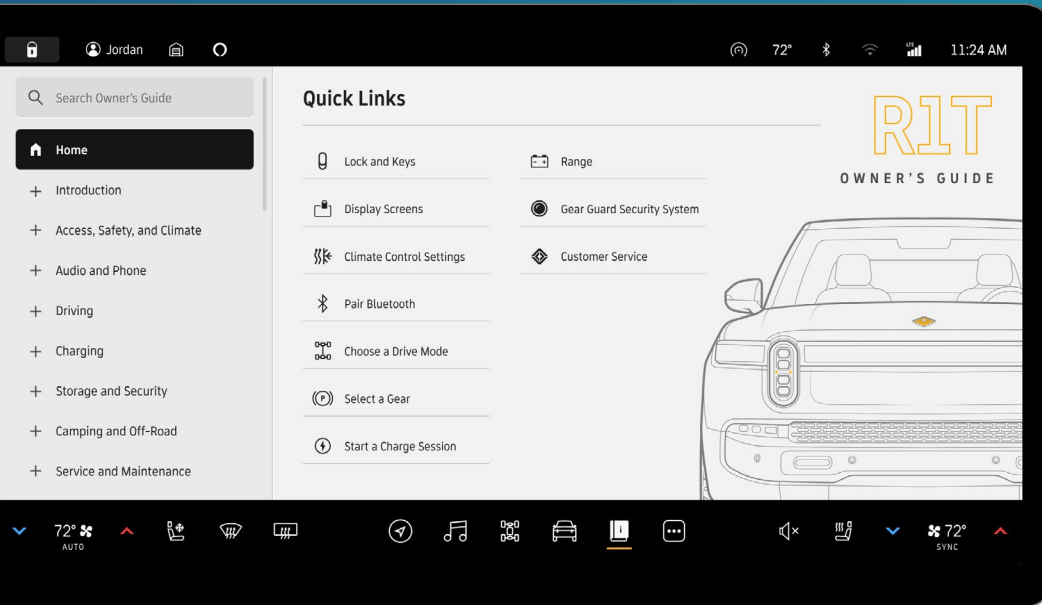**RIVIAN** + **madcap software**

Rivian Uses MadCap Software to Embed Interactive Owner's Guide in Vehicle's Infotainment Dashboard

Optimized User Experience →

Streamlined Content Delivery →

Enhanced Consistency →

Optimized User Experience →

"The interactive, in-dash vehicle guide we've created with Flare is integral to creating a superior experience for our customers.

DAVID JACKSON
Director, Technical Publications, Rivian

Read the Success Story →

InfoPlus

Monthly newsletter from the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

August 2022

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: Schedule Reminder

Linda Robins FISTC, President

The deadline for submission of entries to this year's awards passed on 31 July.

Please see the dedicated UKTC Awards website: https://uktcawards.com/ for more details.

The judges will review the entries from the start of August to notify the winners and announce the results later in the month.

Each entry will be judged and awarded against how well it meets its brief (as described in the entry form) and industry best practices.

Feedback about each entry will be provided, typically including:

▶ Overall feedback

▶ Overall recommendations for improvement

▶ Sample of Judges' detailed feedback

Results will be published in ISTC publications and through social and other media.

The Awards will be presented at the ISTC's TCUK Metro Online Conference in September.

TCUK Metro Online 2022: Tuesday 27 September

Linda Robins FISTC

The event will include the ISTC AGM and UKTC Awards presentations.

TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION UK METRO

Our theme this year is:

TechComm State of Flux: where are we going?

Presentations and discussions on the day will include:

- ▶ Conversation designer
- ▶ Change management (and how it applies to tech comm)
- ▶ Foundation skills in tech comm
- ▶ Information Architecture

More details will be provided in the next issue of *InfoPlus*.

TCUK 2023: looking forward to next year

Linda Robins FISTC

Although we have no date confirmed yet, the ISTC Council is planning that TCUK 2023 will be an in-person conference. Planning is underway for an exciting new event; we will build on past experience and improve to reflect changes since our last face-to-face conference.

Call for volunteers: reviewers for course accreditation

Edward King FISTC

As you may be aware, the ISTC offers a course accreditation service to ensure that the content that training organisations provide is suitable for our members. We also advise these organisations to help them improve their learning materials.

We are looking for volunteers to review a number of courses in the coming months. These may either be new courses or previously accredited courses that are due for their two-year renewal review. If you would like to find out more or want to help, please contact the team education@istc.org.uk or the ISTC office istc@istc.org.uk.

Find out more information about our course accreditation service here: https://istc.org.uk/homepage/professional-development-and-recognition/accredited-courses/.

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This is a free monthly online newsletter for scientific and technical communicators.
InfoPlus is posted at www.istc.org.uk/our-publications/infoplus-newsletter/.

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ISTC community

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 Community 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 for everything ISTC, and specifically, @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 would like to attend one of the groups, please contact the leader.

If you're interested in setting up a new group, contact the ISTC Area Groups Manager, Tom Dumic, at areagroupsmanager@istc.org.uk.

Blog and Podcasts Roundup

Michæl McFarland Campbell MISTC

> The **Cherryleaf Podcast** 126 looked at retrospectives at the end of documentation projects. "*A retrospective is generally a meeting where people can provide constructive feedback to improve the ways of working and to help to provide knowledge that can be useful in defining future deliverables. The idea is that you get feedback from different people who have a say in the project.*"
> https://cherryleaf.podbean.com/e/126-retrospectives-for-documentation-projects/.

Caroline Jarrett recommends that we do not use "reading age" when thinking about adults.
"*If you are 48 years old, [an 8-year old] "reading age" is not good. It means that you've struggled with reading difficulties for your whole life. That's hard. And yet we constantly see recommendations like 'Write for an 8-year-old reading age', and 'readability scores' that claim to tell you what 'reading age' or 'grade level' you are writing at – while completely ignoring whether you are writing for a child, and adult, a teenager, or anything else about them…*" https://www.effortmark.co.uk/do-not-use-reading-age-when-thinking-about-adults/.

Monte Maritz writes on the Institute of Leadership & Management blog about How to lead better by doing less and trusting more.
"*What if we told you that the best way to lead is to do less managing? We've all heard about the type of boss that micromanages and is over-attentive — we can all agree that this management style can be stifling at times. If you want to enable your teams to flourish, we actually recommend doing less…*"
Read more at https://www.institutelm.com/resourceLibrary/lead-better-do-less.html.

Finding technical communicators

Linda Robins FISTC

Last month, I followed up on an enquiry (for a careers forum) about the need for technical communication. I had provided answers from the ISTC website. This led to the question of where technical communicators can be found. Again from the website:

"You will find technical communicators anywhere that technical information needs to be communicated to others. A technical communicator wrote the user manual that comes with your washing machine, also the online help you see when using software applications. The technical communicator may develop many other types of material (instructional videos, software simulations, processes and procedures).

"They may be working at a strategic, organisation level — dealing with the planning aspects of managing content throughout its lifecycle. This can include aligning content to business goals, analysis, modelling, delivery, measuring, and the governance of useful, usable content."

Who are our members?

Technical communication encompasses a wide range of activities. Our members come from virtually every industry and area of society within the UK and internationally. They all need to communicate complex or essential information effectively. Our members create or manage information that has an impact on people; this includes user guides, manuals, installation instructions, operating and safety procedures, business processes, training materials, web content, and software user assistance.

Technical communicators in the workplace can appear under a number of different job titles including:

- Information Designers
- Publication Managers
- Documentation Managers
- Technical Writers/Authors
- UX Writers
- Information Developers
- Content Strategists
- Illustrators
- Translators
- Technical Communicators

And why the ISTC?

It's the professional association that can help you through your career — in technical writing, technical illustration, UX writing, scientific writing, content strategy, or communicating scientific or technical information in other ways.

Join the ISTC today!

TED talks for the communicator

Linda Robins FISTC

I first encountered the TED Radio on the BBC radio station Radio 4Extra. There is a weekly feature of the TED Radio Hours weekly, hour-long radio programme and podcast, produced as a co-production between TED (conference) and National Public Radio. It has been running since April 2012.

"Each episode of the *TED Radio Hour* is one hour long, and explores a theme—such as happiness, crowd-sourcing innovation or power shifts—through three to four related TED Talks. The talks (all of which have been previously recorded and released by TED) are supplemented by follow-up interviews with the speaker, original reporting and other segments that bring the ideas to life.

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"Each TED Radio Hour episode is elaborately stylized, layering original sound design under each TED Talk and conversation." (Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TED_Radio_Hour [accessed 2022-07-21]

TED is a non-profit organisation devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less). TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today covers almost all topics—from science to business to global issues—in more than 100 languages. Meanwhile, independently run TEDx events help share ideas in communities worldwide.

The *TED Radio Hour* is carried on over 600 public radio stations and is one of the top podcasts in the world. Since the beginning of 2020, journalist, podcaster, and media entrepreneur, Manoush Zomorodi has hosted the programme. She writes:

"Hosting TED Radio Hour is one of the best jobs in radio/podcasting. Who wouldn't want to interview the smartest people on the planet about their life's work and then collaborate with one of the top teams in audio to turn it into an intimate, educational, and entertaining hour of listening that impacts millions of people around the

world?" (NPR, "Manoush Zomorodi Will Be the New Host Of TED Radio Hour" 5 November 2019, <https://npr.org/about-npr/776132106/manoush-zomorodi-will-be-the-new-host-of-ted-radio-hour?t=1658401741700>, accessed 2022-07-21).

Manoush Zomorodi also reflects more specifically, "On a more personal note, the show's mission aligns beautifully with my own professional ambition to continue inspiring people to learn more about the world, their community, and themselves… while also having some fun along the way."

I can recommend the podcast series for depth and seriousness of exploration of subject matter while always having the human touch. The talks are always thought provoking and tend to lead to a follow-up talk, blog, book, or video for more detail.

The podcast is available weekly on BBC Sounds:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/b065ynsn.

There is a TED presence on LinkedIn:

https://www.linkedin.com/company/ted-conferences.

I have also just ordered the 'TED' guide to public speaking:

https://www.ted.com/read/ted-talks-the-official-ted-guide-to-public-speaking.

There is plenty of scope in the world of TED for continuing education and improvement.

How to build a sustainable relationship with a problem client
Kevin Duncan

Problem clients can clog up a firm's bandwidth and impede its performance — but there are ways and means of winning them round, writes business adviser Kevin Duncan.

This is a truly massive topic that ranges across pretty much every tricky issue that anyone in business must face on any given working day, and affects staff at every level.

But it's territory I've explored in great depth in some of the training courses I provide, and there are some important areas that are really worth zooming in on. So, here are four tips for how to manage a problem client in ways that will keep them engaged with your business for the long term.

1. Learn how to say "No" politely
For perfectly understandable, commercial reasons, most people are very uncomfortable with saying no to a client or

customer. This is particularly true of 'non-essentialists': people who struggle with prioritisation.

However, what businesses often don't realise or appreciate is that by choosing not to say no, they are de facto saying yes. In which case, the list of client requests grows exponentially longer and soon surpasses anyone's ability to get to grips with it – with junior staff, trainees or interns in particular bearing the brunt.

This is bad for juniors' development: if they take to heart the notion that they're there merely to do what they're told, they will never grow through the process of providing strategic advice based on their expertise.

So, there are several ways of saying no politely – and I must caveat them by stressing that i) they must be pitched sensitively and 100% without aggression (which never works), ii) they must be carefully deployed for the mutual benefit of your own business and the client, and iii) they all depend on your experience, confidence, tone – and the quality of the relationship that you have with the client in question:

▶ *"The consequences of doing what you suggest are X, Y and/or Z, none of which are good. Are you still sure about this?"* Give the client time to ponder this.

▶ *"The agency wouldn't recommend this course of action."* This reminds the client that you are speaking as part of a group of people with specialist knowledge.

▶ *"I wouldn't recommend this – it goes against all my previous experience."* (For the exclusive use of senior figures with long-established track records.)

▶ *"I really don't agree, for reasons X, Y and Z. May I discuss this with a colleague and call you back?"* This buys time for internal advice and consultation.

▶ "We *have already discussed that possibility and rejected it as inappropriate for the following reasons.*" This provides a recap on an earlier discussion that the client has either forgotten or ignored.

▶ *"I understand what you are saying, but I cannot action this in isolation, so I need to discuss it internally and get back to you."*

▶ *"We can do this if you're happy that, as a result of this decision, we won't achieve X."*

▶ Split the problem into parts and commit to resolving some, but not all, of them.

▶ Say no – but offer a better solution immediately.

▶ Say yes – then find a way of saying no later.

2. Educate your client about your business and its values

Within the whole area of what I call 'Problem-client Troubleshooting', there's a rap sheet of behaviours that are simply unacceptable and need to be tackled.

For example, you can have an ignorant client who doesn't even understand the product or service they're buying. You can have an overtly prescriptive client who just says, "I want one of those," and hasn't considered the full breadth of your offering. You can have an even more stubborn variant with a 'supplier mindset': all they want to do is buy your stuff – they don't actually care about your opinion.

You can have a brazenly manipulative client who will try to put you and your business in a headlock over service or price. This tends to happen in discussions around service-level agreements, and will typically take the form of a current or prospective client deliberately misquoting your stated position or offer. So, you'll put forward your own, clear language and figures, and they'll respond with a wilful misrepresentation designed to put you under pressure, drive

down costs or – by stealth – add to the scope of the mission.

You can have late approvers, who will skewer your firm to their side until the very last minute, sapping your bandwidth and depriving other clients of your resources.

On top of all those characters, we also have bullies, bigots, sexists and racists.

Again, junior staff are particularly vulnerable to the influence of the above characters, because they're often too terrified to raise the resulting issues with their bosses. This is particularly true in firms with bad cultures, where juniors live in perpetual fear of being slapped down by their managers.

However, what we want are good cultures – and one of the most constructive ways to establish them is for firms to educate their clients about the ins and outs of their businesses. What is your actual business model? What sort of conditions best support its effectiveness and responsiveness? What are the logistical processes that your firm has to fulfil in order to meet clients' expectations? What sort of knowledge base exists among your staff? And what should clients take away from that about how to properly harness your offering, so they'll come away with a result that's so much better than what they'd first imagined?

As for the bullies, bigots, sexists and racists, they can be screened out through a similar type of educational drive around your company's values. It is increasingly recognised that firms with shared values are sharing supply chains, too. So being particularly assertive about your firm's underlying ethics – plus your zero-tolerance list for certain, harmful behaviours – will tell everyone in your network about what sort of conduct you're unwilling to accept.

3. Make 'panic-free service recovery' a company policy

Imagine yourself as an ordinary customer – let's say you're dealing with your phone provider, for example. Now, a lot of people assume that if something goes hideously wrong in that relationship, service-wise, then that's the end of the line: it should be fully expected that you'd want to move on to pastures new.

However, according to consumer behaviour research, that's not actually the case. Indeed, one study has shown that if a company has handled a mistake particularly well – even if it's entirely to blame – the affected customer ends up being *14 times more loyal to them* than they would have been if nothing had gone wrong at all.

So, if the phone company is honest enough to recognise its mistake – and shows genuine concern in contacting you as quickly as possible with empathetic commiserations and the offer of, say, an extra element to your service free for a year – then suddenly, your service is recovered.

As a result, you will end up being an ambassador for that brand, saying to your friends over dinner: "It's amazing – there was this total mess, but they were completely brilliant about how they dealt with it."

In other words, the response is far better than anyone plunged into a cynical mindset had any reason to expect. Replicate that across multiple customer relationships, and hey presto – you have an army of ambassadors who are prepared to vouch for you in their networks.

My term for that technique is 'panic-free service recovery.' And the important thing to remember is that it's not just a method for handling one-off mistakes – but a constructive way to approach any scenario in which your relationship with a customer is under strain. Which makes it particularly effective for managing problem clients.

There's a lot to be said for any business partnership that's *tested*… where you go

through a hard time together, but come out on the other side and say, "Wow – we made it," and your relationship is actually reinforced by the experience, rather than diminished.

So, the message I try to get across to leaders and managers on my training courses is to reassure themselves and have faith in their teams when something next goes wrong. Don't regard it as a disaster. See it as an excellent opportunity to show how you can service-recover a tricky situation at speed, with charm and good grace. And you will probably have a more loyal client as a result.

4. Don't be afraid to challenge your client

There's a wonderful book called *The Challenger Sale: How to Take Control of the Customer Conversation*, by Brent Adamson and Matthew Dixon.

In its pages, the authors provide an analysis of 6,000 salespeople to pin down the most effective type of sales approach. And given that across the sales world we have a number of different traits and psychologies, they pull out a set of characters such as The Hard Worker, The Relationship Builder, The

Reactive Problem Solver, The Lone Wolf, and so on.

But the type that's more effective than any of the others by a factor of about 10 is The Challenger. So, for example, when a particularly prescriptive client says, "I want one of *those*," and seems dead set on that, The Challenger will say, "That's very interesting – but haven't you considered one of *these*, and then two or three of some other things we do, as well? I think that would create a much better outcome than the one you have in mind."

In other words, The Challenger reframes the client's request as a new proposition, and then solves the issue for them in a different, innovative way. Challengers are the most effective salespeople anywhere. So having the confidence to challenge is a winning formula.

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& MANAGEMENT

Originally published by The Institute of Leadership & Management at https:// www.institutelm.com/resourceLibrary/how-to-build-a-sustainable-relationship-with-a-problem-client.html Reproduced by permission.

Upcoming Courses

Armada training courses

August 2022

22-23 **Introduction to Adobe Illustrator**
Learn how to create and edit vector graphics quickly and effectively, in the leading application for vector graphics. 10% discount for ISTC members (coupon code ISTC10).

£245 + VAT. Live online participation £345 + VAT. In-class at Bristol training centre

www.armada.co.uk/course/ai.

September 2022

1-2 **Introduction to Adobe InDesign**
Provides a comprehensive introduction to the powerful capabilities of InDesign using InDesign's most popular features. 10% discount for ISTC members (coupon code ISTC10).

£245 + VAT. Live online participation £345 + VAT. In-class at Sheffield training centre

www.armada.co.uk/course/id.

September 2022 (continued)

5-6   **Introduction to Adobe After Effects**

Teaches all the key skills needed to use the leading professional software for motion graphics, video compositing and visual effects. Used across all forms of video and screen-based media, After Effects offers a powerful set of tools to deliver stunning visual results.

10% discount for ISTC members (coupon code ISTC10).

£295 + VAT. Live Online course
£395 + VAT. In-class at Bromsgrove training centre
www.armada.co.uk/course/after-effects-training/.

8-9   **Introduction to Adobe Illustrator**

Learn how to create and edit vector graphics quickly and effectively, in the leading application for vector graphics. The comprehensive toolset and features available provide everything you need to produce extraordinary graphics for print, video, the web, and mobile devices.

10% discount for ISTC members (coupon code ISTC10).

£245 + VAT. Live online participation
£345 + VAT. In-class at Sheffield training centre
www.armada.co.uk/course/ai.

12-13   **Introduction to Adobe After Effects**

Teaches all the key skills needed to use the leading professional software for motion graphics, video compositing and visual effects. Used across all forms of video and screen-based media, After Effects offers a powerful set of tools to deliver stunning visual results.

10% discount for ISTC members (coupon code ISTC10).

£295 + VAT. Live Online course
£395 + VAT. In-class at Milton Keynes training centre
www.armada.co.uk/course/after-effects-training/.

15-16   **Introduction to Adobe InDesign**

Provides a comprehensive introduction to the powerful capabilities of InDesign, including setting up new documents, shapes, frames and using InDesign's most popular features.

10% discount for ISTC members (coupon code ISTC10).

£245 + VAT. Live online participation
£345 + VAT. In-class at Bromsgrove training centre
www.armada.co.uk/course/id.

20-21   **Introduction to Adobe Photoshop**

Learn how to create and edit images using the de facto standard in the graphics industry. Techniques covered include colour correction, working with layers, compositing images, and preparing images for use on the Web.

10% discount for ISTC members (coupon code ISTC10).

£245 + VAT. Live online participation
£345 + VAT. In-class at Cardiff training centre
www.armada.co.uk/course/ps.

September 2022 (continued)

22-23 Introduction to Adobe Illustrator
Learn how to create and edit vector graphics quickly and effectively, in the leading application for vector graphics. 10% discount for ISTC members (coupon code ISTC10).

£245 + VAT. Live online participation £345 + VAT. In-class at Cardiff training centre
www.armada.co.uk/course/ai.

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Future events

Write the Docs Prague 2022:
11–13 September 2022, online
Write the Docs brings everyone who writes the docs together in the same room: Programmers, Tech Writers, Support, Designers, Developer Advocates, and more. We all have things to learn from each other, and there's no better way than sitting together and talking.

We invite you to join 300 other folks in our event to explore the art and science of documentation. Find out more: https://www.writethedocs.org/conf/prague/2022/.

NORDIC TechKomm:
21–22 September 2022, Copenhagen
Keynote speaker Ray Gallon will speak about Tech Comm's challenge for the 21st century. Check out the full program here. Secure your spot today. Early bird rates apply until August 23, 2022.

TCUK online 2022:
27 September 2022
The ISTC's annual conference for everyone involved in writing, editing, illustrating, delivering, and publishing technical communication. More details to come.

CopyCon:
14 October 2022
Creativity, inspiration, persuasion: The conference for everyone who uses words to make change

Get inspired and hone your craft with the help of 8 brilliant speakers. Live in Brighton.

https://www.copywritingconference.com/conference/.

Let 1500 other technical communicators know your news

Michæl McFarland Campbell MISTC, 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 information to broadcast to the tech comm community, please do send it to 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 2022 editions are:

Edition	Deadline
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