



September 2008 The Consultants-E Team

Dear < %[contact_first name] % > ,

Welcome to our regular newsletter exploring the world of ICT in education, online training & development. In this issue we consider 'microblogging' – how to get started, where to look, and what to join. If you've missed past newsletters, they can be downloaded in pdf format from our website at: <http://www.theconsultants-e.com/newsletter/>

You'll find the following sections in this newsletter:

- **STOP PRESS**
- **TWITTERING ON**
- **COMPANY NEWS & UPDATE**
- **UPCOMING ONLINE COURSES**
- **CONFERENCES**

We hope you'll enjoy this newsletter. Please note that you've received it because you signed up for mailings from us on our website (<http://www.theconsultants-e.com>), or have done a course with us. If you no longer want to receive newsletters or mailings, please send an email to info@theconsultants-e.com, with 'Unsubscribe' in the subject line.

STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS...

We are launching two new online training courses in October and November!

Blogs [1 – 15 November 2008] 10 hours over 2 weeks

This two-week online Blogs course looks at teacher, students and class blogs, and how they can be used by teachers both in and outside the classroom with learners. You will learn to use RSS to subscribe to blogs, and will set up your own blog during the course. See <http://www.theconsultants-e.com/courses/blogs>

WebQuests [20 November – 20 December 2008]**30 hours over 4 weeks**

The WebQuests course examines the theory and practice of WebQuests, and looks at real examples of WebQuests created for language learners. Participants design, plan and create their own WebQuest, for use in their own teaching context with their own learners, and put their WebQuest online using free WebQuest generator tools. See our WebQuest repository for WebQuests (in pdf format) produced by participants on our past courses! See <http://www.theconsultants-e.com/courses/wq/> for further course info.

All our courses run entirely online In Moodle, and have a limit of 15 participants per course, so sign up early to avoid disappointment!

TWITTERING ON

It's now a firmly-entrenched – and dearly-held - notion that 'kids today ain't what they used to be'. With Mark Prensky creating a new digital divide of 'natives' and 'immigrants' and school teachers complaining endlessly that their kids have the attention span of a goldfish, we're led to believe that there's not much point engaging in any serious teaching as they'll all be on their mobile phones before we've dusted off our Complete Works of William Shakespeare and cracked open a fresh box of chalk.

Sometimes, however, it helps to look at the 'problem' from another angle – or perhaps even embrace the notion that it isn't a problem at all, really – possibly an opportunity. A colleague's daughter (native, eleven years old) can regularly be seen coming home from school and then performing the following tasks:

- Sign in to Messenger to talk to schoolmates last seen ten minutes previously
- Open blog to write new posting, usually directed at schoolmates last seen...
- Post photos for schoolmates
- Send messages to schoolmates via SMS on her mobile
- Look at homework in boring old-style 'book'
- Listen to music in laptop

So, you see, she's pretty busy working on a variety of things, with a variety of media. In fact, I'd say her attention span is quite good, since she can do all these things for hours without getting bored! What's more, she can effectively juggle all these activities whilst shouting up the stairs for some sustenance.

So, it seems, 'natives' have endless patience for technology, and can work with all different manifestations of it at the same time. Far from being unproductive, they're amazingly achieving. The issue for us as teachers is that we tend to get stuck on the details (using a book for the whole class, for example) when we need a bigger, wider, more eclectic picture to engage our learners.

One of the tools we've become particularly fond of is Twitter- a tool which allows for 'microblogging', or blog posts which can be no longer than a normal mobile phone SMS. This is a simple idea (so simple that a lot of people just can't get their heads around it) which takes the SMS and turns it into an online writing, sharing, community tool. Here's how it works:

As a Twitter member you can:

- post short messages about what you're doing, etc.
- follow the short messages of other people (like subscribing)
- be followed by other people

When you post a new message, anyone 'following' you gets an update from you. Similarly, when someone you are following posts an update, you get that on your Twitter page. Essentially what you have is a shifting community of correspondents who interact with each other via short messages.

You can read these updates on your personalised Twitter page, have them sent to your mobile phone, or use specialised software such as Firefox plugins (**see Twitter Resources below**) or dedicated Windows or Mac applications to manage your Twitter life.

So what's this got to do with teaching, training or professional development? This newsletter is too short to consider the areas in any detail, but why not start with teaching by checking out the excellent suggestions in the article 'Twitter for Academia' by Dave Parry (**see Twitter Resources below**)?

And when you're done with that, why not investigate the community and teacher development aspect of Twitter by taking a look at the excellent Webheads Crowdstatus page which brings together lots of the Webheads at:

<http://crowdstatus.com/webheadsinactioncrowd.aspx?>

By now you should be able to see some of the possibilities of engaging your learners with something so creative - and so undemanding on their time.

There is, however, another question which often comes up with these new technologies, and that is the area of impinging on their world, or appropriating 'their' technologies for 'our' teaching purposes. When adopting these approaches we need to ensure that we don't oversell them as something new we've found (we don't want to end up at the party like the

middle-aged man in tight jeans dancing badly to the latest music!) – perhaps try dropping it in in a more casual way... “I found a really interesting website on Twitter the other day”, and see if someone bites – before you know it you’ll have a myriad of class Crowdstatus pages and you’ll be multi-tasking like a teenager!

Twitter Resources

- <http://www.twitter.com>
- <http://www.commoncraft.com/Twitter>
- <http://twittervision.com/>
- <http://twittermap.com/maps>
- <http://twittersearch.com/search/>
- <http://crowdstatus.com/>
- <http://academhack.outsidethetext.com/home/2008/twitter-for-academia/>
- <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/5081>

In the next newsletter...

The Road Warrior teacher. If you travel a lot for work, and need access to all your favourite technologies, then this issue will be of particular interest to you: we examine the must-have gadgets to ease your way around the planet and keep you connected.

Note: You can download all our Newsletters at: <http://www.theconsultants-e.com/newsletter/>

Past issues...

- Twittering On (September 2008)
- Social Networks & Communities of Practice (February 2008)
- A Potted History of Technology in Teaching: The Future (December 2007)
- A Potted History of Technology in Teaching: The Present (November 2007)
- A Potted History of Technology in Teaching: The Past (October 2007)
- Information Overload (June 2007)
- Second Life II (February 2007)
- Second Life I (November 2006)
- Interactive Whiteboards (June 2006)
- Tools for teaching a language online (January 2006)
- ICT Skills for educators (October 2005)
- VLEs: Virtual Learning Environments (May 2005)

COMPANY NEWS & UPDATE

- New f2f workshops
- IWB (Interactive Whiteboard) advisory project
- BBC Project
- Second Life Update
- New Resources section on our website
- Teacher Trainer Journal 'Wired World' articles freely available

New f2f workshops

ICT (Information and Communications Technology) is playing an increasingly important role in the lives of language teachers, teacher trainers and educators, and management, not just in terms of dealing with administrative duties, but in terms of its use in the classroom. How to use ICT (and especially Internet-based tools) effectively in the classroom is an area that is given short shrift even on formal teacher training courses. The result is teachers who are untrained to use ICT successfully and effectively in the classroom, and schools investing in technology that their teachers are either unwilling or unable to use.

We offer a series of workshops on how to implement ICT tools in the language classroom. These are aimed at teachers, teacher trainers, directors, and educators in general. All of our workshops are communicative, hands-on, and based in real classroom practice. Practising teachers leave our workshops with clear ideas on how to implement these tools in their own teaching. With a minimum group size of 6, and a maximum of 25, participants are guaranteed a personal service geared towards addressing common problematic areas associated with the implementation of technology in language teaching, as well as practical, hands-on work which - when applied - can have an immediate and positive impact on their professional lives. Our 2008 - 2009 workshop titles include:

- Pod-what? Podcasting for and with language learners
- The what, why, where and how of Wikis
- Moodle (not muddle)
- Web 2.0: ICT and teachers
- From Web 2.0 to Web 3D
- Second Life for Beginners
- Net Advantage: Marketing 2.0 - The Internet & Your Organisation
- Blogs in the language classroom
- The Chattering classes: Using online chat in the classroom
- Email and the language classroom
- ePortfolios
- RSS: The what and how of RSS
- eNetworks: Social Networking Tools
- eNetworks: Online events and conferences
- Look it up: Online reference tools
- eMaterials: Authoring tools and producing electronic materials
- Word processors in the language classroom

- The Wired Teacher: Skills for the online tutor
- The DoS, the Trainer, the Teacher and Technology
- Young Learners and computers
- Webquests

Full descriptions of each workshop: <http://www.theconsultants-e.com/courses/workshops> .

Each workshop can last between 1 and 3 hours, depending on whether the workshop includes hands-on training with computers for the participants, and a combination of workshops can be put together depending on the client's needs and the total duration of the training.

Please contact Nicky Hockly directly to discuss your training needs and to arrange workshops: nicky.hockly@theconsultants-e.com

IWB Project

The Consultants-E were recently commissioned to advise on IWB (Interactive Whiteboard) implementation and training to a language school in the UK. As part of our study, we carried out an online survey of IWB use from around the world, and found some quite interesting results - 38 respondents completed our online survey:



- 30 of the 38 respondents were in the UK. Of the remaining 8, we had respondents from the Czech Republic (2), Hong Kong, Slovakia, Italy, the USA, Germany and Oman. It may be the case that IWB use is more widespread in the UK, but it's difficult to be sure of this – the high number of UK-based respondents may just reflect the demographics of the lists we posted to. In any case, it means that the info below refers mainly to the UK.
- 36.7% of respondents were from private language schools, 30% were from language centres within Higher Education institutions, and 33.3% from language centres within Further Education institutions. So IWB use (in the UK) seems to be fairly evenly spread

between these different types of language teaching institution.

- Apart from pens, the most popular add-on tools to use with IWBs were slates and tablets.
- 73.7% of rooms that have IWBs also still have traditional whiteboards. However, in those rooms, the IWBs are used more frequently than the traditional ones. Comments with regards to the retaining of traditional boards in addition to IWBs include:

"We took the traditional whiteboards away to ensure the IWBs were used, and to remove the risk of damage to the IWBs by writing on them with board markers"

"I want to get traditional boards out of the classrooms completely, but some teachers want a safety net"

"Useful to have both - expect use of whiteboards to drop as teachers are more effective at using IWBs"

"Temporary staff use traditional boards; established staff usually use IWBs"

"Traditional board only used as a backup"

Overall, it seems that once teachers have familiarised themselves with IWBs, they prefer them over traditional boards.

- 89.5% of teachers received training on IWBs when they were first implemented.
- The most sharing of IWB materials that takes place is of an informal nature (55.6%), with only 25.9% of respondents stating that their institution had set up formal materials-sharing mechanisms. 3 further respondents stated that their institution was in the process of setting up such a mechanism though...
- Only 16.7% use digital materials produced by the vendor or an affiliate, with comments including:

"I'm aware of them but as far as I know they are aimed at and designed for state school syllabuses"

"Nothing very suitable at present"

Overall comments include:

"IWBs are an invaluable pedagogical tool which some teachers will fully embrace and utilise whilst others will ignore. There are several reasons for this, including uncertainty of new technology and a lack of time to explore the software and create new materials due to existing heavy workloads."

"Training in ideas and use of IWBs in ELT would be very welcome! The digital materials look excellent, but are very expensive considering they generally seem to replicate the coursebook: some kind of digital supplementary materials would be very useful."

"It has its uses but also its drawbacks - ie students can only work at it one at a time" [Whereby the Hitachi Duo board now allows for more than one user at a time]

"a very underused resource by some staff due to "technophobia"!!"

"When I was trained in a private language school I had no choice as no ordinary whiteboards were available. At this university very few members of staff use the iwbs other than for powerpoint presentations. I always use the iwb, either as an ordinary whiteboard or with my own flipcharts."

BBC Project

Gavin's new project for the BBC World Service – series four of 'Keep your English up to date' is now available. This series looks at interesting or new words in the language – the first three series were written and recorded by David Crystal and Gavin is delighted to be carrying the work forward with an eclectic and, hopefully, interesting collection of words. More here:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1728_uptodate/

Second Life Update



SLanguages 2008, the conference for language educators in Second Life grew from a small first affair in 2007 to a 24-jour conference this year with parallel sessions from over 20 presenters, plenaries, workshops and field trips. Read more about it at the official website (<http://www.slanguages.net>) and on Gavin's blog at <http://slife.dudeney.com/> . We're just starting planning for SLanguages 2009 and will be looking for an expanded organisational team. If you'd like to help out, please contact Gavin.

We also hosted a roundtable on language learning in Second Life as part of the Linden Lab fifth birthday celebrations. More information here: <http://slife.dudeney.com/?p=51>

Following on from the successful EduCation@EduNation series of seminars for 2007/8 we are pleased to announce a new series of talks with leading language educators working in Second Life. From October, Nik Peachey will be hosting 'A coffee with...' in which he will interview key players in the field. For more information, please check out our website or join the EduCation@EduNation group in-world. You can find sign-up kiosks outside our headquarters on EduNation III.

We've added some new tenants to EduNation III and are currently working on a few builds including a partial island for a Finnish group of educators and a Spanish Club Island for the London School of Economics

And finally, we have a couple of new free teaching tools available in Second Life. The new WordRezz allows teachers to quickly rez moveable vocabulary items for language work in-word, whilst the improved Web Image Viewer now handles all media supported by the SL viewer. More information on the tools can be found on our website: <http://www.theconsultants-e.com/edunation/edunationtools.asp>

New 'resources' section on our website



We've added a new section to our website called 'Resources'. You'll find a selection of video materials from past presentations and interviews given by members of the team, as well as material from workshops, such as PowerPoint presentations, and handouts. We add to this new section regularly, so keep your eye on it for new materials which you may find useful for your own teaching or training.

'It's a Wired World' articles available free

The Teacher Trainers' Journal has made all of Nicky's regular 'Wired World' articles freely available at http://www.tttjournal.co.uk/index.php?page=it_s_a_wired_world. Past articles focus on how teacher trainers can use ICT tools such as blogs, podcasting, Second Life, videos, and WebQuests with their trainees.

UPCOMING ONLINE COURSES

Short courses: Podcasting, Wikis, Second Life, eNetworks, Blogs
[see dates on our website]

10 hours over two weeks (each course).

Podcasts, wikis, blogs and Second Life are ICT tools which are being used by increasingly numbers of teachers in the classroom – these separate short courses will teach you how to use them with your own learners! Each of these short two weeks courses looks at one ICT tool (podcasts, wikis, blogs or Second life) in depth. You will learn not only how the tool works, but how to set up projects with and for your own learners. Each course is hands-on and practical. With plenty of tutor guidance and support, you will learn to set up a project with these free

Internet-based tools for your own learners. You will leave each course ready to try out the tool with your own classes. [[more...](#)]

ICT in the Classroom
01 October 2008 - 20 December 2008

50 hours over ten weeks.

The ICT in the Classroom course looks at a range of useful technology-related skills which are immediately applicable in the classroom. You will learn about various approaches to using technology in the classroom and have the opportunity to put them into practice over the duration of the course itself. Areas covered in the course include: lesson planning for using the Internet, using chat and blogs with learners, and WebQuests. Participants will be required to produce a final ICT-based lesson to use with their own learners. [[more...](#)]

in collaboration with Trinity College London



E-Moderation: A Training Course For Online Tutors
01 October 2008 - 30 October 2008

30 hours over four weeks.

This course is aimed at teachers, trainers, tutors, facilitators, lecturers and mentors from any discipline and any level of education, who are interested in developing the skills necessary to become an effective e-moderator in online courses. [[more...](#)]

Moodle Starter: An Introductory Course to learn how to use Moodle
01 October 2008 - 30 November 2008

40 hours over eight weeks.

This course is aimed at teachers, trainers, tutors, facilitators, lecturers and mentors from any discipline and any level of education, who are interested in learning how to set up and use Moodle to offer online courses. The course is run entirely online, in Moodle itself. [[more...](#)]

WebQuests **20 November – 20 December 2008**

30 hours over four weeks.

The WebQuests course examines the theory and practice of WebQuests, and looks at real examples of WebQuests created for language learners. Participants design, plan and create their own WebQuest, for use in their own teaching context with their own learners, and put their WebQuest online using free WebQuest generator tools. [[more...](#)]

CONFERENCES

You'll find members of the Consultants-E at the following conferences between now and the end of the year. If you're going to be at any of them, please pop along and say hello...

- Macmillan Romania Conference (Bacau, Romania – September 5-6)
<http://www.macmillan.ro/conferinta7.html>
- Özyegin University (Istanbul, Turkey - September 10)
<http://www.ozyegin.edu.tr>
- ELTAF Conference 2008 (Frankfurt, Germany – September 13)
<http://www.eltaf.de/eltaf-conference/index.htm>
- ETAS Learning Technology SIG workshop (Baden, Switzerland - September 19)
http://www.e-tas.ch/events/detail.asp?aELI_Id=229
- British Council Teacher's Conference (Bilbao, Spain - September 20)
- ETAS SIG Day 2008 Conference (Baden, Switzerland - September 20).
http://www.e-tas.ch/events/detail.asp?aELI_Id=242
- Barcelona Pecha Kucha Night, Volume 2 (Barcelona, Spain – September 26)
<http://www.pecha-kucha.org/cities/barcelona>
- EFODL Annual International Conference (Charleroi, Belgium – October 1 – 3)
<http://www.efodl.net/>
- IATEFL Hungary (Balatonfüred, Hungary – October 3 – 5)
<http://www.iatefl.hu/>
- TESL Toronto Conference (Toronto, Canada - October 18)

<http://www.teslontario.org/>

- The Language Show (London, UK – October 31 – November 2)
<http://www.thelanguageshow.co.uk/>
- English UK Teachers' Conference 2008 (London, UK – October 15)
<http://www.englishuk.com/training/conferences.php>
- TESOL Italy Annual Conference (Rome, Italy – November 13 – 14)
<http://www.tesol.it>
- ACEIA Conference 2008 (Seville, Spain - November 15)
<http://www.aceia.es/>
- British Council Second Policy Dialogue (Kolkata, India – November 16 – 17)
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/india-connecting-project-english.htm>
- IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference (Bonn, Germany – November 21 – 23)
<http://www.besig.org/events/conf2008/index.htm>

That's it for this edition. We hope you've enjoyed the newsletter.

September, 2008
The Consultants-E Team