News

Images from the pools-m workshop in Istanbul where the teams experienced the strengths of different language teaching methods

Languages:

Basque
Danish
Dutch
English
Gaelic
German
Greek
Italian
Lithuanian
Maltese
Portuguese
Romanian
Spanish
Turkish

Hop on board and join the pools teams i.e. pools, pools-t, pools-2, and pools-m

The pools-m teams met in Istanbul 2010 for their second workshop. Main point on their agenda was final testing of the selected language teaching methods and preparation for the first pilot course in November.

Germana testing a game produced by the Italian team. The game prepares students for travelling to a foreign country

Both pools-t and pools-m will be presented at the EuroCall 2010 conference in Bordeaux as a Parallel session on September 9th (11:00 - 11:45) The presentation has been placed under the strand: "Innovative e-learning solutions for languages"

Title of the presentation is "Two Tools for producing CLIL (content and language integrated learning) materials"

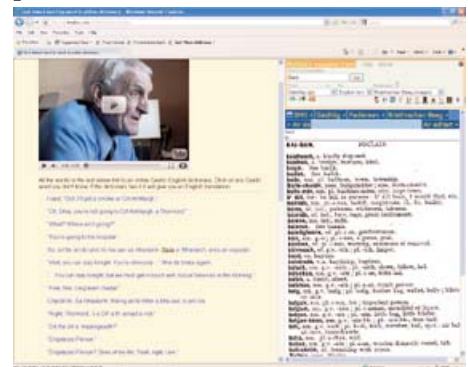The presenters are Caoimhin O Donnaile and Kent Andersen

Meet Caoimhin and Kent at EUROCALL 2010 in Bordeaux. Registration at www.eurocall-languages.org

POOLS-T workshop at SUPSI, held on Tuesday 15 June. The workshop was attended mainly by SUPSI teachers from various faculties, and also some people external to SUPSI, one of whom was particularly interested in our products.

This person, Sue Gilbert, is a Cambridge teacher trainer and oral examiner, and teaches in the public school system in Ticino. The SUPSI team was pleased with the attendance because this is a particularly busy time of the year for SUPSI teachers. The workshop lasted for about 2 hours and started with a presentation of Multidict and Wordlink.

Participants were then encouraged to look up the websites they wanted. The focus then turned to TextBlender, with the presentation of some completed samples (Tacoma Bridge, Circulatory System and Social Work). The participants then created a new TB sample together, following the guidance given by the SUPSI team (looking for a video on youtube, finding the text etc). The level of interest generated was high and all those present were pleased with the results produced.

One of the new units for teaching Gaelic. The unit makes use of scanned dictionary pages from the web archieves

Latest news: The TextBlender has reached its final version. The Wordlink and Multidict tools can now be accessed from www.multidict.net

Multidict one of the tools produced by the project works much better if the end-user has set the browser setting to accept cookies. When cookies are accepted the dictionary remembers the last preferred settings like which dictionary to use and which language.

Multidict - look out for the brown cookie in the right hand top corner. If it is not a brown cookie, but an unhappy face then click it to learn how to change your settings

Thanks to the Multidict the TextBlender selection for dictionary is now limited to indicating the language of the text
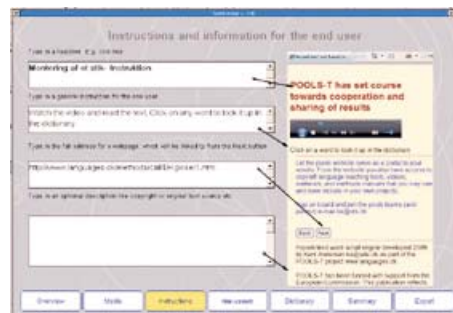
We would appreciate your feedback to Multidict. We hope we may now have tracked down and cured the cookie problem, but would be very glad if anyone who found problems with cookies in Multidict using Internet Explorer could give it another go and see whether things are better now. (Remember to reset your privacy settings back to the default "Medium" level if you had changed them.)

It turns out that the problem was that Multidict uses frames, and Internet Explorer treats cookies within frames as "third party cookies". The solution is that Internet Explorer will accept third party cookies from sites with a "privacy policy". So it seems that all we had to

do was to add an HTTP header promising Internet Explorer that we are going to respect the users' privacy and it will be happy.

Sample webpage produced by SUPSI with the TextBlender in the new "split screen" mode http://dl.dropbox.com/u/4672246/Tacoma/TacomaBridge3.htm As can be seen the unit has been placed online through dropbox.com
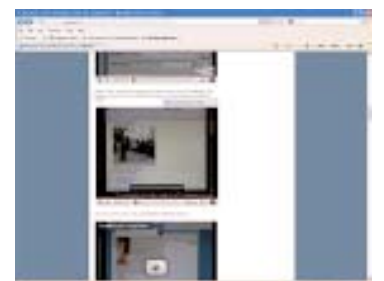

The teams have now started the production of sample language teaching units. Each unit will be created using the TextBlender. More than sixty sample units can now be tested from the www.languages.dk/tools and even more will be produced over summer.

Caoimhín has added a new mechanism to Multidict which enables it to handle dictionaries which had previously proved obstinate. You can see it working with English to Lithuanian here:

www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/
multidict/
?sl=en&tl=lt&dict=Vertimas

The way it works is that instead of Multidict sending a query itself to the dictionary, it sends the dictionary lookup page to the user's browser, having first injected it with some JavaScript which makes the browser fill in and submit the search form automatically. (That is why you may see a kind of "double-take" as the form loads and then the results come in.)

The DIY online videos now have English subtitles. The final DVD versions will have subtitles in all the project languages.

Montering af et stik A text with video in Danish demonstrating how to wire a plug followed by language learning exercises

Latest news: POOLS-2 has finished the adaptation of the original pools materials and has started translation into the three new languages,

Massimo, one of the Maltese team members has presented the pools-2 project at a conference in Arezzo, Italy. The conference has been organized by the Department in order to receive a visit of a wide delegation of Czech participants coming from Brno and South Moravia Labour Offices and from the National Association of Czech Institutions involved in Adult Education (www.aivd.cz/aivd-english). The workshop has been attended also by some trainers and teachers coming from Czech technical high schools and by the Italian teachers of the technical high school I.T.I.S. "Galileo Galilei" of Arezzo (www.itis.arezzo.it).

The Portuguese team members presenting pools-2

The pools-2 projects team at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig were pleased to see their work highlighted recently as "Good Practice" on the website of the education inspectorate: www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=48&topic=388
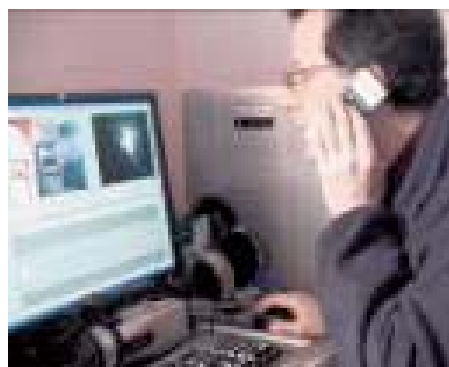
The Island Voices project is a successor to the team's work on the original POOLS project, building on the 2007 European Award for Languages. Co-ordinator Gordon Wells posts regular updates on the project blog at http://guthan.wordpress.com. This helps to inform the work of new video producers in the POOLS-2 project.

While the bilingual Scottish archive of video materials continues to expand rapidly there is also a growing emphasis on learners themselves engaging in recording activity.

An ESOL learner in Benbecula making her own video on the beach.

Listen to an ESOL learner talking about her daughter's school: http://guthan.wordpress.com/2010/06/15/benbecula-english-class-location-filming/

The Island Voices project blog also features a lot of easy-to-make audio recordings, created using Ipadio. The ease with which various free-to-use online platforms and programs, such as Wordpress, YouTube, Ipadio, and now Wordlink, can be combined means the power to create really media-

rich materials is far closer to the ordinary language teacher's grasp than ever before.

The first Portuguese video is now ready for use. It can be watched from the project video area

All the team members in Cyprus, Malta, and Portugal are right now busy preparing 20 videos in each language complete with transcriptions, translations, and despription of content as well as suggested language level for the end user. The videos have to be ready for the upcoming September workshop in Malta, where they will be used as part of the pilot course on Computer Assisted Language Learning.

Pools-2 presented at the Portuguese Association of Language Centres in Higher Education (ReCLes.pt) and the Portuguese Association of Foreign Language

Latest news: The POOLS-M teams have started exploiting the developed materials that can now be downloaded from the project website www.languages.dk/methods

Stefano and his team using communicative methods based on pools-m ideas

Exploitation of pools-m results by CSCS and the "Coop" supermarkets - a huge chain whose main company is called "Unicoop" Firenze.

The "Unicoop" group and CSCS decided together to send 25 apprentices, divided in two groups, to Eskurtze, in the Basque Country, where Susana Martinez helped us creating a programme fitting their needs: Spanish classes, classes of communication, marketing, etc.

The language workshop used some of the language teaching methods provided by the **Pools m** project.

We had the fortune of also having in Pistoia work placements of students coming from Bilbao, and we asked one of them to help us use the language preparation games proposed by the project: we called the games "shoulders without wires" and "chopped sentences". The apprentices had a lot of fun and did great in understanding.

We also asked the Spanish student to make an oral presentation of the city of Bilbao and worked with the students on the direct understanding of the meaning of what Silvia (the Native Spanish Speaker) said. Divided in two groups, they had a certain number of points assigned for each phase

of the presentation completely or partially understood.

The pools-m project teams met in Istanbul to work through the five selected language learning methods and make the final selection of the materials. Each day the teams tried different methods to learn languages like Danish, Italian, Lithuanian and Turkish. For each method there has now been developed ready to use materials in the project languages

Working with a new version of the simulation called "Airport" the simulation can be downloaded in all the project languages from the website

Rasa busily handing out the Lithuanian version of the pools-m brochures at a conference in Lithuania

Pools-m can be followed in FaceBook. Just search for the "pools-m" group and become a group member. You are also very welcome to start debates about our work.

Cecilia Leboeuf a new Pools-m team member

Introducing Cecilia Leboeuf: At SDE College in Vejle, which is located on the east coast of Jutland, Denmark, we have recently been made aware of the POOLS-M project. This appeals to us because it can help us provide a wider outlook on language teaching. I am one of these teachers and my area of interest in this context is creating and integrating new concepts to enhance the learning process.

My background is multicultural. Having lived in several countries throughout my life, I am very well aware of how language and culture are linked together and how easy it is to learn a new language when you are immersed in it, and how boring it can be to just sit with a book.

I am currently teaching English, Danish and Swedish.