



becult **EXTEND**

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## MAIN ARTICLE: **FINAL STRETCH AHEAD**



During the project meeting in March 2010, it seemed that there is a very good possibility for project BeCultExtend to be a great success. It now seems clear what the final website will look like. Introduction of SCORM and the pedagogical approach connected with it and Can-Do-Statements as basis of the improvement in this transfer on innovation has proven to be a real eye-opener. Also the new version of Moodle

offers a better platform for all Becult items. Mediamaisteri has started their portion of the production by creating the navigational path and testing media players and SCORMs in the new so called front office page. What in the beginning seemed to be a very straightforward transfer of innovation has proven to be an effort to re-evaluate the aspects of the old site, then remould the form again and add new languages and professional sectors. It has taken a lot of

A LOT OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING HAS TAKEN PLACE DURING THE PRODUCTION PHASE OF BECULT. WHAT IN THE BEGINNING SEEMED TO BE SELF-EVIDENT HAS TURNED OUT TO BE NOT SO. INTRODUCTION OF SCORM IDEOLOGY TO THE OLD VERSION OF BECULT HAS TAKEN A LOT OF OBSCURITY AWAY FROM THE OLD SITE THAT WAS TAKEN FOR GRANTED AS UNCHANGED PART OF THE PRODUCT. NEW POLISHED VERSION BEATS THE OLD ONE IN TENNIS NUMBERS.

time to understand the point of view of the end user and at the new functionalities. Obviously basic idea stays unchanged but it is more clear and offers both teachers and students a transparent path to learning languages and professional cultures. SCORM itself is one of the best innovations in the world of e-learning in recent times. Thanks to SCORM, we have managed to combine videos, gaming and simple exercises in easy-to-use form. It is quite possible that this new version is very appealing and hopefully with good promotion it will be used as. Like always, there are still a number of unanswered questions and unproduced material, but at least the end is in sight and it seems to be within reach.

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“Due to unexpected work and new technical requirements such as configuration and de-bugging issues, much more subcontracted work is demanded in order to finalize the project on time. In the end this rearrangement of the budget, which will be applied for at National Agency level will enhance quality and usability.”





## LAUNCH VENUE: TAMPERE

If cities would shake hands, Tampere's grip would be energetic and its introduction relaxed, in the style of a large city with an endearing attitude. Tampere's personality is one of numerous reasons for its popularity with visitors. Each year close to a million tourists as well as thousands of congress guests visit the Tampere Region. Finns, Europeans and a good many from beyond. The Tampere Region is one of Finland's fastest growing centres with population more than 210,000 in the city of Tampere and close to half a million in the Tampere Region, with respect to 5.3 million in Finland. Tampere was founded by Sweden's young

monarch, Gustavus III, in 1779. It is Finland's third largest city and the largest inland city in the Nordic countries. The Becult September 2010 launch venue is located on an isthmus between lakes Näsijärvi and Pyhäjärvi in ridge scenery; the Tammerkoski rapids is a nationally recognized landscape, awarded lighting at the Keskustori central square. We have a monumental industrial history, the Finlayson cotton mill was the first large-scale industrial enterprise in Finland. Today Tampere is a centre of leading-edge technology, research, education, culture, sports and business. The only thing missing is the sea!

*Acapela Group, invents text to speech solutions to give your content a voice in up to 25 languages.*

### TEXT TO SPEECH TOOLS USED IN BECULT EXTEND

Speech synthesis is the artificial production of human speech. A computer system used for this purpose is called a speech synthesizer, and can be implemented in software or hardware. A text-to-speech (TTS) system converts normal language text into speech. Synthesized speech can be created by concatenating pieces of recorded speech that are stored in a database. For specific usage domains, the storage of entire words or sentences allows for high-quality output. Alternatively, a synthesizer can incorporate a model of the vocal tract and other human voice characteristics to create a completely "synthetic" voice output. The quality of a speech synthesizer is judged by its similarity to the human voice and by its ability to be understood. For this project, a very good TTS system, Acapela was used to create the multitude of English and Finnish phrasing for Hot Potatoes exercises. Instead of recording sounds by microphone, the sentences were fed to a TTS demo tool online. The sounds produced by that tool were then recorded with software called Total Recorder that can record any sound coming from computers sound card. The results were in most cases incredibly good. Many people were fooled to believe it was a human voice.



# AMERSFOORT MEETING

**MARCH 2010 MEETING SAW A LOT OF THINGS MADE BUT STILL LEAVING ITEMS TO BE DELIVERED. WEB SITE IS SHAPING OUT TO BE QUITE APPEALING**



Our new team member Maria from Spain and Mikko Turunen from Finland.

Meeting in Amersfoort was about finalization of an online test version and starting of testing phase. First of all a new team member, another Maria (Martin) was introduced and given a warm welcome. All partners are present. In this meeting was decided that there were to be no new ideas nor changes made, so when everybody leaves the meeting they know exactly what to do and continue with the production. With this innovative bunch of people it is easier said than done. A cultural movie about the Netherlands has

been shown as an example of how such a movie could look like. Our boss Mats explained the development of the project up to now. Because it really was only 3 months to produce all material before the website was to be finalised and ready for the launch end of September it was stressed that transparency is very important. All partners

introduced their status in the production. For some partners like France, almost all was made (status green). All had still a varied amounts of status red items to be produced. Mikko gave advice on production

issues such as subtitling, flash video editing and uploading. Further into the meeting, Mikko also explained the new Moodle page as the final production platform and showed the new intro and web page's modified design. Mediamaisteri will create the new Becult extend website into their own server so that it will be made available for public during the time of

the launch in September. For this, the navigation path was decided so that the user will easily find the right SCORM package. On Wednesday it was debated that the English master versions can not be changed anymore because the production (translations) has already started. The configuration files were made by Mikko for all languages and uploaded in the Amersfoort folder including instructions. Everybody continues with the translation and production with the files from Mikko. Any other changes were to be corrected centrally. The priority is to produce the new

*“The most important thing during this stage of the project production is transparency in communication. All problems must be addressed as soon as they occur without hesitation. This is vital because the group is geographically so divided”*

version first, if there is time the old partner should continue the debugging on the old files. Mikko will create the new layout in the site to remove the unnecessary files and to restructure to make it more clear. Launch was planned in

week 37: travelling on September 13th, meeting 14th, launch 15th of September 2010 in Finland. Finally, tasks and new deadlines were defined.



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## NANOONG - VOICE RECORDER FOR MOODLE

NanoGong is an applet that can be used by someone to record, playback and save their voice, in a web page. When the recording is played back the user can speed up or slow down the sound without changing it. After the sound is saved in a file, the file can be put on the Internet and then played back using the applet. The actual program is very small in size and display size to secure a short loading time. It can save the recorded voice, in different playback speed, to a file on the user's hard disk. The recording can then be sent to a Web server. The sound can be played using the applet from a website. Some pedagogical examples of ways in which NanoGong can be used include letting students practice recording and listening to their voice, record themselves, save

a copy, and then upload the recording to any learning system such as Moodle. NanoGong also lets students record themselves and automatically send the recording to a website which could be a learning system or the course website.

NanoGong provides a very simple and transparent voice support for Moodle. Using a NanoGong activity and a NanoGong filter NanoGong provides two different types of voice support for Moodle. The NanoGong activity is an exercise that can be included in a course. Every student in the course can submit several voice recordings together with optional text messages using the activity. Teachers in the course can then examine these submissions, give comments, and assign a score to

each of them.

Students can submit their voice and/or text message using a NanoGong recorder and the HTML editor as shown on the right. Once the message is submitted it can be changed or deleted later, provided that the message has not been locked by a teacher or an administrator.

In the teacher's view a list of messages is displayed when a teacher enters the activity. The list contains all currently submitted voice messages of all students sorted by their submission date, as shown on the left. The teacher can choose to lock messages, change the content of the messages, give comments or give a score to the messages.

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