Production network meeting in Barcelona 2-3 June 2011

Participants:

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Minutes of the meeting:

Thursday 2 June:

Morning session

Topic I: Learning Management systems and Digital Learning, including Data flow between LMS and learning materials; Integration tools and methods; Use of standards (SCORM, AICC)

Xavier Farré (Vicens Vives) started the meeting with a presentation of the Catalan approach. They do not have a LMS themselves. It is possible to use simple communication devices like e-mail in the learning process. He presented a true story from the life of a learner. The players involved in the development are content producers, LMS providers, content sellers, and students. In Spain they have 6-7 different LMS’s used in schools, mainly based on Moodle. Xavier further pointed out that they have learned that it is cheaper in the long run to develop the communication protocols themselves without using e.g. SCORM, which is rather complex to work with. In stead they are using SOAP web services. Finally he explained the operations and role of a gateway. In a way the SCORM standards can sometimes be seen as a straight jacket putting limitations on the publisher who produces the content for the LMS. Publishers should work together to formulate their priorities for the content and the LMS. The teachers and learners really do not know what they need for the learning process. Most publishers have developed LMS themselves and sell them along with the content to the schools. Moodle LMS have been around in Spain for 4-5 years now. The training of teachers is responsibility of the government. Teachers like LMS a lot, because they allow them to make their own learning applications. The government has fixed the price for e-learning package to 30 euro per learner. (Click here to see the presentation)

The following discussion debated the points presented by Xavier but also other relevant points. The main topics include: Alexander underlined that the publishers have to be proactive and not just wait for LMS to create the market. In Norway they have two LMS covering the whole market. Gyldendal produces content that works without the LMS at all. By making stand-alone products the
teachers/learners can go directly to the publisher’s own web site and they thus get direct contact with their users.

No country outside Spain has decided to use LMS as the basis for this market. (Kina) In Bulgaria the government has set up a web site with free learning materials but nobody of the teachers go there. In addition Microsoft has set up teachers.bg but again without any success. In Estonia and Latvia the market for e-learning is slowly beginning to grow now, and some rumours talk about LMS being introduced, but only rumours.

**Topic II: Textbook and digital learning (How to prepare learning content for digital learning platforms, from one or more of the following perspectives (tools, methods, experience from practice, business models).**

Raúl Ferrer presented the choices to be made when deciding on the virtual learning environment, e.g. which hardware platform, which bandwidth. Formats include flip-book or rich content pdf. Flipbooks are unpopular with teachers. As for the web books they prefer Moodle, used now by 40 million people in the world. Raúl showed a Moodle 2.0 web book, consisting of initial tests, main contents, pictures and animations, internet links, downloadable pdfs, quizzes and other activities at different levels and final tests. Many applications from Vicens Vives are also designed to work on interactive whiteboards. Visit aula.vicensvivesdigital.com/e/demo/ ([Click here to see the presentation](https://aula.vicensvivesdigital.com/e/demo/))

Mirta pointed out that it is important to allow social aspects in digital books so the learners are able to comment on their reading together with their pals. From the web site visits we can see that at least 20% of the web materials offers are being used outside school. The children love the many interactive activities and tasks that are self correcting.

Kina and Milena presented the situation in BG. They presented their project Prosveta Libri Magici which is now slowly starting up. The curriculum creates a lot of limitations to the development of digital learning materials. In addition, the status as well as the salary of teachers is low in BG, and teachers are mostly from the older generations. The technological level of BG schools is: every school has an internet connection, although often too slow. Schools may have a
couple of whiteboards at their disposal. First stage of the project was to prepare the digitalisation of the existing textbooks. The applications should be adaptable both to interactive and classic whiteboards. The outcomes included both online and offline versions; free e-learning content for teachers. The IT literacy of the teachers is relatively low in BG. The main challenges include a) digitalisation of books for e-versions; b) fonts because the books used Cyrillic fonts; c) pictures were problematic because of very low quality in the original printed books; d) the overall outline of the printed books is not suitable for digital versions; e) making the textbooks materials as such into interactive applications adding sounds and animations. The demo versions were made in XHTML5, but this required a lot of work to organise the transition to interactivity and multimodality. Additional learning resources required an active involvement of the authors of the printed textbooks. In addition it is necessary to develop methodological instructions on how to use all these resources – including instructions directed at the teachers who feel unsecure and nervous in front of these new resources. The types of resources offered are: a) closed types of resources; b) presentations that are open to be edited and enhanced by the teachers themselves; c) interactive modules. These applications are given for free to those teachers which are using the corresponding printed books. This project concerns all textbooks for 5th and 6th grade, and some textbooks for 1st and 3rd grade, in total 45 textbooks. In the first phase all the digitised materials are all off-line (CDs or DVDs); in the second phase the materials will be online. (Click here to see the presentation)

**Afternoon session**

Topic III: **Technological Trends** (Present and future standards in Digital Learning Resources, standards (LOM, CC, SCORM, Ipad))

A short survey in the room showed: Finland loves SCORM and LOM, also Norway uses SCORM; there are no standards in EE and no standards in SI.

Teuvo and Tero gave a presentation of the general situation of the Educational market in Finland. They first presented the structure of the Otava Company, including the new market situation with Sanoma as the biggest player (more than 50% market share) and Otava with 35% market share. Otava offer textbook based digital applications to those schools that use their own books at
120 euro per year per class. In general there is a pressure for a digital future, a new curriculum is coming from 2015/16, there is a clear pressure for the use of digital materials in learning processes, All upper secondary school should be digital in 2015, says the National Board of Education. The Ministry will spend more than 10M euro to develop the necessary infrastructure in upper secondary. Devices in schools: All schools have at least an interactive whiteboard, one computer/student will not happen in the next few years for grades 1-9; teacher’s digital skills are not as good as needed. The government will set aside 50 M euro for technology and innovation. Microsoft and Apple are trying to enter this coming market together with publishers (Click here to see the presentation).

The second presentation of the Finnish team was called: Otava Educational goes digital -current and future perspectives. The three main goals for development of digital materials include: a) motivation in the learners; b) learning results (cooperation with universities); c) elucidation (which is the added value of digital materials compared to the book!). 10 of the 15 biggest cities in Finland have chosen an LMS; the rests are coming to choose next year. Every school has wide bandwidth, there are interactive whiteboards in 65% of the schools, 98% of the pupils have computers at home, 100% have access to computer at the schools. Mobile learning has not yet made its breakthrough in Finland. Regarding technology: Flash based materials use SCORM 1.3, LOM and artificial intelligence. Otava policy: every new book series launched in 2011 includes digital materials in Math, English, ABC-book, History, Science, i.e. the same platform is used in every subject. Otava have two different categories of products: a) integrated materials and b) independent materials. (Click here to see the presentation). Finally Tero showed examples of the digital learning materials form Otava (Click here to see the presentation).

Visit to the temple of Sagrada Familia

Theatre: Carmen by “La cuadra de Sevilla” by Salvador Távora (with flamenco singing and dancing)
Friday 3 June:

Presentation of New Digital Platforms for Teaching (with guests from schools and other publishing houses in Spain)

Presentation of *Tiching* (organised by Vicens Vives), a platform for teachers, based on the need for indexing and easier accessibility in a world wide flood of learning applications. Educational applications are still not indexed, and Google is not adapted to the world of Education. The main reason for setting up the Tiching platform is a need for social networking among teachers in addition to Face book and Twitter. The aims are to organise and provide access to all digital educational contents on the internet. So far 26,000 contents have been indexed and evaluated by teachers.

Presentation of *Deutschstunde online* by Karl Hofbauer Veritas Publishing (Austria): The book series “Deutschstunde” is by now being used by 80% of learners of German in Austria (and abroad). The Internet platform [www.deutschstunde.at](http://www.deutschstunde.at) is absolutely free and offers many interactive exercises for various levels of the German language proficiency. Visitors from 68 countries have been using it so far. Karl Hofbauer tried out the making of an online story with the help of those persons in the audience who were online with their laptops ([Click here to see the presentation](#)).

Presentation of *Prosveta Libri Magici* by Kina Andreeva and Milena Konstantinova from Prosveta Publishing (Bulgaria). The presentation gave insight into the online application of a wide range of digital learning resources including sound, animations and videos for a variety of learners.

Presentation of *Salaby* by Fride Bergem, Gyldendal Norway. This product has digital and funny motivating contents for learners from grade 1 to 4 for all subjects taught in Norwegian schools for this target group. You will find all the free material in English at the front page of [www.salaby.no](http://www.salaby.no). In order to get into the site please use the following password: Username: konsulent, Password: salaby

Presentation of *Smartbook* by Alexander Henriksen, Gyldendal Norway. This is a kind of digital book with zooming, annotation facilities, bookmarks, rich navigation facilities and different ways to imitate the feel and look of the Ipad, it
is now being used in secondary schools in Norway. The presentation was not made with PowerPoint, but if you wish to get an idea of the application, please go to www.smartbok.no, and click on one of the 4 books that are there now (the plus button will lead you to the full versions). Chapter 1 in each book is fully open, and you can ask for a user name and password to access the rest of the books for free (a box will appear where you send your request).

Presentation of Rokus-Klett applications by Klemen Fedran (Slovenia) showed that all digital applications from the publishing house are based on Flash using the Adobe air technology. In addition all digital books are also usable on Interactive Whiteboards.

On behalf of the participants I wish to thank our hosts from Vicens Vives for having organized this excellent meeting for the Production network.

June 2011

Preben Späth