EEPG Production of Electronic Materials Network meeting in Helsinki
13-14 September 2012:

Participants:

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Minutes of the meeting

Thursday September 13th

Morning session

Teuvo Sankila presented the general info about Educational Publishing in Europe (data from EEPG network attendees who had sent in information about the national situation on digital learning in their countries), including the relevant figures concerning education and computers in all the countries attending the meetings represented at the meeting. An important and growing issue is the use of learning management systems. The learning objects from the EU are hardly seen as competition, but in principle this actually is an example of the European Commission (via the European Schoolnet platform) entering the market with learning programmes free of charge (please click to see the presentation)
“Learning fingerprint – what is happening behind the scenes”
Harri Ketamo (CTO, eedu; Adjunct Professor, Tampere University of Technology) gave a presentation about a project that is producing self-organising content and learning analytics. In this approach the goal is to produce complex adaptive systems to teach concepts rather than tasks and solutions. Important is that the exercises are not too easy and not too demanding for the learners. If the learner does not know something he/she does not know why he/she does not know it – this is a challenge for the adaptive system. Harri Ketamo showed an example of a mathematics navigator where the learner is solving multiple choice tasks which are all linked to several maths areas, and the learner is shown which areas are relevant for each exercise. All the time the learner can inspect how he/she is doing in all the small maths areas. In this way the learning paths for each learner are clear and understandable. He also showed ‘eedu elements’ which is a game for learning maths for second grade. Interestingly it is possible to use the insight into the different competences of the learners in order to set up groups whose members have complementary skills.

Natur & Kultur: Digital material for iPads
Malin Fogelström, manager for digital media, presented the materials for iPad for Maths, Swedish, Science and Natural Science for year 1 and soon also years 2 and 3. The company began by finding authors to develop new materials/activities: the world of the ‘qnodds’ offers many different tasks for the learners. Malin also explained in detail the development process behind the project.

Afternoon session

Otava: TOP 7: digital material for 7th grade pupils (English language)
Mariann Kaukinen began her presentation by highlighting such important features of language learning as differentiation, emphasis on oral exercises, and stated that learning to learn is closely linked to practice and self-evaluation. The digital materials offers among other features a karaoke function, interactive grammar,
keys to all exercises, tools for learners with special needs as well as tools for teachers to customize the tests to the learner group. Otava insist on making digital learning a social event (games for cultural awareness, also possibility for learners to share material (not only via Facebook). In addition learners are able to build new exercises by themselves. The digital material is Flash based. The web address for watching the test is http://www3.otava.fi/demo/top7 (please click to see the presentation)

Lehrmittelverlag Zürich: How to create customer value for teaching materials? We connect print and digital products.

Julia Reichmann and Caroline Mendelin shared the presentation on digital products and teaching materials. First they presented some digital projects for Maths for grade 1 to 6. Secondly they pointed to the different digital products available online e.g. vocabulary learning, and finally they showed an online platform for teachers to share teaching materials of their own. (please click to see the presentation) For further information please follow the links below:

http://www.lehrmittelverlag-zuerich.ch/LehrmittelSites/MathematikPrimarstufe/Mathematik1/Fertigkeitenverwerben/tabid/702/language/de-CH/Default.aspx

http://www.lehrmittelverlag-zuerich.ch/LehrmittelSites/MathematikPrimarstufe/Mathematik2/Fertigkeitenverwerben/tabid/786/language/de-CH/Default.aspx


http://www.lehrmittelclub.ch/
Systime: The internet book - 100 % web based educational material - leaving the paper textbook by 2015
Claes Sønderriis explained that the company plans to leave printed books totally by the end of 2015. This year (2012) 35% of the turnover comes from digital products. He showed examples of the 150 i-books (interactive books) they have produced already, e.g. music, psychology and maths. This year they have sold 250,000 individual licenses.

Systime: Database publishing - from database to internet book/eBook/paper textbook
Merete Troelsen, who is the production manager at Systime, presented the concept of database publishing, also called open source CMS, where all the i-books are produced. In this database structure the content and the presentation are separated. Everything in the database is coded in XML and using CSS-stylesheets. So all the output from the database is in XHTML format.

Zvaigzne: Samples of electronic materials they have developed/are going to develop
Sintija Buhanovska first presented the Zvaigzne publishing house. Next she pointed out those interactive materials for ‘digital natives’ (the young learners) are a very important concept. The Ministry of Education has since 2004 been supporting the development of digital products which are all free because of EU funding. The schools who participated in this exercise received interactive whiteboards. Usually in the schools there is one classroom with computer equipment. The schools do not have enough money to buy computers for all pupils. There are still teachers who are not able to install a DVD on a computer (!). The average age of teachers in Latvia is higher than 45 years. E-books have been produced by Zvaigzne since 2010. For primary and secondary level they have published books for Latvian language and History accompanied by a DVD with lots of additional materials. For the production of digital products Zvaigzne has
been cooperating with the Polish company Young Digital Planet. They localize and adapt a series of digital products for different grades. She gave a detailed description of the whole process of localisation. In addition they have trained teachers from 20% of the schools in Latvia, showing them how to integrate IT in education. She finally showed examples of digital products for grades 5-6 for Natural Science and Physics. material (please click to see the presentation).

Friday September 14th

Morning Session

Koolibri: Digital Publishing in Estonia
Kadri Haljamaa explained Koolibri’s digital past and future. Earlier they have made workbooks accessible for free in digital format. The Ministry of Education has demanded that all printed books should be accompanied by digital material without any precise indications as to what this means. A second approach has been to offer PowerPoint presentations of the pages from the books and integrated digitalisation of the exercises (e.g. sound clips, movable elements for matching tasks). These presentations cover subjects for grades 1-3 (Estonian, Social science and Natural Science). In addition she showed a new digital iPad version of an Estonian textbook for grade 4 with short stories and fairy tales accompanied by a lot of various exercises to support and train the reading comprehension.

Working hard with laptops and old fashioned pencils!
**Systime: Math interactivity using html5 - cross-browser, cross-device**
Claes Sønderriis presented the Math i-book (which won the silver award in the BESA competition in 2011). The company has realised that the most comprehensive and flexible platform is html5 which adapts to all browsers and both Windows machines and Apple’s iPads. He presented an impressive series of tools for calculating, drawing graphs, showing statistical data and linear regression.

**Zvaigzne: Technologies/platforms for educational use**
Sintija Buhanovska presented the brand new iPhone 5 with a tube video and discussed the potential for such devices in learning environment. She debated the concepts digital immigrants (teachers) vs. digital natives (learners) who are on their mobile phones all the time. She called Plato’s Academy the first social network in the world. She presented a new survey on the skills of young persons in modern society. The three cornerstones for tomorrow are 1. information literacy skills (how to find info, what sources to trust) 2. critical and creative thinking, and 3. Cooperation (please click to see the presentation).

**Profil International: Presentation of a new web portal**
Mirta Ambruš Maršić gave an online presentation of the present version of their new web portal. In general it is important to notice that all kinds of educational materials including digital have to be approved by the Ministry of Education in Croatia. There are big obstacles for pedagogical materials to be approved, e.g. the time for sending in products for approval is impossible to foresee. She explained in detail all the ideas to be taken into consideration when setting up the company web site (with whom will we communicate? What can be offered free for download?), the solution became a combination of 1) a news like portal, 2) a teachers’ area (e.g. with teachers’ chat room) and 3) a web shop.

Afternoon session

Lidia Nestorova gave a short presentation of their new digital material accompanying the textbook for English and an Art book for grade 1. In Bulgaria such digital materials do not have to be approved, since they are seen as merely accompanying materials to the textbooks proper.

**Otava: Analytics – interesting information is available; can we use it for business?**
Fredrik Rahka who is responsible for digital products at Otava first pointed out that digital material guidelines is the headline. Are we really sure that the products bring value to the teachers and the learners? Otava started with PDF’s and PPT’s but also standalone applications (done with Fronter, Moodle etc). He gave an in depth presentation of TutkiNet (which is an example of problem based learning in a series of subjects with hundreds of questions and exercises. Next question was: What should we be doing in the future? Possibilities are e-books etc. We have to focus on the actual learning process – how can digital products support the development of the learning? Focus must also be on quality assurance, the pricing, the business models and the sales and distribution. The whole process runs through these steps of an eternal loop: build, measure and learn and start again. Finally he presented Histoira 7, an iPad app for History. In th second half of his presentation Fredrik tried to answer the questions: How do we see the future of electronically based learning? Which trends are showing up today?

Evaluation by all participants (in written form) and concluding words by Preben Späth

3rd of October 2012,

Preben Späth