



# InfoPlus+

Monthly newsletter from the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

August 2023

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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

### Revealing the Stellar Lineup of Speakers for TCUK23

We are thrilled to announce the highly anticipated speaker lineup for TCUK23, the premier event for technical communicators. This year's conference promises to be an exceptional gathering of industry experts and thought leaders who will share their insights, experiences, and practical knowledge on a wide range of topics in the field of technical communication. Brace yourself for a remarkable journey of discovery and inspiration!

#### Ellis Pratt (Cherryleaf)

Presentation: *Using ChatGPT/AI in Techcomm: Survey Results, Insights, and Practical Applications*

Ellis Pratt, from Cherryleaf, will delve into the realm of ChatGPT/AI and its profound impact on technical communication. Sharing survey results, valuable



insights, and practical applications, Ellis will explore how, and if, this technology can revolutionise our approach to knowledge sharing.

#### Paul Ballard (3di)

Presentation: *The Globots are coming! - making sense of globalisation and automation*

Join Paul Ballard from 3di as he expands on his recent Communicator article, which unravels the complexities of globalisation and automation in technical communication. Discover strategies to make sense of these trends and harness their potential to enhance content creation and delivery on a global scale.

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**Joaquim Baptista (Farfetch)**

Presentation: *Nurturing REST API references*

Joaquim Baptista, from Farfetch, will guide us through the crucial process of nurturing REST API references. Gain insights into best practices, effective documentation techniques, and how to provide developers with the information they need to leverage REST APIs successfully.

**David Bailey (Snyk)**

Presentation: *Navigating the rapids of docs-as-code implementation*

David Bailey, representing Snyk, will navigate us through the rapid waters of docs-as-code implementation. Learn about the benefits, challenges, and practical strategies to streamline your documentation process using docs-as-code principles.

**Tony Dzumaga**

Workshop: *SVG in Tech Docs*

Tony Dzumaga will lead an engaging workshop on leveraging SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics) in technical documentation. Discover the power of this versatile visual format and how it can enhance the clarity and effectiveness of your technical content.

**Malcolm Wallace (Siemens Digital Industries Software)**

Workshop: *Learning to think; learning to care*

Malcolm Wallace, from Siemens Digital Industries Software, will conduct a thought-provoking workshop centered around the core critical thinking skills required for technical communication. Explore the human side of tech comms, developing empathy, and understanding how it influences the way we create content.

**Jeremy Nelson (Oxbury)**

Presentation: *Being the First*

Jeremy Nelson will share his insights on being the first, examining the challenges and opportunities that come with pioneering in the field of technical communication. Gain inspiration and valuable lessons from Jeremy's unique perspective.

**Mark Swaine (SLB)**

Presentation: *I was asked to make 3D interactive procedures - were they useful, or did they just look nice?*

Join Mark Swaine from SLB as he reflects on the value and effectiveness of 3D interactive procedures. Discover whether their aesthetic appeal translates into practical benefits and



**Clear technical documentation.  
Complex translation & localization.**

**Learn more**

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learn how to evaluate their usefulness in technical communication.

**Rachel Johnston** (Protas Ltd.)

Presentation: *In-product guided tours: the how, the why, the how much? and the watch out!*

Rachel Johnston, representing Protas Ltd., will delve into the world of in-product guided tours. Explore the purpose, implementation strategies, considerations, and potential pitfalls of incorporating guided tours to enhance the user experience.

**Nidhi Augustine** (SAP Labs India)

Presentation: *User Stories and User Persona are the Nexus for Product Documentation*

Nidhi Augustine, from SAP Labs India, will illuminate the critical connection between user stories, user personas, and product documentation. Discover how these elements intertwine and can be leveraged to create impactful and user-centric technical content.

Presentation: *Feature Toggles Building Symbiosis Between Authors and Developers*

In another captivating presentation, Nidhi Augustine will explore the symbiotic relationship between authors and

developers in the context of feature toggles. Gain insights into effective collaboration strategies and how technical communicators can align their efforts with developers.

**Warren Singer** (Thredd)

Presentation: *How to build a successful technical publications team*

Join Warren Singer as he shares his expertise on building a successful technical publications team. Discover strategies for talent acquisition, team dynamics, and fostering a culture of collaboration and excellence in technical communication.

**Carl DeBeer** (VMware)

Presentation: *How to Use Data to Inform your Decisions*

Carl DeBeer, representing VMware, will shed light on the power of data-driven decision-making in technical communication. Explore how to leverage data and analytics to inform content strategy, improve user experience, and drive continuous improvement.

The exceptional lineup of speakers at TCUK23 promises an immersive learning experience, offering invaluable insights and practical knowledge that will elevate your skills and shape the future of technical communication. Don't miss the opportunity

to connect with industry leaders, expand your professional network, and discover innovative approaches in this rapidly evolving field. Join us at TCUK23 and unlock the power of technical communication!

For detailed information on the conference schedule, session timings, and additional speakers, please refer to the official TCUK23 website, or stay tuned for updates via official announcements and social media channels.

## Sponsor Spotlight

Please welcome [Firehead](#) to our sponsor lineup. CJ Walker from Firehead will present at TCUK23 on how the right training can accelerate your career options.

## Continuing Professional Development with the ISTC

*Linda Robins FISTC, ISTC President*

In the July issue of *InfoPlus*, I wrote about the ISTC Mentoring Scheme. This was in the context of the support we offer members in developing and enhancing their professional skills. This month I am focusing on our Continuing Professional Development framework.

We provide a flexible CPD framework that enables our members – regardless of their

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current levels of knowledge or expertise – to demonstrate that they are continually striving to extend and update their skills.

For all ISTC members, a CPD record is a valuable resource as follows:

- Summary of the learning done in a format that can be used to describe experience in a particular area.
- Support for a CV entry that refers to work in a particular industry or use of a specific tool or technique.
- Evidence for discussion during performance reviews or appraisals.

### Our CPD Framework

Importantly, our CPD framework focuses on what our members and their employers or clients need: relevant, appropriate learning that can be applied to the workplace. Our emphasis is on CPD outcomes – what our members gain from their CPD, rather than on an arbitrary number of hours of attendance. For more information, please read the [CPD guidance for ISTC members](#).

### Your CPD Record

- Your personal reflective record is always the best evidence you can have. It is good practice to complete your personal record as soon as possible after the CPD activity. Your reflective record about each CPD activity describes what you learnt; how you learnt it and what you intend to do next.
- • If you attend events that issue certificates of attendance, keep them.
- • If you have paid for training, keep the invoice or receipt.
- • If you have created something, add it (or an extract) to your portfolio.

If you have provided other evidence, your reflective record can be brief. If the reflective record is the only evidence of your learning activity, you may wish to go into more detail to show what you have learnt and possibly how you intend to apply it.

### What counts as valid CPD?

Some of us prefer the more formal discipline of academic study, or training courses in a particular area. Others prefer to research, experiment and investigate, either alone or with others.

We are all learning all the time, whether we realise it or not. From the reflection on the project that didn't go quite as planned to the investigation of a new tool or technique, much of our learning is informal, gained 'on the job'. That doesn't mean it isn't valuable. Please check the ISTC website for [sample CPD records](#).

*We recognise any activity that results in learning something relevant to a member's role as valid CPD.*

### Why raise this now?

- To mention that volunteering as a mentor in our ISTC Mentoring Scheme counts as CPD.
- We are only just over halfway through the year, so this is a timely reminder to record your activities.
- TCUK23 delegates can make the most of their conference experience by recording their learning outcomes from presentations and workshops. Taking time for reflection on the day helps to provide lasting benefits.

## 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](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/1858546)

#### England

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

#### Scotland

- Technical Writers (East Scotland ISTC)  
[www.linkedin.com/groups/13536907](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/13536907)

#### Ireland

- Irish Technical Writers – An ISTC Area Group  
[www.linkedin.com/groups/3369559](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/3369559)



### ISTC on Facebook

Our main Facebook page is at [www.facebook.com/ISTC.org.uk](http://www.facebook.com/ISTC.org.uk)

® You can join the ISTC Community group at [www.facebook.com/groups/490570891153888](http://www.facebook.com/groups/490570891153888) for discussion with fellow professionals.

The TCUK Facebook page is at [www.facebook.com/techcommuk/](http://www.facebook.com/techcommuk/)

### ISTC on Twitter

Follow us on Twitter at [@ISTC\\_org](https://twitter.com/ISTC_org) for everything ISTC, and specifically, [@TCUK\\_conf](https://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/](https://www.instagram.com/istc_org/).

### ISTC on YouTube

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



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## 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

Contact the group leader if you want to attend one of the groups. Want to set up a new group? Contact Tom Dunic, our Area Groups Manager at [areagroupsmanager@istc.org.uk](mailto:areagroupsmanager@istc.org.uk).

## Training courses

### Armada

#### August 2023

##### 7-8 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).

£295 + VAT. Instructor led, live online course  
£345 + VAT. In-class at Sheffield training centre

[www.armada.co.uk/course/ps](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/ps).

##### 14-15 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).

£295 + VAT. Instructor led, live online course  
£345 + VAT. In-class at Bristol training centre

[www.armada.co.uk/course/id](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/id).

## ...August 2023

### 23-24 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.

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

£345 + VAT. Instructor led, live online course

£395 + VAT. In-class at our Milton Keynes training centre

[www.armada.co.uk/course/ae](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/ae).

### 29-30 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).

£295 + VAT. Instructor led, live online course

£345 + VAT. In-class at Reading training centre

[www.armada.co.uk/course/id](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/id).

## September 2023

### 4-5 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).

£345 + VAT. Instructor led, live online course

£395 + VAT. In-class at our Reading training centre

[www.armada.co.uk/course/ae](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/ae).

## 11-15 Technical Authoring Training Programme

ACCREDITED  
TRAINING  
COURSE



ISTC-accredited programme comprising:

- Introduction to technical authoring (1 day)
- Intermediate technical authoring (2 days)
- Advanced technical authoring (2 days)

Training in core technical authoring skills for new and experienced technical authors.

Attend the complete programme, or just the module(s) relevant to your experience.

This course is now hosted by Matthew Ellison.

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

£1,195 + VAT. Instructor led, live online course

£1,495 + VAT In-class at Bristol training centre

[www.armada.co.uk/course/tatp](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/tatp).

...September 2023

## 18-19 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).

£295 + VAT. Instructor led, live online course

£345 + VAT. In-class at Bromsgrove training centre

[www.armada.co.uk/course/ai](http://www.armada.co.uk/course/ai)

Follow us: [@ArmadaTraining](https://twitter.com/ArmadaTraining)



## Cherryleaf

ACCREDITED  
TRAINING  
COURSE



Technical Author/Technical Writer/  
technical writing e-learning course

<https://www.cherryleaf.com/training/technical-author-basicinduction-training-course/>.

Learn to write like a professional technical communicator. This

course teaches you the fundamentals of technical writing, and helps you understand your role as a Technical Author (or similar position).

This technical communication course is accredited by the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators.

### New two course bundles

We offer five bundle options that contain two courses at a discounted price:

- [Technical Writing & Screenshots Course Bundle](#)
- [Technical Writing & UI Text Course Bundle](#)
- [Technical Writing & User Onboarding Course Bundle](#)
- [Technical Writing & Copywriting Course Bundle](#)

## ESTON Training

Technical/Commercial Authorship (Former ISTC Syllabus Parts 1 & 2): <http://www.estontrg.com/technicalcommercial-authorship/>. A £50 discount is offered to ISTC members for this course.

**Simplified English:**

<http://www.estontrg.com/english-language-courses/>.

**Standard Generalised Mark-up Language (SGML):**

<http://www.estontrg.com/standard-generalised-mark-language-sgml-course/>.

**Editing and Publishing Magazines:**

<http://www.estontrg.com/editing-publishing-magazine-course/>.

**Report Writing:**

<http://www.estontrg.com/report-writing-course/>.

**Business English:**

<http://www.estontrg.com/business-english-course/>.



## Firehead

### An Introduction to Content Operations

<https://firehead-training.net/course/an-introduction-to-content-operations>.

### Creating user onboarding content

<https://firehead-training.net/course/creating-user-onboarding-content>.

### Creating Screenshots and Images for User Guides

<https://firehead-training.net/course/creating-screenshots-and-images-for-user-guides>.

### DITA concepts

<https://firehead-training.net/course/dita-concepts>.

### Introduction to Content Design

<https://firehead-training.net/course/content-design>.

### Specifications for Technical Communicators

<https://firehead-training.net/course/specifications-for-technical-communicators>.

### Fundamentals of modern technical communication

<https://firehead-training.net/course/technical-communication-fundamentals-1>.

## MadCap Software

For details of the latest MadCap Software training schedule (both on-site and online) visit: [www.madcapsoftware.com/services/training/](http://www.madcapsoftware.com/services/training/).

## Free technical writing courses

*Some free technical writing courses submitted by Mike Mee*

<https://developers.google.com/tech-writing/overview>.

<https://www.udemy.com/course/technical-writing-a-quick-start-to-software-documentation/>.

<https://github.com/wise4rmgod/TechnicalWriterResources>.

<https://iimskills.com/a-guide-on-technical-writing-and-technical-writing-training/>.

<https://iimskills.com/a-guide-on-technical-writing-and-technical-writing-training/>.

## Let's talk content ops

ISTC Honorary Fellow, Rahel Baillie, hosts some webinars talking about things that are of interest to technical communicators.

Webinars include:

- ContentOps as Part of Product Lifecycle Management

- Let's Talk Content Operations
- Growing a Customer Support Site Into a ContentOps Pipeline
- Turning Team Pains into Operational Gains

Find out more at

<https://www.brighttalk.com/search/?q=Let's+Talk+ContentOps>.

## National Manufacturing Day



Thursday, 28th September 2023 is National Manufacturing Day (NMD). NMD is a day when companies open their doors to showcase a range of highly skilled jobs. Organised by Make UK, with employers pledging their involvement on the event website, it looks a really exciting day.

Find out more at <https://www.nationalmanufacturingday.org>.

## From the editor



I am sure that you have noticed that *InfoPlus* has become a bit light on news and further information as we have come into the summer months. With the TCUK Conference taking place in September 2023, I sincerely hope that we will have more information and updates from companies and individuals, and even our local groups.

*InfoPlus* can only be as good as the information sent into me in advance. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Michaël*

[newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk).



### Let other technical communicators know your news

*Michaël McFarland Campbell MISTC*

*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 for the tech comm community, please do send it to me, so we can make sure as many people hear about it as soon as possible. My email is [newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@istc.org.uk).

*InfoPlus* is published and distributed usually on the first working day of each month. Please bear this in mind when submitting time-sensitive information.

The deadlines for the 2023 editions are:

Edition	Deadline
September 2023	Fri 18 August 2023 at 12 noon BST
October 2023	Fri 22 September 2023 at 12 noon BST
November 2023	Fri 20 October 2023 at 12 noon BST
December 2023	Fri 17 November 2023 at 12 noon GMT

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