



25 MAR 2017
09H – 13H



“The meeting is informal with just enough structure.”



*Nuno Grazina
Feedzai*



*Helena Pires
Vision Box*



*Jorge Leal
Feedzai*

The 12th Report

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Invitations

First invitation (12-Mar)

Greetings to all technical writers, and to everyone interested in technical writing!

We are excited to announce our 12th formal meeting:

- **Saturday, March 25th, 9h00–13h00** (be sharp).
- **Feedzai Lisbon office.**
- Avenida D. João II, Lote 1.16.01 Piso 11, 1990-083 Lisboa

Nuno Grazina (Feedzai): Technical Communicators: Why we rarely find them in the wild

Nuno will provide an overview of the main traits of a good technical communicator, and discuss why setting the bar so high is making it that much harder for Feedzai to hire the right people.

Helena Pires (Vision-Box): Documentation changes but style remains: The importance of a Style Guide in technical documentation

Helena will provide a survival guide for writers with no technical background who want to thrive in a hi-tech environment, and give some insights on the importance of having a Style Guide in technical documentation.

Jorge Leal (Feedzai): Aesthetically functional

When looking for functionality and clarity, sometimes appearance is overlooked. In this presentation, Jorge will tackle technical writing from an aesthetic point of view: what we should aim for when documenting is not only for it to be concise, but also appealing and current.

The participation is free, but subject to room capacity.

Thanks to our sponsors for all the support: [Feedzai](#) (room and coffee-break), [APCOMTEC](#) (marketing) and [EuroSIGDOC](#) (site).

We are also delighted to welcome Nuno Grazina as organizer! For this meeting, he both secured the location and selected the speakers!

- Nuno Grazina, Feedzai, nuno.grazina@feedzai.com
- Alexandra Albuquerque, APCOMTEC president, info@apcomtec.org
- Carlos Costa, EuroSIGDOC chair, carlos.costa@acm.org
- Joaquim Baptista, EuroSIGDOC vice-chair, px@acm.org

PS: Feel free to extend this invitation to friends and other interested parties. More interesting participants will improve the learning experience for everyone.

Second invitation (23-Mar)

Greetings again,

This is a gentle reminder for the meeting next Saturday, with some updated information.

- The building is right next to the Oriente station. See the photo below.
- The building is closed on Saturdays. Ring the bell, wait for the security personnel, then go up to the 11th floor. Wave or knock on the door.
- The event will be in the lounge. Expect an informal space.

The tentative agenda is the following, subject to delays imposed by your questions:

- 09:00 — Introduction to the group, and rules of interaction.
- 09:30 — Nuno Grazina — Technical Communicators: Why we rarely find the in the wild.
- 10:15 — Coffee-break, sponsored by Feedzai.
- 10:45 — Helena Pires — Documentation changes but style remains: The importance of a Style Guide in technical documentation.
- 11:30 — Jorge Leal — Aesthetically functional.
- 12:15 — Wrap up.
- 12:30 — Lunch. Join us to continue the conversation!

Thanks to our sponsors for all the support: Feedzai (room and coffee-break), APCOMTEC (marketing) and EuroSIGDOC (site).

- Nuno Grazina, Feedzai, nuno.grazina@feedzai.com
- Alexandra Albuquerque, APCOMTEC president, info@apcomtec.org
- Carlos Costa, EuroSIGDOC chair, carlos.costa@acm.org
- Joaquim Baptista, EuroSIGDOC vice-chair, px@acm.org

PS: Feel free to extend this invitation to friends and other interested parties. More interesting participants will improve the learning experience for everyone.

PPS: Note that the report of the 11th meeting is (finally) live at <http://eurosigdoc.acm.org/2016-11-15-ips-11th-formal/>

What happened?

After some weeks of preparation, we finally held the 12th edition of Technical Writers @ Lisbon, this time at Feedzai's Lisbon office in Parque das Nações.

Participants started arriving before and around 9AM as scheduled in a joyful mood and commenting about the amazing office view overlooking the Tagus river. We gathered in the lounge area marked by an informal atmosphere, with a TV, sofas and a pool table that also doubles as a ping-pong table.

Not much after 9AM presentations started with some familiar faces in the audience and quite a few new ones. Twenty people attended the meeting, including not only technical communicators but also software engineers and people from other backgrounds.

Joaquim Baptista

Joaquim opened the event with a short introduction to the group and quickly explained the rules of the game, including the usual public notes and how he would then publish a summary of the event in a report.



Nuno Grazina

Feedzai has experienced tremendous growth in the past few years and is now at that “not quite a big company but no longer a startup” stage. To go along with this growth, the company started a Technical Communication team as they can no longer afford to just release software with some last-minute docs.

Nuno explained what Feedzai is looking for in a Technical Communicator and why it has been so hard to find such people. The presentation started by introducing how industry

terms like Technical Writer are starting to seem more and more outdated, as a Technical Communicator does so much more than just writing.

However, those are the terms the market recognizes and the job titles we still must use when posting job offers. And what Feedzai has observed is that most people that respond to these ads end up failing not only on language aspects but also by being unable to extract relevant technical knowledge and expose it in a relevant way.

Then, Nuno presented 10 key characteristics that a Technical Communicator should have, and the ones Feedzai is looking for when hiring. Some of these traits may be innate and behavioral, while others are more technical. But what they have in common is that they need to be nurtured and developed.

The conclusion, and after some Q&A discussion, is that as companies realize the value of having a technical communicator in their ranks, the market is still not responding to the challenge. And while we can't move our eyes off the prize and just lower the bar or give up on trying to find this super-being, unicorn or mythical creature, it's up to us to push forward and find alternatives. And the most fitting one seems to be considering not the individual as the unicorn but the team itself. The sum of each individual's best skills will end up fulfilling these 10 key traits and even taking them further.

Coffee break

After the first presentation, we moved to the kitchen area for coffee and some snacks gently provided by Feedzai. Everyone was engaged in conversation whether it was about what had just been discussed, the company itself or other related topics.



Helena Pires

Helena joined Vision-Box in 2014, coming from a linguistics background and extensive experience in editorial coordination and translations. She wasn't a technical writer before that, and landing at a technological company, having to quickly learn the ropes of a new job, she experienced first-hand the necessity of having some structure and guidelines.

When a new member joined the team, and started asking questions, she drew on her past experience and started working on a Style Guide as a way of exposing a reference of the team's learnings and best practices.

Helena described the Style Guide as a broad and encompassing tool that includes spelling and grammar rules, writing guidelines, how to organize the different types of documents, correct usage of technical terms, etc. Documenting hardware manuals, software manuals and end-user guides, and handling translations for all these types of content made it clear that the Style Guide could not just be mere generic recommendations and suggestions.

The sheer variety of content, its complexity and the intricacies of the documentation toolchain (in DITA) stressed the need for a very thorough and complete code of best practices. Although it is a continuous work in progress, it became clear to the audience that this tool is much more than what we might think of when considering a regular Style Guide.

The Q&A session generated a lot of interest from the participants, as it was a very practical topic that resonated with the audience. In the end, there was a general consensus that having their own versions of such Style Guide would be very useful to anyone in the audience.



Jorge Leal

Jorge presented his personal account of what technical communication means to him and how his experiences led him to move from Spain to Lisbon where he currently works at Feedzai.

He started out by explaining his view on how a combination of passion for writing and literature and an early exposure to technology, brought the “technical” and the “writing” together. He studied English Philology and now works in the engineering department of a software company. That may seem strange, but for him it is only natural.

It's also natural for him to think in broader terms than just technical writing. He described his views on what modern technical communication should be: Current, Human, Proper and Fresh. Docs must be correct and up-to-date but they also must feel like a human wrote them to be easily understood by other humans in an easy and appealing way.

He concluded his presentation reflecting on what his experiences led him to believe is the best way to continually learn and improve as a modern technical communicator. In general, always looking forward, trying to find better and innovative solutions, communicating in a personal and unique voice, not getting stuck in old patterns and not settling for what's already comfortable.

The audience was very engaged by seeing a seemingly old concept being presented in such a personal and heartfelt way. The Q&A session was confirmed the initial idea that in Technical Communication, what really makes the unicorn is the combination of unique people, points of view, and skills in the same functional unit. And that's what we should strive to achieve as Technical Communicators.



Final words

Special thanks to the speakers for the diverse and though-provoking presentations, and to Feedzai for just letting us borrow their workspace for a whole morning.

— Nuno Grazina, nuno.grazina@feedzai.com

After years of driving the meetings of Technical Writers @ Lisbon, I felt a special pleasure in seeing Nuno accept the challenge and organize a very successful meeting. He invited and coordinated the speakers, secured the location and the coffee-break, and put together a perfect morning. I learned from the three presentations.

The eternal challenge of the community has been to make these sessions regular. Let us know if you can offer a location, or if you would like to present. Presenting what you know is a good way to consolidate your own knowledge. And presenting is never difficult when you present among friends.

— Joaquim Baptista, px@acm.org

PS: If you care about such things, we finished the morning on schedule at 12h30.

Nuno Grazina

Nuno Grazina started out as a Technical Writer in 2011 after joining the Documentation team at Altitude Software. Having learned how to transform complex concepts into simple explanations, he has been drawing on that experience ever since.

Shifting his focus to business-oriented disciplines Nuno helped Vision-Box reach ambitious goals with winning business proposals. In a fast paced and innovative environment his responsibilities quickly expanded to solution design, pre-sales and innovation, always grounded on technical knowledge.

At OutSystems he developed the foundations for exposing technical knowledge to the community of customers, developers and even people that have never heard of the company. The content production framework covered everything from thought leadership and lead nurturing to advanced practices and technical guides, to be published at several different types of media.

Currently, he heads all product technical knowledge initiatives at Feedzai. The Technical Communication team delivers docs for 3 products and the entire technical training program. Other than delivering great content, his main mission has been developing and sharing collaborative practices that enable anyone to write the docs (yes, engineers can write!), and make apparent the often overlooked value of software documentation.

Before technical knowledge became his focus, Nuno worked as a software engineer at a marketing agency and collaborated with INESC-ID on an automatic speech translation project (PT-STAR). He holds an MSc in Computer Engineering from Instituto Superior Técnico.

About Feedzai

Feedzai is AI. We're coding the future of commerce with the most advanced risk management platform powered by big data and artificial intelligence. Founded and developed by data scientists and aerospace engineers, Feedzai has one critical mission: make commerce safe. The world's largest banks, payment providers and retailers use Feedzai's machine learning technology to manage risks associated with banking and shopping, whether it's in person, online or via mobile devices.

Learn more at www.feedzai.com.



Technical Communicators

Why we rarely find them in the wild

feedzai

Nuno Grazina
Technical Knowledge Manager

25/03/2017



What is a technical communicator?

What is a technical communicator?

Technical Writer

Information Designer/Developer

Knowledge Engineer

Documentation Specialist

Shakespeare

That guy that writes

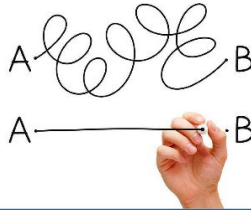
[illegible]

Do you understand the reader?

Transforms complex into simple

Can you write exactly what the reader needs?

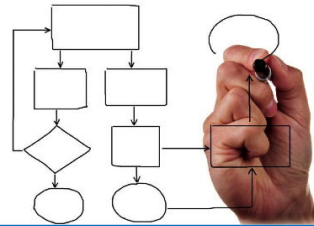
Can you write less and simplify?



Thinks visually

Can you explain what you need to a designer?

Can you draw diagrams yourself?



Gets things done

Do you set up and use the product?

Can you do more by doing less?

Are you pragmatic?



Is technically inclined

Do you have a technical background?

Are you comfortable with complex and cutting edge technology?

Can you code if necessary?

```
public class TcpClientExample
{
    public static void Main()
    {
        byte[] data = new byte[1024];
        TcpClient client = new TcpClient("localhost", 8080);
        try
        {
            NetworkStream ns = client.GetStream();
            int recvd = ns.Read(data, 0, data.Length);
            string dataStr = Encoding.ASCII.GetString(data, 0, recvd);
            Console.WriteLine(dataStr);
        }
        catch (SocketException)
        {
            Console.WriteLine("Unable to connect to server.");
            return;
        }
        while (true)
        {
            input = Console.ReadLine();
            if (input == "exit") break;
            ns.Write(Encoding.ASCII.GetBytes(input));
        }
    }
}
```

Collaborates and communicates

Do you sit with your stakeholders?

Do you seek constant feedback?



Has received training

Have you had formal training?

Have you been mentored?



Has experience/potential

Do you know best practices?

Have you used specialized tooling?

Do you have a sixth sense as to what works?



Is willing to take risks and fight

Are you ready to step up and do it?

Are you not afraid to mess up?

Can you learn from failure?

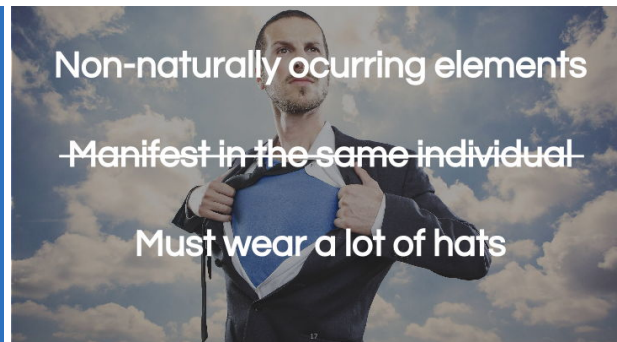


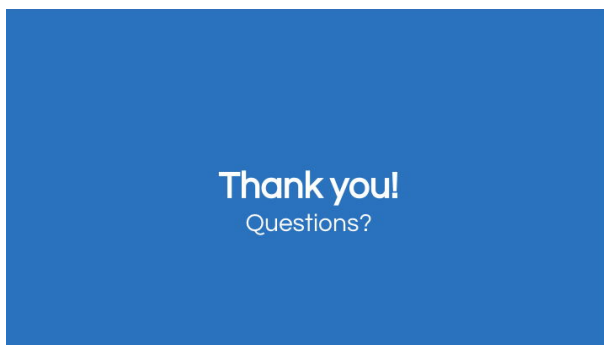
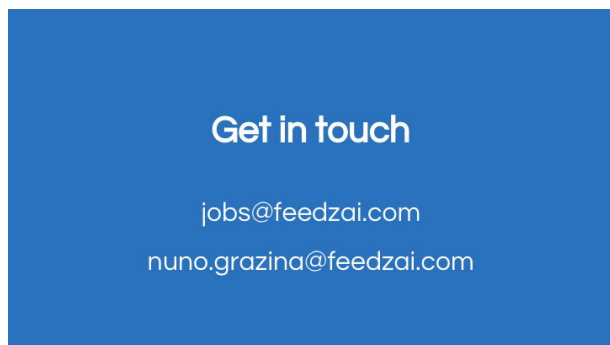
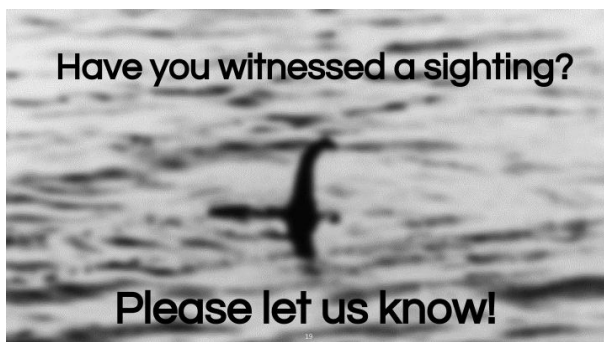
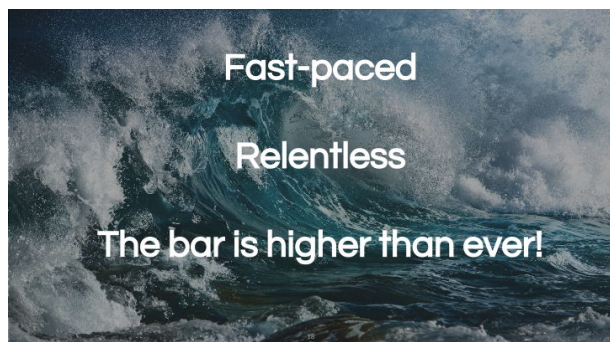
Laws of nature

Non-naturally occurring elements

~~Manifest in the same individual~~

Must wear a lot of hats





Helena Pires

Graduated in Modern Languages and Literatures, English and German Studies, at Coimbra University, I realized that languages would give me a passport to wider opportunities rather than mainstream jobs. I experienced multiculturalism in Germany, felt part of a bigger human family, and always knew that I had to live in a city with an airport. I started my career in a publishing house in Porto and from that time onward I developed a career dedicated to editorial production, contents, translation, and finally technical writing at publishing, online and IT companies. After around 25 school books and childrens' books, 50 translated travel guides, 15 hotel websites, and 100 technical documents later, I'm still passionate about contents, foreign languages and to learning a bit about everything. Curiosity won't kill the cat, and it certainly keeps the passion going 😊



About Vision-box

Vision-box® is an IT company that provides biometric solutions in **Border Control**, **Identity Management** and **Surveillance**. Its main clients are governments, border control authorities, and airports, among others.

The company was founded by an R&D team in 2001 as a spin-off from INETI (Instituto Nacional de Engenharia, Tecnologia e Inovação), which was one of Portugal's leading government-funded technology labs. Innovation in image processing, computer vision, digital CCTV, mechatronics and biometric technologies has contributed to the expansion of the company.

Today Vision-box® is a leading provider of Automated Border Control (ABC) systems and electronic identity solutions. The company's core business areas are:

- **Identity Management**

Electronic identity solutions based on biometric data collection and the management of the life cycle of electronic identity documents.

- **Border Control**

Automated Border Control (ABC) e-gates and traveler management systems deployed in airports, sea and land borders across five continents.

- **Security**

Intelligent digital video management solutions and biometric identification systems.

Vision-box® is headquartered in Lisbon, and has currently offices in Australia, Brazil, Hong Kong, Qatar, USA, United Kingdom and the Netherlands. It employs more than two hundred workers distributed through several areas such as R&D, software development, product design and engineering, quality control, manufacturing, marketing and technical documentation.

Documentation changes but style remains:

The importance of a Style Guide in technical documentation

1

"Fashions fade, style is eternal."

Yves Saint Laurent

2

Documentation changes,
but **Style** remains

3

Who I am

- Graduated in **English and German** Studies in Coimbra.
- **Before 2014:** Editorial coordinator, manager, translators' coordinator
- **After 2014:** Technical "translator" (aka Technical writer) at Vision-Box
- **In my free time:** I sing in a choir and practice suspended yoga ☺



4

How I ended up as Tech Writer

- A **career shift**: my experience in book production, content management and English proficiency led me to take the risk ☺
- Learned technical writing through **mentoring** and **on-job training**
- Started with hardware maintenance manuals and then software user and operator manuals
- Technical **documentation** was first produced in **Word** and later in **DITA** (Darwin Information Typing Architecture)

5

Survival guide for non-techies

- Start with an **open mindset**
- Ask "**stupid**" questions
- Act like a **detective** or a **reporter**
- Put yourself in the **user's shoes**
- Be **curious** and flexible
- **Simplify** – turn complex concepts into simple ideas
- Start a **glossary** of technical terms



6

A Style Guide – what for?

- A new Technical Writer arrived to the team and started asking too many questions :o
- We needed a reference or lighthouse
- We had to make decisions about frequent spelling doubts and work procedures
- Existing style guides (e.g. Apple and Microsoft) are too long
- Better take the time to set writing rules and work procedures!



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A Style Guide (aka Bible ;) is...

- A set of **spelling** and **grammar** rules
- A guide of **work** rules
- A code of **best practices**
- A **training manual** for new members of the doc. team.
- Promotes **text consistency** and a **uniform look and feel**



... and includes loads of real-world practical examples!

8

Main chapters of the SG

1. Spelling and grammar rules
2. Technical writing guidelines
3. DITA structure (root folder, sub-folders and file organization)
4. Safety information (mandatory safety topics)
5. Glossary of technical terms, acronyms, and abbreviations
6. Reference language and knowledge resources

9

5 Principles for writing documentation

1. **Use American English** spelling as standard language
2. **Keep it Simple** – write in Simplified English
3. **Use short** and clear sentences
4. **Be active** – use the active voice, not the passive
5. **Avoid gender-specific references** such as he/she

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3.1 Five principles for writing documentation

When writing technical documentation, apply the following principles. Let's call them the Five Principles of Technical Writing:

1. **Use American English instead of British English** - Use American English spelling as the standard usage in all technical documents. Whenever necessary, refer to the American Heritage Dictionary <https://www.ahdictionary.com> or to Merriam-Webster Dictionary <http://www.merriam-webster.com>. For spelling rules, consult the section 4.1 Spelling (page 8).
2. **Write in simplified English** - Apply the "Keep it Simple" principle. Write clear declarative sentences and avoid complex forms or language. Keep in mind that often English is not the native language of the readers of technical documentation. Whenever possible, use simple vocabulary and sentences to improve clarity. If there is need to use complex terms or acronyms, explain them.
3. **Use short sentences** - Write short sentences and avoid combining different ideas in the same sentence. Split several ideas into separate sentences. Whenever necessary, use Hemingway App <http://www.hemingwayapp.com> to convert complex sentences into short and simple sentences that are easier to read.
4. **Use the active voice** - Use the active voice and avoid the passive voice, whenever possible. However, if a sentence reads more naturally and is easier to understand in the passive voice, do not force it to the active voice. For further information, consult the section 4.5 Verbs and active voice (page 15).
5. **Avoid gender-specific references** - When possible, use the second person or plural forms instead of gender-specific pronouns. The second person has a friendly tone and connects you with the user. It also helps avoid passive voice because it focuses the discussion on the user. Prefer the forms: "the user", "the operator" or "the travelers" instead of "his/her", "him/her" or "them". For further information, consult the section 4.3 Pronouns (page 10).

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Structure of the DITA platform

The DITA structure has 3 main folders:

1. **Scripts** – to automate the output from .xml to .pdf
2. **Docs** – all documentation related to products and projects
3. **Translations** – translated docs organized by language

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Types of documents – HW

Hardware manuals	Purpose	Target audience	Examples of products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance: • External 1st level • External 2nd level • Internal 2nd level 	Provide technical procedures on how to execute maintenance and replacement tasks. There are three levels of maintenance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External 1st level: cleaning and preventive maintenance • External 2nd level: component replacement • Internal 2nd level: deeper component replacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External 1st level: operators • External 2nd level: vision-box technicians or nominated representatives • Internal 2nd level: vision-box expert technicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vb i-match™ bluish • vb i-match™ e-gate • vb e-gate™ bluish • vb e-pass™ desktop

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Types of documents – SW

Software manuals	Purpose	Target audience	Examples of products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User • Operator • Administration 	Provide instructions on how the user can interact with the equipment. Provide instructions on how to operate and manage a software application. Describe the interface of applications that monitor and control a system, for example a border control system. Provide instructions on how to administrate a software application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff that help users use the equipment • Operators • Auditors • Officers • Immigration staff • Border control officers • Administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vb i-match™ server software • vb i-pass™ server software • vb inspector™ • vb referral™ • vb supervisor™ • vb routing™ server • vb quick enroll™ • vb report viewer™ • vb i-pass™ server software • vb supervisor™

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Types of documents – HW / SW

HWSW manuals	Purpose	Target audience	Examples of products
Installation	Provide technical instructions on how to install an equipment, for example unpack and mount hardware, and install software.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vision-bee® technicians, software experts, or nominated representatives • Operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vb e-gate™ • supervisors™
Configuration	Provide technical instructions on how to configure a system, an equipment, or a software application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vision-bee® technicians, software experts, or nominated representatives • Operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vb management center™ • vb orchestra™
Work instructions	Provide specific instructions on how to perform a single task, for example, replace a component.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vision-bee® technicians, software experts, or nominated representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vb e-gate™

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Structuring a document

- Typical table of contents (TOC) of HW and SW manuals
- Headings should be clear and short to fit in one line
- Use lead-in sentences before tables, lists, and images
- Numbered lists vs unordered lists for different purposes
- Apply the right format and resolution for images: technical drawings, screenshots, photos, etc.
- Create cross-references within the doc. when needed

16

Technical Terms

Correct	Incorrect	Examples
app (application for mobile devices)	mobile application	Install the Appy Flow app on your mobile device.
application (software application for computers or larger end-user items)	program	The vb inspector™ is an application installed on a monitoring station.
• log in (verb) login (noun)	log in, log into, log on, log into	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log in with your new password. • After the login, click Ok.
• log out (verb) logout (noun)	log out, log off, log out from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must log out of the application. • Do the logout.
• photo page of the passport (use in user manuals) • MRZ page of the passport (use in operator manuals)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The traveler must open the passport on the photo page. • The operator should instruct the traveler to open the passport on the MRZ page.
press (press a button on a touchscreen)	press on the button	To save the changes, press Save.
• real time (noun) • real-time (adjective)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The solution provides information in real time. • The solution generates real-time statistics and reports.

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Glossary & Terminology

AA (Active Authentication)	Explicit authentication of the chip. Requires processing capabilities of the eMR1D chip. Ensures that the chip has not been substituted, by means of a challenge-response protocol between the inspection system and the eMR1D chip.
ABC (Automated Border Control)	Automation of the border control procedure, maintaining or improving into the security level achieved by human border control while guaranteeing that all legal restrictions and guidelines are applied to personal information protection.
ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)	An US law that protects the civil rights of people with disabilities. It affords protection against discrimination to Americans with disabilities, requires employers to provide proper facilities to employees with disabilities, and imposes accessibility requirements on public accommodations.
AIC (Automatic Immigration Control)	Automated system which authenticates the travel document, establishes that the traveler is the rightful holder of the travel document, queries relevant travel restriction databases and determines eligibility for border crossing.
APIS (Advance Passenger Information System)	An electronic data interchange system intended to enhance border security. An APIS collects and shares limited data on passengers and crew members such as identification details from the passport and basic flight information. Passengers must provide this data before traveling to or from certain countries. Then the airlines or vessel operators share it with the computer system of the destination state.
Biometric capture	Process of capturing a sample of unique biological traits of a person.
Biometric identification	Process of identifying a person by comparing the captured biometric data of one person against all biometric data stored in a database. This is called a One-to-many (1:N) method of identification.
Biometric verification	Process of confirming the identity of a person by comparing the captured biometric data with only one linked biometric data previously stored in a database or document. This is called a One-to-one (1:1) method of verification.

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Benefits of a Style Guide

- **Quick reference** for spelling, grammar and work rules
 - Code of **best practices**
 - **Training manual**
 - Provides **consistency** to all documentation
 - Provides a **professional look and feel**
 - Gives a more clear and **familiar feeling** to the reader
 - All docs can be **reused** by different TWs and newcomer TWs!
- ...It is a work in progress...



19

If you don't have a Style Guide...

- Adopt one...
- Create a basic set of work procedures
- Create a glossary of main technical terms
- ...



20

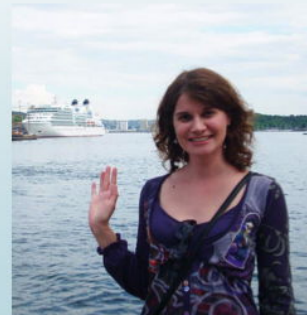
Thank You!

Helena Pires

hpaires_pt@yahoo.com

www.linkedin.com/in/helenapires

25 March 2017



Jorge Leal

I'm Jorge Leal, 26 years old, born in Spain and currently living in Lisbon.

Ever since I was little, I greatly enjoy literature and writing, and I always wanted to make a life out of it. With that purpose in mind, I studied English Philology in the University of Oviedo in Asturias. Philology, unbeknownst to many, is a discipline that comprises the study of a language in written historical sources: a combination of literary criticism, history, cultural studies, and linguistics.

I worked as an English and Literature teacher for three years, which helped me develop the virtue of patience, as the age of my students ranged from 2 to 30-odd years old, and the needs of every student make you abstract your mind in order to get to know how to be clear to them.



Apart from literature, I always had a passion for technology, and I grew up surrounded by gadgets here and there and a brother obsessed with computers. I got my first computer at the age of 8 (an old one from my brother, of course) and I've been only learning ever since.

About a year ago, these two passions (writing and technology) merged when I started to work as a technical writer in Ingram Micro's Cloud services, and I have continued doing so until now in Feedzai. It was a personal revolution: I finally got to merge how much I liked writing, teaching and dealing with technology in a single job.

About Feedzai

Feedzai is AI. We're coding the future of commerce with the most advanced risk management platform powered by big data and artificial intelligence. Founded and developed by data scientists and aerospace engineers, Feedzai has one critical mission: make commerce safe.

The world's largest banks, payment providers and retailers use Feedzai's machine learning technology to manage risks associated with banking and shopping, whether it's in person, online or via mobile devices.

Learn more at www.feedzai.com.

Aesthetically functional

Last Saturday, I took part of the technical writing gathering TW@Lisbon at Feedzai's offices. I got the chance to present my point of view about technical communication and my approach towards the task of documenting software.

I tried to offer my personal account on the topic, highlighting what's important to me and how my academic background has shaped the way I interact with technology and with the process of documentation. Having studied English Philology, working in an engineering position might come across as odd, and I tried to explain the influence of these studies in my career. Studying literature has helped get inspired and find my voice, therefore being able to convey any kind of message (including technical ones) more easily and comfortably. I've adopted all this knowledge as the key to understanding the cultural and linguistic mechanisms behind the human reasoning, easing the process of **translating complex concepts into understandable ones**.

However, my exposure to technology from an early age has also given me the opportunity to develop a naturally receptive mind towards the more technical aspects of technical writing. Art and technology have always come hand by hand, as we can see in the importance of technology in the evolution of theatre. This is the reason why we should not consider them two different worlds, as both are mere representations of the evolution of humankind and their mindset: Technology is broader than devices.

I see **technical communication** as a multichannel discipline to which the term "Technical Writing" seems to be insufficient. There are four main properties I like to apply to my work as a technical communicator:

- **Currentness:** In an evolving world, our job must evolve with it. Applying new techniques, channels and methodologies in order to not only produce documentation that is clear and accessible, but also up-to-date and contemporaneous.
- **Humanity:** Technical Communication is a job that could be mimicked by automation, thus we must keep it human. Avoid sterile content, bigotry and pedantry as it would only affect your job negatively, producing obscure material.
- **Properness:** We should make a good use of linguistics in order to produce clear documentation. Therefore, we must seek to master writing in general, not only technical writing. People speak vernacular and manuals should too, be clear but avoid oversimplifying and overcomplicating.
- **Freshness:** Be cool, make your documents interesting and use audiovisual help. Make diagrams, give importance to aesthetics and don't produce dated content. No one wants to follow a boring manual.

We shouldn't really want to produce materials that look like an Ikea manual and I'm happy to say that producing current materials is something that is valued in Feedzai (as shown in one of the slides). Aim for making documentation **attractive and logical** so that readers don't face it with the feeling that it is going to be a nightmare to read. Also, the **interaction**

with developers must be highlighted, no one knows their product better than them and their contributions are gold: They write the script, but it's the technical communicators' job to be the actors.

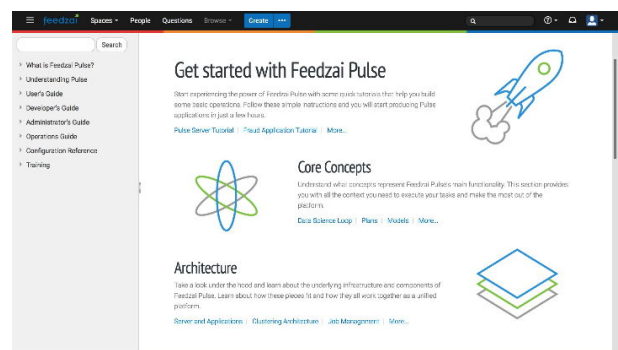
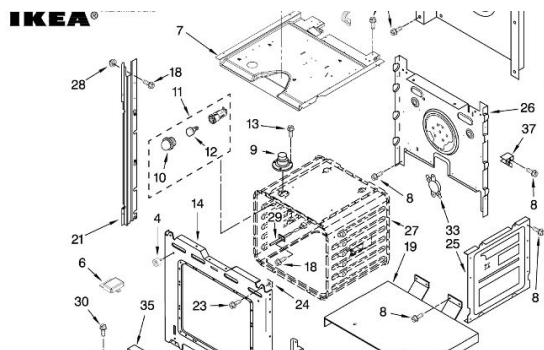
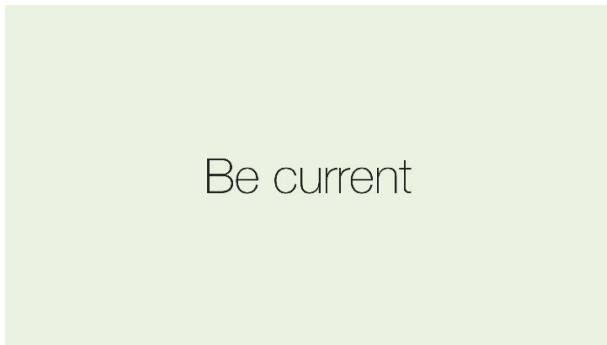
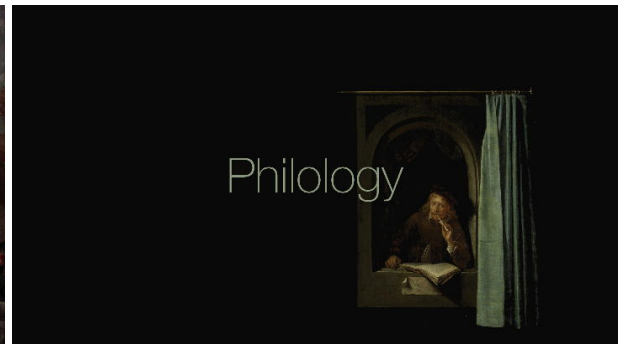
I also reflected some guidelines I use on a daily basis:

- **Defying oneself:** Always aim for something better. Follow guidelines but do not be a guidelines extremist. **If something works, don't stick blindly to it**, there might be something that works even better.
- **Developing one's own style:** Be aseptic and clear, but **retain your own voice**. There's a reason why our mums would rather have us explaining to them how to configure their phones than reading a manual. Try to be your readers' children when you write.
- **Applying progress:** Don't get stuck in dusty concepts. There are new ways of presenting information every day and there's a reason why people would rather watch a youtube tutorial. **Broaden your horizons** when browsing for the best possible way to present something.
- **Reinventing standards:** Learn from what you've done and what you have been taught but don't be afraid to try new ways of conveying your message just because it's not orthodox or standardised.

As on the talk, I'd like to finish by quoting one of my favourite poems that could work as a motto for never-ending learning.

"We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

— T. S. Eliot

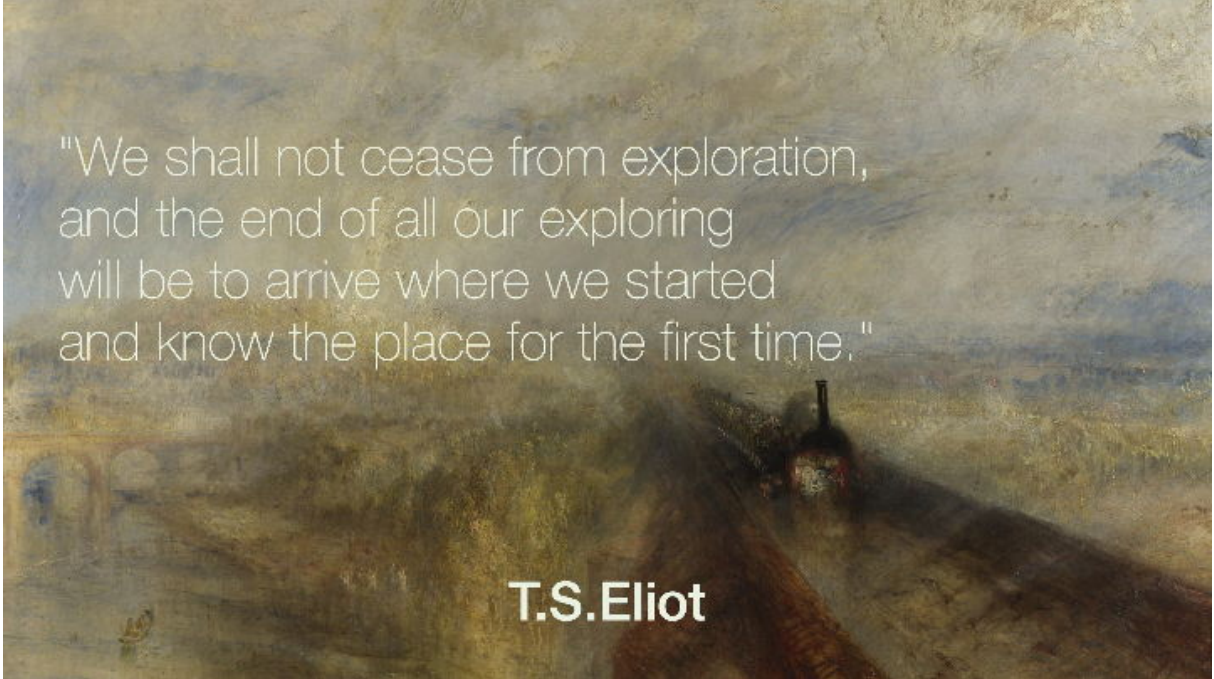


Defy yourself

Develop your style

Apply progress

Reinvent standards



"We shall not cease from exploration,
and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time."

T.S.Eliot

Public notes

All participants received a questionnaire with the following questions:

- Ideas, doubts, comments, reflexions?
- What did you like the most?
- How could we improve? What could we do differently?

The participants were promised that their answers would be published in a final public report.

The following pages have the notes returned by 10 participants, transcribed or translated to English.

The anonymous notes correspond to participants that did not check the “publish?” box.

Technical Writers professional learners fighting for users everywhere	Name (optional) Publish? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Sim, Atue-me</i> Email: Publish? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>luis.almeida@gmail.com</i>
public notes <small>We will contact you through email. We will publish your name and email if you say so. We will publish your notes below as part of the public report.</small>	
Ideas, doubts, comments, reflections? <i>entretanto verifico que no final o complemento de diferentes background (técnicos, artísticos, etc...) acabam por complementarem-se porque é o objetivo comum: passar a mensagem. É importante, ainda para mais, quando estamos muito felizes porque temos alguma coisa o desmotivamos, não há de ser assim a "boa parte" porque se expõem em si mesmos diferentes (mas autênticos) pontos de vista e isso acaba por ser algo de que se não se quer, e isso acaba por ser o mesmo resultado. Não que seja importante, mas o objetivo de tentar apresentar o dito documento reflete pela sua forma, de tentar desenvolver pontos nos quais seja possível apresentar ideias e ideias de desenvolvimento de trabalho, mas mesmo quando se se para a questão de não se quer alguma documento de trabalho ou equipamento que tenha o problema de desenvolvimento mas não está relacionado a que de que se fez no mesmo.</i>	
What did you like the most? <i>O conjunto de todos os apresentadores.</i>	
How could we improve? What could we do differently? <i>Podemos reunir os dados das primeiras e seguintes de modo a aumentar a rede de contactos de quem participa/participa a mais.</i>	
Thanks!	

Jorge Leal

Comments? The three talks complemented each other really well. We've gone through the different aspects of technical writing. They have helped expanding the traditional limits of technical writing.

Like? The question rounds were very thought-provoking.

Improve? More structure and scheduled planning.

Laura Barros

Comments? The event was very dynamical, with much participation. I only attended to the last presentation which I liked, the informal style of presenting in a very pleasant place for work in Feedzai. It was an opportunity to meet former colleagues and very interesting to head the exchange of ideas and new suggestions for future events. It seems the technical writing events are to continue and keep on gathering motivated professionals of the area.

Like? The dynamical exchange of ideas, active participation, suggestions and availability for future gatherings of technical writing and for the formats / scope of future events. The modern and pleasant Feedzai space.

Improve? Maybe a not so early schedule, a place with better parking.

Luís Almeida

Email? luisalmeida@gmail.com

Comments? It is interesting how at the end the different backgrounds (technical, artistic, and so on) are complementary in what is the common objective: to pass the message.

Furthermore, it is important when we are focused in a technical task such as development, where everything is a secret 'black box', that a background in different areas (more artistic) can deconstruct the logical burden that we carry, and obtain the same result.

I believe that it would be important, when searching for the superman referred by Nuno Grazina, that we try to develop talks where it is possible to present guidelines to develop a technical writer (while transmitting the logical mission that any document must possess) to teams/elements that feel the documentation issues but do not know what is being done by others.

Like? The set of all presentations.

Improve? We can gather the contacts of attendees and share them to increase the contact network of those that belong or not to the area.

Paulo Ribeiro

Email? paulo@diffraction.pt

Comments? Once again I really enjoyed watching the presentations, especially because each one of them resonated deeply with me for different reasons.

It was great recognizing familiar faces and also meeting new people.

This session was also a great opportunity for some people from my current Technical Communication team to learn about different practices and concerns from the field.

Like? I really enjoyed the discussions that developed after each talk. I got the feeling the participants had quite different professional experiences and were curious to learn more about each other's work and challenges as technical writers.

The relatively informal environment of these sessions appeals to me. I also appreciated that this meeting ended pretty much within the scheduled time.

Improve? Let's try to continue bringing different points of view, presented by new people to the community. This would surely help keep the spark going.

It would also be interesting to publicize the event next to people who may not be technical writers yet but who may be curious about the profession.

Rui Costa

Comments? Wonderful session — different viewpoints, topic diversity, real-world problems debated.

Like? Please see above.

Improve? Today's arrangement was near-perfect. Thank you!

Anonymous #5

Comments? What an inspiring place for this Saturday morning.

How could we know the Portuguese and Global markets for technical writing services in the companies that seek the services of technical writers? Is there a market niche for this kind of business?

Like? Besides the view, the comfort of the community of technical writers.

Improve? Continuity of some ideas left in the air.

Anonymous #6

Comments?

- Good, inspiring presentations and people.
- The ideas were different, creative, fun and less technical than usual.
- The Unicorn is the team 😊 not just one Technical Writer.
- Diversity in one team is more enriching than everyone having the same background.

Like?

- The informality of the event.
- The cosy space.
- The view to the river.
- The nice and varied people interested and united by the same interest.

Anonymous #7

Comments?

Joaquim. Intro to the group.

Nuno Grazina. Tech Communicator (broader more encompassing of the role than tech writer, knowledge eng, etc.). 10 characteristics:

- Gets it, the whys.
- Ask (the right) questions.
- Know target audience.
- Transform complex to simple.
- Write exactly what reader needs.
- Think visually.
- Gets things done.
- Tech minded.
- Collaborate / communicate.
- Has experience (best practices).

- Risk taker (somewhat), learn by practice.

The social life of information.

Helena Pires. Style Guide (mentored by Paulo Ribeiro), Word -> DITA. Style Guide at Vision Box. Life cycle of documentation and the realities of working companies.

Jorge Leal. Philology. Tech writing is a lot about teaching.

Be current / Be human / Be proper / Be fresh / Defy yourself / Reinvent standards / Apply progress / Dev(elop) style.

Like? The opportunity to discuss; the meeting is informal with just enough structure.

Anonymous #8

Comment? The presentation of Helena is a good explanation of what is a text style guide. Jorge made an inspiring presentation.

Anonymous #9

Comment?

- It was very interesting as usual. 🤖
- I specially found the second talk most enlightening, because it was about a TW style guide, as a sort of speak about meta information on technical writing.
- In the first talk I found interesting the discussion around the skills and work involving TW work.

Like? Discussion part.

Institutional support

About EuroSIGDOC

EuroSIGDOC is an ACM SIGDOC European chapter.

SIGDOC is the Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group (SIG) on the Design of Communication (DOC).

EuroSIGDOC is a group of researchers and practitioners wanting to pursue the SIGDOC mission in a European context.

Like SIGDOC, EuroSIGDOC focuses on the design of communication as it is taught, practiced, researched, and conceptualized in various fields, including technical communication, software engineering, information architecture and usability.



Since 2010, EuroSIGDOC sponsored the following events:

- OSDOC 2010 — Workshop Open Source and Design of Communication (eurosigdoc.acm.org/osdoc2010);
- OSDOC 2011 — Workshop Open Source and Design of Communication (eurosigdoc.acm.org/osdoc2011);
- OSDOC 2012 — Workshop Open Source and Design of Communication (eurosigdoc.acm.org/osdoc2012);
- OSDOC 2013 — Workshop Open Source and Design of Communication (eurosigdoc.acm.org/osdoc2113);
- ISDOC 2012 — Workshop Information Systems and Design of Communication (eurosigdoc.acm.org/isdoc2012);
- ISDOC 2013 — International Conference on Information Systems and Design of Communication (eurosigdoc.acm.org/isdoc2013)
- ISDOC 2014 — International Conference on Information Systems and Design of Communication (eurosigdoc.acm.org/isdoc2014)

Several seminars were sponsored by EuroSIGDOC (eurosigdoc.acm.org/seminars.html), and now the TWL (Technical Writers @ Lisbon).

— EuroSIGDOC Board

About APCOMTEC

APCOMTEC: uma associação interdisciplinar

Desde a sua criação, em 2006, que a APCOMTEC, Associação Portuguesa para a Comunicação Técnica, com sede na UA, tem vindo a promover e divulgar a prática profissional, formativa e de investigação em Comunicação Técnica (CT), em Portugal. Nos últimos anos, procurou dar a conhecer o seu trabalho e divulgar esta área, recente em contexto nacional, tanto através da formação, da organização de eventos, das redes sociais e da Newsletter

Missão e objetivos

AAPCOMTEC tem por missão o desenvolvimento, a promoção e a representação da Comunicação Técnica em Portugal, bem como dos respetivos profissionais.

Dos objetivos dos atuais órgãos sociais fazem parte o diálogo próximo entre o meio académico e o meio empresarial, a promoção da interdisciplinaridade inerente à CT, nomeadamente com a Tradução, a Terminologia, a Engenharia Informática e a Divulgação de Ciência, bem como o fortalecimento da presença e o reconhecimento da CT a nível nacional e europeu. AAPCOMTEC é associada da TCeurope – associação que representa os interesses da comunidade de Comunicação Técnica a nível europeu.

O que temos feito

Enquanto agente divulgador e mediador de experiências, conhecimento, informação, produtos e serviços sobre e de Comunicação Técnica, a APCOMTEC tem dinamizado eventos de informação e formação em CT, nomeadamente através das suas Jornadas e do Colóquio Internacional de Comunicação Técnica 2012.

Foram três as **Jornadas** já organizadas em diferentes pontos do país, desde 2011: no DLC/UA, sobre Comunicação Profissional e Design de Informação, na ESTGA, dedicada à Comunicação Profissional e Planeamento na Documentação Técnica, e no ISCAP, coorganizada com o Centro Multimédia de Línguas (CML), sob o tema “Comunicação Técnica: como traduzir negócios em sucesso”.

O objetivo destas Jornadas consistia em reunir especialistas e profissionais, na área da Comunicação Técnica (CT), e dar a conhecer o seu trabalho a futuros especialistas, indo assim ao encontro dos próprios objetivos da APCOMTEC.

Quanto ao **Colóquio Internacional de Comunicação Técnica 2012**, constituído por um Pré-colóquio sobre «Sustentabilidade em Comunicação Técnica» e o Colóquio TCeurope 2012 «Technical Communication and Readership», este teve lugar no Departamento de Línguas e Culturas da U. Aveiro em abril de 2012.

O Pré-colóquio permitiu debater acerca da estreita relação entre a Comunicação Técnica, a Terminologia, a Tradução e a Engenharia Informática, que inegavelmente contribui para um desenvolvimento mais preciso, adequado e eficaz, assim como para a criação de documentação mais personalizada e intuitiva.

Quanto ao Colóquio TCeurope, o seu objetivo foi fornecer uma visão geral do estado-da-arte de um tópico tão vasto e desafiante como é o público-alvo em Comunicação Técnica, bem como explorar os diferentes e emergentes meios de comunicação aqui utilizados, trocar informação relativa à comunicação técnica e às suas aplicações, avaliar as vantagens e desvantagens dos diversos formatos de edição e produção, assim como as utilizações, as necessidades e as exigências provenientes da e-sociedade.

Este conjunto de eventos contribuiu certamente para o crescimento da associação, tanto a nível do número dos seus associados como da projeção que conseguiu dar a esta área recente do conhecimento, tendo-se este último facto refletido nos inúmeros contactos de qualidade que a APCOMTEC teve com as **empresas e instituições**, essencialmente a nível nacional.

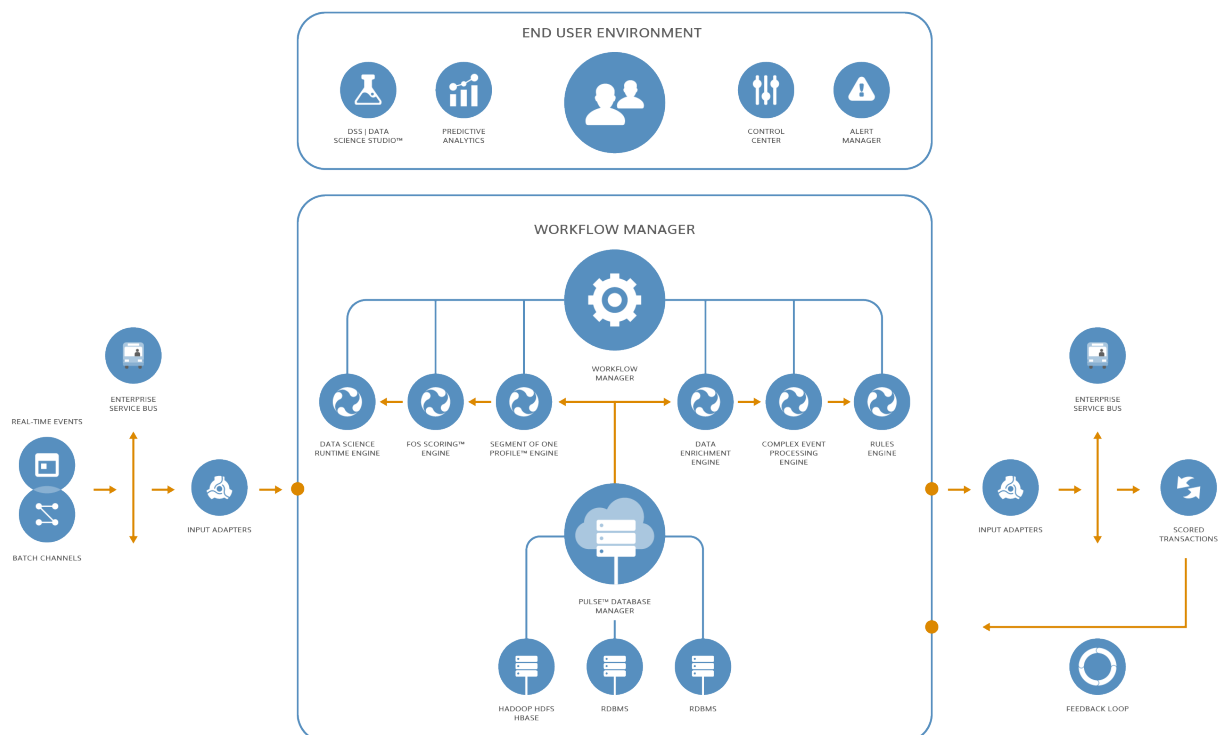
Já a nível europeu, o esforço da associação em manter a ligação à **TCeurope** tornou-se particularmente profícuo aquando da organização conjunta do evento internacional antes mencionado, assim com nas reuniões de trabalho subsequentes, tendo a última acontecido em Bruxelas, em abril de 2013, onde a APCOMTEC esteve presente.



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