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Mike Austin Award 2019

Accepting this award for his contribution to the ISTC over numerous years, **Peter Fountain** recounts his involvement.

During a spate of very busy activity at my various works, I missed a few emails and a couple of phone calls from our President Carol Leahy. Not to worry, I thought, it can't be too important or the issue would have been detailed for me to address it. It is fair to say that when we finally connected, I was not at all prepared for the news that I had been voted by the ISTC Council to receive the Mike Austin award. In case you've not heard of this award before, our website details it as "The ISTC award for outstanding service to the ISTC was introduced in 2004. An occasional award, when a deserving individual is identified, it is issued in recognition of the hard work and commitment of individuals who have helped the ISTC to achieve and exceed its goals."

It's funny how time flies when you're enjoying yourself — but when it was mentioned that I had been a member of the ISTC for 35 years, and a Council member for over 20, I was surprised that my involvement has been almost as long as my career in what was once called Technical Publications.

As you may have read in a previous article of mine (Why would anyone bother? *Communicator* Spring 2012) I had a slow start in contributing to

the ISTC. However, once I started I found the undertaking immensely rewarding. Many of the issues that have materialised proved to be great training for the way businesses and our profession, and work generally, are changing. Working with (mostly) unpaid volunteers, all of whom have numerous other conflicting pressures on their time, is replicated by my inability to devote all of my attention all of the time to current and ongoing issues. The world we are moving towards is one of equal partnerships where people choose who to work for, support and who to spend time with. This ongoing multilevel competition for attention and resources is present in industry as well as the ISTC. I was very involved in running one of the first Area Groups for a few years. As a member of Council I've provided general support and carried out the annual Salary and Benefits survey for many years. In addition, I've been Treasurer since 2002 (which included a massive sourcing of external support in 2008) amongst many other diverse and interesting tasks. It has certainly been a great training ground in the partnership way of working with individuals and organisations, all of whom are moving in the direction indicated.

In my acceptance speech, at this year's well organised TCUK conference at Chesford Grange, Kenilworth, Warwickshire I mentioned how amazed I was to receive the award for doing something that I see as a most enjoyable and rewarding activity. I could have added that I feel the benefit of this activity has helped me enormously in my professional (and private) life and that while undertaking the tasks they have taught me many valuable and free lessons in an environment where work pressures are absent. In other words, providing such support to the ISTC has helped me immeasurably while, I hope, benefited the ISTC too. I would heartily recommend others to consider providing their contribution as I and all the other Council members have done over the years — it could be one of the most useful things you can do to enhance not only your professional career but also enrich your working environment.

I would like to thank Council for selecting me for this award, ASL and the rest of the ISTC for their support over the years, and I look forward to working with new individuals and to continue making contributions to further help and facilitate the goals of the ISTC for the benefit of all. **C**



References

Fountain P (2012) 'Why would anyone bother?' *Communicator*, Spring 2012: 10
 Mike Austin Award www.istc.org.uk/professional-development-and-recognition/mike-austin-award (accessed 1 November 2019)



Peter Fountain FISTC, ISTC Treasurer joined the ISTC in 1984 and became a Fellow in 1997.

He became an ISTC council member in the mid-1990s, and has been honorary treasurer since 2002.

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