Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators
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Guidelines for Contributors

Introduction

These guidelines provide general instructions on preparing material for *Communicator*. For more specific advice, please e-mail the Commissioning Editor or the ISTC Office istc@istc.org.uk.

Copyright

Articles in *Communicator* are copyright and are the property of the authors, who have asserted their moral rights. However, *Communicator* is also published on the ISTC's website (ISTC members only) and submission of articles for publication in the journal signifies permission to publish in both media.

Note: The rules of the International Council for Technical Communication, INTECOM, give member societies (of which the ISTC is one) the right to reproduce articles from the journals of other member societies. Contributing to an ISTC publication implies acceptance of this rule.

Authors must respect other people's copyright. Give credit for any text or graphics you include; obtain written permission to use anything that is not covered by the 'fair use' provision of copyright law.

Deadlines

The 2021 deadline dates for *Communicator* are as follows:

Issue	Copy deadline date	Publication date	Theme
Spring	24 January	12 March	Language
Summer	9 May	25 June	Emerging Trends
Autumn	22 August	8 October	Diversity
Winter	24 October	10 December	Communicating Visually

Personal profile

We publish an author biography of up to 50 words with articles, for which we need the following:

- Name (first and last), ISTC grade and any other 'letters' to follow your name
- Professional title and employer if relevant
- Credentials for writing the article, such as qualifications, experience and professional involvement
- High resolution photo (recommended 300dpi, minimum requirement 150dpi) of the author
- Email address if you are willing to be contacted by readers and website URL if available
- Blog addresses, Twitter, LinkedIn and Medium accounts if relevant

Note: The profile may be shortened if space is short.

Length

Items may cover half, one, two or three pages. Detailed items of exceptional interest may run to four pages or may be more effective divided into a series of shorter articles; please discuss this with the Editor. The following table shows approximate word counts (which will vary with the number of graphics you use):

Pages	Words
Half	425
One	850
Two	1700
Three	2550
Four	3400

Articles that exceed required lengths may have to be edited. We try to obtain approval from authors before publishing edited articles but deadlines may prevent this.

Structure

Bear in mind the need for visual appeal and readability:

- Use headings and sub-headings to chunk information; try to avoid the use of more than two heading levels below the main headline.
- Use lists to structure text; number items where the order is significant and otherwise use bullets; try to avoid more than one level of points within a list.
- Consider providing material for sidebars or panels; indicate that these are required.

Elements

Communicator contains two main types of content: features and regulars. Features are the articles and series of articles offered to the Editor by contributors without an ongoing commitment to fill a particular slot. Regulars are, as their name suggests, designed to provide a consistent framework to the journal using content from regular contributors. The following table shows the elements used in features and regulars.

Note: The requirements for book reviews are the subject of separate guidelines.

Element	Length	Features	Regulars
Banner (top-left corner of page)	up to 20 characters	Standard noun to help in searching for a subject-area	Fixed when the regular slot is agreed
Headline	up to 35 characters	Snappy title capturing the essence of your theme	Snappy title capturing the essence of your theme
Standfirst	up to 120 characters	Enticing explanation of the thrust of your article	Enticing explanation of the thrust of your article
Author profile	up to 400 characters	For one-page articles, shorten profile to 30 words	Regulars are one page so shorten profile to 30 words

Note: Spaces are counted as characters in lengths shown.

It is helpful if authors propose content for these elements. Where they are not provided, the editorial team creates them as part of the copyediting stage. For examples, please refer to a back issue of the journal (Spring 2003 onwards).

Formatting

Communicator is compiled in Adobe InDesign™ and text will be formatted for publication in this package.

If you are working in Word, please download our template from: https://istc.org.uk/homepage/publications-and-resources/communicator. This provides a reasonable approximation of the final typeset appearance of articles and contains instructions for preparing copy that can be imported into InDesign with very little manual intervention.

If you are not working in Word or choose not to use the template, please use only basic formatting to convey the structure of your submission and any elements that need to be emphasised:

- Do not use blank lines and additional spaces to spread out your work. To adjust paragraph spacing, use the settings in your word processor. Use a table structure to space information horizontally.
- Do not insert hyperlinks and remove any that are created automatically by your word processor.
- Set the language of your document to UK or British English. To select language in Word, use Tools>Language>Set Language.
- Make sure that the number of spaces after a full stop is one. To set this in Word, use Tools>Options>Spelling & Grammar. Under the 'Grammar' options, click on 'Settings'. Set 'Spaces required between sentences' to '1'.
- If your article is more than one page long, add simple page numbers at the foot of each page to help us keep the pages in sequence (the numbers will be removed when *Communicator* is compiled).
- *Please note that the Word template is in .dotx format and therefore you may find that it does not work for you. If this is the case, don't spend time trying to get it to work, just create a document with basic formatting. Thanks.*

Illustrations

Where possible, design graphics to illustrate text; this is especially important in articles explaining how to do a task or use a tool. For diagrams, use a sans serif typeface, lower case letters for annotations and bold text for highlighting specific elements. Reference all graphics from the text, explaining their significance, and place the references before the graphics.

If you can create graphics yourself, use a common format such as .eps, .tiff, .ai or .jpeg. For raster formats, save at a high resolution, with minimum compression settings. Avoid converting vector graphics into raster formats. If you want to use photographs, supply sharp copyright-free images suitable for publication or explain the requirement so the Editorial Team can source an appropriate image.

If you include screenshots, treat them differently from photographic images:

- Prior to taking a screenshot, please change your **Appearance** settings to the default style for your operating system to remove any personalised text or window effects;

- Save in TIFF format with CMYK colour;

- Do not adjust the resolution;

- Do not resample; that is, do not artificially remove or add any pixels.

- Do not encode a file with an indexed or subset colour palette, unless your image editing application provides the option to use a Selective/Perceptual palette (this avoids the introduction of noise, artefacts and banding into the image)

- Do remember that *Communicator* is a print journal and therefore all images need to be saved with a high resolution.

Cover photographs

We welcome cover photographs related to articles. These should be eye-catching and provide suitable areas for cover text to be positioned. They must be good quality photographs, digitised at high resolution. The minimum acceptable resolution is 200 dpi (requiring an image size, after cropping, of 1732 pixels wide by 1969 pixels high); the industry standard resolution is 300 dpi (requiring 2598 pixels wide by 2953 pixels high).

References

Quoting your sources enhances the credibility of your writing and enables readers to research a topic further. *Communicator* uses the Harvard system for referencing. When you reference a work, you can do it in one of three ways:

- Denscombe (1998) states that the Harvard system is more commonplace these days.
- The Harvard system is used more widely than the alternative numerical system (Denscombe 1998).
- It has been stated that 'the Harvard system … is more commonplace these days' (Denscombe 1998: 228).

Giving a page number (as in the third example) enables readers to check exactly what your source wrote on the subject.

Present your list of references as follows:

Denscombe, M (1998) *The Good Research Guide for small-scale social research projects*. Boston. Allyn & Bacon.

For articles, include both the title of the article and the name of the journal in which it was published:

Raison, B (2000) 'ILS and the motor industry', *Communicator*, Winter 2000: 28.

You may also want to give contact details for organisations mentioned in your article.

Online references are cited in a similar way but with the addition of a URL and access date:

Nielsen J (1997) *Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox*, March, 1997; 'Be Succinct!' (online) available at www.useit.com/alertbox/9703b.html (accessed August 2002)

Article filenaming

Before you submit an article it would ease the editing process if you could ensure that:

- All changes to date have been accepted.
- Each page is numbered
- The file name better reflects the title of the item
- The file name includes the author's name or initials.

Contributing process

The articles are commissioned by the Editor. All readers are also able to suggest ideas / articles for contribution as well.

Each article is edited with feedback given to the contributor. The article may go back and forth between the editor and contributor until both parties are happy with the article.

The article then goes to the copyeditors.

About 2 weeks after the copy deadline date the articles go to the Production Editor for typesetting.

The PDF produced by the typesetters is reviewed by the proofreaders. At this stage, the contributors also have a final say to make very minor changes.

Final changes are made by the typesetters. A month after the copy deadline the final PDF goes to the printer for printing and distribution.

All contributors will be sent a PDF version of their finalised article around the publication date of the corresponding issue.

Copies of *Communicator*

Every contributor to an issue is offered up to 5 copies of the corresponding issue of *Communicator.* All contributors are normally asked when all the articles have been typeset.

Distribution of *Communicator*

1000 copies of *Communicator* are normally printed for each issue. These copies are sent to ISTC members, subscribers, business affiliates, contributors and events.