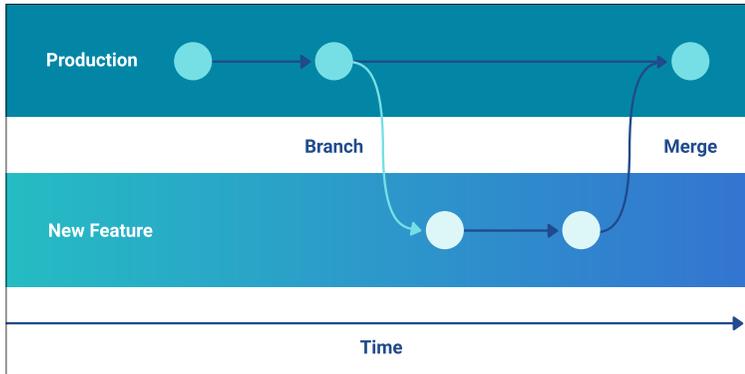


New Release

MadCap Flare 2021 r3

New Branching Support for Your MadCap Central Git Repository

Whether you are a lone author, or part of a team, branching offers many benefits. With this new feature, continuously develop new content while not affecting your main (production) branch used to generate approved content.



Branching support in MadCap Central is a huge game-changer for us. Having the ability to create a new branch and push it to MadCap Central is going to revolutionize how we manage our projects tremendously.

Rosa Davis
Technical Writer and Documentation Strategist,
Vaison

MadCap Software is Trusted
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InfoPlus

Monthly newsletter from the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

March 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](#).

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ISTC news

UKTC Awards 2022



From Linda Robins, ISTC President

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.

To encourage you to enter this year, here is some more information:

The judges assess how a particular entry meets its stated objective: details of the purpose, audience, medium, and scale of distribution are all supplied with the entry. The entrant is encouraged to give details of budgets and schedules, collaboration, and other background. Client

comments are welcome; reflections on the project, including ideas for future improvements are also encouraged.

We accept entries with content subject to a Non-Disclosure Agreement. Just make the conditions clear in the details accompanying your entry. The ISTC office and the judging panel will respect the sensitivity of the information and treat it accordingly.

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.

We encourage entries of all types—anything that displays, encourages, or helps the production of high-quality technical communication.

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

UKTC Awards 2021

The winners were announced at the TCUK Metro Online 2021 main event on Tuesday 28 September, the ISTC's virtual conference. 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 awards for the *Communicator* article and *Communicator* column of the year.

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

UKTC Awards 2022

Entries for 2022 are welcomed now. Please contact the ISTC office (istc@istc.org.uk) for details.

TCUK important update

The ISTC Council has been considering when to return to an in-person conference. We now feel that we have the best chance of success by staging this next year; so TCUK 2023 will be an in-person event. For 2022, we are planning an online event in the last week of September (including the ISTC AGM and UKTC Awards as in the last two years).

We are seeking support from members interested in helping to make both events happen. More information will be sent out separately in the near future. However, you can contact us now via istc@istc.org.uk if you would like to know more.

ISTC annual survey covering employment

The 2022 survey is now closed.

Thanks to all who have contributed to the ISTC annual survey covering employment. The survey's purpose is to collect data relating to the qualifications, experience, and remuneration of technical communicators in the UK.

We usually get a good representation of roles and range of ages across our profession. We will present the results 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 send an email to istc@istc.org.uk.

Did you know you could advertise in this space?



■ Reach an engaged, specialist audience of content professionals!

■ Join MadCap, 3di and many others who advertise in this e-newsletter!

■ Ideal for product releases, news, courses/events, brand awareness, and recruitment!

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

ISTC Meets John Kearney



John Kearney

Wednesday 9 March 2022, 1–2 p.m.

Cyber security is not just about hacking or coming up with technical tools and tricks to counter hackers. The ability to clearly communicate complex information is vital in the ongoing effort to help people

be more secure.

“In my talk, I hope to cover ways in which writers can help cyber professionals, and also what we can learn from them to produce better and safer content in other areas.”

John is a technical communication consultant with over 20 years of experience.

He worked in cyber security early in his career, returning in 2018. Since then, he has worked alongside security specialists to produce user-centred content in the public and private sectors. His pronouns are he/him.

This talk is for anyone in technical communication from entry-level to advanced. No prior knowledge of cyber security is required, but curiosity is welcome.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/istc-495786380>.

The ISTC Podcast

By Imogen Craigmile

In January and February I conducted two fascinating interviews with Professor of Typography Gerry Leonidas and Content Strategist, producer and writer Ritwik Sarkar. If you haven't listened yet, you can find the past two episodes on Podbean or just search ISTC Podcast.

The next episode will be released on the last Friday in March, so keep your eyes peeled for its release! If you are interested in any aspect of podcasting and want to get involved with the production team, contact me at istc@istc.org.uk.

ISTC Mentoring



mentoring

We'll be hearing from Andrew McFarland Campbell about the ISTC mentoring scheme next month. If you have any questions you want answered about the scheme, send them to me at newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk by 10 March and I will pass them to him to see if he can answer them in his article.

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

February 2022

Jess Hopf on the Knowlegible Design blog explains how to help others navigate your graphic:

<https://knowlegible.design/visual-hierarchy/>.

Arnaud Lauret posts on his API Handyman blog about hacking a desktop app calling an API and learning some API design principles:

<https://apihandyman.io/hacking-elgato-key-light-with-postman/>.

From Madcap this webinar on using Madcap Flare to generate AOI documentation:

<https://www.madcapsoftware.com/webinars/using-madcap-flare-to-generate-api-documentation>.

The Government Digital Service has recently updated its content design: planning, writing and managing content manual:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/content-design>.

Tom Johnson's I'd rather be writing blog has a product review of Archbee, a new online platform for writing and managing documentation:

<https://idratherbewriting.com/blog/archbee-product-review.html>.

Carrie Hane posts on the benefits of structured content for content creators: <https://www.sanity.io/blog/benefits-of-structured-content-for-content-creators>.

Cherryleaf's Ellis Pratt looks at the skills needed for developing a developer portal in this podcast:

<https://www.cherryleaf.com/2022/02/podcast-121-what-are-the-skills-needed-for-developing-a-developer-portal/>.

This is my last blog round up for the ISTC newsletter, thanks for reading and clicking over the last few years, *Ginny*.



Industry and general news

Video experts launch initiative to support tomorrow's most exciting talent

The Content Creatives—a London-based organisation that helps businesses to create and share customised videos with their customers across social media—is launching a new initiative to support the next generation of media talent.

The Content Creatives are working with young people aged 18-24 from across London who have a passion for video and a flair for photography, providing them with unique opportunities to produce corporate social responsibility videos for some of the country's most prolific organisations.

Under the scheme, The Content Creatives will partner and collaborate with talented young people from diverse and often challenging backgrounds to help them explore their skills and promote their ability within the industry. The paid short term project assignments are designed to fit in with education and family responsibilities and can help the production artists of tomorrow to learn valuable digital



Photo: Rob Lee, The Content Creatives

storytelling skills to open up future employment opportunities.

The Content Creatives have long been dedicated to youth empowerment and are recognised as a leading AQA accredited training centre teaching a wide range of competencies across content production, mobile journalism, personal branding and citizenship skills. Prior to the new initiative,

the company formed the Youth Citizen Service; a social media channel filled with helpful, informative videos for young people relating to employment, mental health, citizenship and much more.

Danny Eycott, Head of Production at The Content Creatives, says “Having a team of undiscovered talent onboard is proving to be very popular with our clients, and it’s incredibly exciting for

us to see how these young people, many of whom have little to no professional experience, are fast becoming an essential part of our delivery process. Experience isn’t everything; sometimes we can build excellence by nurturing passion”.

It’s not only passionate young producers that stand to benefit from the new scheme, but businesses, too. Now more than ever, organisations are under increasing pressure to effectively communicate their corporate

social responsibility to attract new employees, retain existing ones, engage with customers, and build a strong and positive industry reputation. With help from The Content Creatives and their team of young talent, businesses can promote their efforts and boost their brand through customised CSR & ESG videos.

These 'explainer' videos can be used to raise awareness of a particular CSR initiative from societal, charitable, and environmental issues and across a wide range of other practices, to show that a business sees and acknowledges the challenges, is taking a conscious effort to make positive changes and to encourage others to join them on a mission to make the world a better, healthier place.

To find out more about The Content Creatives, visit [thecontentcreatives.com](https://www.thecontentcreatives.com) or watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wW-rdzta3sE>.

Will the four-day week become a reality for all?

The concept of a four-day week is that it creates happier, more fulfilled employees who are more focused on their job, but will it work for everyone?

After embracing flexible work styles during the pandemic, some companies are now taking the risk and adopting shorter weeks, as a permanent solution. So, what if all organisations in the UK scrapped the traditional 5-day week and made this the norm? Would business soar or would productivity take a hit?

Between 2015 and 2019, Iceland was the first country to take the leap and trial the four-day week in which workers were paid the same amount for shorter hours. It was overwhelmingly successful, leading to many workers moving to shorter hours permanently. In 2021, Spain and New Zealand also announced trials of a 32-hour week, and Scotland is putting plans into place for companies to explore the benefits and costs. The UK are following closely behind.

So, how do you know if a four-day week is right for your business? Take a look at some of the advantages and disadvantages below:

Advantages

Reduced running costs: Moving to a four-day work week can cut costs for everyone – the office would be closed for one extra day a week, saving on costs such as electricity

and energy consumption. Employees would also be using fewer office supplies and equipment, paying less to commute, and seeing a reduction in expenses such as business lunches.

Increased employee productivity and wellbeing: With one extra day off per week, employees would have more free time to do the things they love, improving overall happiness. We've all heard the phrase "work smarter, not harder" – this is the theory behind the four-day week. If you're putting your employees' wellbeing first, ensuring they are happier and more fulfilled in their work-life balance, it's said they will focus more on their job, with an overall boost in productivity.

Help to attract and retain talent: Over the past few years, workplaces have started to offer more flexible working, which is one of the biggest perks that persuades employees to join and stay at a company. It shows companies trust their employees to get the work done, even within limited timeframes. By offering a four-day working week and a three-day weekend, companies are more attractive and, as a result, are able to attract and retain the best talent.

Disadvantages

Reduced hours and work-related stress: To accommodate the four-day week, the number of hours that employees work will need to be reduced. Although evidence suggests this can increase productivity, it may not necessarily be a great morale booster to your team, as they are being given less time to meet the same targets.

Increased pressure: An option to achieve the four-day week would be to compress hours instead of reducing them – so instead of working five eight-hour days, your teams would work four ten-hour days, but compressed hours can turn up the pressure. People can only focus and work effectively for so long before tiredness and burnout sets in.

Less holiday entitlement: One of the first things employees will ask is “how does this affect my holiday entitlement?” If you switch to a four-day week but keep to the same hours then holiday allowance won’t change, however if you reduce the number of hours employees work each week, then holiday entitlement will need to be re-calculated.

So, are you considering a four-day week in your organisation? It remains to be seen whether it’s the future of the workplace, but

organisations need to continue to be agile and adapt to accommodate increasing changes in technology and the marketplace, whilst maintaining focus on the wellbeing of employees to support productivity, retention, and engagement.

Originally published by The Institute of Leadership & Management <https://www.institutelm.com/resourceLibrary/the-four-day-week.html> Used with permission.



Upcoming events and webinars

Why you should care about content impact – 2 March 2022 8 am PT/ 11 am ET

Christopher Carroll explores the need to ensure the content you produce is fit for purpose.

Every engagement with a prospect, partner, employee, or customer relies on content – it's the lifeblood of business. Yet, many organizations have no way to know whether the content they produce fits its purpose, and they can't tell you whether or not it provides a desired, measurable business impact.

This presentation will be of particular interest to content teams working for organizations looking to improve the overall value of content by increasing content production efficiency, mitigating unnecessary risks, aligning writing teams, ensuring content quality and impact, developing consistent cross-channel communication, reducing content delivery delays, and improving customer experiences by providing clear, concise, relevant, and up-to-date content.

Brought to you by The Content Wrangler and sponsored by Acrolinx.

<https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/9273/466019>.

SlatorCon – 16 March 2022

SlatorCon Remote March 2022 brings you the most comprehensive, cross-sector agenda ever. Join us on March 16th to hear our line-up of 20 speakers discuss Saas Localization, Dubbing, Machine Translation, Transcreation, M&A, Healthcare Interpreting, Remote Simultaneous Interpreting... We could go on!

All on the world's most advanced remote conferencing platform, Hopin, so you get the most out of the presentations and networking sessions.

<https://slator.com/slatorcon-remote-march-2022/>.

Scaling video production with content reuse – 23 March 2022

Wednesday, 23 March 2022, 10 am PT/1 pm ET.

Learn how these companies quickly created highly personalized animated medical

videos customized to age, gender, and medication type.

Join Wouter Maagdenberger, Rob Neeter, and Andrea Citta for this presentation to understand how these technologies are working together to revolutionize technical video content reuse.

Brought to you by The Content Wrangler and sponsored by Paligo

<https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/9273/479919>.

STC's Technical Communication Summit

STC's Technical Communication Summit takes place 15-18 May at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, Illinois and registration is now open.

The theme is The Booming Business of Content: A New Era, New Opportunities.

The advance registration rate is \$1,150 until 31 March but ISTC members can book using the early registration rate of \$925 by emailing elaine.gilliam@stc.org to register and pay.

Further information can be found at <https://summit.stc.org>.

InfoPlus



infoplus

Opportunities available

Blog Reviewer

As Ginny said in the the Blog round up above, she has now finished her time of reviewing and selecting the blogs to include. Therefore, we are on the lookout for a new blog reviewer. If you would like to be involved, please get in touch with me at newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

Podcast reviews

It is some months since we have had any reviews of podcasts in the newsletter. Perhaps you have listened to some that you would recommend to other technical communicators. If you do, please send your review to me at newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

Back page

"Tablets were replaced by scrolls. Scrolls were replaced by books. Now we scroll through books on tablets." — submitted by William Waddilove.

Try these two (tougher) word puzzles

Try your hand at two hard-scrambled passages below which prove your brain needs more than just the first and last letters of a scrambled word to read it quickly.

With these, you'll see why our brains can only handle *typoglycemia* to a point. The answers at the bottom; try not to cheat!

A dootcr has aimttdded the magltheuansr of a tageene ceacnr pintaet who deid aetfr a hatospil durg blendur.

In the Vcraiton are, a levloy eamlred geren, pirlaalty frmoueltad form asir nec, was uesd in fcaibrs and ppaluor falrol hresesdeads.

The first example is from that blog post by Matt Davis. The second is our re-scrambling of a fascinating Jezebel lead. And they're not easy! Research shows that typos definitely interfere with reading speed. (There's a reason we have spell-checkers!) Tricky jumble puzzles that can take hours to complete also prove that, in the end, letter order and spelling absolutely make or break our comprehension of a word.

Answers:

A doctor has admitted the manslaughter of a teenage cancer patient who died after a hospital drug blunder.
In the Victorian era, a lovely emerald green, partially formulated from arsenic, was used in fabrics and popular floral headresses.

Let other technical communicators know your news

by Michael McFarland Campbell, *InfoPlus* editor

InfoPlus is here to help technical communicators hear the news about our profession including —but not solely— news from the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators. If you have news to broadcast to the technical communication community, please do send it into me so we can make sure as many people hear about it as possible. My email is newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk.

InfoPlus is published and distributed usually 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.

The deadlines for the each of the 2022 editions are:

Edition	Deadline
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