to discuss and understand the mathematical

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MADWORLD

DUBLIN, IRELAND

The Premier Technical Communication and Content Strategy Conference

The Marker Hotel | Dublin, Ireland >>> OCTOBER 8-11, 2019

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terminology, such as the functions and operations.

The learning materials will help tackle academic underachievement, alienation and disaffection, which can lead to students leaving school at an early age.

The target groups are students in Years 8-12 at secondary school, or in further education, who have intermediate and pre-intermediate levels of competence in a foreign language. They could be immigrants, international students in foreign language speaking institutions, students in a country or institution where the language of maths instruction is not the mother tongue, or students in their home countries learning a foreign language.

Work is now underway to develop the Mathspeak training modules, with the two-year project due to be completed in September 2020. Upon completion, schools around the EU will be able to download and use the free educational materials that have been developed.

Industry and general news

Technical communication in Europe

How does the technical communication profession vary across Europe? The tekom Europe Country Reports have been compiled for a number of nations and it shows that the picture is quite diverse.

Information about job profile and recognition, training and education, demand, and the industrial sectors in which technical communicators are predominately found has been collated for nine countries (Germany, France, Belgium, Ireland, Finland, Italy, Spain, Hungary and Greece).

The summary shows that while there is a demand for technical communicators in all the countries the profession is still not widely recognised, although the level of awareness is improving. It also highlights

that – with some exceptions – the availability of training in the field remains limited. You can access the findings here.

The State of APIs 2018 report

In September 2018, Pusher interviewed 400 professional application developers, based in both the United States and the United Kingdom, to examine how they make decisions regarding the dilemma of "build versus buy". A report summarising the survey results has recently been published.

The report explores the current usage of APIs, developers' preferences, top API functionalities and more. Key findings include:

▶ 56% of respondents in both countries reported using third-party APIs in their applications.

▶ The average developer in the USA uses at least 18 APIs to power their applications, compared to 12 APIs used by the average UK developer.

▶ Data handling is the most common use of APIs across all organisations in both markets.

The full report is available here.

About the ISTC's Business Affiliates

Our Business Affiliate programme has been in place for over 15 years. It enables organisations to take advantage of a range of benefits, and to contribute to promoting technical communication as a profession. Find out more here.

A full list of our current Business Affiliates is found here.

Tricks of the trade

This month, **Dr Mike Unwalla FISTC** shares information about [LanguageTool](#) – software that can help you proofread.

A screenshot from LanguageTool

In British English, some words have more than one possible spelling (aeon/eon; customise/customize; generalisation/generalization).

The "z" spelling of words such as customise/customize and generalisation/generalization is known as "Oxford spelling". For a good introduction, refer to [blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2011/03/28/ize-or-ise/](#).

Because of the name "Oxford spelling", many people think that the "z" spelling is a style convention and that the "s" spelling is the correct spelling for British English. It is not. The "s" spelling is the newer spelling variant. The New Universal Dictionary, reprinted 1958, says, "The spellings -ise, -iser, -isation, and so on have been adopted throughout, since they are always permissible according to modern usage even where -ize, etc., may be the strict rule."

The Economist Style Guide, 12th edition, says that "The American convention is to spell with 'z' many words that some British people and publishers (including 'The Economist') spell with 's'. The 'z' spelling is, of course, also a correct British form." Because a word can have more than one spelling in British English, a document can contain inconsistencies. Although

a good human editor will find such inconsistencies, most editing software does not find them. But, [LanguageTool](#) can. The screenshot opposite shows examples. Variants of the same word are underlined in blue. Words that can be spelled with "s" or "z" are underlined in green.

LanguageTool is free. Use the online version or download the desktop version.

Do you have a TechComm trick or tip to share? Have you recently come across something that made you exclaim, "If only I'd know that sooner!"? It might be software-related, a grammar tip, the discovery of a particularly useful YouTube tutorial…

Please send an overview of your insight, and a short description of who you are, to newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk and I will publish it in a future edition. Let's put our heads together and help each other out.

Blog news

By Ginny Critcher

Hello again! Here's the latest blog round up from the popular blogs on technical communication.

Cherryleaf's Ellis Pratt looks at the KonMari approach to online content:

https://www.cherryleaf.com/2019/01/the-konmari-approach-to-online-content/.

Sarah O'Keefe at Scriptorium predicts a 2019 trend – smarter content in unexpected places:

https://www.scriptorium.com/2019/01/2019-trend-smarter-content-in-unexpected-places/.

Sarah Maddox on her FFeathers blog gives hints and tips on preparing for applying for a tech author role for Google in Sydney:

https://ffeathers.wordpress.com/.

Tom Johnson on his I'd rather be writing blog looks at TechComm trends:

https://idratherbewriting.com/2019/01/17/recording-brighttalk-trends/.

3di' s Jakob Wisniewski asks why PDF refuses to die:

https://3di-info.com/pdf-refuses-to-die-why-is-that/.

John Saito at the UX Collective asks if UX writers should code:

https://uxdesign.cc/should-ux-writers-code-6a28af11e1a8.

Do you have a blog? Seen an interesting post? Let me know so I can include it in my monthly review. Email ginny@cherryleaf.com.

Ginny has a background as a skilled trainer and information designer, and is responsible for the development of Cherryleaf's training courses. In addition to her skills in information design, she has over twenty years' experience in teaching and training throughout the world. She is Cherryleaf's representative to the ISTC.

Training and event reviews

Have you recently attended a training course or event that you think would be of interest to our community of readers? Why not submit a short review? Email newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

Training courses

Armada

Armada is offering a 10% discount for ISTC members on all the following courses.

February

14-15   Introduction to Adobe Captivate
This course teaches everything you need to create professional standard e-learning tutorials and high quality demos.

Armada, Bromsgrove.

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

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...February

18-19 **Authoring structured FrameMaker documents**
Covers the fundamentals of using of FrameMaker in structured mode, teaching how to create and edit documents using structured FrameMaker templates.
Armada, Newbury.
www.armada.co.uk/course/ authoring-structured-framemaker-documents-training.

20-21 **Creating Element Definition Documents (EDDs)**
Teaches how to:
- Build an Element Definition Document.
- Link elements using formatting rules to a FrameMaker template.
- Convert legacy data to a Structured FrameMaker file using a conversion table.
Armada, Newbury.
www.armada.co.uk/course/ creating-element-definition-documents-edds-training.

21-22 **Introduction to Adobe Captivate**
This course teaches everything you need to create professional standard e-learning tutorials and high-quality demos.
Armada, Sheffield.
www.armada.co.uk/course/ captivate-training.

March

4-5 **Introduction to Adobe FrameMaker**
Provides a thorough grounding in standard FrameMaker (unstructured mode), covering the essential techniques for generating high standard printed documents. Includes master pages, graphics, tables and FrameMaker's document revision features.
Armada, Newbury.
www.armada.co.uk/course/ framemaker-training.

14-15 **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.
Armada, Bromsgrove.
www.armada.co.uk/course/ indesign-training.

14-15 **Advanced Adobe FrameMaker**
Teaches everything you need to be able to:
- Create and maintain FrameMaker templates.
- Build and maintain multi-chapter books with cross-references, table of contents and an index.
Armada, Newbury.
www.armada.co.uk/course/ advanced-framemaker-training.

14-15 **Introduction to Adobe Captivate**
This course teaches everything you need to create professional standard e-learning tutorials and high-quality demos.
Armada, Reading.
www.armada.co.uk/course/ captivate-training.

...Armada

...March

18-19 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.
Armada, Sheffield.

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

21-22 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.
Armada, Bristol.

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

25-26 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.
Armada, Milton Keynes.

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

25-26 Introduction to Adobe Captivate
This course teaches everything you need to create professional standard e-learning tutorials and high-quality demos.
Armada, Bristol.

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

25-29 Technical Authoring Training Programme
ISTC-accredited programme comprising:

- Introduction to technical authoring (1 day)
- Intermediate technical authoring (2 days)
- Advanced technical authoring (2 days)

Training in core technical authoring skills for new and experienced technical authors. Attend the complete programme, or just the module(s) you want.
Armada, Reading.

www.armada.co.uk/course/technical-author-training.

28-29 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.
Armada, Milton Keynes.

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

Training and events – discounts for ISTC members

To see all the discounts currently available to our members, log on to the Discussion Forum on the ISTC website – www.istc.org.uk/our-community/discussion-forums (you **must** be logged on to see the forums) – and go to the "Training and Events - Membership Discounts" thread in The Lobby.

Cherryleaf

We offer online training courses in:

Technical Author/Technical Writing:
https://www.cherryleaf.com/training/technical-author-basicinduction-training-course/. Cherryleaf is offering a 10% discount to ISTC members for this course.

Technical Copywriting:
https://www.cherryleaf.com/training/technical-copywriting-training-course/. This online technical copywriting training course teaches you how to write clear and effective marketing copy, in a straightforward and efficient way. Let us share with you the best practices we've developed for writing copy for software (SaaS and desktop) and other technical products.

Advanced Technical Communication:
https://cherryleaf.teachable.com/p/advanced-technical-communication. Cherryleaf's advanced technical communication skills course provides you with access to a collection of online modules in technical communication, under a low-cost monthly subscription plan. Each module is self-contained, so you can to choose to take just a single module, if you wish.

It contains:

- DITA Fundamentals
- Single Sourcing and Content Reuse
- Introduction to Content Strategy
- Documenting REST APIs
- Managing Software Documentation Projects
- Writing and Designing Embedded Help
- Markdown
- Revising and Editing Content
- Trends in Technical Communication

ESTON Training

Technical/Commercial Authorship (Former ISTC Syllabus Parts 1 & 2):
http://www.estontrg.com/technicalcommercial-authorship/. A £50 discount is offered to ISTC members for this course.

Simplified English:
http://www.estontrg.com/english-language-courses/.

Standard Generalised Mark-up Language (SGML):
http://www.estontrg.com/standard-generalised-mark-language-sgml-course/.

Editing and Publishing Magazines:
http://www.estontrg.com/editing-publishing-magazine-course/.

Report Writing:
http://www.estontrg.com/report-writing-course/.

Business English:
http://www.estontrg.com/business-english-course/.

Firehead

Learn FrameMaker 2019:
http://firehead.net/training/learn-framemaker-2017/.

Learn Adaptive Content Modelling:
http://firehead.net/training/learn-adaptive-content-modelling/.

Creating Mobile Apps without Coding:
http://firehead.net/training/creating-mobile-apps-without-coding/.

Customer Journey Mapping:
http://firehead.net/training/customer-journey-mapping/.

MadCap Software

For details of the latest MadCap Software training schedule (both on-site and online) visit: www.madcapsoftware.com/services/training/.

Events listings

February

5   **ISTC North East England Area Group Meeting**
We will be discussing authoring tools. Please register via Eventbrite if you would like to attend. For more information email northeastengland_areagroup@istc.org.uk.

The Town Wall, Pink Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5HX from 18:00 – 20:30.

5   **ISTC Thames Valley Area Group Meeting**
We will be focusing on translation this month. For more information email thamesvalley_areagroup@istc.org.uk.

Bird in Hand Hotel, Bath Road, Knowl Hill, Reading, RG10 9UP at 19:30

12   **SustainableUX: Design vs Climate Change**
The conference for UX, front-end, and product people who want to make a positive impact – on climate-change, social equality, and inclusion.

Online.

https://sustainableux.com/.

21   **The UX Conference**
The theme of the conference is designers and marketing. With speakers from Canonical, Which?, Ocado, Monzo, Condé Nast, Booking, Thomas Cook, Virgin Atlantic and others.

London, UK.

https://theuxconf.com.

25-28   **Learning DITA Live 2019**
Dive deeper into DITA at the second LearningDITA Live event. Free to attend.

Online.

https://learningdita.com/learningdita-live-2019/2019-sessions/.

March

5   **ISTC Thames Valley Area Group Meeting**
Jen Lambourne from Government Document Services (GDS) will be joining us to talk about "Docs as Code". For more information email thamesvalley_areagroup@istc.org.uk.

Bird in Hand Hotel, Bath Road, Knowl Hill, Reading, RG10 9UP at 19:30

14-15   **Future of Information and Communication Conference (FICC) 2019**
FICC 2019 aims to provide a forum for researchers from both academia and industry to share their latest research contributions and exchange knowledge with the common goal of shaping the future of Information and Communication.

San Francisco, USA.

http://saiconference.com/FICC.

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30-5 **NN/g UX Conference**
This conference will help you get up to speed on user experience best practices so you can create successful interfaces. Seven days of in-depth, full-day courses (attend as few or as many as you like).
London, UK.
https://www.nngroup.com/training/london.

April

3-5 **Agile in the City**
Returning for its fifth year, the conference has a strong practical focus and attracts industry practitioners and decision-makers who want to improve their success with agile and lean methods.
London, UK.
https://2019.london.agileinthecity.net.

11-12 **Information Energy 2019**
Information Energy 2019 focuses on how we empower emerging technologies with information.
Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
https://www.informationenergy.org/.

25 **ISTC East of Scotland Area Group Meeting**
Topic to be confirmed nearer the time. For more information email Holli Hamilton: eastscotland areagroup@istc.org.uk.
Corero Network Security, 53 Hanover Street, Edinburgh at 18:00.

Join the ISTC

Discover the five benefits of being an ISTC member:

What the ISTC offers

May

5-8 **STC's Technical Communication Summit**
The STC Summit, which celebrates its 66th anniversary in 2019, features top-notch presenters to discuss key trends, issues, and cutting-edge solutions in technical communication.
Denver, CO, USA.
https://summit.stc.org/conference/.

June

20 **National Freelancers Day**
Join IPSE, the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed, for their annual flagship event.
London, UK.
https://www.nationalfreelancersday.com.

September

10-12   Technical Communication UK (TCUK) Conference
The ISTC's annual conference for everyone involved in writing, editing, illustrating, delivering and publishing technical information.
Kenilworth, Warwickshire, England.
http://technicalcommunicationuk. com.

October

8-11   MadWorld 2019 Dublin
The premier technical communication and content strategy conference for the MadCap Software user community.
Dublin,
Ireland.
https://www.madcapsoftware.com/ blog/2018/12/06/speak-madworld- 2019-dublin-call-presentations- now-open/.

Upcoming webinars

If you know of a webinar that will be of interest to readers, please email newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

February

21   How to Prepare your MadCap Flare Project for Localization
This webinar will provide insight into what happens – or should happen – when you send your Flare project off for translation, and what you can do to help your translation vendor deliver fully functional, correctly translated Flare projects.
https://www.madcapsoftware.com/ resources/live-webinars.aspx.

26   How a CAT Tool can Help You
This short webinar is a perfect introduction for people who have never used a Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) tool before.
https://www.sdl.com/event/ language/webinars/02-2019/how-a- cat-tool-can-help-you.html.

March

12   Let's Talk Cybersecurity
Join Scott Abel, The Content Wrangler, for a discussion about cybersecurity with Toni Flores, editor of "The Language of Cybersecurity", M.K. Palmore, Senior Federal Law Enforcement Executive for the FBI, and cyberdefense specialist, Keyaan Williams of Cyber Leadership and Strategy Solutions, LLC. We'll discuss the current state of cyber warfare and help you understand a variety of vulnerabilities, exploits, defenses and controls.
https://www.brighttalk.com/ webcast/9273/336535.

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Back page

Happy Chinese New Year!

Chinese New Year, China's biggest holiday, is on 5 February this year. Officially, the holiday runs for three days, but unofficially it is celebrated for two weeks. During this time, the world's largest human migration takes place as hundreds of millions of Chinese people return home to celebrate. The holiday is also marked in other countries, including Vietnam and South Korea, and by people of Chinese descent all over the world. Even if you have no connection to China it is often used as an excuse to enjoy a Chinese meal.

Particular foods are believed to bring good fortune if eaten on New Year's Day, including chicken (for general good fortune), fish (for abundance), noodles (for longevity), and dumplings because they look like gold ingots. Avoid duck, because the word duck (ya), sounds like a word that means to oppress. Also, don't say the number four in Chinese (si), because it sounds like the word for death. On the other hand, some numbers are auspicious: three (san) because it sounds like the word for life, six (liu) because it sounds like flowing, and eight (ba) because it sounds like wealth.

Each year on the Chinese calendar is assigned an animal of the zodiac, with the sequence being repeated every 12 years. Last year was the Year of the Dog, and 2019 is the Year of the Pig. The Pig is the twelfth of the zodiac animals. According to one myth the animals were arranged in the order by which they arrived at the Jade Emperor's party. One theory states that Pig was late because he overslept. Another story says that a wolf destroyed his house; he had to rebuild it before he could set off. Whatever happened, he was the last to arrive and hence took twelfth place.

Don't forget to enter our Neologism Contest which was launched last month. Make up an amusing alternative definition for a common word and email it to newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

The size of Wales

A quick quiz. How big is the Amazon rainforest?*

Another question. How do you effectively describe enormous objects?

According to this BBC News article, Wales has been a helpful yardstick for quite some time; the phrase "about the size of Wales" can be traced back to 1844. The Land of My Fathers has been used to describe the area an asteroid could wipe out if it collided with Earth, explain the vastness of an iceberg, depict how much damage a nuclear bomb could cause, and delineate deforestation.

Are you familiar with the expression? Even if you weren't already, now that it's on your radar expect to hear or see it regularly! Tot up the number of times you encounter (or use) the expression in the next month and let me know.

*Answer: Amazon rainforest = 316 x Wales (source: BBC/WWF/Ordnance Survey).