Meeting of the EEPG Network for Production of Electronic Materials in Ljubljana 25-26 March 2010

Participants:

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Minutes of the meeting

25 March:
Morning session:

Klemen Fedran, (Rokus-Klett): Preparing a next generation of textbooks
Klemen talked about interactive whiteboards and said that such applications will normally look like the textbooks to make the transition for teachers easier. Rokuks intends to convert all their textbooks to IWB (Interactive White Boards). The tool they intend to use will be compatible with the SCORM and Moodle standards.
In the future tablets will be available for all pupils. In general the direction seems to be that learning material should be available whenever and wherever the pupil wants to learn. We will be selling content, not books. In Rokuks’ case the IWB applications will be produced out of house. The business plan will be to sell rent (the right to use the applications) one year to the schools. The price will be around 100 euro per year (see the presentation).

Jelka Razpotnik, (Rokus-Klett): Didactic elements of interactive materials
Digital materials for history must take into account: practical everyday examples, real-world experience, hands-on activities, problem solving approach, use of different sources and media. In addition Jelka showed an
Gregor Inkret, (Rokus Klett): Designing the interactive materials
Gregor first discussed topics like typography, type design including the special attention to be paid to typography for the screen. Other relevant and important topics were page layout and interface design with three basic advantages over the traditional textbook: animation, video clips and hyperlinks. Another topic is the icons; Gregor also described in detail the icon design process. Adapting textbooks to digital applications does not mean just to transfer the books but to change the content in accordance with the new interface.
Gregor predicted that there will be new types of cooperation with editors, designers, animators and web developers in educational publishing (see the presentation).

Katarina Blomqvist and Anne-Li Stjernholm (Natur & Kultur): The development of interactive educational materials; Case study Sweden
The starting point was a tour with a Smartboard retailer in the autumn of 2008. In the company they set up a special department in charge of the production of digital media for both general literature and educational material in January 2009. They have now produced content for interactive whiteboards, mobile phones and for one-to-one use for a series of school subjects. They handed out a leaflet showing all the web based products from Natur & Kultur. Business model: You buy the products and pay for an access code. After activation the product is valid for a period of 6 or 12 months. Katarina described a long list of digital applications. In many areas of Sweden all classrooms in the schools are now equipped with interactive whiteboards/computers. IWB-support has been welcomed but it has been harder to sell the more advanced/future products; so now they are going more into interactive e-books for use on computers and tablets. In the future every pupil will have his/her own computer/tablet. In Sweden the distributors of interactive whiteboards are interested in buying the applications from the educational publishers and then bundle the applications with the whiteboard they sell to schools (see the presentation).

Afternoon session:

Preben Spåth (EEPG): Digital Learning Resources – what are they and
what are the perspectives of the European Commission? Preben first discussed different definitions of Learning Objects and went on to present the idea behind the Learning Resource Exchange connected to the European Schoolnet in Brussels. Furthermore he mentioned the so called sub-projects (Calibrate, Aspect and MELT), and gave links to how to search for Learning Objects among the 140,000 available at the LRE web site (http://lreforschools.eun.org). Sub-projects of interest are found at these URLs (http://aspect-project.org; http://calibrate.eun.org; and http://info.melt-project.eu/www/en/pub/melt-project/welcome.htm) Preben also mentioned a EU funded project (EdReNe) concerned with setting up repositories for Learning Objects etc. This project is open to anybody who is interested, i.e. the seminars and workshops are free. On their web site are links to coming events where publishers are most welcome to attend (http://edrene.org). (click here to read more about the whole LRE portal and its goals (see the presentation)

**Mindaugas Valinevičius (Sviesa): Development of interactive educational materials;**
**Case study Lithuania**

Mindaugas showed an award-winning collection (‘Human and Nature’) of more than 1,500 learning objects for natural science, physics and chemistry. The production of this collection has been funded by the EU Structural Fond. He also showed a portal organized by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education where teachers can freely select from a long list of downloadable learning objects. These applications have been bought by the Ministry from local producers in Lithuania (see the presentation).

Workshop: How will the new technologies influence the future of educational publishing?
This topic created a vivid debate the outcomes of which was collected on the following file (see the summary)
Guided Tour in Ljubljana Old Town, including a boat trip on the river Ljubljanica

*Klemen Fedran, (Rokus Klett)*: New technologies changing book publishing. Klemen showed several funny but also highly relevant movie clips e.g. about printing in the old days and about the Kindle device and TimeInc and their future reading device (see the presentation).

*Ilze Smite (Zvaigzne ABC Publishers)*: Development of interactive educational materials: Case study Latvia. The main topics Ilze presented include Publishing of books, Digital materials for class works, and e-books. There is big variation regarding the digital electronic equipment in schools in Latvia. Furthermore many teachers do not yet feel prepared for using ICT in their teaching. Like all other publishers Zvaigzne is also trying to find a way to convince teachers and schools that they have to pay for digital learning tools (see the presentation).

Håvard Rye (*Gyldendal Undervisning*): Development of interactive educational materials: Case study Norway.
Håvard Rye, Manager of Gyldendal Digital Department, presented the approaches used as regards digital products for education in Norway. He described the working methodologies used in the production of digital material, and also mentioned the business models (see the presentation). Then Peder Skou (Gyldendal Undervisning) presented the so called smart book which is a digitized textbook based on a ‘real’ textbook, but adapted to learners with special needs like dyslexia. The book allows the learner to listen to all the texts in the printed version plus watch video clips and other digital applications. The actual production of this material will probably be based around an existing product with outsourced further development to meet Gyldendal's needs. Indian software developers Hurix are the most likely candidate.

*Jesus Fernandez (Vicens Vives): Development of interactive educational materials:*

Case study Spain.

Jesus Fernandez presented the Spanish approach which is based on a Government decision that all school at Secondary level in Spain are being digitalized, i.e. equipped with computers and interactive whiteboards but also with the necessary applications: The State has organized the production of 2,000 learning objects which can now be freely used by the schools. In addition Jesus showed how his company has adapted some textbooks from Vicens Vives to the digital world (see the presentation).
Summary discussion and closure of the meeting
All participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire on the evaluation of the meeting. Finally two important decisions were taken: a) we agreed that the coming meeting of this network should be organized in connection with the Online Educa exhibition in Berlin around 1 December 2011. Preben will contact Cornelsen Verlag to find out if the network could visit the exhibition Wednesday and Thursday and after that have a ‘traditional’ network meeting on Friday (hopefully on the premises of Cornelsen Verlag).
b) It was unanimously decided to set up a Facebook for this network, and before the ending of the meeting Peder Skou had already established such a meeting place for all participants.

On behalf of all participants I wish to thank Klemen Fedran and this colleagues for helping to organize this meeting which was according to the evaluation questionnaires very successful and fruitful.

April 2010,
Preben Späth