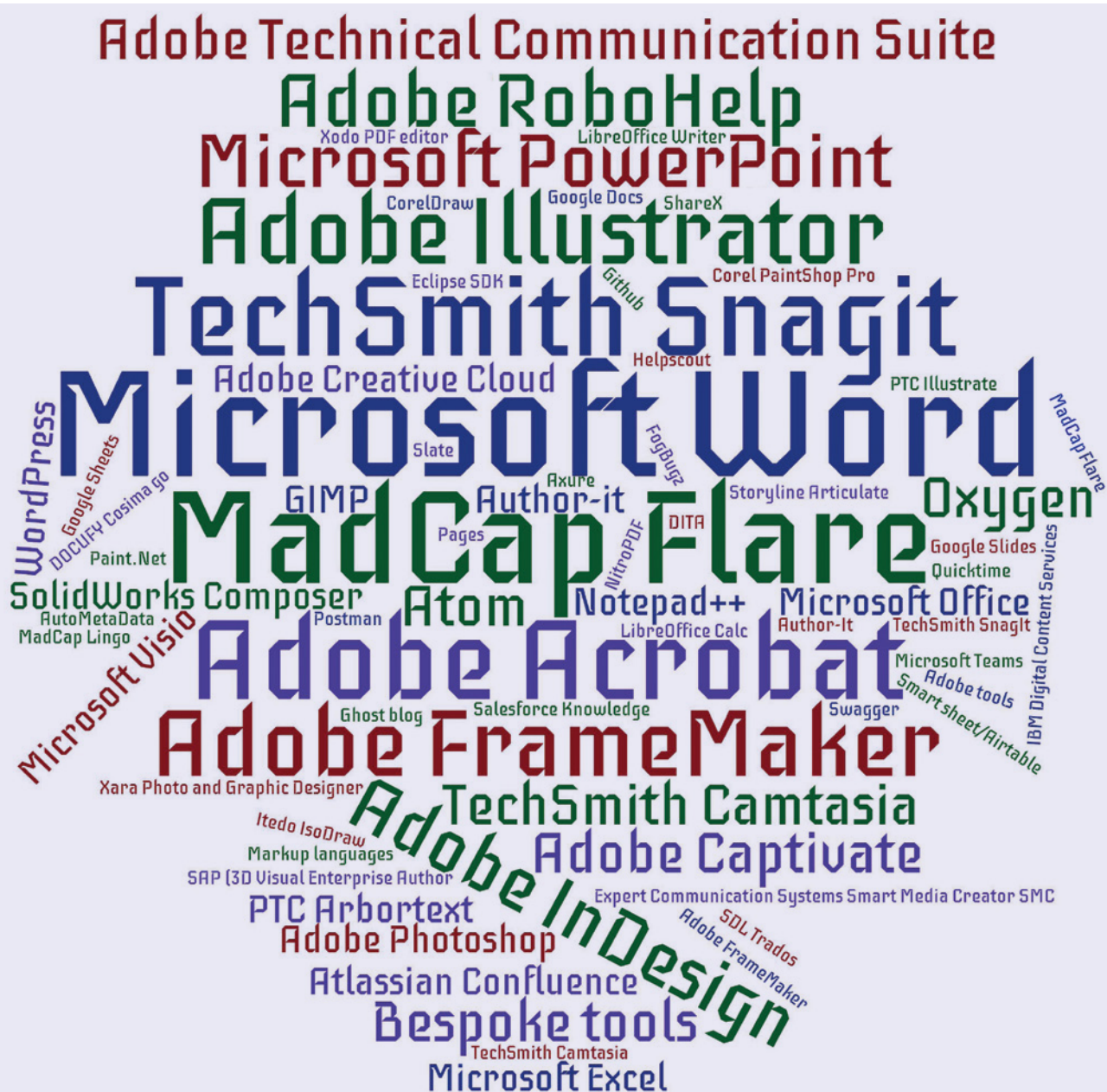




Communicator

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Claire Walsh shares the structure of her home working day

I start each day with a cup of coffee while I catch up on the news online. I work from home for a company called TWi, so I don't have the chance to wake up en route to work. Therefore, I need to allocate time in the mornings to caffeinate. After the caffeine has taken full effect, I log onto my work laptop.

“ Flexi-time gives me a work-life balance. ”

I'm usually online around 9am, but today I've gotten up earlier because I'm meeting my mother for coffee after work, so I want to finish earlier today. That's one of the benefits of flexi-time; I can have a work-life balance that meets my needs on any particular day.

The first thing I do when I log on is check my inbox, reply to any emails that I've received since logging off the day before, and jot down any actions I need to take.

I am an ardent list writer; I use lists to organise just about everything. Typically, before I log off every day, I write down a provisional to-do list for the next day. So, after reading my emails, I update my list from the day

before. I like to have an achievable set of tasks to complete. Crossing each one off is a little win.

Now that I have my goals set for the day, I take on the first task on my list: complete the information security awareness refresher quiz. This is an internal quiz to ensure that all TWi staff are up to date with our information security awareness processes and policies.

After this, I begin working on a client project. I'm currently working on an online help single-sourcing project for a multi-national company (MNC). This involves taking content that has been combined from various sources into one and streamlining it to make it work as a single source for multiple regions. I am working on this project with two other writers from TWi in collaboration with a team of subject matter experts from the MNC. Working with two other writers is great because I can reach out to them if I want a second opinion.

“ Readability scores show the impact re-authoring has on help pages. ”

Today, we are collecting screenshots of some of the help pages that are currently live on MNC's website and getting the readability scores for these pages before we begin the process of re-authoring them. This is an important step in the process as it allows us to show the client the impact that re-authoring has had on the content at the end of the process.

At 11am I have a one-to-one meeting with my manager. We catch up on the progress of projects and discuss upcoming work for the week ahead.

After this, I resume working on the client project until lunch time. I like to use lunch time to organise my personal life. Right now, I'm in the process of planning a wedding and have recently moved home, so for the last few months I've been using lunch time to catch up on any personal emails I have from wedding suppliers or about my home move.

After lunch, I work on the client project until 3pm. At 3pm, there is a presentation about the work done by the Cork Simon charity. TWi, as a Cork-based company, has partnered with Cork Simon to assist the charity

in their effort to improve the lives of homeless people in the Cork community. It is great to see the impact that TWi has made in partnership with Cork Simon.

Following the presentation, I finish up working on the screenshots and readability scores for the client project and move onto re-authoring one of the topics. I start by migrating the content from a Word file to the authoring tool that we are using for this project, XMetaL. I then edit the content to ensure that the information is relevant and written to a high standard. As this information is aimed at the general public, it's important to ensure that it is clear and easy to read. For this purpose, we use a tool called Acrolinx on this project. It allows us to see the readability score of the content and identify any areas where the writing could be improved.

At 4.50pm, I finish up on client work. Then, I check my emails for the last time and create my provisional to-do list for the next day. At 5pm, I log off and cross the threshold of my home office into the hallway, and that's it, I'm home. No rush hour traffic or waiting for a bus. This is the key benefit of working from home for me. Once work is complete, the rest of the day is mine to spend how I like.

“ No rush hour traffic or waiting for a bus. ”

Getting out is important when you work from home, so I try to get out as much as possible when I'm not working. Usually, I go for a walk after work, but since it's still winter in Ireland and we're in the midst of storm Dennis, I think a warm cafe will do just fine. **C**

Claire Walsh is an information developer at TWi, a leading provider of outsourced technical writing, editing, and documentation solutions in Cork, Ireland.