BEST OF THE LLTI LISTSERVER

[Ed. Note: I would like to make this a regular column in the journal. Subscribers to LLTI who are interested in culling out the most interesting/useful information for such a column can contact me via email or phone.]

LLTI (Language Learning Technology International) is a type of "bulletin board" messaging system made available to anyone with Internet or BITNET access. Subscribing is simple (and free!), and the exchange of information is truly amazing. For more information on subscribing, see *The IALL Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Winter 1991) or Email:Otmar.Foelsche@mac.dartmouth.edu.

LLTI's moderator, Otmar Foelsche, left this message: LLTI has been on the air for exactly one year. We have 158 subscribers. We are now officially supported by the Consortium for Language Teaching and Learning. Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year 1992 to all of you. Let's hope that all the amazing events of 1991 will have a lasting impact on our world and our lives.

By way of example of the useful nature of LLTI, over the past few months several directors have posted messages asking for information or leads to finding specific types of software (language tapes, films, computer software) for many different, and sometimes esoteric, languages. Virtually every query received an answer from someone who know of a source or actually had materials and could provide an opinion as well as source information. Among the tape sets that people were looking for *and found* during the last few months are:

Brazilian (films)
Chinese (word processing/tutor)
Estonian (language tapes)
French (interviews, commentaries,pronunciation, etc)
Icelandic (language tapes)
Italian (videotapes)
Japanese (instructional video)
Latin (CAI)
Mayan (language tapes)
Norwegian (dialogues and/or readings)
Portuguese (instructional materials)
Russian (news during the August 1991 coup)

The remainder of this column lists topics with the initial question and pertinent responses. Note that "commercial" notes slip in from time to time, but discussion among particpants on the list seemed to favor brief notices since this is a quick and easy way to hear about new products and services. At the same time, members can respond (non-commercially) as to their experiences, good or bad, with such products.

SELF INSTRUCTIONAL SOURCES

What about NASILP? I know they have Portuguese texts. National Association of Self-Instruction Language Programs. Out of Temple University—John Means is the person to contact. —Karen Kay

ITALIAN SOURCES

RAI in New York for info on italian movies. Also, RAI broadcasts classic Italian movies on Mondays 6-8 eastern on F3, 24. Their number is (212) 468-2500. —George Mitrevski, Auburn University.

Starship Audio-Industries, 605 Utterback Store Road, Great Falls, Virginia, 22066 (703) 430-8692/(703) 450-5780 is a large mail-order house that stocks a number of Italian films among the hundreds of titles they offer. We have found them to be a good source for many of our language and humanities videodiscs. — Harold H. Hendricks, Brigham Young University.

The Voyager Company has a number of foreign language films, including Italian titles, on videodisc. Their address is 1351 Pacific Coast Highway, Santa Monica, CA 90401 and their phone number is 800-446-2001. -Lynne Crandall, Univ of Michigan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IAMT

The International Association for Machine Translation, of which the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas (AMTA) is a part, will publish its first newsletter in January 1992 under the general editorship of John Hutchins in the U.K. Individuals and organizations in the Americas are invited to send letters, announcements of conferences, publications or software products, or other material of interest, to the following address; electronic submissions are encouraged!
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I will be happy to forward announcements from other regions to the appropriate regional editor.

For information on joining the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas (AMTA), please contact:

Scott Bennett (fax: 512/471-6084; voice: 512/471-4166; e-mail: bennett@utxvms.cc.utexas.edu)

Joann Ryan (fax: 301/585-0742; voice: 301/585-0851)

Muriel Vasconcellos (fax: 202/667-8808; voice: 202/861-4338).

Guide to FL materials for PCs

Just published: Ian Treshman, *Multilingual PC Directory: A Guide to Multilingual and Foreign Language Products for PCs and Compatibles.* September 1991 Knowledge Computing Ltd. ISBN 1-873091-01-X.

Includes assessments of operating system versions, wordprocessing, database and desktop publishing software suitable for Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian scripts. (and others for Russian, Polish, Lao, Urdu, Japanese...) Knowledge Computing are contactable in the UK at 9, Ashdown Drive, Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 4LZ. Tel (+44) 81 953 7722 or in the USA at PO BOX 3068, Stamford, CT, 06905-0068 FAX (203) 975 7317. Sorry, I don't have a price for this book at hand. —Neal Dalton, Cray Research.

Hiragana Fonts

I'm not a language instructor, but I am a psycholinguist. I'm also a mac enthusiast and in recent years a type designer. I specialize in making laser fonts of foreign

writing systems. I've noticed a lot of talk about Japanese in recent weeks on this net, so I thought I should mention one of my fonts and see what the reaction is.

I have a nice Hiragana font (I call it Shorai) which is an attempt at brush-drawn characters on a computer. The font is available on the Macintosh in Type 1 format (so it's compatible with Adobe Type Manager), as well as in TrueType format for those of you using System 7. If you're using a PC and have Windows and ATM for Windows then I also have a PC version of Shorai that you can use.

Let me mention that I started designing fonts because I was appalled at the commercial prices for foreign language typefaces a few years back when I was doing a tutorial in Japanese. I feel that language scholars should be able to work in their respective writing systems without exorbitant expense. The prices I ask for my fonts reflect this philosophy.

Shorai is available on disk (please specify which format you'd like) for $10 for individual use, or $30 for institutional use. Please add $1.50 for shipping and media.

Dr. Lawrence M. Schoen, Department of Psychology, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL 60045, (708) 234-3100 x566, FAX (708) 234-6487 Email: lschoen@casbah.acns.nwu.edu

JEMH

Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia. Published by the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education, Editor: David H. Jonassen (University of Colorado-Denver); Associate Editor: Scott Grabinger (University of Colorado-Denver)

The *Journal of Educational Multimedia and*

Hypermedia is designed to provide a multidisciplinary forum and serve as a primary information source to present and discuss research and applications on Multimedia and Hypermedia in education. The main goal of the Journal is to contribute to the advancement of the theory and practice of learning and teaching using these powerful technological tools that allow the integration of images, sound, text and data.

To request subscription/membership information or Author Guidelines, contact:

AACE (Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education), P.O. Box 2966, Charlottesville, VA 22902 USA, E-mail: aace@virginia.edu, Phone: (804) 973-3987

TESL-L List

There is a recently-established electronic list for teachers of English as a second/foreign language. Members of this list who are interested, should send a message to the listserv at CUNYVM asking to sub to TESL-L, or else send a personal message to ABTHC@CUNYVM.BITNET or ABTHC@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU (Internet) CLDLC@CUNYVM.BITNET or CLDLC@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU (Internet) and ask one of those people to sign you on.

COMPUTER CHRONICLES

Although the actual broadcast times will undoubtedly vary from region to region, *Computer Chronicles*, I just heard, will be doing a special broadcast on foreign language software next week. From what I can see in my TV schedule, PBS channels are the main disseminators of this program. Did anybody tape this program? —Otmar Foelsche

I taped most of the Computer Chronicles-FL show but was not too impressed with what I saw. They spent a big chunk of time

on translation software and very little on the secondary and post-secondary software available. They did a short demo of KanjiMaster that barely introduced it. On the whole I was disappointed but I do understand that the program has to be pointed toward a large audience. —Thomas Browne, Macalester College (MN).

International Channel

The International Channel has announced a new benefit available to affiliates of their service. IC can now allow affiliates to tape and store programs from its feed for up to one year. The majority (15) of the eighteen languages now being featured on the service can be stored in this fashion. IC has negotiated these rights directly with their program suppliers in response to numerous requests from colleges and universities.

For further information on the International Channel contact Karen Livingstone at 617-734-7815.

BARCODE READERS

Q. I hope to use barcode wands/magnetic stripe readers to check students in and out of our Lang. Lab, beginning next semester. Student ID cards have both barcodes & mag strips already. I'll have to barcode label all of our circulating materials, and will probably keep our collections catalogue and student FL enrollment records (from the registrar) on FileMaker Pro databases.

What I now need input on is colleagues' experiences and opinions on barcode and magnetic stripe reader hardware/software combinations. Some have already told me that metal wands are far better than plastic ones. Some of you may wish to comment also on whether your institution's FL

faculty finds reports of student Lab use (including "take-home copy service") helpful in their reflections on student progress in their FL courses. —Steven M. Smolnik, at SMSMO@CONNCOLL.BITNET at Connecticut College.

R. We began using the UniScan barcode reader this semester and are very pleased with its performance. (The wand is metal). We don't use magnetic stripe readers. UniScan is a product of TPS Electronics, 4047 Transport St. Palo Alto, CA 94303 - (800)526-5920 (415)856-6833. We had been researching for a while and bought it at MacWorld Expo for $395.00.

We use it primarily to keep circulation records, and we custom designed an application to organize the information we want.

For the most part, our faculty are not interested in attendance records - in fact one department specifically asked that we save resources by not sending reports. For the few faculty who are interested, we are able to generate reports by language, course and section instructor.

Our holdings are quite large - one course might require students to use as many as 50 tapes during a semester. And if such a course regularly experiences heavy enrollments, it means that we need mega multiple copies of each tape. We also had to consider that some courses change their lab materials every semester. Because of all of this, I was very hesitant to barcode every individual cassette - only to have to change them every semester. We're experimenting with a system in which we assign a barcode to every master cassette and print out a hard copy master list of barcodes and titles. We've arranged these lists by language - medium - title - chapter, and put them in protective plastic sleeves in a large 3 ring binder. As each cassette is borrowed, we "read" the information from the master list rather than

from the cassette itself. It was a little cumbersome the first week, but locating the correct title has now become almost automatic.

(Other consideration are whether to put the barcode label on the cassette, the cassette box, or both - we experience occasional migration of cassettes into wrong boxes) (The volume of our out-of-Lab circulation as well as our storage system require that all cassettes be stored in labeled boxes).

Now this could all be avoided by incorporating a barcode in a computer generated label - something which I have also avoided for economy's sake considering the rapidity with which we erase and re-record our cassettes.

I'm sure we have not found the perfect system and I'd welcome comments - about the barcode system as well as the economy of computer printed labels in a situation in which cassettes are regularly recycled.

Frank Ryan, Language Resource Center, Brown University, listen@brownvm.brown.edu

R. We barcode every item that gets circulated (but not the cases, since the tape is what we're tracking).

We purchased preprinted barcode labels since the quality is better (it has a sort of plastic coating) and the times it takes to print them yourself also costs money.

We don't make copies for every lesson for every student (for example, 300 copies of Spanish lesson 2). Instead, we make a reasonable "core" number of tapes, identified as Spanish lesson 2, for example. (about 60, for example). Then we make additional copies of Spanish lesson 2 on what we call "Blank Audio Cassettes" that are labeled only "BACxxxx". When students return

these tapes, they get thrown into the recycling bin, and the next week they may become German lesson 16. Lots of re-duping, but a lot less cost in terms of space, cassettes, etc. We use Pentagon copiers to make 19 copies at a time, both sides, and the copier does the erasing.

Thus our circulation system keeps track of about 60 SP1.001.001 (the call number for Spanish lesson 1, for example), and about several thousand BAC tapes. It has worked extremely well for us.

Hope this info helps...

Read Gilgen, University of Wisconsin

R. Barcode use is indeed the way to go, but that's the easy part. The software used to track things is more important (and perhaps difficult). John Huy demoed the Winnebago Circulation software at our last MWALL meeting and it looks like it has a great deal of potential.

As for providing stats to faculty members, I'd be careful. You don't want to be the means for reporting on student attendance, especially on individual student attendance. This violates all sorts of privacy issues. (Have you ever seen a library that allows you, or anyone else, to know who has checked out what materials?) General stats are fine, but again we don't feel we should be in the business of monitoring lab use for the sake of the Spanish department (for example). I'd suggest you get some ideas, and _then_ meet with the F.L. faculty to formulate some policy. The software you choose may dictate some limits as well.

Read Gilgen, University of Wisconsin

R. I have had excellent success in the past using TPS Electronics bar code readers from TPS Electronics 4047 Transport St., Palo Alto, CA 94303 (800) 526-5920 FAX

Lab Notes

(415)856-6833.

They are wonderful to work with and will custom build you a bar code and/or mag stripe reader for your environment. — David Herren, Middlebury College

R. I have had the same experience with them. They will make sure that what you get will work. They won't sell you anything, unless THEY are sure things will be right.

What you need to watch out for is the Val-Dine System - they use a location of the magnetic strip on the ID's that cannot be read by standard barcode readers. That's why TPS, for example, wants to have a blank ID from your campus to test it thoroughly. Barcodes on the Val-Dine System are usually no problem. I have heard from others that Val-Dine is also using standard locations these days....

My suggestion to everybody is to get in touch with Boston University (Bruce Parkhurst) who has developed a fully professional Fourth Dimension based system that should take care of the needs of even the largest institutions.

We are using a slot reader so that students can simply pull their card through and see their record on the computer screen. If the machine has problems reading the card, it will alert us. This eliminates the need for a person up front (we have an open library system). —Otmar Foelsche, Dartmouth.

MULTISTANDARD VCRs

Q. Does anyone who has the Panasonic Universal VCR ("W1") know if it is possible to play out an NTSC signal from a standard U.S. VCR and record this signal as a SECAM one on the Universal VCR? This type of function would in fact be a standards conversion, good, for example, for making

video "postcards" to send to French classes overseas. Thanks in advance. -Joel Goldfield, Plymouth State College

Q. We're considering purchasing a multi-standard VHS VCR and would appreciate any advice on models and prices. Thanks in advance. —Cindy Evans, Skidmore College

R. Yes. The Panasonic AG-W1 converts the video input to whatever standard you specify on the front panel. We often convert NTSC to PAL or SECAM for faculty taking video material abroad. —Harold H. Hendricks, Brigham Young University

R. Our AG-W1 is being used extensively on campus, and we charge for converting standards. We expect the machine will pay for itself within about one and a half years. We often get requests for converting tapes from faculty who are going to conferences abroad and want to show a tape there. — George Mitrevski, Auburn University.

Q. We're considering purchasing a multi-standard VHS VCR and would appreciate any advice on models and prices. Thanks in advance. —Cindy Evans, Skidmore College

R. We have two multi-standard machines. (1) A Panasonic AG-6200E tri-standard (doesn't do French in color). This machine requires a CT2000M tri-standard monitor. Standard must be selected by the user. Cost at the time of purchase: VCR: $1670.00, Monitor: $870.00, Total: $2540.00. (2) A Panasonic AG-W1 Universal VCR (does do French in color). Can use a regular monitor. Standard automatically selected by the machine. Can do conversions by connecting it to any other machine. Cost at the time of purchase: VCR: $1990.00. —Cheryll Lamph, University of Utah, (801) 581-6677

R. A word about the difference between

multi standard and tri standard. Regardless of what sales personnel tell you, a tri standard player will not play a SECAM tape in color. A multi standard player will. We have a Philips multi standard Model VR6843 which does reproduce color SECAM very well. There are a couple of drawbacks. It is represented as not requiring a tri standard monitor. Not true for us. We can get away with an NTSC monitor with this for everything except color SECAM. Also, my understanding is that Philips is not supporting export of this model to the US. It is available on the "light grey" market. The main concern here is repair. If Philips has no authorized repair or parts centers, what will you do? Beware - this is not a converter. If you link to another tri or multi standard unit, you can copy PAL to PAL or SECAM to SECAM, but you cannot convert from one standard to another.

We also have a Panasonic AG 6200 Tri standard (No color SECAM). It requires a tri standard monitor, and again, is not a converter. It is supported by Panasonic in the US and repairs are available. —Frank Ryan, Brown Univ.

R. My recommendation: totally unnecessary! We recently purchased a Panasonic AG-W1, a combination VCR and standards converter for about $1800. It works perfectly. I have since found out that AIWA also puts out a digital standards converter for about HALF of that price. Prior to purchasing the Panasonic, our university had purchased numerous Hitachi VT-498EM multi-standard VCR's. They also work perfectly, but, with the acquisition of our AG-W1, we can now convert ANYTHING to ANYTHING and the Hitachi's are superfluous. —Dale V. Lally Jr, St. Lawrence University

WIRELESS HEADSETS

Q. Does anyone have experience with cordless headphone systems, either RF or infrared? We are going to be renovating the lab at Loyola soon, and will be bringing in SCOLA via satellite dish. Because we don't have a separate room for SCOLA viewing, I'd like to set up a viewing area in the lab using headphones—the cordless variety. Can you make any suggestions, recommendations? I'd really appreciate hearing from you. -David Pankratz, Loyola University (Chicago).

R. Here at the University of Victoria Computer Assisted Language Learning (C.A.L.L.) facility we've been using the Sennheiser Infrared system for about six months. So far we've been very happy with it and look forward to using more of its' potential in the coming years.

Costs start at about $285.00 (Can) for a very basic, small room system up to over $6,000.00 (Can). Here in Victoria they are in used in churches, synagogues, and live theatres.

Send me e-mail if you have specific questions. I have a lot of literature on a few different setups as well as the cost breakdowns for our specific system. Good luck. —Sue Mackey, (smack@sol.uvic.ca)

VIDEOTAPE REWINDERS

Q. Can anyone recommend a brand of videotape rewinder that works??? Thanks!

R. A friend that runs a video shop recommends a brand called Kinyo. His gets a great deal of use and he's very happy with it. Unfortunately the only information he had about getting them is through a chain of video wholesalers called Video One. Mike says they are a chain across Canada but that's all he could say.

Hope that helps, Sue Mackey, (smack@sol.uvic.ca)

R. I have one of those (Kinyo) from K-Mart and it is working fine. — Otmar Foelsche

R. Could we have more specifics on "great deal of use?" We've tried a couple of different ones, with relatively poor luck on both. One started eating tapes, and the other had a transformer die. We circulated (i.e. checked out in house) over 7600 videotapes this past semester alone. We are quite interested in finding a rewinder (cleaner) that can stand up to that kind of abuse. The K-Mart brands just won't cut it. Thanks... —Read Gilgen, Wisconsin.

LCD PANELS

Q. Would any one of you on the list have some experience with LCD PANELS ?

- 480U Universal Looking Glass (cables included) CDN $2150.00

- P.C. Viewer 1600LC (16 colours) CDN $3890.00

- Sharp QA-1000 (64 colours) CDN $3850.00

I am only interested in colour panels, and I would appreciate if you have suggestions and comments on these models or others. —Annick Deakin, University of Western Ontario, deakin@uwovax.bitnet, (519) 661 2104

R. In my opinion, the best option on the market today for overhead computer display is the ViewFrame Spectra from nView Corporation. It is not an LCD panel, but rather uses thin film transistor active matrix technology to reproduce the image. According to nView's literature, it produces "true, full spectrum color images, with more than five times the contrast and more than five times the speed of passive matrix panels." I can attest to its superiority over other panels. The colors are much truer, and above all, in graphic environments such as Windows, the cursor doesn't disappear whenever you move it, as is the case with passive LCD panels. At the CALICO meeting in Monterey last week, presenters were continually asking Jim Pusack if they could borrow his nView panel, because it was so much better that the ones provided by the equipment rental company. It costs a little more than the others, about $5000, I believe, but it is worth the difference. If you're swimming in money, look into the nView MediaPro, which displays not only computer input, but also composite and S-video input in NTSC or PAL. It is priced at about $10,000, I believe, but it can serve as a quite adequate substitute for the $10,000+ three-gun front projectors, and has the added advantage of being completely portable. For more information, contact nView Corporation at 11835 Canon Blvd., Newport News VA 23606 (just happens to be in our area), 804-873-1354. —Gary Smith, College of William and Mary, 804-221-3660, GASMIT@WMVM1