LLTI Highlights
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Welcome to"LLTI-Highlights". This column features an overview of the most important discussions on the LLTI -Language Learning and Technology International- listserv for the first half of the 2002, which have been summarized and paraphrased by me. Otmar Foelsche, the moderator of the electronic discussion list, has assigned a reference number to each topic that appeared in the discussion list. This number can be used to search the LLTI archives. Instructions on searching the archives appear at the end of this column.

Licensing fees for Streaming Video

The January 2002 discussion on *Licensing fees for Streaming Video* (#6463) was launched by Joseph Kautz with the following message: "We would like to stream a couple of hours of German from the Fokus Deutsch series but the publisher is charging 400.00 per year as a licensing fee. Does this seem like a fair offer? Are other institutions paying similar fees for the right to stream video and audio?"

Beth Secrist sent the first reply, agreeing with the frustrations concerning the licensing fees:"...I believe we paid $350 per year to digitize and stream Nuevos Destinos. I think the Annenberg/CPB videos are probably the costliest from this standpoint. Other than having to pay licensing fees for some Portuguese audio tapes... none of the publishers have charged to digitize their materials." Jack Burston added:"You are quite right to query the licensing fee being charged to digitize the Fokus Deutsch video, all the more so in that if you read the small print you will discover that the $400 is per semester, not per year. Needless to say, this is an exorbitant fee considering that other textbooks ...allow their video materials to be digitized and network distributed without cost. In fairness to McGraw-Hill, I would point out that it is the copyright holder of the video (Annenberg) who is the problem here...."

Judy Shoaf tried to explain the reason for the licensing fees:"... With audio, most textbook companies extend the same rights as they did for copying tapes ...Video has always had much more restrictive legal and explicit protections than audio... I guess this comes from the fact that records need to be heard in public or on the radio in order to sell copies, whereas video makes its money by selling view-

ing rights. It seems to me that with video the charges should be comparable to broadcasting..."

Others joined in expressing their frustrations, such as Lorraine Williams:"...I think that the publishers should be paying us to do the work of converting this stuff to streaming format! They should give it away in the same way they do with the cassette tapes! I have been granted free permission to stream audio on our password-protected LAN from three different publishers, but this has required a great deal of work on my part."

According to Becky Adae, Annenberg is not the only one charging licensing fees:"... I was quite distressed to learn that an American publisher of Chinese textbooks wanted to charge us for digitizing their audio tapes for which we had already paid much more than the usual cost. (We haven't reached the stage of streaming video yet). They claimed that they were too small not to require additional fees. Unfortunately, as a NY state public institution, we can't afford it either."

Software to create crossword puzzles

Many threads on the LLTI listserv initiated by queries concerning new software generated quite a few helpful messages, such as the February discussion entitled *Software to create crossword puzzles* (#6491), initiated during the month of January by Rebecca Adae:"I have a colleague who swears that she was able to use some software at another institution to create crossword puzzles. She can't remember the name of it, and I have not been able to find anything. Perhaps it is some old shareware? Has anyone heard of such a thing and has information on how we might get a copy?"

Barbara Siennicki's recommendation included purchasing information:"We use Crosswords and More. The supplier is Expert Software Inc. They can be reached at (305) 567-9996 (EST)."Annelie Chapman had another suggestion:"An online source for creating crossword puzzles is Puzzlemaker. If you just create and print, the service is free. They charge for storage."A later message by Lynne Crandall included the URL for Puzzlemaker: http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com/.
Jack Burston's reference pointed to a CALICO software review containing a lot of useful information:"You might want to have a look at Crossword Compiler. It is arguably the best there is: http://astro.temple.edu/~jburston/CALICO/review/crossword00.htm."

Several postings included recommendations for Hot Potatoes, such as Judy Shoaf's:"Hot Potatoes has a crossword-puzzle application for Windows. I haven't looked at them for a while but I was always

really impressed with the sensitivity of the interface to pedagogical problems ...: http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/halfbaked/."Karen Tusack and Keeta Martin both pointed out that Hot Potatoes is free for educators. Keeta Martin added:"...Hot Potatoes does not yet, as far as I know, support non-western languages like Russian, Chinese, or Japanese ...."Ted Wells referenced another source for vocabulary games:"This is an internet-based site for all types of word scrambles. From what I have seen, however, it does not really like accents: http://puzzles.apte.com/index.cfm?CFID=935410 &CFTOKEN=63352668."

Code Free DVD Players

Another February discussion dealt with the topic of *Code Free DVD Players* (#6507). Daniel Tom started the topic with the following message:"I know the problem of DVD region codes has been discussed previously on LLTI.... We are looking into purchasing a DVD player as we are increasingly receiving requests from instructors. The various language departments also offer several film courses and the instructors would like to switch to using DVDs rather than videos. However, I suspect that the DVDs for the foreign films they use are available in the US and are region 1 encoded. Nevertheless, it was suggested that we get a code free DVD player in case faculty members go to Europe or Asia ... and come back with DVDs that they purchased in those countries and want to use them in their classes. In your experience, how often have you had this kind of request from your faculty? Has the demand been enough to warrant the purchase of a code free DVD...? In addition to the region code problem there is also the problem of PAL DVDs so you would also have to purchase a code free DVD player that is also capable of playing PAL DVDs on an NTSC monitor or an expensive video converter...As with everything else we are faced with budget constraints and may not have the luxury of buying one region 1 player and one code free player... Two models I looked at on the web, Daewoo DVD-5700 and Sampo DVE-611, at the following site, http://www.220giftcenter.com, claim that they are'guaranteed to play all old, current and future DVD movies including DVDs that are RCE coded.'... These models are also supposed to play PAL movies on an NTSC TV..."

John Bowden recounted his experience with another model:"We just picked up a Malata ... region free unit which plays all CD-R(W)s, VCDs, MP3, all region and region switchable plus progressive scan types. This little unit ran only $285, shipping included..." David Herren had more details on this type of DVD player:"The Malata DVD-N996 is a particularly feature rich unit that currently runs $335. It is a switchable region player-you select the region code to play the disc (defaulting to region'0', no region). This is an

advantage in that the new Regional Coding Enhancement (RCE) for Region 1 DVDs... [which] will prevent their being played on region free players is not an issue for this player. With respect to NTSC and PAL, this unit includes an NTSC to PAL converter on board, so no multi-standard monitor is required....available at: http://www.planetomni.com/MSDVD_MLTA_dvd-n996_DTL.shtml."

Read Gilgen's message included answers for all questions asked in the initial message:"We are being asked for DVD capability all the time, and hence we have purchased some'regular'(Region 1) DVD players. However, there is the occasional DVD that comes home with professors from abroad, and we have had to use a computer to play them... So we just purchased a code-free DVD player, which surprisingly didn't cost a lot more than a regular one ... We will let you know how well it works, but we got the Pioneer DV-533 ... for only $250...As for the PAL issue... we hook ours up to the video projector which handles PAL. ..."

Franz-Joseph Wehage raised additional questions:"I see ads constantly for code free players... However, they almost only mention PAL/NTSC. Will SECAM DVDs play therefore on a code free player? Are SECAM DVDs considered region 2 as well as PAL? We bought a Daewoo recently that claimed to play PAL, which it does not.The message says'wrong region'. However, the box and the manual says it will play PAL DVDs..."David Herren's reply addressed these new questions:"To the best of my knowledge, DVDs are not produced in SECAM-they do not exist. SECAM is clearly in decline as a format-even the French manufactured video equipment is all SECAM/PAL with a move towards PAL...You are confusing'region' and'video format'.They are separate concepts. For formats, we have PAL and NTSC. For regions, there are 6 regions: Region 0:Universal for cartoons, older films and educational titles; Region 1:Canada, United States and its territories; Region 2:Japan, Europe, South Africa, Middle East; Region 3:South-East Asia, East Asia; Region 4:Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands, Central America, Mexico, South America, Caribbean; Region 5: Former Soviet Union, Indian Subcontinent, Africa (also North Korea, Mongolia); Region 6:China.Theoretically, one could have a PAL or NTSC version of a disc for each of the 6 world regions, though in practice discs are produced in the video standard common in the region for which they are coded. Regions were created by the movie studios to control world wide release schedules and maximize their profits..."

Joel Goldfield suggested additional vendors:"Try InternationalVideo & Electronics, Inc. (Toll-free Number: 877-578-0587.Email: sales@220-electronics.com). My second Malata 946 worked right

out of the box, but note that its Dolby 5.1 requires multiple audio hookups... We also received pretty good service from DVDshippers (McCay Enterprises)in Virginia ... Our Mustek unit also worked immediately for code-free playback of all our international DVDs to NTSC..."

Lee Ramsdell had yet another recommendation:"We purchased a Sampo DVE 611 from DVD City. It works very well and is indeed code free. We have not had any difficulties in playing different formats... We purchased this unit from DVD City... Their web site is: http://dvdcity.com/." Otmar Foelsche added another source for the purchase of DVDs: Proscanexplained.htm;CHARSET=us-ascii [text/html].

Duncan Charters also shared his knowledge about region-code free DVD players:"...Sampo from Taiwan seems to have been the first manufacturer to have a code-free DVD player with conversion distributed in this country, which is why many people have these. The more recent models are more satisfactory than the earlier ones. We have a DVE-625, which works well. However, it doesn't automatically play a PAL DVD on an NTSC TV, because the factory auto setting to which it defaults plays NTSC on NTSC and PAL on PAL. The manual does not say anything about how to change the setting, so you have to ask for tech support. In this case, with the DVD running, you need to punch in the code'72555'on the remote... The World Gift Center in Chicago mentioned a couple of times does have good service and very responsive technical support by phone or e-mail. The direct web address for DVD details is www.world-import.com/dvd.htm. Another Chicago supplier that we have had good experience with is dvdoverseas.com... The quality of the bottom-of-the-line built-in converters is not quite as good as running the player directly through a multi-standard projector or a better-quality external converter, but it is adequate for most uses. Some of the cheaper machines, such as the Sampo, may have problems with high-speed animation movies... For playing through a projector or external converter, we have found the Pioneer DV-343 to be very versatile ..."

Keyboard trays a good thing??

A March discussion entitled *Keyboard trays a good thing??* (#6577) was initiated by David Westerhof-Shultz with the following message:"I am in the final stages of purchasing a new 65-70 position language lab. In getting down to making all the nitty-gritty decisions, I am stumped... at whether or not including keyboard trays at each student position is a good thing! ... Our existing lab has never utilized them, previously...Personally, I am not a big fan of

them, myself. ...With this in mind, most...of my student positions will only have a monitor, keyboard and mouse on the actual work surface (if I choose not to have keyboard trays). But even so, I know that all remaining space is a prized commodity. I would be curious to hear from any of you, your preferences and experiences using keyboard trays in your own labs.

To this, Carine Ullom replied:"We have one 20-station lab with trays and one 10 station lab without trays. The stations with trays are, in my opinion, nicer. The rooms often double as 'normal' classrooms and in that case, we need as much free desk space as possible. Additionally, although we theoretically allow no food or drink in the labs, we do have the occasional soda spill. In those instances, the keyboards hidden in the trays are less vulnerable.... Our trays are strictly pull-out drawers and the mouse is up on the top of the desk..." Deanne Cobb shared her experience with keyboard trays: "Our present lab does have keyboard trays and has had for years ...Ours are somewhat simple, only a piece of board suspended underneath that slide and locked into place. ... I have found that ours have worked quite well and offered both comfort and the opportunity for more desk space..."

Margo Burns had additional recommendations for the design of a new lab:"We use them in our 28-station lab-you would be surprised how much space this frees up. Many of our teachers have written parts to their exams to accompany the audio, and they simply need the space for the students to write. And for standardized exams, it was important that there was sufficient space to open a test booklet and have the two pages lie flat on the desktop. The one difficulty is for the long-legged students: keyboard trays hang below the desktop and don't give them a lot of room under there. Having adjustable-height chairs is important. Check for wheelchair accessibility when coming up with your design so that a drawer would not get in their way...Don't go chintzy when purchasing trays: anything that gets pushed and pulled as part of normal wear and tear needs to be sturdy. I also recommend getting a drawer that is wide enough to accommodate both the keyboard and the mouse..."

Joe McLaughlin had similar thoughts on the issue:"...Students still use books, notebooks, and write on paper in the lab...I would recommend getting the keyboard trays and having free space in front of the computer for books and paper."

Mary Fetherston expressed an additional concern for the lab design: "... the [keyboard] trays force the students to sit farther into the aisle (because the tray is pulled out), this means the aisles have to be

larger!" In her message, Samantha Earp also had the lab design in mind:"...In answer to your question about keyboard trays, here is one more factor to consider. My experience is that if you use them in a lab that is organized into rows (one behind the other), you need to allow for more space between the rows. Students inevitably end up sliding their chairs back some to compensate for the physical presence of the keyboard trays, and then it is hard or even impossible for others in the row to walk behind them..."

Judy Shoaf preferred a solution without keyboard trays:"A better way to spend money to save space is on flat-screen monitors. I have noticed that when students don't need a keyboard; they usually tuck it back away beside the monitor..." Marty Dewindt also stated her reason for not having keyboard trays:"...when polled, most students did not like them..."

Students downloading programs

An important discussion during the month of April concerned itself with *Students downloading programs* (#6607). Barbara Siennicki initiated the topic:"We have about 58 PCs running Word in our labs, all of which are accessible to our international students for self-access. Although we stress ... that students are not to download programs or fonts in their own language, they continue to do so. We explain that downloading programs changes system folders and cause other difficulties, but it makes no difference to the students. We were told about some software called'Fortres'that will prevent students from doing this, but we can't find this company. Could anyone help with information about Fortres or some other software that we could use? ..."

Carly Born recommended another software solution:"At my previous institution they used Fortres, but had nothing but problems with it. ...But our Student Computing Coordinator here has instituted a wonderful system with software called PCRDist. [In] this...system...on every logout or shut down the system files are checked against a master setup. Anything that has been changed is set back to the original setup and anything new is deleted. He has it setup so that it runs after every time our students logout, which they are encouraged to do when they leave the lab. The refreshing process takes about two minutes and then it reboots itself and is ready for the next person. We like it because it keeps the machines clean and it's also an easy way to add new software. We just add it to the master and then they have it the next time they reboot...."

Damian Kavanagh had several suggestions:"We have a similar problem. Our fix is to use a program, which is very inexpensive, called Deep Freeze www.deepfreezeusa.com . What it does is actually

allow students to do anything they want to the computer, then after they log off, it resets the computer to the settings we selected, therefore making it pristine for the next user. There is also hardware which does the same thing called Centurion www.centuriontech.com. Other programs, such as Fortres which… is now available for Windows XP, will make it so the students can't access various parts of the computer …"

Deanne Cobb shared experience with the initially mentioned software: I think Fortres is exactly what you might be looking for. The URL for Fortres is http://www.fortres.com/. We have Windows 98 PCs in our lab and we run Fortres Clean Slate. This is a good product for the most part. Students can still download whatever they wish and use it, but the moment that the machine is rebooted, all that material is erased and the machine is left configured exactly as you made it before applying the security. When you need to run an update on your plug-ins or make any other changes that you want to be lasting, you simply disable the security, restart the machine, make the changes you want, re-enable the security and then reboot again…."

Ed Dente:"We use a wonderful little device - a physical lock - called Centurian Guard, from Centurian Technologies. It is turned on and off with a key, and prevents anything from being written on the hard drive. It creates a virtual hard drive while the computer is in use, then on reboot, all that temporary material is deleted. …." Karima Benremouga:"Try FoolProof. Visit http://www.smartstuff.com/products/security.html for info about the product. We have been using it successfully with our Macs."

Gerry Hartig had another preference: We also use Deep Freeze. I tried Fortress and FoolProof and found too many conflicts with the great variety of language software we have on our PCs… Deep Freeze allows students to go wild. Want to download all your games? Want to delete all the Win files? No problem. Go for it. All I have to do is reboot the machine and it's back to its original state. I have had no conflicts with any of my software. You can also set Deep Freeze to reboot itself periodically. My machines reboot themselves at 8 am every morning to start the day off fresh…"

Copy-protection crashes computers?

Ursula Williams discovered that new innovations of the music industry have the potential to create big headaches for language learning center directors. Her message (#6694) *Copy-protection crashes computers?* started a very lively discussion during the month of May: "…There is a new generation of copy-protected audio CDs that can

crash your computer or render it unable to start up properly. These discs are not audio CDs following the standard industry specification, and will say 'Will not work on PC/Mac' in place of the Compact Disc logo. If you intend to play an audio CD on your computer, inspect the packaging for any warnings about computer-specific copy protection measures present on the disc. Inserting one of these discs into a computer can cause unexpected harmful results, including freezes, crashes, and startup problems that may require the machine to be sent back to the vendor for service. This service will not be covered under warranty, and charges for these incidents will be the responsibility of the individual user.

Carroll Hightower:"... Here is some more information on the copy-protected audio discs, from CNET: http://news.com.com/2100-1023-876055.html. Apple also has an article in its Knowledge Base on dealing with the crashes caused by the discs: http://kbase.info.apple.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/kbase.woa/wa/query?searchMode=Assisted&type=id&val=KC.106882."

César (from Carnegie Mellon University) provided more insight into this issue:" ... The bulk of these copy-proof 'audio CDs' have been released in the European market, specifically Germany, but they are also coming to the U.S.A.. ONY has been a big proponent and architect in this endeavor but sadly the 'copy proofing' works by adding to the CD a track that contains bogus data. Since computer hard drives are programmed to read data files first, the Windows PCs will continuously try to play the bogus track first and will never succeeded. This may cause the CD playing application to freeze. The same thing happens with Apple PCs, but some of them actually crash... These 'audio CDs' are not technically or legally 'Compact Discs' and as such will not bear the CD Logo found on compact discs. Instead of the logo, they state 'Will not play on PC/Mac'... Ironically, this 'high-tech' protection has already been defeated by simply scribbling around the rim of the 'audio CD' with a felt-tip marker. Doing this renders the 'audio CD' computer playable and capable of being copied..."

Derek Roff passed on another suggestion on this issue:"This has been discussed in two of the video lists that I follow... The guerilla anti-marketing suggestion that was made on the list, was for everyone to go to their local CD vendor, buy the copy-protected not-really-a-CD, open it, return it to the vendor saying that the CD wouldn't play properly, and repeat. If this internet-promoted resistance campaign becomes widespread, I think this copy protection idea will fade away fast. In the meantime, make sure you see the trademarked CD logo on a disk before you put it in your drive."

John McVicker found a New Scientist article on this issue: http://www.newscientist.com/news/print.jsp?id=ns99992271. Judi Franz referenced an article published in the Los Angeles Times:"…Copycats beware! Sony Music has planted a 'poisoned pellet' of software in the European version of Céline Dion's latest CD, 'A New Day Has Come'. Those who attempt to make copies of the disc risk having the optical drives of personal computers crash and, in some cases, permanently freeze. Warnings that the discs don't play in computers are on the CD case and on the discs themselves…"

Mike Shaughnessy had more technical details: Sony has developed this technology called 'Key2Audio'. New Audio CDs are infused with an initial track of faulty data that the computer cannot read. PC CD-ROM drives always search this track first and get hung up… This track is ignored by regular audio CD players…" Marty Dewindt: "A felt tip marker or tape can defeat the protection. Anyway, here is the link to the MacCentral article that talks about this issue: http://maccentral.macworld.com/news/0205/10.audiocds.php."

Language Learning and Technology International Listserver Archives

The discussions of the Language Learning and Technology International (LLTI) listserver have been archived and posted on the web. These LLTI archives can be accessed from the IALLT Home page, which is loca ted at http://www.iall.net/. A link to the LLTI Listserver appears at the top level of the IALLT Home page. The LLTI listserver page gives instructions on how to subscribe or unsubscribe to the listserver. In addition, there is a link to the LLTI archives. These archives can also be accessed at http://listserv.dartmouth.edu/archives/llti.html.

To search the archives, type the subject in the first search field. The search engine will match the subject with the subject headings of the archived messages. You may also type a key word or words in the second search field. This search will look for the key words in the body text of all messages. It the reference number that has been assigned to a discussion topic is entered in this field, the search will bring up a complete list of all discussions dealing with the topic. You may also want to restrict search by limiting it to a specific author or by entering beginning and ending dates. Such a restriction is particularly useful for searches on frequently occurring topics. Any questions or comments related to the LLTI listserver may be addressed to Otmar Foelsche, the moderator of the LLTI discussion list. Otmar can be contacted at otmar.foelsche@dartmouth.edu. ◆

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