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[www.moodlemoot.org](http://www.moodlemoot.org)

Welcome to our regular newsletter exploring the world of ICT in education, online training and development. In this issue we consider **Social Networks and Communities of Practice** – 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**
- **GETTING SOCIAL**
- **COMPANY NEWS & UPDATE**
- **UPCOMING ONLINE COURSES**
- **CONFERENCES**

#### **STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!**

**eNetworks** - spring 2008 sees the launch of a new short 10-hour course for educators interested in how to set up online communities and online training events / conferences. Check out our website for more details: <http://www.theconsultants-e.com/courses/index.asp>

**Education@EduNation seminars!** Our first two seminars (December: Gavin Dudeney, Teaching Tools in Second Life and January: Graham Stanley, Teen Grid Angst) are now archived in the Archive Space on EduNation II. If you'd like to attend our **February seminar** (Jeremy Koester talking on games in Second Life), visit EduNation III in Second Life and use the automatic sign-up board there (<http://tinyurl.com/3awkys>) . In March, top-selling ELT author **Jeremy Harmer** will be bringing his avatar in-world, topic to be announced...

**Gavin and Nicky's book** "How To Teach English with Technology" (Pearson Longman 2007) has been short-listed for the prestigious Ben Warren International House Trust Prize. You can find out more details about the prize here: <http://www.ihes.com/warren/index.html>

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#### **GETTING SOCIAL**

One of the great revolutions brought about by the Net has to be the ability to interact with large global groups of people on a regular basis – from email to discussion groups and on through the more 'Web 2.0' social applications. Net usage used to be such a solitary activity – searching for resources, reading them and then, perhaps, using them. Occasionally you might have the opportunity to send email to someone else who shared your interest – but, essentially, Google was king. If you Googled, you had the world at your fingertips.

However, our reliance on search tools may soon be coming to an end, according to an end-of-year article in Newsweek which predicted the demise of search and the rise of 'social searching'. Researchers note that increasingly people rely on 'who they know' rather than 'what they read' – and this goes for anything, from buying a sofa to deciding on a holiday package or a new computer. It is not so much what a company says about itself, but what other people say about it – on blogs, wikis, websites, social networking sites and other popular forms of 'folk media'.

And these same knowledge networks are increasingly important in our professional lives. In this section we look at some of the ways professionals keep in touch, and recommend some tools and sites for you to investigate.

#### **Communities of Practice**

On the professional side you could choose to join an online (or distributed) community of

practice where groups of like-minded professionals get together to collaborate on a shared area of interest. Communities of practice (CoPs) sprang up out of the ideas of Lave and Wenger and are more than just a run-of-the-mill discussion group. In a CoP, the emphasis is very much on practice and reflection – so, rather than a group of people simply talking about something, you'll find an active group who discuss, apply, report and reflect. It's this cycle that makes CoPs such supportive and productive environments.

In this newsletter we'd like to focus on three which you may find useful...

### **1) Webheads in Action ([http://webheadsinaction.org/yahoo\\_groups](http://webheadsinaction.org/yahoo_groups))**

One of the busiest and best CoPs in our field, this group concentrates on the application of new technologies in language teaching. Here you'll find discussions on software, hardware, pedagogical applications of technology, new tools, social networks and more. The Webheads group also run free online development courses each year. If you're thinking of joining one group, then this is probably the best place to start.

### **2) DOGME ELT (<http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/dogme>)**

On the other end of the technology scale you'll find this group, originally set up by Scott Thornbury. The group centres around a 'materials-light' approach to ELT and has very productive discussions about all aspects of materials, approaches and attitudes to teaching. Amongst the complex theoretical discussions you'll also find some stimulating and practical teaching ideas and materials.

### **3) SLED (<https://lists.secondlife.com/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/educators>)**

If you're interested in the pedagogical possibilities of Second Life then this is the first place to look. The list (started in 2006) has now grown to over 4,000 members and is the central repository for all things education in Second Life. Here you'll find SL educational tools, approaches and teaching ideas as well as reports on projects, classes and educational events.

Of course global communities such as these are fantastic tools, but you'll also find a lot of more localised or smaller communities such as country-specific teacher association groups or small teacher development groups. It's with this group of professionals in mind that we've put together our new eNetworks course (**see Company News and Update below**) which aims to provide teachers and trainers with the knowledge and skills to set up their own communities of practice for their own particular needs and constituencies.

## **Social Life**

So, that's professional communities covered, but how about the more 'social' side of things? Where do people go for the 'lighter' side of life? Well the answer is one (or more) of the big social networking sites which facilitate social communications and sharing. At the moment, there are probably three big ones which you might like to check out...

### **1) MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com>)**

MySpace is probably the one for the younger generations – there's a lot of music, cinema and politics on it and it has been credited with launching the careers of plenty of groups, including the Arctic Monkeys. This is not the site to join if you're looking to expand your professional circle or friends. But if you want to know what your kids are doing, then you may want to take a quick look!

### **2) Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>)**

Facebook sits nicely between MySpace and LinkedIn (**see below**) in that it has plenty of professionals on it – and plenty of professional interest groups as part of it – but still has a lively social side to it as well. Facebook also includes hundreds of additional small applications that can be installed to enhance the experience. Join groups, send postcards, share photos, take quizzes – if you can imagine it, you can probably do it on Facebook.

### **3) LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>)**

LinkedIn is the 'sober cousin' you might avoid at a wedding – always going on about their work and never stopping to have any fun. In fact it's aimed squarely at professionals and their 'network of trusted contacts' – and you can tell from the information they ask for in your profile that it's that sort of community. It's not a very interesting site, to be sure – but a prospective employer might well look there when looking you up.

And that brings us on to an important point about these sites... They're public spaces and anyone can look you up, so bear that in mind when you're posting photos, bio or anything else. It was recently revealed that universities now routinely check out MySpace profiles and pages of students wanting to go and study with them – and it's not much of a leap to imagine that anyone thinking of dealing with you will, at some point, check you out online. So think before you link!

But where does all this lead us? Well, the simple answer is that it makes your life rather busy, in terms of keeping up with everything going on on the various lists and sites – but it also keeps you in touch with other people who share your interests and gives you a fairly simple ‘push’ way of keeping up-to-date with the things that interest you. The downside is – as always with technology – time. By the time we’ve caught up with our emails, blogs, mailing lists and social networks, how much time do we have for our jobs and our ‘real lives’? If anyone finds a happy balance, we’d be glad to hear from you...

#### **In the next newsletter...**

There’s a certain amount of ‘downsizing’ occurring in social media at the moment, and in the next edition of this newsletter we’ll be looking at sources of quick fixes for information and development – look out for first looks at Twitter, Pownce and social media sites such as Flickr.

**Note:** download all our newsletters at <http://www.theconsultants-e.com/newsletter/>

Past issues...

- **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)

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#### **COMPANY NEWS & UPDATE**

- **Recent Course Additions**
- **Face-to-Face Workshops**
- **BBC Project Update**
- **Second Life Update**
- **Prizes**
- **IATEFL/BC Online Exeter**
- **ICT in the Classroom Scholarship Winner**

#### **Recent Course Additions**

##### **1) Moodle Smarter**

To complement our basic Moodle training course for teachers (Moodle Starter) we have added a more advanced course which delves deeper into Moodle, and looks at the more complex teaching tools Moodle has to offer. This new course (Moodle Smarter) is ideal for those people who have already taken the Starter course, or for those with some experience of Moodle or other VLEs. The course will be launched in this first quarter of 2008 – see our website for course dates and more information: <http://www.theconsultants-e.com/courses/moodle/>

##### **2) Teaching Business English**

The Teaching Business English course is aimed at teachers who are new to Business English (BE) teaching, and at those with experience. The course looks at a range of useful techniques, tools and resources for teaching BE to learners and considers a variety of contexts for BE teaching, covering issues of course and materials design, needs analysis, and performance-driven learning based on the workplace. It also looks at how to teach business skills such as presenting, negotiating, as well as written and spoken business communication skills, and intercultural competence and considers how new technologies may be integrated into BE teaching. Participants also have the opportunity to brush up on their subject knowledge of key business concepts in areas such marketing, leadership skills and management. This course additionally offers an optional add-on week (7-8 hours) on how to use the virtual world Second Life in teaching and training BE learners. More Information here:

<http://www.theconsultants-e.com/courses/be/index.asp>

##### **3) eNetworks: How to set up online communities and events**

A short 10-hour course for educators interested in how to set up online communities and online training events / conferences. The practical, hands-on course includes:

- the theory and practice of online communities of practice (CoPs) – what are they, and what makes them work
- a tour of several functioning CoPs related to language teaching and training
- a look at examples of real online events and conferences, from short one-hour synchronous events to long-term online conferences which use asynchronous communication and resources
- an exploration of various free web-based tools that can be used to create web communities and events (e.g. Yahoogroups, Ning, Moodle, WizIQ, skypecasts...

Course participants consider how they might set up an online community and/or training event for their own context, during this course.

## Face-to-face Workshops

We are offering a wide range of new f2f workshops and seminars in 2008. To help you identify your own and your staff's ICT training needs we have set up an online ICT needs analysis tool – if you'd like to use it to help define your institution's training needs, please get in touch with Nicky directly ([nicky.hockly@theconsultants-e.com](mailto:nicky.hockly@theconsultants-e.com)).

Below is the expanded and updated list of our f2f workshops programme for 2008. 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 us](#) directly to discuss your training needs, and our training terms and fees. We also offer these workshops in Spanish or Catalan, and can provide resources for teachers of modern European languages (Spanish, French, German, Italian).

- **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 and RSS in the language classroom**
- **The Chattering classes: Using online chat in the classroom**
- **The Wired Teacher: Skills for the Online Tutor**
- **The DoS, the Trainer, the Teacher and Technology**
- **ePortfolios**
- **Word-processor based activities**
- **Interactive whiteboards**
- **Email and the language classroom**
- **Social networking**
- **Social bookmarking**
- **Young Learners and Computers**
- **WebQuests**
- **Online reference tools and how to use them**
- **Authoring tools and producing electronic materials for learners**

## BBC Project Update

Gavin's new project for the BBC World Service – series four of 'Keep your English up to date' is now going into production. After getting suggestions from plenty of different people and sources, the final list of words and phrases he'll be looking at includes: d'oh!, carbon footprint, cashback, 24/7, newbie, pants, supersize, downsize, w00t!, smirking, be like, pre-owned and facebook. Stay tuned for more information of when the series will be available as audio files with transcripts and teaching notes. Past series – written by David Crystal – can be found here:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1728\\_uptodate/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1728_uptodate/)

## Second Life Update

Our three island presence in Second Life is getting busier and busier as more educators join the social whirl of multi-user virtual environments. EduNation I has one remaining plot and EduNation III is slowly turning into a 'Who's Who' in the CALL world with plenty of organisations and technology-inspired individuals setting up space and starting to use it for their teaching.

The EduCation@EduNation series continues in February with Jeremy Koester talking on games in Second Life, and in March we will be joined by the avatar form of ELT author Jeremy Harmer - topic to be announced. We expect both of these events to be very popular, so please arrive early.

In keeping with our mission to provide free space for educators, EduNation II is still available for anyone wishing to try their hand at 'virtual teaching'. Complementary to this is the suite of free teaching tools that we continue to develop. The toolkit now includes:

- Powerpoint Presenter
- Podcast Player
- Video Player
- Blog Reader
- Publicity Display Post
- Quiz Generator (TreasureHUD)
- Speakeasy HUD
- Web Image Viewer
- Exhibition HUD
- Networked Information Server

All these free tools are available on EduNation II and from:

<http://www.slexchange.com/modules.php?name=Marketplace&MerchantID=21147>  
[http://shop.onrez.com/Dudenev\\_Ge](http://shop.onrez.com/Dudenev_Ge)

March 28th and 29th we will be hosting the in-world part of the Wireless Ready II Conference, live from Nagoya in Japan. The topic of this one-day event is "Interactivity, Collaboration and Feedback in Language Learning Technologies, and features plenaries from Michael Coghlan, Russell Stannard and John Collick and two panel discussions with a wide variety of experts talking on a number of TELL-related topics. More information on our website towards the end of February.

## Prizes

2007 was a good year for Consultants-E team members – Lindsay Clandfield won the International House Ben Warren Trust Prize for his book (with Luke Prodromou) "Dealing With Difficulties" (Delta Publishing) and the same title also picked up the Duke of Edinburgh ESU English Language Book Award. Lindsay is nominated for a British Council ELTON award in 2008. Nicky and Gavin's book "How To Teach English with Technology" (Pearson Longman) is short-listed for the 2007 International House Ben Warren Trust Prize and the ICT in the Classroom online training course won a British Council ELTON award earlier last year.

## IATEFL/BC Exeter Online

Having made a great start last year at the IATEFL Annual Conference in Aberdeen, the collaboration between the British Council and IATEFL is set to get even bigger this year at the conference in Exeter, with much of the conference being made available online via a dedicated Moodle site and blog. As resident technical guru on the IATEFL Coordinating Committee, Gavin is managing the IATEFL side of things and there are some exciting developments in the pipeline. Watch out for more details on the usual mailing lists as to how to sign up and enjoy the conference if you're not fortunate enough to be there in person. If you want more details, please check out the IATEFL website at: <http://www.iatefl.org>

## ICT in the Classroom Scholarship Winner

We regularly offer a scholarship for our online courses to teachers in developing countries. Our last winner was Duc Dao from Vietnam, and our current 2008 scholarship winner (who is on the January – March 'ICT in the Classroom' course) is Anindya Syam Choudury from India. See where all our past winners are from, and what they have to say about their course experiences, on our scholarship page:

<http://www.theconsultants-e.com/courses/scholarships.asp>

You can also keep an eye out for when our next scholarship will be offered for 2008.

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**OUR NEXT ONLINE COURSES****Teaching Business English: 1 - 30 March 2008****30 hours over four weeks. [optional one-week add-on about Second Life]**

The Teaching Business English course looks at a range of useful techniques, tools and resources for teaching Business English to learners. We consider a variety of contexts for Business English teaching, and cover issues of course and materials design, needs analysis, and performance-driven learning based on the workplace. We also look at how to teach business skills such as presenting, negotiating, as well as written and spoken communication skills, and intercultural competence. Participants also have the opportunity to brush up on their subject knowledge of key business concepts in areas such marketing, leadership skills and management. [[more...](#)]

**Short courses: Podcasting, Wikis, Second Life - see website for dates****10 hours over two weeks (each course).**

Podcasts, wikis, 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 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: 3 April– 20 June 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](#)



**WINNER – British Council ELTONs Award 2007**

**E-Moderation: A Training Course For Online Tutors: 1 – 30 March 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: learn how to use Moodle: 1 May - 30 June 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...](#)]

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**CONFERENCES**

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

- [Hot Topic Event](#) (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – March 4)  
[ Nicky ]
- British Council PIP Seminar (Bangkok, Thailand – March 5 - 6)  
[ Nicky ]
- [TESOL Spain](#) (Madrid, Spain – March 7 – 9)  
[ Lindsay ]
- [IATEFL Annual Conference](#) and Exhibition (Exeter, UK – April 7 – 11)  
[ Gavin, Nicky, Lindsay, Valentina, Eric ]
- [Sprachend & Beruf Konferenz](#) (Düsseldorf, 21 April)  
[ Carl ]
- [Technology in ELT](#) (Istanbul, Turkey – 10 May)  
[ Gavin, Nicky ]

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

**February, 2008**  
**The Consultants-E Team**

