

CONFERENCE REVIEWS

CALICO 1991

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CALICO (Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium) held its annual meeting April 2-6, 1991 in Atlanta, Georgia. Pre-conference seminars were held on April 2 and 3 with regular sessions beginning on April 4.

The most significant discussions during the conference revolved around the technology of the future, more specifically full-motion digitized video and audio on CD-ROM XA. This was the topic of both Frank Borchardt's keynote dinner address and a very informative presentation by Lt. Col. Mike Bush of the USAF Academy.

According to Lt. Col. Bush, CD-I (Interactive) is on the verge of becoming a reality, its release having been announced as "Real Soon Now" since 1986. At the same time, CD-ROM XA (Extended architecture) Audio and Graphics are both now available. The advantage of this technology is that it sets a worldwide standard for digitized audio and for interleaving graphics and audio. Thus, at least theoretically, digitized applications developed on any platform (Mac, IBM, etc.) using any standard (Pal, NTSC, etc.) should one day be interchangeable. This attempt to make everyone's hardware compatible is already being realized by the Multimedia PC, which Lt. Col. Bush claims is already on the market. This machine will work with anyone's overlay board, CD player, MIDI board, etc. Once you install the drivers for your equipment, the machine will find it. Lt. Col. Bush ended his presentation with a breathtaking demon-

stration of CD-ROM XA technology, running full-motion video, synchronized with audio, off a CD. The way this technology works is that chunks of information come off the CD and are processed by the computer so that video gets sent to the video driver, audio to the audio driver, and so forth. The one major disadvantage to this technology is that it will not yet allow for full-screen video, unlike DVI (Digital Video Interactive), which does. In summary, Lt. Col. Bush thinks we have a good grasp of videodisc technology now and that it is time to look toward the future. Because of the rapidly developing digitized technology, Lt. Col. Bush stressed the fact that we should focus not on the delivery systems of our applications, but on what we want our students to do.

A number of other presentations also emphasized the importance of putting pedagogy before technology. At a panel discussion about courseware development led by Dan Church all of the participants stressed the need for clear pedagogical goals. James Noblitt argued that the problems in courseware development are no longer technological, but human. There is a need for teamwork at all levels including faculty, computer services and administration. The outcome goal must be clear so that the technology doesn't take over. This idea was seconded by Dana Paramskas who said that courseware should be "tight", and not try to be all-encompassing. It should serve as a core to supplement classroom activities. Ann Whiskeyman also felt that "pedagogy

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should be the motor for technology." In addition, Captain Mark Secan pointed out that "pragmatism" is the key: the applications should be easy to work with, that is, easy to use, install and construct lessons for.

Another interesting presentation was given by Don Mullen of Duke University. Don has been developing foreign character support under Windows 3.0. So far the people at Duke have developed a package of mapped keyboards which allows for a lot more flexibility than the foreign character support provided by Windows 3.0. In Duke's product, the newly mapped keyboard appears in a window on the screen, much like HDC's keyboard mapper. The disadvantage to HDC is that it is limited to Roman-based characters. Duke's mapper includes non-Roman language capability (Arabic, Persian, Cyrillic and Chinese). Their package also allows for the user to map his or her own keyboard. At the present time, this package only works within WinCalis and WinAuthor, but it is quite attractive since it provides right to left support as well as Chinese characters. To access the Chinese characters the user types the English equivalent. The computer then searches a dictionary and offers the Chinese possibilities. This process can be speeded up by typing in complete words since the dictionary is word-based. Plans are in the works to provide support for Japanese, but it is not available yet.

Other presentations focused on specific applications being tested and developed. M.I.T.'s Project Athena, "Philippe: An Interactive Fiction," which is now in its fourteenth version, was presented by Mary Ann Lyman-Hager from Penn State University. She has been using the program, which runs on a Macintosh, in French classes at Penn. Unfortunately, Philippe is not yet commercially available, but can be obtained in beta-test form. Brigham Young University is updating its old "Montevidisco" program

to make it more compatible with current hardware configurations. Jerry Larson and Charles Bush presented the new version they have developed for the Mac using a computer, videodisc player and two monitors. They have plans for an IBM version, as well as for remastering the original video footage on laser disc. The Mac version is not available yet, but should be within a year. The IBM version could take longer. Carolyn Fidelman presented "In the French Body," a program being developed at the University of Massachusetts, Boston which is designed to teach students French intonation and gestures. The materials being produced by the project include videodiscs, student workbooks and a teacher's guide. They are also working on a similar project in German. These three projects are representative of the type of applications many are working on.

One of the concerns which seemed to be shared by many of the conference participants is that there seems to be a duplication of efforts going on between colleagues at different institutions. For instance, two different Russian professors have developed exercises to accompany the same textbook, *Russian for Everybody*. While some felt there should be more of an attempt made to coordinate courseware development efforts, still others felt that it is more important to keep forging ahead on whatever projects are deemed necessary by individual developers. Ann Whiskeyman, during the Courseware Development panel discussion, expressed the feeling that the primary goal right now should be to "Just Do It," and eventually the programs will be sifted out. A need for quality courseware clearly exists. And the ways to get that courseware out there are getting better all the time, as Lt. Col. Bush showed us. However, as Dan Church reminded us all, "Non-existent software doesn't run any faster on the new machines."