Media & Learning News

January 2013 Issue

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Medi@tando in Italy attracts large audience

The 5th edition of Medi@tando, a major Italian conference on media education and related topics took place in Rimini on 10 and 11 January 2013 and involved more than 300 educators, teachers, academics and researchers. Many initiatives were presented during the conference which provided an important opportunity for sharing and critical reflection as well as for exploitation. During the conference Anne Claire Orban promoted the necessity of adopting new attitudes to promote curiosity, creativity and the culture of debate, while Paolo Paolini suggested using games as a way to address attitudes, motivations and skills. Roberto Farné invited participants to go back to fundamentals and he quoted Alberto Manzi, the great teacher who helped to eliminate illiteracy in Italy in the 60's "the school must educate to think rather than teach thoughts", something that is certainly work keeping in mind.

Launch of MediaMosa Foundation

SURFnet and Kennisnet in the Netherlands announced the birth of the independent MediaMosa Foundation in early January. This new foundation will represent users' interests in MediaMosa, promote its use, and further develop its software based on the Open Source platform Drupal. MediaMosa enables educational institutions and research centres to construct their own video distribution platform and to manage, store, run and index all kinds of content, including video in a simple manner. MediaMosa allows users to create links to existing websites, to integrate high-quality online video into lectures and lessons and to set up video websites without infrastructural difficulties. Any institution or organisation willing to pay a small annual contribution to MediaMosa can join the users' council.

Audio-visual citation guidelines in the making

Ever wanted to cite from a video, a feature film or another media that is not like books or printed articles? Not easy! The AV Citation Project initiated by the BUFVC as part of the HEFCE-funded Shared Services project in the UK, addresses the complexities of audio-visual citation for academics, archivists, journal editors and researchers. A working group led by Dr Sian Barber from Queens University Belfast is producing a series of guidelines to provide sensible, clear and practical uniform rules for the citation of audio-visual material and to ensure that all audio-visual material referenced and used in research and higher education can easily be found by others. The guidelines will be made freely available in March 2013. More information on this very interesting initiative is available here, join the discussion on Twitter: @bufvc #AVcitation.

2013 Education Influencers in Twitter

For the fourth year in a row, Distance Education, the well-known US portal on online education, has drawn up a list of the "Top 20 Education Influencers to Follow on Twitter in 2013". This year's list includes well-known educators, bloggers and facilitators like @coolcatteacher as well more institutional accounts like @EducationSector. These tweets cover everything from tips for improving studying and learning skills to online resources and articles. And even though we are not yet included – don't forget to follow us on @MediaLearning!

Featured Articles

Putting educational media into practice in a Greek school

By Petros Michailidis, 5th Primary School of Alexandroupolis, Greece

The project's name is "… and the Oscar goes to …" and although it seems to be a project about movies this isn't quite true. The main idea behind the project was to incorporate the way movies tell stories into everyday teaching practice and through this to stimulate students to be involved at a higher level in the teaching and learning process. This means that not only were the usual school subjects such as languages, mathematics, social and science studies, art, English and ICT

Petros Michailidis

taught during the scheduled activities but on top of that the creation of positive attitudes on contemporary issues were encouraged like how to handle bullying and hooliganism. In addition, the project gave the students an opportunity to learn how to express themselves beyond the usual oral and written means by providing them with the equipment and necessary tools to do so using video.

The development of the project took place in three stages which were designed is such a way so as to reflect three main kinds of movie shots (short shot, medium shot and long shot). During these stages pupils learnt how to edit a movie, how to add subtitles and a musical background, how to convert a movie to 3D and to create their own storyboards with their own scenarios, to be actors/actresses and finally to shoot their own scene based on a school subject. During the progression of the project, they also learned how music or different angles can affect the final result of the movie and how a movie can have an effect on people's opinions. In addition there was a fourth stage where pupils from partner schools created in collaboration with one another a "treasure hunt" movie, promoting their city's landmarks.

The development of this project came about as a result of several factors. They included a desire to change traditional face-to-face boring teaching practice into one that is more exciting, the need to provide students with 21st century skills, eagerness on the part of students for hard work and experimentation and the importance of making pupils aware that they are members of a community that is wider than the local or even the national community. In addition, communication in a language other than their mother tongue and the opportunity to work with colleagues and students from different countries are always very strong motives for the creation of any kind of educational project including this one.

Through the project, students not only learned the basics of creating a film, but gained, through personal experiences, a set of personal criteria that they can use to judge the quality of films while learning how to deal creatively and imaginatively with any problem that presents itself. Exposing themselves to the camera and thus to their classmates, they had an opportunity to develop their personality and according to their interests to participate in activities that they liked. In addition, through the various activities, they developed a sense of solidarity, of teamwork and co-operation, learning how to take initiative and how to create original material based on school subjects. They improvised, disagreed and agreed, negotiated and protested and eventually, through the project, they not only improved their performance as students but also came out better prepared so as to deal with any upcoming challenge.

"… and the Oscar goes to …" was the winner of the MEDEA Award for User-Generated Educational Media 2012 - find out more about this entry on the MEDEA Awards website.

*trans*Lectures: subtitling video lecture repositories accurately and cost-effectively

This article is part of our dedicated series on lecture capture. It is provided by the Lifelong Learning project REC:all, which aims to explore new ways in which lecture capture can become more pedagogically valuable and engaging, and which is investigating a variety of learning design, technical and legal issues related to lecture capture. In this sixth issue we take a closer look at the work being done in the *trans*Lectures project, which was also the subject of the recent REC:all webinar held on 8 January.

During this one-hour webinar Gonçal Garcés and Carlos Turró, members of the *trans*Lectures team at Universitat Politecnica de Valencia (UPV), described the progress made by *trans*Lectures in the first year of the project. You can watch a recording of this webinar on the REC:all website. In this article, we briefly summarise some of the main points put forward during the webinar.

*trans*Lectures is an EU Framework Programme 7 (FP7) research project aimed at developing innovative, cost-effective solutions to produce accurate transcriptions and translations in large video lecture repositories. An initial description of the project was published in Media & Learning News on June 2012.

In the *trans*Lectures approach, transcriptions and translations are first generated automatically by tools that take advantage of lecture-specific knowledge such as the speaker and topic, in what is known as massive adaptation, to provide higher accuracy than general-purpose systems. For transcriptions, let's say, the system can adapt its acoustic model to the specific speaker in a lecture by gathering knowledge from previous lectures by the same speaker; for translations, similarly, translation models can be adapted to a topic by using knowledge from existing lectures on that same topic. Even more importantly, text extracted from a lecture's slides helps the system determine what to expect when transcribing or translating it.

First a written transcription in the same language of the lecture is generated, and afterwards translations are generated from that text. Then, since high-quality translations are unlikely to be achieved without human supervision, those initial texts are supervised collaboratively with minimal user effort thanks to the use of intelligent interaction: innovative, truly interactive models in which the system immediately learns from, and reacts to, each correction introduced by a user in the text. Users of the repository are not left alone to supervise by themselves the whole text of each lecture; rather, the system points out the parts of the automatically generated text it feels less confident about (for instance, by highlighting some words in red), so the user first notices those parts and edits them or confirms them. At this point, the system immediately learns from this user input so as not to repeat the same mistakes in the future. A preliminary demo of such an interface is available at the *trans*Lectures website.

Scientific evaluations show that massive adaptation provides significant improvements in the quality of automatic transcriptions and translations, and also that intelligent interaction techniques reduce notably the user effort needed to supervise those texts to reach a publishable level of quality. Additionally, a quality comparison with Google's public transcription and translation systems (based on general-purpose models) showed that video lecture transcriptions and translations generated by the *trans*Lectures tools fared better than Google's for most language combinations, the improvement in the case of transcriptions being very considerable (mostly owing to the adaptation of acoustic models to the speaker by the *trans*Lectures tools).

The *trans*Lectures tools will keep improving during the duration of the project. Their implementation in the open-access VideoLectures.NET and poliMedia repositories is well under way and will keep progressing this year. Moreover, they will be integrated into the Opencast Matterhorn platform and released before the end of the project, so that they can be implemented in any Matterhorn-based repository. For more information, visit the transLectures website.

The next REC:all webinar will be about Videolab: the multimedia management system at the KU Leuven, presented by Roman Verraest on 26 March. To find out more about lecture capture generally, join the REC:all community.

SignMedia: online learning tool for deaf media professionals

By Christine Jolly, University of Wolverhampton, UK

SignMedia is an online learning resource that uses sign language to teach vocational written English to deaf media professionals. The project was proud to be a finalist in the recent MEDEA Awards 2012.

The world of broadcast media offers an increasingly rich source of employment for deaf graduates and professionals across Europe, but the focus on communication through written English still proves to be a barrier for sign language users. Essential production documentation contains challenging technical English, as do many of the instructions and descriptors used in software, hardware and on technological equipment.

Christine Jolly

The SignMedia project aims to break down these barriers with an innovative and accessible online learning resource that uses Sign Language video and interactive tasks. It has pushed boundaries further in eLearning design, bringing video narrative, and an immersive, alternative reality to deaf online education for the first time.

To create an authentic media experience for the users, the learning takes place within a fictional deaf production company whilst working on the soap opera 'Beautiful Days'. All learning activities are designed around authentic media documentation taken from the production process, such as Risk Assessments, Call Sheets, Treatments and Scripts, thus enabling deaf users to develop language skills that are directly transferrable to their place of work.

The use of Sign Language videos and deaf presenters to teach written English is in itself an innovation. For many years, deaf people have been taught through the spoken word, but recent developments have seen a rise in sign bilingualism across Europe – a teaching method that promotes deaf culture and uses sign language as a method of delivery. Within the SignMedia learning tool, we were determined that Sign Language users would not feel like an afterthought, an 'added extra'.

The visual medium of Sign Languages also means that print dictionaries are of limited use. As a result, it is a real challenge to make specialist language items and neologisms accessible to the wider deaf community and younger generations. This presents an obvious disadvantage to Sign Language users who wish to break into the media industry. SignMedia addresses this need with the inclusion of a signed glossary with language items selected by deaf and hearing media industry professionals.

Target users have described the tool as engaging, unique and fun. We were especially delighted when feedback revealed that the 'alternative reality' learning environment removed the threat and pressure that many deaf people have experienced in formal education. There has also been a powerful response to the Sign Language videos, with deaf adults revealing that they have understood English grammatical concepts for the first time after watching the clips.

The SignMedia project recognises the immense potential of combining the shared visual modalities of e-learning, media and Sign Language. The result is a product that uses contemporary media developments to reflect the vibrancy, creativity and professional aspirations of the deaf community.

SignMedia was supported by Leonardo da Vinci Development of Innovation and the consortium included deaf and hearing teams from the University of Wolverhampton (UK), University of Klagenfurt (Austria), University of Turin (Italy) and Mutt&Jeff Pictures (UK). Visit the resource.

Tools of the Trade
Heads Up for Video Editing in the Cloud

By Mathy Vanbuel, ATiT, Belgium

Over the past few years many technologies, applications, software and services have moved from software solutions installed on PC hardware to cloud-based solutions (also called sometimes Software-as-a-Service). We see this trend in technologies used by businesses for publishing, storing, distributing and managing video content such as YouTube or Vimeo, but how about editing in the cloud? Productivity software such as spread sheets, word processing and database

Mathy Vanbuel

applications have successfully made a first move and users are (slowly) following, but until recently it was hard to imagine that processor hungry applications that require a continuous high quality stream of data (such as video and audio) could be migrated also to the cloud. But there are good examples now that are demonstrating that it can be done and that online editing is no longer just a dream, and a number of services are now providing reliable, responsive and user friendly editing services. In a previous issue we already talked about the YouTube Video Editor when it was launched, but there are other solutions, for example: VideoToolBox, Pixorial, WeVideo, FileLab Video Editor, even professional solutions such as Adobe Premiere are making moves towards a cloud-based editing service. Some editing solutions can even be integrated in an organisation's

own website, for example MixMoov which also allows users to edit online on their cloud based editor. These are just a sample, there are others. And they are a clear indication that video applications are becoming increasingly accessible, flexible and universal: capturing devices are everywhere: in our phones, on our stills cameras, webcams on our PC… video is displayed almost everywhere and in every application provisions are being made to embed video. And finally editing and distributing video is now also becoming almost ubiquitous.

The YouTube Video Editor

But is it usable and useful? Let's have a look first at some of the possible advantages and disadvantages.

Cloud-based editing solutions make it unnecessary to install software on each individual user's computer and are system independent (PC/ Mac) as they are browser based. They allow for the import and use of virtually any type of media, which are uploaded by the user or can be accessed from media resources on the web within the same interface. Most online editors have interfaces and functionalities that are very similar to the desktop non-linear editors that we are used to working with (with drag-and-drop functionalities, titling and effects, transitions, storyboard or timeline-based sequence building) but in addition can offer real collaboration across time and place. Finally they allow for high-quality publishing for streaming or download to a variety of devices. There are also disadvantages of course: users require a very good and stable Internet access to the service, which may be problematic in schools where many users are sharing limited Internet access. The fact that you always have to be connected is also a limitation as well as the fact that complex and very high-quality image and sound processes are often not provided (yet) by the online providers.

In the next issue we will compare a number of online editors to see in how far they are ready to be used in educational video production. And we will conclude this mini-series with an article on educational uses of online editing.

Making smartphone videos like a pro…

Smartphones are not only getting smarter in doing many more things than we ever thought they could, but they are also doing things like photography and video really well. But good image sensors are not the only secret to making good videos, video makers need more, for example tools and apps to adapt, control, change images and sound, to correct or adjust or to manage recordings. Everyday new apps are being created to do this, and in this new series each month we will present a new app that can be useful for video makers that use their smart phone or tablet to create professional imagery. Not all apps that we will present are available for all phone operating systems, but we will try to be as broad and fair as possible between all systems.

Filmic Pro

This week to kick off the series, an iPhone app called Filmic Pro (4,49 Euros, available for iPad also) that allows the video maker to adjust the exposure as with a video camera with manual control: this app allows adjustment of exposure and frame rates, audio recording levels and focus. Some

Premium Partners

medea awards

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With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) of the European Union

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adjustments are a bit awkward but it's better than nothing, and there is much more that will turn your iPhone into a very powerful HD video instrument: different variable frame rates, stereo recording support, custom slate configurations and much more. Finally the app has export settings for Vimeo, YouTube, Dropbox, and Facebook.

Resources of the Month

This section includes a selection of resources from the Media & Learning Resources Database.

- **Musique(s)** is a free online tool (in French) providing users with a fun and easy way to learn about music instruments and styles through sound, text, quizzes and games.

- **Xtramath** is a free web-based program helping students master basic mathematical skills, designed for use in class or at home.

- **200 Free Kids Educational Resources**, by Openculture, gathers resources in many formats (video lessons, apps, books, websites, etc.) covering a wide range of topics.

- **Teaching Channel** is a video showcase — on the Internet and TV — of inspiring and effective teaching practices in US schools with the aim of revolutionising how teachers learn, connect, and inspire each other.

- **1jour1actu** is a French website publishing actuality-related educational contents (articles, videos, activities, dossiers, games, interactive sheets) for children.

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Spaces available on educational video course

Spaces are still available for the week-long residential **course** "Using Video to Support Teaching and Learning" taking place on 11-16 March. Aimed at enthusiastic educators who would like to create their own educational video materials, this week-long residential course combines theoretical and practical elements. Register now to join other teachers from Europe.

Charting Media and Learning in Europe - 2011 Report Published

MEDEAnet project partners are publishing 3 annual reports from 2012 to 2014 on media literacy, the development of educational media skills and the use of media-based teaching resources in each of the partner countries; Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Greece and Romania. The purpose of this work is to create and share knowledge about how media is used to support teaching and learning in different parts of Europe. The first of these reports is now **available** and focuses on the policies that are currently in place as well as trends regarding policy.

Related Awards Schemes & Events

Junior Spider Awards

Established in 2009 as a student program parallel to the **eircom Spiders**, the **eircom Junior Spider Awards** highlight how primary and post-primary students embrace the Internet and to mark the innovative ways they use it both in school and in their daily lives. Deadline for this year's entries is 1 February 2013. To **participate**, first check the **categories** and **rules**.

NAMLE 2013

This year the US-based NAMLE (National Association for Media Literacy Education) conference takes place in California on 12-13 July 2013 and has as its theme "Intersections: Teaching and Learning Across Media". According to the organisers the conference will include a rich mix of conversation, brainstorming sessions, hands-on workshops, screenings and open space engagement with a variety of media and technologies. The **Call for Proposals** closes on 21 January 2013.

BETT in London from 30 January to 2 February

BETT 2013 is dedicated to showcasing the best in UK and international learning technology products, resources and best practice, from early years to higher education. Last year, it was visited by more than 30,000 people from 120 different countries. This 4-day event will be held at the ExCeL London from 30 January to 2 February 2013, and will host many conferences and workshops as well as exhibitors' product stands. For more information, visit the **BETT website**.

Network Performing Arts Production Workshop

The Fourth European Network Performing Arts Production **workshop** in the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna will be held 12 -14 March 2013, and will emphasise the equipment and staffing requirements for interactive performing arts education, multi-site performance events, and high-quality netcasting over advanced networks. It will combine hands-on audio/video production techniques and presentations about producing high quality transmissions of various Performing Arts.

International media education seminar in Finland

The Finnish Society on Media Education is organising a seminar entitled "My Media Playground" on 14-15 February in Tampere, Finland. The topic of the seminar is 0–12-year old children's media use, media skills and best practices of media education. The seminar is aimed at experts planning media education strategies, policies and materials for children up to 12 years old and other experts in the field. Visit the seminar **website**.

Contact information

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