



newsletter

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MAIN ARTICLE: LEARNING UNITS

NEW YEAR 2010 BRINGS ABOUT CONCRETE RESULTS OF BECULT MATERIAL AND A NEW WAY IT IS PUT TOGETHER BY THE MEANS OF SCORM LEARNING UNITS. THIS WILL FURTHER AID THE END-USER TO UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF BECULT

level, table of can-do-statements in all project languages, linked Hot Potatoes exercises that cover comprehensively all three aspects of the Can-Dos (writing, reading and listening skills) plus learning games. Later on, this concept of SCORM learning unit will be converted to other areas, also including those created in the first BeCult project. This was the reason for which the material of hotel, service and kitchen needed to be re-edited and translated so that all material will be harmonized and of the same quality as the new Retail material. Furthermore, it will be much easier for outside users to create similar learning packages to be imported into BeCult.org. There is no need then to cover issues dealing with flash formats and its user interface. Moodle will be suited for learning unit purposes by our subcontracting company, Mediamasteri, with whom a contract have been negotiated late 2009. This means that sometime around spring 2010, hopefully before Zaragoza work meeting, the new Moodle 1.96 version will be introduced along with the new site intro.

As the project is well in its second year and 2010 looms around the corner, the next phase is to collect the produced material and formulate it into neat learning units of videos, exercises and games. The welcomed addition from learners and teachers perspective is the introduction of learning unit concept. Earlier issues of this newsletter covered already the concept of SCORM, that allows the editor of large bundle of

learning material to gather and construct a learning path using all the material in a way that is usable and easy to understand. The way this is done is to use an already existing freeware called RELOAD editor. At the moment, even though a major bulk of material is still to be produced, we can construct a single complete learning unit from existing finished English material of Retail. This material set will thus include all the subtitled English videos of A2/B1

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RELOAD OFFERS COST-EFFECTIVE (READ: FREE) WAY TO CREATE LEARNING UNITS FOR PROJECT PURPOSES

WHAT DOES RELOAD PROJECT MEAN?

RELOAD is a project funded under the JISC Exchange for Learning Programme (X4L). The project focuses on the development of tools that are based on emerging learning technology interoperability specifications. It is managed by the University of Bolton with staff located at the University of Bolton and the University of Strathclyde. The primary aims of this project are to facilitate the creation, sharing and reuse of learning objects and services and in addition to enhance the range of pedagogical approaches realisable through the use of lesson plans. These aims will be achieved through the production of a suite of software tools for authoring and delivery of standard-compliant learning objects incorporating comprehensive user guides and exemplar resources. The tools will be of significant value to the JISC and wider community, since they provide the crucial "missing link" which allows users to author and transfer learning objects, in specification compliant format, between authoring and design tools, local and distributed digital repositories, and VLEs. The main tool to create pedagogical material is the RELOAD editor that provides support for IMS Content Packaging 1.1.4, SCORM 1.2, and SCORM 2004 to suit the BeCult Extend learning unit purposes.

TEACHING TOURISM IN PIRKO

At PIRKO the teaching of tourism takes place in two facilities both located in small towns of Kangasala and Lempäälä, outside Tampere. In Kangasala, the main focus is tourism services in nature, while Lempäälä focuses on cultural and urban travel. BeCult team member Pirkko Karvonen operates in both facilities. The Kangasala students were involved in filming of BeCult tourism in Finnish language, with production done by audio visual students of Lempäälä unit of culture and crafts. In a Finnish VET system, according to the curricula, the graduated student of tourism activities services is able to fork in culture events, guide service, nature sites, theme parks, catering and adventure travel. This of

course means, that no day is similar. The work environment differs from luxury hotel to simple tent in frozen forest. Contrary to many European VET institutions, according to Pirkko Karvonen, in Finland the teaching of tourism forms a singular individual discipline with is completely own curricula. Many countries, in which tourism is a vital industry, it is considered under the header of business and administration. The three year study plan includes at least 20 weeks of on-the-job learning in tourist facilities both in Pirkanmaa and possibly abroad. Tourism is international in its nature and thus it was a welcomed addition to BeCult set of pedagogical services.





FROM THE DRAWING BOARD

AS PART OF BECULT EXTEND TECHNICAL TEAM, INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR MIKKO TURUNEN COVERS SOME ISSUES FROM TECHNICAL POINT OF VIEW



International coordinator Mikko Turunen from PIRKO, Finland

As I am sitting in my office overlooking the lovely parking lot of PIRKO, being one of the people in this project to cover technical issues, I would like to pause for a moment to reflect some of the obstacles in material production in a project such as ours. First of all and unfortunately, we are not living in a perfect world. In that world all the project members of BeCult Extend would leave their families for 2 years and move to Berlin. A specifically designed project BeCult office space would be in our use 24/7/365. It would host the fastest PC's available. All the team works in a spacey room. All the questions

and problems would be handled as they appear. For material filming, a movie production team from Hollywood would in our use. OK, we could manage one from Cinecitta as well. Before the project began and in the early stages there would be 2 month comprehensive practice period so that every project member would be perfect users of Hot Potatoes, Quandary and audio visual production software. The master files in English would be produced first and when and only when they would be 100% perfect and ready, only then the language expert team would translated the material with close attention given by the original master files producers. There would be no possibility for anyone to pick up wrong or older imperfect material to be translated and thus being in danger of doing the same thing twice. In the perfect world, all team members would also be able to utilize their personal strenghts. And as the project would be the ONLY thing anybody would do for the duration of the project, there needn't be any phone calls from colleagues about upcoming lessons or other projects to handle. Whenever new material

is finished, a simple shout of "German Retail Hot Potatoes are ready!" would be sufficient to notify that to all. And of course with unlimited travel budget, the team would be able to go to every single global theme-related seminars, congresses and such events for dissemination and advertising. And yes, no external reporting would be needed. There would not be any problems to reach deadlines because there would be a group of dedicated servants to monitor, motivate and punish the production team with electric shocks in order to easily reach all deadlines with a smile in their faces. But it is not a perfect world.



HOW TO USE OUR PRODUCT?

Every time there is a new project and a resulting product, this question always rises. What now? How can the finished product flourish and continue to develop and give value to the teaching and learning communities in Europe (and indeed the world). It is a vital question and needs some discussion. First of all, the idea behind a project like ours must have been a good one to be financed. This means that it has seen to be beneficial for users. Now the derivative is to ensure that these benefits are realized. As web-based tool, BeCult will do that as anyone can register and start using it from anywhere. Dissemination helps to get people in the teaching community aware of the product and its use. But in today's hectic world with millions of messages and adverts being sent and seen

every day, how will our message pass through this net of other messages? One aspect of this project as "Transfer of Innovation" is to create a strong user base for our product. In order to create that, a set of concrete tools like this newsletter to spread the news about BeCult needs to be produced. Another question is to create within the product a comprehensive avenue of possibilities to varied use. For example, in many cases, a web based material will simply be printed and used in a classical way as learning material with paper and pen. It means that all materials must be created also in printed formats. In another hand, some teachers might find useful to have the videos in format that can be used offline or in mobile devices. That means that all videos are downloadable and in different

formats for different devices. These two examples are just tip of the iceberg of possibilities. All in all, some form of administration is absolutely needed to keep the site running and to spread information about it. How this can be achieved for any type of project-based product is not just a problem with BeCult but a more general one. It is also a problem that should really also be of interest for our financiers, namely European Commission, for what use there is a great product that no-one is aware and no-one is in control of. Hopefully there will be some concrete answers to these questions in the future.

LAUNCH SEMINAR IN FINLAND 2010

