

Communicator

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

Autumn 2021

Diversity in Technical Communication

- Learn about the trendy Docs-as-code approach
- Find out how Technical Communicators can help good causes
- Read about the crypto world
- Create truly inclusive UX copy



President's View

Linda Robins shares the latest ISTC news.



Online collaboration

It has been nearly 18 months since the pandemic shook up our working and living arrangements. Recently I have been reflecting on what has changed for the technical communications professional since my Summer President's View. Undoubtedly the main difference is the cautious return to 'near normality' which is shaking up our respective routines yet again. Nearly every day for the last few weeks, I have been encountering conversations about the prospect of a partial return to the office. (I realise this will not have so much impact on 'seasoned' home workers although they will experience a difference in their dealings with co-workers and clients as their routines change.)

The likely pattern for most is to start with one day a week in the office (now or very soon), working up to two to three days a week longer term. Interestingly there is a note of trepidation in most discussions. 'How will the return to the office (after so long) affect my productivity?'; 'Will I feel comfortable on public transport?'; 'Will the working environment be suitable?'; 'Will my work/life balance be affected adversely?'

There are several potentially conflicting elements in play. I recognise that there may be enduring problems from prolonged social isolation, which interaction in online meetings could not overcome. Longer term there must be a rethink by companies on deployment

of staff since under-use of office space cannot be cost effective. Also, erstwhile urban-dwelling workers are moving to more congenial settings for improved quality of life: Scarborough in North Yorkshire is now tagged 'Zoom Town on Sea'. This will be a developing story with the need to adapt as conditions change. Hopefully we will all have learnt some new techniques to use to advantage as we face the new reality.



I have been benefitting from the guidance provided by Maxwell Hoffman in his article on working from home in the Summer 2020 issue of *Communicator*¹. I revisited this recently with the likely change of circumstances in prospect. I had been encouraged by the emphasis on positive benefits of working from home once one has established an appropriate working environment (to suit the individual). In particular:

- Collaborative content creation (through online discussion).
- Efficient use of email and messaging to streamline communication.
- Ways of overcoming 'blank page' syndrome despite lack of personal contact.

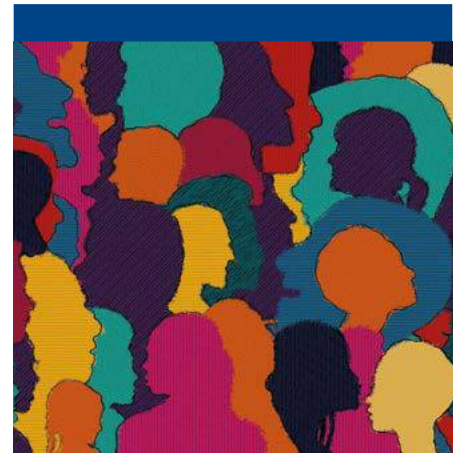
Maxwell offers encouragement for the return to face-to-face collaboration. He writes from the perspective of more than 20 years of mostly remote working with spells in the office in between. He suggests that the online personas developed through virtual communication can be used to good effect when meeting in person. Collaboration skills are improved leading to greater productivity.

Diversity

Thinking about the theme for this issue, I found a description of diversity as... "what makes each of us unique." To



1. Maxwell Hoffman 'Working from home with success' Summer *Communicator* 2020



Source: <https://pixabay.com/>

promote diversity in the workplace, we must recognise, respect and value differences based on ethnicity, gender, age, race, religion and sexual orientation. In our profession, we have great opportunities to embrace differences since our work covers such a large range of sectors. Our participants are of varied backgrounds, ages and with a genuinely global reach.

Today I was listening to a team GB spokesman on the radio speaking about the great success of the Tokyo Olympics as the most diverse to date. It encompassed all the differences listed above and had many new sports categories included for the first time. He also spoke about the pathway to success for prospective participants being well established but the gateway to wider participation needs to be improved. I can see a parallel in technical communication; we in turn can work on our outreach to promote our profession.

TCUK Metro Online



TCUK Metro Online 2021 will have taken place when this issue is published. Our theme was chosen to reflect these times of change: 'TechComms but not as you know it'.

The TCUK Metro Online Conference main event was scheduled for the afternoon of Tuesday 28th September with a programme as follows:

- ISTC Annual General Meeting for ISTC members only, ahead of the main conference.
- Annual Awards Presentations
- Two Webinars (followed by Q & A sessions).

Other sessions were planned as TCUK Online Satellite Events: during the week ending Friday 1st October. A report of TCUK Metro Online 2021 will be given in the Winter issue of *Communicator*.

UK Technical Communication Awards



At the time of writing the judges are engrossed in assessing the entries for the UKTC Awards 2021. This is another bumper year for quality and variety of entry types. The Award winners will be announced at TCUK Metro Online 2021. The Awards will be presented on the 28th September. Details will be provided subsequently on the UKTC Awards website. We encourage the winners to contribute articles to *Communicator*. We plan to include comprehensive coverage of the awards presented and the experiences of the entrants in producing their entries, in the Winter issue of *Communicator*. ■

Reference

Hoffman, M. (2020) 'Working from home with success' *Communicator*, Summer 2020: 16-19

Linda Robins FISTC

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Member news

as at August 2021

New members

A warm welcome to all new members who have joined the ISTC.

Member



Ashleigh Thompson	Belfast
Kevin Gorringer	East Sussex
Michael McFarland Campbell	Ireland
Ian Milward	Bristol
Lee Hurt	London
Nick Flynn	Merseyside
Ben Mullane	Devon
Joan Sweeney	Dublin
Richard Vaughan	East Sussex

Junior

Matt Rus	Edinburgh
Colin Ross-Barton	Hampshire
Andrew Gibb	Scotland

Student

Martin Phillips	Northamptonshire
Catherine Pope	East Sussex

Rejoiners

Welcome back! We hope you gain much from your membership.

Member



Chris Butters	Cheshire
Xanthe O'Brien	Edinburgh
Derek Reid-Crawford	London

A recent quote from a Member of the ISTC:

"Having worked in communications roles for over 20 years, Michael is a Member and Accredited Practitioner of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and has recently taken on a new role as the Copy Editor for the ISTC's monthly newsletter, InfoPlus. He also writes an award-winning blog on living with HIV and kidney failure at <https://hivblogger.com>."

Michael McFarland Campbell – Ireland

If you would like to contribute to this section, please reach the editor: commissioning.editor@istc.org.uk