Participants:

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Minutes of the meeting

Thursday 31 May

Topic 1: Development and marketing of e-learning materials

Lolita Paragyte told about the tenders in the market for financing from the EU; in addition there are specific tenders for the supporting the production of digital content, with such requirements as curriculum coverage, universal platform and textbook independence.
Sviesa has started a big new project called Aurora with the production of 20 lessons for whiteboard based on textbook material, to be used in 20 schools with 500 students. Lolita further showed examples of what these lessons are going to look like. There followed a longer discussion on the advantages and disadvantages with the different brands of interactive whiteboards in the market ([click here to see the presentation](#)).

Sintija Buhanovska combined the two topics of the day into one presentation. So far Zvaigzne has produced 3 DVDs with lessons for Science in primary school and Physics for Form 10 (secondary school). Why not online? Because the teachers and the students want something physical to have in their hands. She addressed the divide between digital immigrants and digital natives, most teachers are actually digital immigrants, while only teachers younger than 25 are mostly digital natives. The targets of Zvaigzne
are: to localize materials for science, to educate teachers, to inform parents and take part in exhibitions.

Competition aspects in this area have been and are still interactive materials developed using EU funding, and another problem has been the poor infrastructure with insufficient funding for schools to buy digital materials, in addition teacher training in the area is important and needed. All the digital materials are textbook independent (click here to see the presentation).

Matic Karlovsek explained a new project called Lilibi with the two characters Lili & Bine. He presented the interactive land of Lilibi, which offers exercises and content for all subjects in primary school (grades 1-3). Rokus-Klett has also produced online accessible interactive e-textbooks as well as workbooks with Lili & Bine. Marketing activities included: 1) involving head teachers in 1/3 of Slovenian schools (who are decision makers regarding technical equipment in the schools); 2) classic seminars with up 150 teachers attending; 3) e-seminars; 4) workshops on how to use e-textbooks; 5) e-presentations of the Land of Lilibi; 5) e-newsletters; 6) special offer for whiteboards (selling whiteboards with a projector included to schools who buy the Lilibi package); 7) gifts like bags, head puppets etc.; 8) catalogues; 9) invitations and envelopes with Lilibi logos on them; 10) a huge promotional campaign in September (when school starts) (click here to see the presentation).

Zoran Simic explained the background and history of Profil International. The current situation in Croatia is that printed textbooks are supplemented with CD, CD-ROM, DVD etc. Electronic textbooks can be highly interactive. He showed examples of e-learning products like interactive periodic table (Chemistry) and interactive atlases for history and geography. As regards e-learning materials the market (i.e. the teachers of Croatia) is rather conservative (click here to see the presentation).
Topic 2: 
*Marketing of interactive materials and how to approach the teachers*

Lolita Paragyte explained how Sviesa is now planning to do relationship marketing (like a real business to business relation when selling the (benefits of) e-learning materials to the teachers/schools. They have direct communication through a whole army of sales reps. In addition the publishing house is organizing local demonstrations. Among the forms of advertising are local newspapers, newsletters (sent directly to the teachers), attending book fairs, organizing demo e-lessons, exhibitions and conferences and of course the web site.

Matic Karlovsek gave a presentation of his view on a good example of marketing of interactive materials including how to approach the teachers who are the important persons to communicate with when selling educational materials ([click here to see the presentation](#)).

Last item this was a presentation by Maindaugas Valinevicius who gave the background for a big number of digital learning materials they had developed with financial support form the state. These applications included materials for geography, history, maths, reading and language learning.
Friday 1 June

Topic 3: *Ideas for and experience in using the internet for marketing*

Kristine Kokina showed the strategies for using the internet for marketing in Latvia. First of all they have the homepage of the publishing house with a new and modern look. It is easy to navigate in order to find information on the books and other materials. There is a special section for teachers and for i-Zvaigzne
(e-learning materials); in addition there are possibilities participate in quizzes and competitions. Furthermore they have the web site www.egramatnica.lv with a special place to find and buy books. In the special section for schools there are benefits for ordering schoolbooks online. They also have launched an online contest called “Star class”, with more than 300 school classes participating from all over Latvia. Zvaigzne also has a number of email lists (including teachers, schools, school librarians and media), and their newsletter is distributed to more than 10,000 receivers every two weeks. In addition they organize several social networks via Facebook, Twitter and Youtube (click here to see the presentation).

Matic Karlovsek gave a presentation of how Rokus-Klett is using the internet for marketing their products, e.g. several web sites and banners, how to use Face book as a medium for marketing, asking teachers what they think about the company’s materials and why (offering small gifts in return), special web sites for primary and secondary school teachers (click here to see the presentation).

Lolita Paragyte walked through some of the web sites of her company. For example here the pedagogical rationale behind the lessons and products is presented in detail to the teachers visiting the sites.

Zoran Simic presented the approach used in Profil International: regarding general fiction they use YouTube and Face book heavily to present clips showing advertising for general fiction books, and this seems to be a strong instrument for raising the sales. As for school books some of them are presented interactively allowing the visitor to browse through the whole of the books to get an in depth impression of the pedagogy used in the material. In addition he showed the interactive web shop, where users can order and buy all the books published by Profil. Finally he walked through the
Profil Face book which has an impressive number of friends; and he presented the new book festival organized last month.

Topic 4:

*Examples of a successful and a not so successful marketing campaign*

Kristine Kokina first talked about a successful story from Zvaigzne concerning ‘Varied World’ for 6 years old children. The background was that the Ministry had a big amount of money to be spent specifically on pre-school education. There was obviously a heavy competition among the publishers – and Zvaigzne was among the winners! The material had to be produced within 5 to 6 months only. Kristine showed the collection of textbooks in the series, including workbooks for Latvian language, Maths, Natural sciences, Games teacher’s Guide plus interactive components. They organized a long series of direct meetings with pre-school teachers. All the material was shown to all the attending teachers (among them only one male teacher!). Important is that the authors themselves were participating in the travelling team. There were special discount prices for those who ordered all the components during the campaign meetings, and a canvas bag was given to these buyers. Zvaigzne also produced a new catalogue for kindergarten and primary schools, and a colourful brochure was made with summaries of each component. There were a lot of advertisements in national newspapers. All in all this was an extremely successful campaign, and they are planning professional courses for kindergarten teachers in the future; and meetings will also be organized in the future on national level. In the end Zvaigzne has now 50% of the kindergarten market ([click here to see the presentation](#)).
Matic Karlovsek presented a successful and an unsuccessful campaign. First he showed the promotional campaign for Lilibi. Rokuš-Klett made a partnership with Telemach (the biggest TV provider in Slovenia) covering 160,000 households in the country. A series of TV commercials were produced and shown all over the country. Due to the partnership the Telemach company was highly motivated to send the ads in the TV. In addition ads were shown on 100 billboards countrywide. A number of promotional brochures were distributed countrywide at the end of August. Next will come ads in magazines like National Geographic Junior. Thousands of emails have been sent to all members of the email databases of the two partners. A big press conference was also organized. It certainly was a successful campaign looking at the number of persons registering for the application, on the other hand the actual sales were significantly lower (including almost 2,000 classroom licenses) (click here to see the presentation).

The last item was the traditional evaluation session where all participants filled in the evaluation forms. On the second page of these forms everybody had the opportunity to suggest topics for coming meeting of this network, and as in previous years these suggestions will of course be taken into consideration when planning future network meetings.

On behalf of the participants I would like to thank the hosts for organizing the meeting, not at least for the guided tour walk through the still living myths and fairy tales of Vilnius.

June 2012

Preben Späth