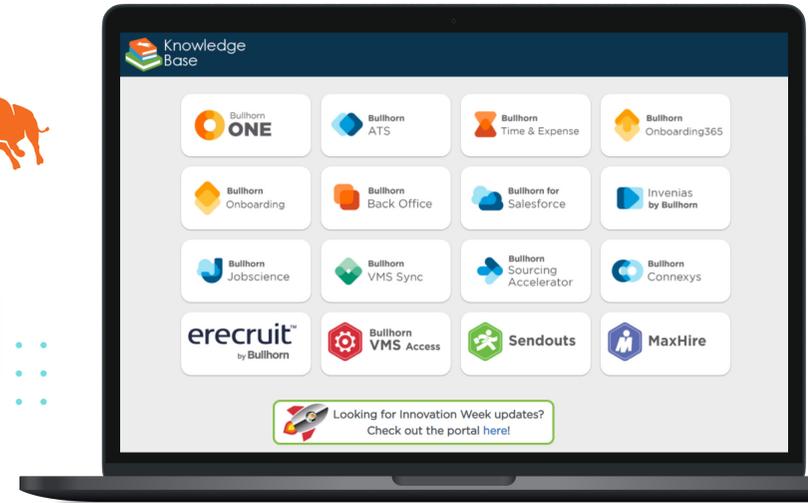


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I love MadCap Central because I can build a dashboard of all the different projects, look at what people are doing, and hone in on things that could create a poor customer experience that the author needs to focus on.



RYAN NICHOLSON

Director of Content and Training,
Bullhorn, Inc.

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InfoPlus

Monthly newsletter from the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

April 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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Highlights

It's always a pleasure hearing from other technical communicators through the month leading up to the next publication of *InfoPlus*. We've all our regular columns and more! Watch out for the competition to win a copy of Margo Bloomstein's book *Trustworthy*.

Please do let me know if there is anything that you want other technical communicators to hear, *InfoPlus* is here for your news.

Michaël.

ISTC News

ISTC Council news

From Linda Robins, ISTC President

In pre-Covid times, the ISTC Council supplemented regular video call meetings by an annual in-person meeting. Typically, we hired a conference room in London and spent a Saturday in November planning priorities and activities for the year ahead. We last had been able to do this in November 2019.

With social distancing rules relaxed, we felt able to hold an in-person meeting on 12 March. Given the distances involved, we compromised with a hybrid meeting involving in-person and video calls, using a council member's home as our base.

We had a very useful and productive session. We are looking forward to sharing our plans with ISTC members. Our motivation is ensuring we give the best value to our members and promoting excellence in scientific and technical communication. There will also be many opportunities for wider participation in ISTC activities.

Future issues of *InfoPlus* will reveal details. More information will be sent out separately shortly. You can, of course, contact us now via istc@istc.org.uk if you would like to know more.

TCUK news – a reminder

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—TCUK 2023 will be an in-person event. For 2022, we plan an online event in the last week of September, which will include the ISTC AGM and the UKTC Awards as in the last two years.

We are seeking support from members interested in making both events happen. Watch out for more information which will be sent out soon. In the meantime, you can contact us now by email at istc@istc.org.uk if you want to know more.

Celebrate Earth Day by going paperless

Earth Day is an annual day to highlight the global action to look after the environment. Starting in 1970, the event took off around the world in 1990 and has encouraged acts both great and small by organizations and individuals in the decades since.

Earth Day falls on 22 April every year. To mark it this year, we are reminding all our members that you can request to go paperless with your *Communicator* subscription. We offered members the

chance to receive fewer printed issues at the start of 2022, but you may not have realised that the option to go entirely paperless was always there.

If you want to go paperless, just email us at istc@istc.org.uk and let us know; we'll do the rest for you. We aren't able to offer a discount for going paperless, but as a volunteer-led, non-profit organization any money we save means more funding for other projects. Whether you choose to do this or not, you can always get the digital copy of *Communicator* by logging in to the ISTC website at istc.org.uk.

Find out more about Earth Day at www.earthday.org/.

ISTC meets Margot Bloomstein

Wednesday 13 April, 2.30 to 3.30 pm.

Writing and Designing for Trust

In today's economy, businesses need a new strategy to earn trust and help consumers and citizens make confident decisions. Undermining confidence is cynicism: it erodes trust in the media, government, public institutions, and consumer brands. To regain trust, we talk about empathy, transparency, and authenticity. But how do we get beyond those buzzwords in copy—and what is the responsibility and

Margot Bloomstein is one of the most prominent voices in the content strategy industry. She is the author of *Trustworthy: How the Smartest Brands Beat Cynicism* and *Bridge the Trust Gap and Content Strategy at Work: Real-World Stories to Strengthen Every Interactive Project* and is the principal of Appropriate, Inc., a brand and content strategy consultancy based in Boston. As a speaker and strategic adviser, she has worked with marketing teams in a range of organizations over the past two decades, including the American Montessori Society, Fidelity, Harvard University, Lovehoney, Mailchimp, and Sallie Mae. The creator of BrandSort, she developed the popular message architecture-driven approach to content strategy. Margot advises Women Talk Design and teaches in the content strategy graduate program at FH Joanneum University in Graz, Austria. She also lectures around the world about brand-driven content strategy and designing for trust. Find her on Twitter at [@mbloomstein](https://twitter.com/mbloomstein).

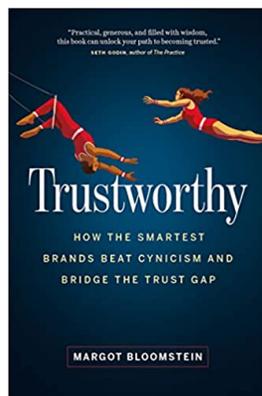


opportunity for content developers and content strategists to lead the way? The secret is in how we use content to empower our audiences: when we give more control to users, they put more trust in us.

Examining what works among teams of all stripes and sizes, Margot Bloomstein will share examples from retail, publishing, government, software, and other industries to detail what you can do to meet new challenges in information consumption. Learn how voice, volume, and vulnerability can inform your work to regain trust and lead your audience and organization from cynicism toward something far more productive: action and hope.

Book giveaway at ISTC Meets

Alongside the ISTC meets Margot Bloomstein event on 13 April, there will be a competition to win a free copy of her book, *Trustworthy: How the Smartest Brands Beat Cynicism and Bridge the Trust Gap*. Watch out for more info on the competition on Twitter [@istc org](https://twitter.com/istc_org).



The ISTC Podcast

By Imogen Craigmile

In March, I interviewed Ray Gallon, founder of the Transformation Society, about his enthralling career in Tech Comms. If you haven't listened yet you can find the episode and all the past episodes on Podbean or just search ISTC Podcast.

The next episode will be released on the last Friday of April. I am excited to be conducting a deep dive into the topic of Artificial Intelligence and Tech Comms with C J Walker, Director at Firehead. 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.



ISTC Mentoring scheme



mentoring

By ~~Andrew~~ Michael McFarland Campbell

So, the Mentoring Scheme lead didn't manage to get me the copy for the newsletter despite living in the same house. However, he had a sore throat last week, so he thought he better get a Covid-19 Antigen test. Being the professional technical communicator that he is, he very nearly re-wrote the *Instructions For Use* as he thought they were terrible. What other instructions have you nearly rewritten? Answers to newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk please.

ISTC Membership

If you are reading *InfoPlus* and aren't already an ISTC Member, why not? Membership of the ISTC demonstrates an interest in and commitment to professional development and the wider technical communication industry. We have opportunities to exchange views and information with other professional communicators.

Technical authors, technical content strategists, information designers, publication managers, documentation managers, information developers, technical illustrators, translators are among the many roles that our members have.

Find out more about joining the ISTC at <https://istc.org.uk/homepage/join-the-istc/how-to-join-the-istc/>.

ISTC Social Media

ISTC on LinkedIn

There are ISTC groups on LinkedIn for ISTC members which 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](http://www.twitter.com/TCUK_conf) for everything to do with our annual conference TCUK.

ISTC on Instagram

If you use Instagram, 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>.



ISTC Local Area 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 Dunic, at areagroupsmanager@istc.org.uk.

ISTC Thames Valley report from March meeting

By Darren Mitcham

At the Thames Valley group meeting in March, we recounted our experiences with user feedback initiatives (or the lack of them in some cases, as it seems that not every author has the chance to receive any). Google Analytics is a good first step for web-based help systems, as it can track the pages visited, how long people remain on them, and where they go next. Others have participated

in more extensive user research which involved questionnaires and interviews of willing users. These need careful planning to achieve their full potential, but they often have value by uncovering some fairly serious issues. In one example, the research showed that users went to Google to search for a particular Help topic because the search engine in the help itself was so poor. However, the area where feedback seemed to be the most consistent and thorough was in bid tendering, where the scores on bid documents are always fed back to the submitter, sometimes with anonymized data from the winning bid to highlight areas of particular importance and help improve future tenders.

The next ISTC Thames Valley meeting is on Tuesday 5 April from 7.30 pm. In our quest to ensure we find the best venue for our meetings, we will be trying the Three Horseshoes, Marlow Bottom, SL7 3RA.

UK Technical Communication Awards 2022

By Linda Robins, ISTC President



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

To encourage you to enter this year here is some more background 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. We encourage the entrant to give details of budgets and schedules, collaboration, and other background information. Client comments are welcomed. 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.

Details of the 2022 winners are available on the website: <https://uktcawards.com/past-years/winners-2021/>.

Entries for 2022 are welcome now. Enter via <https://uktcawards.com/awards/enter/>.

Blog Roundup

By Michael McFarland Campbell

Nita Beck and Ann Pillman have a conversation about Collaborative Document Reviews on the MadBlog:

<https://www.madcapsoftware.com/blog/collaborative-document-reviews-a-conversation/>.

Dr Timothy Ponce discusses Using tools to help users in visuals for technical communication, on the MadBlog:

<https://www.madcapsoftware.com/blog/visuals-in-technical-communication-using-all-our-tools-to-help-users/>.

Tom Johnson highlights a series on how to prepare for technical writing jobs and interviews by Aaron Redshaw:

<https://idratherbewriting.com/blog/technical-writing-jobs-and-interviews/>.

Daniel Beck provides a handy list of fictitious numbers, domains, etc for use in documentation:

<https://ddbeck.com/fictitious-numbers/>.

Danielle Ezell updates her guidance on how to resize an image correctly at TechSmith:

<https://www.techsmith.com/blog/how-to-resize-an-image-correctly/>.

Jess at Knowlegible Design illustrates Why knowing too much can be bad for communicating your science:

<https://knowlegible.design/why-knowing-too-much-can-be-bad-for-communicating-your-science/>.

Simeon Griggs writes about Creating a parent/child taxonomy in Sanity.io:

<https://www.sanity.io/guides/parent-child-taxonomy>.

If you have a blog on technical writing, do let me know so I can include it in the monthly review? Have you spotted an interesting post? Let me know, email michael@woggle.org.uk.



Opportunities available in *InfoPlus*

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.

Did you know you could advertise in this space?

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

Let other technical communicators know your news

by *Michaël 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
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