

ICT Curriculum Team

ICT Newsletter

BETT Show/NAACE Special Edition

BETT 2006 – Bigger and Better?

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Remember:

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ICT Curriculum Team

BETT is the world's leading educational information & communications technologies (ICT) event, attracting over 600 educational suppliers and over 28000 visitors, and bringing together the global teaching and learning community for four days of innovations and inspirations.

Early Years and Primary Software, Content and Tools
2Create A Story allows children to write independently, to illustrate and narrate their own stories. It is designed to support children's independent learning. It can also be used alongside an interactive whiteboard for whole-school teaching. The product can be used to create both fictional stories and for factual writing, e.g. planning the steps in a science experiment. 2Create A Story is designed to stimulate and teach young children to produce effective, creative, multimedia stories through the following options: import photos, record sound to accompany stories, save stories as Flash, so children can share their work online with relatives and friends locally and globally.

Secondary Software, Content and Tools
MediaStage allows learners to create virtual performances for Media Studies, and guidance on using it for GCSE study and to create projects for coursework. The product is a virtual production studio enabling students to be directors, actors, lighting technicians, camera operators, stage managers, scriptwriters and critics.

Early Years and Primary Hardware

Bee-Bot is a programmable floor robot which incorporates programming, prediction, estimation and recording.

It supports the teaching of the Foundation Stage and KS1 early control objectives. Bee-Bot bridges the gap between remote control vehicles and more complex floor robots, making it simple for both teachers and children to use. This floor robot comes in a child-friendly size, it features clear and bright buttons, and has a robust design. There is a range of activity mats for different activities.

Secondary Hardware

Graphical Logger Pack includes HP iPaq 2110 Pocket PC and EasySense Flash Logger. This is a portable rechargeable datalogger with a range of sensors that can be attached. It allows pupils to collect, display and analyse the data using Sensing Science software, write reports using Pocket Word and use Pocket Excel for further analysis.

The most impressive new product on display was the 42" High Definition Plasma Touch Screen. Interactive Whiteboards are valuable tools but there are still many disadvantages, particularly when you consider children with special educational needs.

Display technologies, as they are often called, generally involve the use of a projector. Despite the benefits these bring, there can be



BETT 2006 stirs mixed emotions. The gleaming glitz of the stands contrasts with the black depression of many of those running them concerning the future. There are the superb teachers receiving Becta awards who are so adept in using technology for learning, contrasted with those more interested in ogling or buying the hardware and software. At BETT the latter seem in the ascendant. TES

mounting/positioning difficulties and there are certainly issues surrounding the health and safety aspects of children and staff standing in the line of the beam.

The Plasma screen connects directly to the PC and can be considered as a large monitor. The glass overlay built into the front of the screen is touch sensitive and can perform like a mouse. The screen can be wall mounted or supplied on an impressive adjustable stand that is accessible by wheelchair users. Although originally very expensive, the price differential when compared to projector, mounting and whiteboard is getting narrower all the time.

We are planning to install one of these new systems in two newly established special classes in September and hope that this will give us all an opportunity to evaluate their value.

Bernie Henderson

NAACE Conference 2006



One of the sessions attended by the team during the Naace conference 2006 was delivered by Mike Banahan of Open Forum Europe. The talk described what options are available in terms of open source software for education and put the intellectual case for the use of OSS. Many of Mike's personal observations and experiences are confirmed in a recent Becta information sheet, which he made reference to entitled, 'Using open source software in schools', which can be found on the link below.

http://www.becta.org.uk/corporate/publications/documents/BEC5606_Information_Sheetrev.pdf

Both suggest that the main driver for introducing OSS was the potential cost savings. One particular area identified was the use of open source operating systems and thin-client networks to extend the life of old computers. Mike quoted a saving of £60,000 in one school as a consequence of adopting the thin-client solution, a saving that had been independently verified. During his talk he made reference to various open source software packages and I have listed a number below with a description and link to the website where they may be downloaded for your evaluation.

AbiWord (<http://www.abisource.com>)

AbiWord is a light weight, stand alone word processor that can read and write a large number of document formats, including MS-Word. Due to its small size it is well suited for use on older hardware, and will run happily on a 486DX with 16MB of RAM, while still letting you edit all the relevant document formats of today. Key features include HTML export, unlimited undo and redo, support for spell checking, styles, columns, tables, images, and bulleted/numbered lists. The Spell Checker is available in a range of languages. Using this software on old machines might increase their usefulness with out incurring extra licensing costs.

PDFCreator (http://sector7g.wurzel6.de/pdfcreator/index_en.htm)

PDFCreator can be used to generate PDF documents directly from any Windows program. Once installed, simply select 'Print' from the File menu of your word processor or drawing program, and select 'PDFCreator Printer' from the list of printers. Click 'Save' and enter a name for your PDF output file. That's it! This could be a valuable software tool for the new DiDA course.

OpenOffice 2 (<http://www.openoffice.org/>)

OpenOffice 2 is a full-featured productivity suite including a word processor, spreadsheet, web page editor and presentation program. Notable features in this version are native PDF and Flash export at the click of button. For pupils who don't have Microsoft Office at home, Open Office will allow them to open and edit Office applications and then save them in the appropriate Microsoft format.

GIMP (<http://gimp-win.sourceforge.net/>)

The GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP), is a powerful and comprehensive imaging solution, suitable for those wanting to manipulate digital photographs, design and export graphics for the web, convert from one file format to another and even produce complex high-resolution compositions for print.

NVU (<http://www.nvu.com>)

NVU (pronounced en-view) is the open source world's answer to Macromedia's Dreamweaver. It is a fully featured what-you-see-is-what-you-get web page editor, enabling you to create compelling web pages without having to devote months to learning html. Both GIMP and NVU could be used for the delivery of DiDA,

Firefox (<http://www.mozilla.com/firefox/central/>)

Firefox light-weight web browser based on Mozilla technology. It empowers you to browse faster, more safely, and more efficiently. Key features include: Popup Blocking to stop those annoying ads popping up. Tabbed Browsing lets you view multiple web pages in a single window. Open links in the background so that they're ready for viewing when you're ready to read them.

Celestia (<http://www.shatters.net/celestia/>)

Celestia is a simulation of the entire universe, based on current astronomical information. It includes beautifully rendered planets, moons, and some smaller orbital bodies such as Mir and the International Space Station. Celestia is not limited to our solar system; you can visit other stars, or even travel outside the galaxy!!!

BT Schools' Awards



This Award is for schools that can demonstrate their commitment to help everyone in the UK understand and enjoy the benefits of improved interpersonal communication skills. (<http://www.bteducation.org/awards/>)

Four Swansea Schools were award winners 2005-2006. They are: Casllwchwr Primary, Penclawdd Primary School, St Thomas Primary School, Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Y Login Fach.

Casllwchwr Primary has used ICT for Speaking and Listening as part of their work for this award.

Each term the children prepare and present an individual presentation (using Powerpoint, slide shows etc). Towards the end of last term as part of their study of World War 2 each child researched the homefront as a subtopic and prepared a ten minute oral presentation on the subject. The presentations were of an extremely high standard. As well as addressing their classmates they also further developed their communication skills by tailoring their presentations for KS1 pupils who they also presented to. The children used PowerPoint presentations to illustrate their research. An example is included on the website.

This term their topic is space. They decided to link IT and speaking and listening skills together with the help of a GTCW grant. The children worked in groups of 3 to plan, design and produce animated cartoons linked to the topic space. Using the knowledge of each child's particular strengths the groups were selected so that each child had a particular role to play. The results were quite amazing, not only were some fantastic animations produced, but the interaction between children, groups and younger children was a pleasure to see.



Picture Data

Do you remember 1st Find IT? A totally new version of this software entitled Picture Data is on the verge of being released by JVSoft. The first prototype was shown to ICT Primary Co-ordinators during one of the co-ordinator days last year. The final prototype was demonstrated at the BETT show in January with a release date projected by April. It appears that this has been adhered to.

The final prototype shows a marked improvement to the version demonstrated last summer. A new user friendly interface has been created. Like the original 1st Find IT, the aim is to develop the concept of information handling through a topic and picture based approach. The software has been completely overhauled with some stunning graphics and many new features enabling pupils to:

Input and edit information; carry out simple and advanced searches; plot graphs in a variety of ways; write about each record via a simple word processor.

Overall the software is highly versatile with the latter feature above being a positive addition. The software contains a variety of topics that are suitable for Key Stages 1 and 2. One CD ROM is also being prepared with secondary SEN pupils in mind.

Picture Data could fill a void that currently exists with database packages. The package will be launched with the following topics contained on three CD ROMs.

Disc 1: Fairy Tales, Alien Worlds and Humpty Dumpty
 Disc 2: Healthy Eating, Dressing Teddy and Little Miss Muffet.
 Disc 3: Alien Builder, Teddy Bear's Picnic and Mary Mary.

Further details of the software may be found at JVSoft: <http://www.jvsoft.co.uk>



SA1 Development Multimedia Project

St Thomas has used the project to extend our children who are gifted in the areas of ICT and English. The project has mainly focused on the changes to our school community, through the closure of our school and the creation of St Thomas Community Primary School.

The children have documented our present building in photos, explaining why they need a new building. They have also interviewed past pupils, finding out what the school used to be like. Pupils have visited the site of the new school and have taken photographs as the structure develops.

Visits have been made to the SA1 waterfront development and the children have had opportunities to discover what is going to be there and the services that they will be able to access on their doorstep. They have also interviewed their local councillor and the AM for Swansea East, discovering their views and the feelings of constituents in the area.

Glyn Tiltman (St. Thomas Primary School)



SA1-derful Time!

Children at Pennard Primary have excitedly taken part in Swansea's SA1 Development Multimedia Project. After deciding on the sequence of their storyboard ideas, children began exploring digital still and video images, video editing software and creating layered musical compositions. One child described their role as 'digital DJs.'

Children decided to split into historical, present and future SA1 research teams to find out about changes in the area, and researched how Swansea's past successes will be incorporated into future plans. Having created their own short Wallace and Gromit animations and developed interviewing techniques at two schools local to the SA1 development, one child said, "I liked watching the models move after we had made their pictures into animations."

The resources and support provided by the ICT team have been of great benefit to the school, and we look forward to future initiatives that the ICT team will offer us.

Pennard Primary School



Thanks are due to Logotron for their support this year (www.logo.com)

So You Want To Be A Programmer?

On Friday the 18th of November, six Year 10 pupils got the day away from school and attended the Swansea University Computer Science Technocamps workshop "So you think you want to be a programmer...?" presented by Mark Kiddell.

Pupils spent the 6 hours learning to program with Delphi, a programming language similar to Pascal. They first wrote console (text) based programs that would do simple things like ask someone their name and age. As the Year 10s got more confident, the programs would do sums and manipulate user input. Eventually their own functions replaced the simpler commands to make the programs more efficient.

After a break for lunch, the Bishop Gore pupils moved on to graphical programs with a part of Delphi more like VisualBasic. With this they made traffic lights that changed colour as set by timers. Eventually they added cars which drove along a road and stopped when the traffic lights told them to.

Ian Hughes (Bishop Gore Comprehensive School)



Bishop Gore School ICT Enrichment

Able and hard working pupils at Bishop Gore can take advantage of activities to enhance their ICT capability beyond that provided by the normal curriculum. Such an activity took place recently in conjunction with IT Wales, based at the University of Wales Swansea.

Four lucky Year 8 pupils from Bishop Gore School took part in an ICT workshop called 'Challenging Communication – Operation Mercury' run by I.T. Wales and Teamforce in Swansea University on 16th November 2005.

During the day, pupils took part in using satellite navigation systems and using software to change the image of pictures used in movie making called Winmorph, a complex piece of software.

Pupils also took part in a quiz during the day and came 2nd against other schools in Swansea and Neath and Port Talbot, winning the year group, the chance of using a climbing wall used by soldiers training in the Army for a day. They were just one point away from winning 5 stadium tickets to see Swansea City or the Ospreys play at Liberty Stadium. Bad luck! It was a truly amazing day!

Ian Hughes (Bishop Gore Comprehensive School)



Broadband Network News

Videoconferencing

SLTS have been assisted by The University of Wales Swansea in configuring the Education Broadband Network for videoconferencing. This is based on the design implemented in the Welsh Video Network which at this time, is probably still the best of its type.

This is a standards based system and uses the Janet Videoconferencing Service (JVCS) which makes conferencing easy to setup with the online booking service and online monitoring of the conference. The system implements the E164 numbering system which makes it easy for experienced users to make quick ad-hoc calls to known users.

This system requires a CODEC and a separate network point in the school to guarantee the quality of the conference. We are currently experimenting with Polycom CODEC's to establish the most cost effective equipment for a small group, medium size group and a full class.

If your school is interested in more information leading to implementation of videoconferencing, please contact the service desk on 636900.

Wireless Networks

Wireless networking looks too good to be true: low cost, easy configuration, portable and no wires to trip over!!

However, there are concerns particularly with security. If the wireless security configuration is not set-up correctly then any PC with a wireless card and in range may be able to connect to the school's network. Problems also occur from other wireless networks in range being in the same channel which can cause interference other problems with signals not passing through walls because they have foil covered insulation or other materials which stop or deflect the signal. Finally, common wireless networks work on the same frequency as microwaves so if there are microwaves in the vicinity this could stop your network working.

If you are still interested in considering wireless technology please contact the Service Desk on 01792 636900 and we will arrange to do a wireless survey and advise you on the best way to proceed.

more...



Broadband Network News (continued)

Access from Home

SLTS are now able to allow access from home to staff and pupils. This is a secure web based system which can be accessed using a web browser, typically Microsoft Internet Explorer, and the HTTPS protocol. Just a few points to explain what home access is.



Access from Home is:

- Being able to access from home, over the internet, using a web browser (Internet Explorer), files or documents, (for technical reasons this excludes SIMS) which you have access to, and are held on a school system. Down loading the required files or documents to your local (home) pc to work on them.
- Upload (return) these files or documents back to the school server so they can be accessed in school as normal. This will initially be by e-mail.
- Being able to access schools e-mail accounts, using Outlook Web Access, if required.

Access from Home is NOT:

- The same as logging on in school.
- The same speed of access as in school.

You will require:

- A home pc with internet access.
- Your school must be a member of the education active directory domain and connected to the education broadband network (all primary school SLA and Level 2 in the secondary school SLA).
- The same software/ programs, in the same version, to work on the files or documents as you use in school.
- Permission from the school.
- Microsoft user Client Access License (CAL approximately £18.22 per staff user and £1.86 per pupil user) this cost is the schools responsibility.



Issues:

- The speed of the users home internet access will have a dramatic influence on the performance of this service. A dial up link will be extremely slow, down loading and up loading the files or documents. Large files may be unacceptably slow. If a broadband link is available then this will be less of an issue.
- Password security is very important as it is the only thing stopping unauthorised access to your files or documents.
- It is recommended that the home pc is running Windows XP and has an up to date anti virus system installed.
- There is no support for the home pc's and there will be no network support during weekends and after 5:00pm Monday to Thursday and 4:30pm on Friday and before 8:30am Monday to Friday.
- Depending on the demand we may have to introduce a curfew where the system is unavailable from 10:30pm to 07:00am. This is the time we backup all the schools systems over the network.

SLTS Technical Support Section

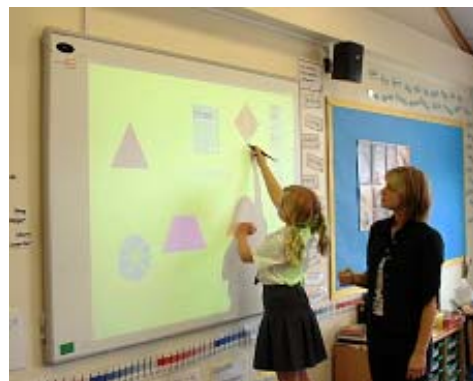


<http://www.learn-ict.org.uk/slts/>

Interactive Whiteboard Project Feedback

Phase One of the Swansea Primary Schools Interactive Whiteboard project started in Summer Term 2005 and formally concluded in Spring Term 2006. A total of 21 schools participated in this project. 156 teachers completed the questionnaires and 29 teachers were interviewed. The project generated the following recommendations:

- Fixed installation is encouraged (ceiling mounted DPs and wall mounted IWBs).
- Ensure the height of the board is appropriate to specific users.
- Make greater use of online resources.
- Save IWB work for revisiting purposes.
- Stress the importance of health and safety issues to all users (refer to comments).
- Further develop interactivity between pupil, teacher and board.
- Provide opportunities for LSAs to attend IWB based training.
- Develop 'learning' slides to be displayed on the IWB during transition periods.
- Consider the installation of wall mounted speakers to enhance the multimedia experience.
- Investigate the possibility of using different coloured backgrounds to aid learning.
- Ensure regular training is made available to staff.
- Consider the installation of IWBs in SEN rooms.
- Consider IWB positioning / training implications for left-handed users.
- Develop a viable maintenance protocol for DPs (especially bulbs / filters).
- Consider the installation of window blinds in IWB rooms.
- Develop a strategy to ensure teachers have equitable access to IWBs.



A full text is available at:

<http://www.learn-ict.org.uk/materials/materials.asp#Whiteboards>

Lindsay Harvey (ICT Curriculum Team)

SmartBoard Update!

For users of the SMART interactive whiteboards BETT saw the launch of a new version of software to be released around Easter time. Although the SMART software has been continually updated version 9.5 will offer significant improvements for use in schools. Pages can be linked to other pages in a Notebook file to produce a "branching" display. Objects on a page can be locked in three ways. They can be locked in place, locked so they can be moved but not edited, or locked so they can be rotated and moved but not edited. Teachers can outline and capture any shape or part of the screen with the screen capture tool



The new Gallery of resources includes thousands of objects, including over 500 new images, audio, video, Flash and Notebook software lesson activities. The gallery now has facility to find content by using a keyword search facility or browsing through the new content file structure.

Virtually all types of content, including images, audio, video, Flash and Notebook files, can be organised and stored in the Gallery. The software also allows video and audio files to be included on Notebook pages and these can be rotated or resized, written over and stored in the gallery.

Even better news – the upgrade will be free and will be available for download from www.smarttech.com/support/software.

Howel Davies (ICT Curriculum Team)

Definitive Software Library (Spring 2006)

Recommended Software List (Primary/Secondary/Special)

Textease Studio + / CT (Softease)	Revelation Sight and Sound (Logotron)	Maths Packs 1 – 4 (Interactive Resources)	Primary Maths Games (Interactive Resources)
Splosh (Kudlian)	My Modelling Toolkit (Granada)	Zoombinis (3 Versions) (Broderbund)	Virtual Experiments (Collins)
Dazzle 1, 2 & 3 (Indigo)	Izzy's Island (Sherston)	Crystal Rainforest (Sherston)	Web Detectives (Sherston)
Black Cat Compose (Granada)	2Create (2Simple)	2Create a Story (2Simple)	Teaching Maths Series (Interactive Resources)
Finale Notepad (Free) (Finale Music)	Little Brown Bear Series (Sherston)	Dreamweaver (Adobe)	Fireworks (Adobe)
Print Music (Finale Music)	Teacher's Cupboard (Sherston)	Flash (Adobe)	FreeHand (Adobe)
Junior Insight (Logotron)	Number Train (Sherston)	Report Assist (Simple Logic)	Kiddesk (Riverdeep)
Cloze Pro (CrickSoft)	Clicker 4 & 5 (CrickSoft)	Wordshark (Inclusive Technology)	Numbershark (Inclusive Technology)
Tizzy's First Tools (Softease)	Teddy Bear's Picnic (Sherston)	Granny's Garden (4Mation)	Oxford Reading Tree (Oxford)
Millie's Maths House (EdMark / Riverdeep)	Microscope QX3 Software (Intel)	Digital Blue Software (Intel)	My World (Inclusive Technology)
Number Plane (Sherston)	Badger Trails (Sherston)	Map Detectives (Sherston)	Xipster (Xow/Advisory Matters)
E-mail Detectives (Sherston)	Abacus Maths Software (GINN)	Illuminatus Creator 5.5 (Digital Workshop)	Teithio'r Byd (Dorling Kindersley)
StarSpell (RM)	IEP Writer (Learn How Publications)	Smart Notebook / Smart Ideas (SMART)	Paint Shop Pro 10 (Corel)
ACTIVprimary 2 & ACTIVstudio 2 (Promethean)	Revelation Sight and Sound (Logotron)	2Animate (2Simple)	Speedy Keys (Granada)
Jigworks (CrickSoft)	IT Mouse Skills (Inclusive Technology)	2Type (2Simple)	



Essential Software

Flash Player	Shockwave Player	Quicktime Player	Acrobat Reader
Media Player 10	Photo Story 3	Java Player	Movie Maker 2
DirectX 9	Real Player	Audacity	Irfan View
SWIFF Player	SWIFF Point Player	Maxthon Browser	MS Office (Microsoft)
MS FrontPage (Microsoft)	MS Publisher (Microsoft)	Google Earth (Google)	