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InfoPlus

Monthly newsletter from the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

January 2022

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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](#).

Advertising: [Felicity Davie](#)

Editorial: [Michaël McFarland Campbell](#)

Layout Editor: [Bob Hewitt](#)

Blogs Editor: [Ginny Critcher](#)

ISTC Office: Unit 19 Omega Business Village Thurston Road Northallerton, DL6 2NJ

Tel: +44 (0)20 8253 4506
Email: istc@istc.org.uk
Web: www.istc.org.uk

Highlights

Welcome to 2022 already. Every New Year has people making resolutions. Perhaps you have an article you want to write for *InfoPlus*, perhaps you have an event coming up you want people to come to. Why not make one of your resolutions to let me know so I can put it in future editions of *InfoPlus*? There's a handy list of monthly deadlines later in the newsletter on [page 7](#).

Michaël.

ISTC news

UK Technical Communications Awards January 2022

From Linda Robins, ISTC President

Thinking of making New Year's resolutions for 2022? Why not enter for an award?

The annual UK Technical Communications Awards recognise best practices and outstanding contributions to technical communication. Each year we invite entries from individuals or teams (or their sponsors) so we can recognise and reward the best examples.

Anyone can enter. We encourage entries of all types, traditional documentation to those demonstrating technical innovation—anything that displays, encourages, or helps the production of high-quality technical communication.

There is a dedicated UKTC Awards website: <https://uktcawards.com/>.

The 2021 winners were announced at the [TCUK Metro Online 2021](#) main event on Tuesday 28 September, a virtual conference hosted by the ISTC. Seven companies, with contributors from several countries, were recognised for the quality of their entries, six received Merit Awards and one was presented with the trophy as Overall Winner. We also had an award for *Communicator* article and one for the *Communicator* column of the year.

Details of these entries and their authors are given on the website: <https://uktcawards.com/past-years/winners-2021/>.

Entries for the 2022 UKTC Awards will be welcomed early this year. Details will be given in next month's *InfoPlus*.

ISTC annual survey covering employment

by Linda Robins, ISTC President

You can help make a difference!

The ISTC annual survey covering employment is now available and all technical communicators in the UK can take part. The purpose of this survey is to collect data relating to qualifications, experience, and remuneration of technical communicators in the UK.

We hope a good number of you can take part so that we get a good representation of our profession. The survey is open both to members and non-members of the ISTC.

The results will be made available to ISTC members through our publications. If you are not an ISTC member and would like to receive a copy of the survey results, please contact istc@istc.org.uk.

Click on the link here to get started.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YBFYVC7>.

Do not hesitate or delay. It will take you 10 minutes at most (guaranteed). The deadline for the survey is 28 February 2022.

ISTC membership renewals due

by Linda Robins, ISTC President

Renewals for ISTC Members opened on 1 December; payment can be made via the website or by contacting the ISTC office. Members have received an email with details and can check the [renewals link](#) of the ISTC website.

Renewals this year include the new step of choosing how you receive your copies of *Communicator*. Also this year, the previous 'Junior' membership grade has been renamed 'Entry level'.

ISTC meets Mark Lewin

by James Bartley



Wednesday 12 January 2022, 1–2 pm.

Working in developer documentation

Developer documentation is an increasingly in-demand and lucrative area for technical writers to be in. However, many are put off by the assumption that you need to be a programmer to make the switch. In this talk, Mark will tell you what it's like to work in developer documentation, what skills are required, and how you can find work.

A purple rectangular graphic with white text. At the top left is the '3di' logo, where the '3' is inside a dashed white square. To the right of the logo is the text 'Complexity made clear'. Below this is the main text: 'Do you need API documentation that's useful & helps drive engagement?'. At the bottom center is a white rounded rectangle containing the text 'Learn more'. At the bottom left is a small globe icon followed by the text '3di-info.com'.

About the speaker: Mark Lewin

Mark Lewin is a technical writer and trainer, and the author of books and training courses on various programming topics. He currently works on the documentation team at Aply. He has a particular interest in web-mapping APIs, probably due to his terrible sense of direction.

When he's not hunched over a keyboard, he likes to act (badly) in a local drama group and take his kids on one of his (now infamous) 'circular walks', where the true answer to the question 'Are we there yet?' is 'I haven't got a clue'.

Visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/istc-meets-mark-lewin-tickets-222014209477> to register to attend the event.

ISTC meets 2022

TCUK online is now called ISTC meets, and the first of our newly renamed webinars will be running in January. Details of previous events are available on the ISTC website at istc.org.uk/events. You can find details of our January event via [our Eventbrite page](#). Follow us there to be immediately notified when our lineup of events for next year goes live.

TCUK website moved

by James Bartley

All information about the TCUK conference can now be found at istc.org.uk/tcuk. This move brings together information about several years' worth of conferences, including recordings, slides, and presenter details. Check it out now to find interesting talks and presenters you may have previously missed.

The ISTC Podcast

by Imogen Craigmile

In December, Amanda and I took part in a light-hearted Christmas-themed episode of the podcast. Together, we reviewed our personal highlights of the past year, produced a festive quiz, and had a laugh at some podcast outtakes. If you haven't listened yet, you can find the December episode on Podbean or just search ISTC Podcast.

The next episode will be hosted by myself, Imogen Craigmile. I am taking over the podcast microphone and am hoping to bring you more exciting episodes over the coming months. The January episode will be published on the last Friday of the month. If



you are interested in any aspect of podcasting and want to get involved with the production team, contact Imogen at istc@istc.org.uk.

Listen to the current and past podcasts at <https://istctechcomm.podbean.com/>.

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Contact felicity@tou-can.co.uk for further details!

ISTC local area and special interest groups

The ISTC groups offer opportunities 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.

Current ISTC groups

Name	Leader	Email
Cambridge	Deb Stevens	cambridge_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Midlands	James Bartley	midlands_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Thames Valley	Darren Mitcham	thamesvalley_areagroup@istc.org.uk
East of Scotland	Holli Hamilton	eastscotland_areagroup@istc.org.uk
Yorkshire	Dee Vincent-Day	yorkshire_areagroup@istc.org.uk

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 group, contact our Area Groups Manager, Tom Dumic, at areagroupsmanager@istc.org.uk.

ISTC online groups

ISTC on LinkedIn

ISTC groups on LinkedIn for ISTC members include:

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



England

- Cambridge Technical Communicators
www.linkedin.com/groups/1805651
- ISTC Midlands Area Group
www.linkedin.com/groups/4835591
- Thames Valley Area Group
www.linkedin.com/groups/4805266
- ISTC Yorkshire Area Group for Communication Professionals
www.linkedin.com/groups/4662452

Scotland

- Technical Writers (East Scotland ISTC)
www.linkedin.com/groups/13536907

Ireland

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

ISTC on Facebook

Our main Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/ISTC.org.uk

You can join the ISTC group at www.facebook.com/groups/490570891153888 for discussion with fellow professionals.

The TCUK Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/techcommuk/

ISTC on Twitter

Follow us on Twitter at @ISTC_org (www.twitter.com/ISTC_org) for everything ISTC, and specifically, @TCUK_conf (www.twitter.com/TCUK_conf) for everything to do with our annual conference TCUK.

ISTC on Instagram

We also have an Instagram account, so you can follow us there too www.instagram.com/istc_org/.

ISTC on YouTube

You can subscribe to our videos at <https://www.youtube.com/user/istctechcomm>.



Blog round up

by Ginny Critcher

December 2021

Lis Hamilton outlines some techniques for getting subject matter experts to review your content on time.

<https://www.madcapsoftware.com/blog/managing-feedback-from-your-subject-matter-experts-smes/>.

Tom Johnson, on his blog I'd rather be writing, outlines how broadening your distribution list to those outside the meeting, your notes can be a powerful way to influence those around you:

https://idratherbewriting.com/learnapidoc/docapis_meeting_notes.html.

Joe Hilger at Enterprise Knowledge discusses two of the most important tools for effective content personalization : Componentized Content Management Systems (CCMS) and Knowledge Graphs:

<https://enterprise-knowledge.com/taking-content-personalization-to-the-next-level-graphs-and-componentized-content-management/>.

Brad Frost posts about how his own definition of a design system has recently changed to address some hard-earned lessons:

<https://bradfrost.com/blog/post/design-systems-are-for-user-interfaces/>.

Daniel Beck explains why blurring screenshots is not an effective way to keep information confidential:

<https://ddbeck.com/dont-blur-for-privacy/>.



On the Cherryleaf blog you can find out about trends in tech comm in 2022: <https://www.cherryleaf.com/2021/12/podcast-119-trends-in-technical-communication-for-2022-and-beyond/>.

Do you have a blog? Let me know so I can include it in my monthly review.

Seen an interesting post? Let me know, email ginny@cherryleaf.com.

Other news

Announcing MEGAComm 2022 – 16th Annual Event for Tech Writers

by Paula Stern, MegaComm Conference Coordinator



MEGAComm 2022 is an exciting annual conference for technical writers and hi-tech professionals. Once it was a small, intimate gathering of Israeli technical writers to learn, to network, to share the latest trends and

practices in the field of technical communication. In the past few years, it has grown with international speakers and attendees.

Today it is an amazing, affordable international conference of global proportions. Last year, we had attendees from 15 different countries; speakers from four continents!

MEGAComm unites tech writers from Israel, India, Europe and the US in a friendly, informal, informative and dynamic online conference. All sessions are recorded and available after the conference to our attendees.

This year, we are thrilled to feature Tom Johnson, Sarah O’Keefe, Kirk St.Amant, major Israeli and European tech writing presenters and vendors coming together for three fantastic days.

The conference will take place February 8 – 10 (from 9:00 – 15:00 each day). The cost for all 3 days is just \$250.

For more information, see www.megacomm.org or write to info@megacomm.org.

Get your information out to other technical communicators

by Michael McFarland Campbell, InfoPlus editor

InfoPlus is the monthly online newsletter from the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators, and is there to share information from the ISTC, our sponsors, and other professionals which may be of interest to the technical communications community.

InfoPlus is usually published and distributed on the first working day of each month. Occasionally, there may be a delay until the first week of the month. Please bear this in mind when submitting time-sensitive information. Send your contributions to me at newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

The deadlines for the each of the 2022 editions are:

Edition	Deadline
February 2022	Fri 21 January 2022 at 12 noon GMT
March 2022	Fri 18 February 2022 at 12 noon GMT
April 2022	Fri 18 March 2022 at 12 noon GMT
May 2022	Fri 22 April 2022 at 12 noon GMT
June 2022	Fri 20 May 2022 at 12 noon GMT
July 2022	Fri 17 June 2022 at 12 noon GMT
August 2022	Fri 22 July 2022 at 12 noon GMT
September 2022	Fri 19 August 2022 at 12 noon GMT
October 2022	Fri 16 September 2022 at 12 noon GMT
November 2022	Fri 21 October 2022 at 12 noon GMT
December 2022	Fri 18 November 2022 at 12 noon GMT