MAPE Newsletter

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Spring Term 2000
Newman College with MAPE

Rhona Dick

By now Christmas, the New Year (or Millennium depending upon your point of view) and BETT will be little more than distant memories. After some eighteen months of the Literacy Hour we are all old hands and have more than a passing acquaintance with the Daily Maths Lesson. What of the future? Well there is the prospect of yet another revision to the National Curriculum. But these are momentous and exciting times in which we live. We have had an Industrial Revolution and now we are in the midst of a Technological Revolution. Harold Wilson, when Prime Minister in the 1960s, talked at length about it. What vision he had! I wonder if even he could have dreamt of the extent to which technology has encompassed all our lives. Look at the changes in technology in the classroom in the last two decades since computers first appeared. Programs stored on audio-cassettes that took ages to load; black and white portable TVs doubling as monitors; BBC computers with 16K of memory (or a massive 32K if you bought the BBC B). Today, for not much more, you can get a 32MB RAM, 6.4GB Hard Drive, 17 inch colour monitor, modem, CD-ROM drive etc. When I first signed up with an ISP I paid charges of about £13 a month; now many companies are providing free connection, and already there are ISPs claiming to provide access free of the cost of telephone calls too.

The content of the web grows exponentially. The danger of course is that the quality will not match the quantity, and there is always the possibility of accessing sites which, for one reason or another, leave a lot to be desired. However, access to the Internet has proved to be a great stimulus. Companies, schools, organisations and individuals are developing rich and exciting websites, many with material suitable for teachers and children. A few years ago wordprocessing a piece of writing was as exciting as it might get; now our pupils all have the opportunity and right to have their work published for a wider (and it can't get much wider than the Internet!) audience. What an incentive!

I don't suppose that any one of us can look to the future and imagine what is in store for us as teachers, or for our pupils, in the next decade or two. I believe that, whatever it is, it will be exciting and beneficial. Let's make the most of the opportunities on offer, and spread the word. MAPE, through its publications and regular events tries to do just that, but we need to hear from you, the classroom teachers who make it all happen.

Make 2000 the year you write for MAPE.

Future publications

The next MAPE Focus will be MAPE Focus on Science to be published in Autumn 2000. If you could contribute to this publication please contact:

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Talking to computers

Heather Govier
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I am writing this article without even touching my keyboard. Instead, I am wearing a headset rather like that used by a telephonist and speaking these words into a microphone. A piece of software on my computer called Via Voice is picking up everything I say and printing it as text on the screen. It almost seems like magic: Dr Doolittle could talk to the animals – I can talk to my computer!

Dictation software is not exactly new – it has been around for quite a few years – but the accuracy has increased and the price has dropped to such an extent that these programmes are now easily within the grasp of most computer users. For those of us who are self taught, four-finger typists with a lot of text to write or to copy, a system like this a fantastic aid – but is dictation software any use in primary schools?

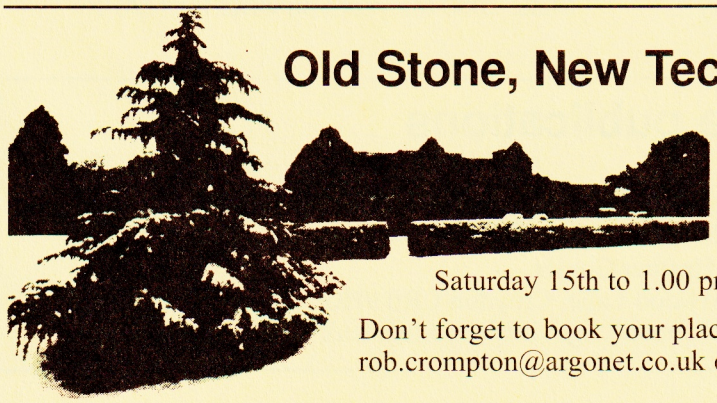
To be honest, the answer has to be 'not yet'. It isn't possible to install the program and start talking straightaway. Before you can begin, it is necessary spend some time teaching the computer to recognise your voice. This involves reading about a hundred prepared phrases into the microphone. The computer then sets up a file that is quite specific to your voice and this file is used every time you dictate. It is possible to have files for several different people set upon the same computer so, for example, my husband, my daughter and I will all be able to use the system. However, these voice files are very expensive on memory and it would not really be a viable proposition to set up a file for every child in the class. Furthermore, the system is very sensitive to noises in the background and will only work effectively in a quiet room.

The errors that it makes are quite amusing sometimes. For example, at the end of the last paragraph it gave me the word 'man' instead of the word 'room'. But the software goes on learning the more you use it. To teach it that I had said 'room' and not 'man' I highlighted the word 'man', causing a pop-up menu to appear, offering a number of options which the software thought I might have said. The word 'room' was the second option (numbered 2) and all I had to do was to speak into my microphone the words 'Pick 2' and the word 'room' was substituted for 'man' in the text. At the same time the system also refined its understanding of my voice. Next time I say 'room' it will find it easier to understand.

Although the technology is not quite up to it yet, the potential of this type of software in primary schools is enormous. A word processor is a great boon in that it allows children to edit and revise their writing but initial entry of text is often slow because of children's poor keyboard skills. If dictation software could be used for this, then pupils could be freed to concentrate on what they want to say. Dictation software also removes the need to worry about spelling; the computer handles all that for you. The software will also read back what has been written and could thus be a valuable tool for helping very young children make the links between reading and writing.

None of this will be possible until we have systems which are very tolerant of background noise and which are able to respond to anybody's voice without prior teaching. Until then, little Janet and John will just have to soldier on with the keyboard. But as a productivity tool for teachers, dictation software is well worth thinking about.

Via Voice from IBM works on high specification PC computers and costs around £130.



Old Stone, New Technology

The MAPE Easter Conference 2000 will be held in the lovely setting of Easthampstead Park near Reading from 10.30 am on Saturday 15th to 1.00 pm on Sunday 16th April 2000.

Don't forget to book your place by contacting Rob Crompton by email: rob.crompton@argonet.co.uk or telephone 0118 941 1374

Essential tools for primary IT capability

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Many schools are acquiring a range of computers from a variety of sources, for example supermarket token collections, donations from local businesses, laptop projects such as the BECTa scheme, etc. Some of these machines are arriving without educational software and are mainly used with a selection of CD-ROMs. However, where is the word processor, paint package or information handling software that would make the machine a really useful educational resource?

What Logotron has done is to assemble a set of five educational programs that can be considered useful, when used in a generic way, for teaching about 90% of the curriculum. What is relatively new, conceptually, is the notion of a company providing the user with a complete set of software that will run on any computer platform such as Acorn, Apple or PC. It is true that the RM Window Box has always been provided as a complete package and that some companies have tried to follow this example but here we have a company providing a good software base irrespective of the platform.

Each of the items of software has been reviewed and acclaimed before, and will be familiar to many Acorn users, and so little more needs to be said of the individual programs, except perhaps to give a brief description for teachers more used to the PC platform.

The five programs are:

My World is the famous 'click-to-stick' program. This has been around for some time on the RM Window Box but not as generally available for the general PC market. Teachers can use ready-made screens to 'Dress Teddy', make a weather map, construct sentences, etc. By using the 'Basis' screen they can also construct electronic worksheets for literacy, working at the letter, word, sentence or text level.

My World is *My World!* but the text entry on the PC version is a little more complex and not WYSIWYG as on the Acorn. However, the creation of simple text screens by the teacher is at about the same level of simplicity. Text screens are obviously useful when creating screens for literacy but for numeracy work I prefer to use, or have access to, objects for ordering, counting or sorting. The Acorn platform is the best when it comes to teachers who wish to put their own graphical objects into their homemade Basis screens. PC users may have to purchase a Draw program such as *Oak Draw* to do this. *Paint* cannot be used as it is not an object-oriented program.

The Acorn machine arrives pre-loaded with a *!Draw* program which allows the user to load the 'Basis' screen and add clip art images, scanned images or digital photos.

Textease is an initial dtp program which combines text, graphics and will speak the text that has been typed on screen. Textease for the PC is virtually identical to the Acorn version.

Dazzle is a really good art package similar to other art programs such as *Colour Magic* but with slightly different features.

Junior Pinpoint is a standard information-handling program. Unlike *Information Workshop, Junior Pinpoint* starts by making the user construct a questionnaire that can then be printed and used for data collection. At any point, while entering data, the user can recall the questionnaire sheet and add or delete questions, which are then updated on all filled in sheets. The appearance of the icons is identical across platforms, it is only the positioning that differs.

Superlogo is a version of Logo with lots of whistles and bells! Superlogo will probably be mostly used for turtle graphics work, which is a shame since this version of Logo has many dynamic features which can enthuse pupils once they have seen some of the possibilities. Examples are available which show web pages and interactive games that have been created by school children.

A real delight is the ease of installation. Once the CD-ROM is in the drive, clicking the install button is about as hard as it gets. The user is presented with five boxes containing the names of the programs with the invitation to click on each to install them. Once installed they can be easily loaded from a button bar or by clicking on 'Start', 'Programs', selecting the program and clicking.

The school with the mixed economy of computer hardware will now be able to run the same software on all machines with very few differences in feel and performance.

In my job I have to prepare students to teach in schools where a variety of machines and software exist. I also have to use a PC network for Internet and email access and college-provided and licensed software. To make the teaching coherent I purchased the site license version of this software so that now I can use all the machines in the room at the same time and can guarantee the experiences the students are getting, as well as ensuring that they go into school ready to use the software they might find.

The software is available from:

Logotron
124 Cambridge Science Park, Milton Road,
Cambridge CB4 4ZS
Tel: 01223-425558; Fax: 01223-425349
email: Info@logo.com
Web site: http://www.logo.com

Cost of standalone £149.00 and network/site licences for five people £299.00.

Special Offer to MAPE Members

Quote your MAPE membership number (you'll find it printed on the address label of this mailing) when you order a copy of this software and you'll receive a 10% discount.

Netd@ys Europe '99

The UK launch event of this Europe wide initiative took place in Coventry on 15 November, some three days later than the main launch in Helsinki.

The place of ICT in our everyday lives

Michael Wills, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the DfEE with special responsibility for ICT policy, highlighted the importance of ICT skills for today, but more importantly for the children just beginning their formal education – about 90% of jobs now require at least basic ICT skills. He elaborated on the threat to society of the 'Digital Divide', the gap between the technological haves and have-nots, saying that 'new technologies always trail casualties in their wake' and considerable money is being set aside to address the digital divide.

We are in the midst of a major technological revolution. The speed with which this technology is becoming a part of our lives was illustrated in the following statistics. Mr Wills said that it took 38 years for 50 million people in the USA to gain access to radio, 16 years people to purchase a PC, but by contrast it has only taken 4 years for the same number of people to have access to the Internet! And there's no sign of a slow-down.

The background to Netd@ys

Netd@ys had their beginnings in a European initiative in 1996. An annual programme now exists to explore ways in which the Internet can be used to exchange information and broaden cultural awareness across Europe. This year twenty countries are involved in a wide range of activities. Apart from the forty projects funded by the European Commission there are many more worldwide activities.

Among those mentioned was a Finnish project linking several small rural schools and *Molecool*, a Norwegian project; secondary pupils must build complex chemical molecules in the context of a game.

www.molekult.org

In describing the development of Internet learning, Maria Kokkonen, the Project Manager Netd@ys Europe 1999, said that our own NGfL is one of the most advanced systems of its kind and the envy of many countries, not just in Europe but around the world. One of Becta's contributions this year is a series of Internet Treasure Hunts. Those of you who have visited MAPE's web site recently will know of Janice Staines' Maths Treasure Trail. This gives us a clue as to the high standard we might expect from the Internet Treasure Hunts covering most curriculum areas at Key Stages 1– 3.

http://vtc.ngfl.gov.uk/resource/cits/primary/publications/thunt

Of the Netd@y projects on display one in particular attracted my attention. SCET has been involved with the University of Liege and twelve schools in eleven countries working on 'Through my Window'. This project looks at weather across Europe, and involves pre-school children in Turkey gathering songs, stories and rhymes from other European countries as well as secondary pupils in Germany using sophisticated data-logging equipment to record weather data. The information will be made available on CD early in the New Year.

For further information contact Ivan Mykytyn:

email i.mykytyn@scet.com.
URL http://www.svtc.org.uk/netdays99

Other presentations looked at different uses of the Internet. Peter Watts, Deputy Head of Potters Green Primary School in Coventry, outlined a way in which children in his school can be active, rather than just passive, users of the Internet. Briefly this is the way it works:

Children work in pairs and undertake regular Internet Treasure Hunts. Peter always sets the first question, but thereafter it's over to the children. Not only must pupils answer the question they have been set, but they must also use the same site to pose a question of their own. Thus by Wednesday the Treasure Hunt might look something like this:

Day	Names	Question	Answer
Monday		What does the word 'Armada' mean?	'Armada' is the Spanish word for fleet.
Tuesday	Josh and Sara	How many ships took part in the Spanish Armada?	There were 150 ships. It was the biggest fleet there had been.
Wednesday	Zaineb and Ayeesha	Who were the Sea Beggars?	
Thursday	Harpreet and Sanjay		
Friday	Lee and Hayley		

In this way not only are the children developing their ICT skills using the Internet in a worthwhile and meaningful way, but additionally they are reading for information. Children and adults will often skim read to find the answer to a question, missing so many rich nuggets in the process. By asking children to pose questions as well as answer them Pete is ensuring that children search for information he wants them to find, but also information that interests them.

Gradually the school is building up a useful resource of Internet Treasure Hunts.

An exhibition of other innovative Internet ideas included one of particular interest to primary teachers. *Stories from the Web* explores how children can develop their reading, imagination, ICT and literacy skills by integrating the Internet into the day to day services of libraries.

There are two key features:

1. A web site at http://hosted.ukoln.ac.uk/stories/. This is interactive; children can submit their own work, some of which is published.
2. *Regular Stories from the Web* clubs in libraries in Bristol, Birmingham and Leeds. These are structured sessions using the project web site.

It is hoped that the next phase will incorporate author sessions with an online chat room. There are also plans to develop links with schools across the world through the British Council.

For further information contact Anne Everall, or Lynda Matheson

Stories from the Web
Centre for the Child
Birmingham Central Library
Chamberlain Square
Birmingham
B3 3HQ.
tel: 0121 303 3365
fax: 0121 303 4386
email: stories@dial.pipex.com

Some useful addresses

http://www.netdays99.org
http://www.eun.org
(There is also a link from the BECTa site)

I love islands
contact: Sylvie Reforzo
email: sreforzo@cyberworkers.com
URL: http://www.cyberworkers.com/netdays

The On-Line Museum
contact: Sirikit Amann
email: sirikit.amann@oks.ac.at
URL: http://www.museumonline.at

Space Adventure
contact: Vicki Beth Lynn
email: vicki@theguardians.com
URL: http://www.theguardians.com

What was my town like three centuries ago?
contact: Rjitta Pakarinen
email: rjitta.pakarinen@hel.fi
URL: http://www.hel.fi/kaumuseo/netdays

School ICT and communities crossing the divide

PIN is scaling up an innovative and far-reaching initiative designed to support growing numbers of teachers wishing to address rapidly rising inequalities between ICT 'haves' and 'have nots' by extending access to school technology resources to parents, families and the wider community.

Schools now make up 25% of all contacts to PIN. In response to this, from October 1999, PIN will be trialling 'hands on' ICT parent and family workshop materials for use by schools. The initial focus will be the Internet, with other strands to follow, eg. ICT supporting literacy, numeracy and homework. The materials are being flexibly designed to be used and adapted by schools wishing to extend and equalise computer access within their local communities.

PIN is also commencing a nationally co-ordinated outreach and monitoring programme designed to identify and evaluate current school-based family and community ICT initiatives. The objectives are:

(a) to form an accurate national picture of current good practice,
(b) to publish a varied and extensive set of case studies; and
(c) to produce a broad range of high quality and helpful Guidance for schools.

All this will be linked to a major dissemination strategy which includes the Internet.

PIN's Director, Jacquie Disney says:

Increased Government investment in school technology and training means there is an opportunity for schools to redress the balance by extending support to children and parents without a computer at home. We must neither underestimate the support schools themselves will need in making the transition to community access providers, nor should we think that schools alone are the whole solution. But schools have a key role to play in ensuring that low-income families are not excluded from the fundamental 'life chances' increasingly determined by access to new technologies.

PIN-supported research in July 1999 bears out previous findings that access to home IT is forging a growing divide between middle class and low income households:

- 66% of parents identified education as the main benefit of the Internet, with 64% saying they would like to spend more time using it with their children; however, social and economic factors disadvantage and exclude many families from participating in these opportunities.
- The research identified school as the most likely place children will have access to the Internet. DfEE statistics in August 1999 show a dramatic increase in schools now connected to the Internet: 62% of primary schools and 93% of secondary schools.

PIN will be launching the first phase of this project in January 2000, at the BETT exhibition, 12–15 January at London Olympia.

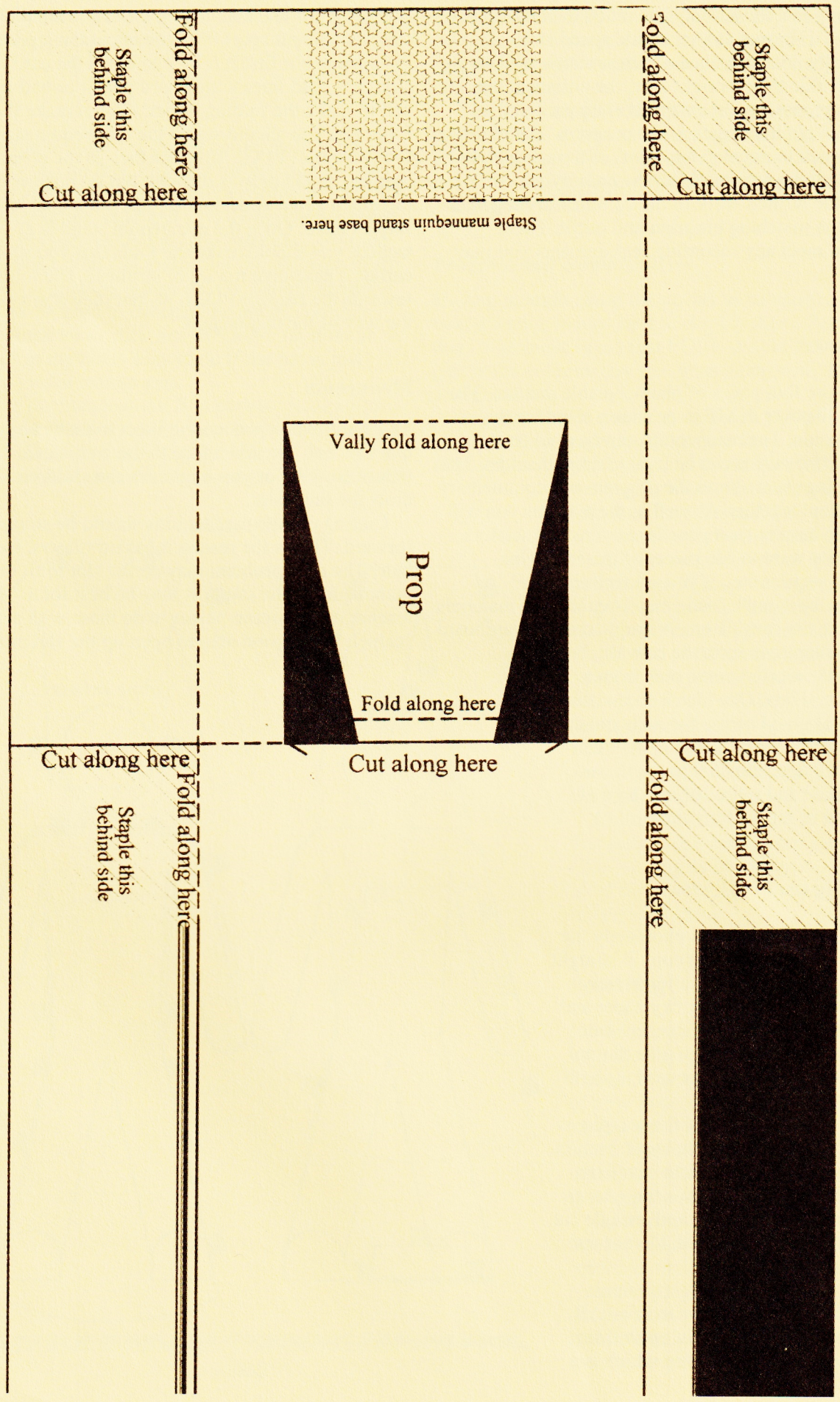
Pixie fashion show

Duncan Louttit
Swallow Systems
duncan@swallow.co.uk

The idea is that the children should design and make outfits for a mannequin. PIXIE moves the mannequin to make it 'strut its stuff' on a catwalk.

Children should be encouraged to write an appropriate commentary, describing the outfit. While PIXIE is moving, the children should read out their commentary to go with the outfit and the movements.

The activity has clear design and technology content and straightforward control content, but it is, perhaps, in speaking and writing that many


Staple this behind side
Fold along here
Cut along here
Staple mannequin stand base here.
Vally fold along here
Prop
Fold along here
Cut along here
Cut along here
Staple this behind side
Fold along here
Cut along here
Staple this behind side
Fold along here

teachers feel the activity has much to contribute. As PIXIE moves at a moderate speed and will normally do a sequence of actions such as showing its left side then its right side, the commentary needs to move on at an appropriate pace and go through similar stages as the program. The children are forced to develop the 'plot' of the commentary to match the actions. After the activity you will have the written work of the commentary together with the matching program and outfit. These should meet any recording requirements you may have.

Resources

There are four pages of photocopiable masters. The cover fits over PIXIE to provide a stand for the mannequin. The mannequins can be used on their own or the outfits can be used to dress them up. The recording sheet allows the program and commentary to be kept together. As well as these sheets you will need to have at least pencils, crayons and scissors. You may want to add pieces of material, glue, glitter, sequins etc., if you are feeling brave!

The most enthusiastic may want to have materials to make the catwalk etc. A simple sheet of cardboard cut to shape can form the catwalk. You can make a proscenium arch from a cardboard box. One idea is to use thin material glued across the arch and cut into narrow strips so that PIXIE can make an appearance through these 'curtains' and retire behind them at the end of the performance.

Making the PIXIE cover

The first thing to do is photocopy the cover sheet. If you can copy it straight onto card, this is best, alternatively you can copy it onto sticky paper and then stick that to card, or copy onto ordinary paper and then glue that to card. Cornflakes packet card is about the right thickness.

Now you can cut out the two pieces that make the cover. The cover itself is a plain rectangle with four cuts from the outside. There are two triangles to be taken out altogether and a single cut joining the two triangles. Do not cut the base into two parts!

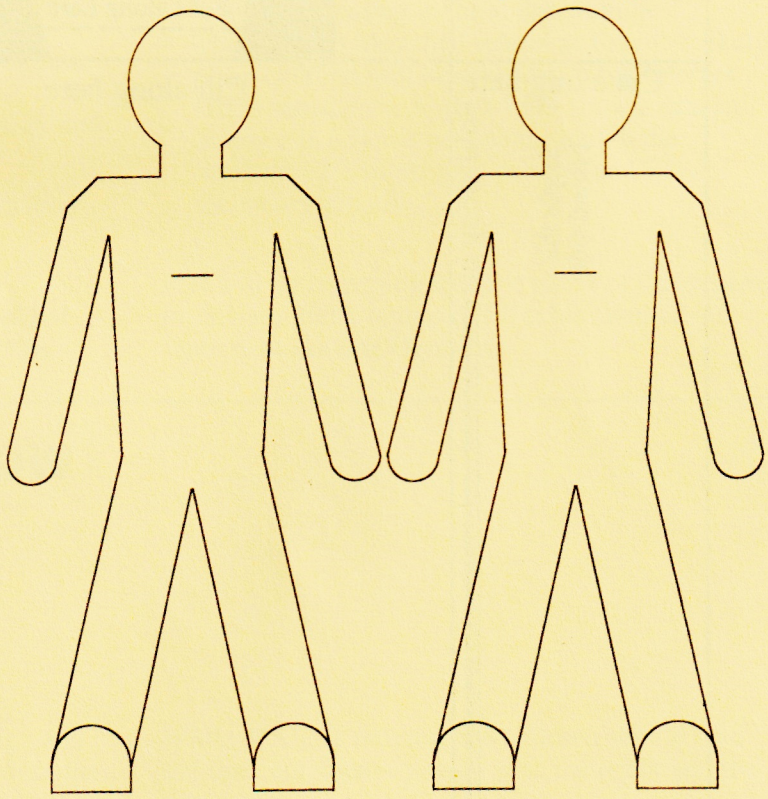
The starred area is just to show where the mannequin stand fits. All the folds are 'hill' folds, apart from the front edge of the prop which is a 'valley' fold. The mannequin stand is a simple shape to cut out apart from the tab at the top where the mannequin fits. It is best to crush the card along the fold lines with a hard pencil or ball-point pen to make the folding easier. Do not make the folds yet. You should staple the mannequin stand to the front of PIXIE first and then to the prop. Stapling to the prop is difficult but do not worry too much about appearances, just put a couple of staples there. Once the mannequin stand is attached, you should make the folds that you scored earlier. These give it a lot of stiffness. The folds are towards the back of PIXIE so that they don't get in the way of the mannequin.

Mannequin

There are two copies on the sheet to make copying quicker. You can add a face to the mannequin before copying or you might ask the children to draw the face later.

Cutting out the mannequins should be straightforward. This is the reason it has no fingers, toes or hair! The only problem may be the slot to fit the mannequin to the stand. It may be best for a teacher or classroom helper to do these with a scalpel. It is a good idea to open up the slot and

photo enlarge



Mannequins for use with PIXIE. Cut out figure and cut the slot in the chest for attaching to the cover.

XPIX025-2/1

check that it fits on the stand before starting to dress the mannequin up.

Outfits

The simplest outfit is just to colour in the mannequin. If you do this, it is best for the children to colour in the mannequin before cutting it out. This is easier for the child and also gives a better result.

Details such as buttons and belts can be added by drawing. You can make this simple outfit much jazzier by sticking things on. Glitter and appliqué can also be used to enhance the effect. Another idea would be to stick bits of feather or cloth on. A feather in the hat is easy to do if the hat is just drawn on the mannequin.

Like the mannequins, it is easiest to colour in the clothes before cutting them out. Remember you are not limited to the shapes as drawn. The necklines are another area where children can use their design talents. You can ask the children to design other types of clothes. For example a sarong should be possible and a sash should be fairly straightforward.

The funny shape in the bottom right-hand corner of the clothes sheet is a hat with a brim. An alternative approach to fitting a hat would be to have two slits in the bottom and fit it over the mannequin's head.

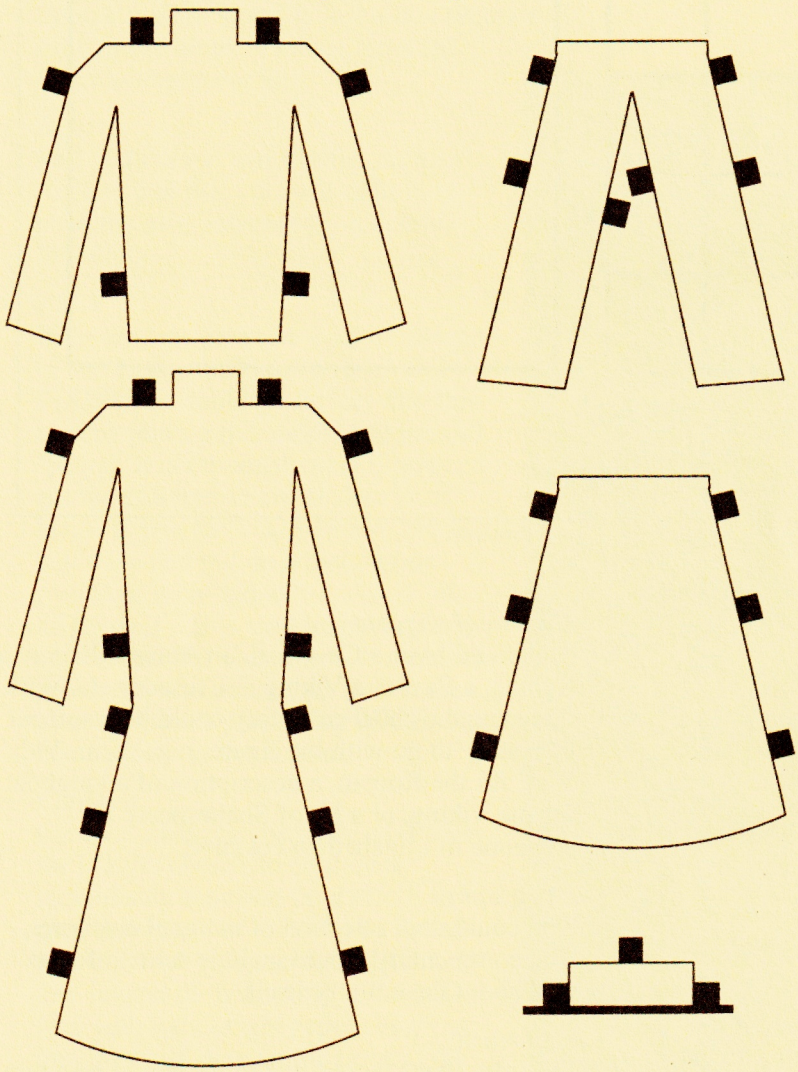
Program and commentaries

Having thought about the outfits to be shown, the next question is how best to display them. Part of this is the movements that PIXIE should make, part is the commentary that goes along with the movements.

You may find it easiest to start with PIXIE's program. Encourage the children to keep it as simple as possible. A typical program would have PIXIE moving forward, pause, turn to one side then the other and then either back away or turn round and exit. Having got an outfit and a 'dance', each child will have to write a story to go along with it. The story should include the name of the model, a description of the outfit, both in terms of the types of clothes and the colours. Brighter children can synchronise things so that when PIXIE turns to the right, they talk about, for example, the watch that the model wears on its left hand.

Children will have to test for themselves that the spoken story takes as long as the program. An ideal story will finish just as PIXIE finishes its dance.

photo enlarge



Clothes for use with the PIXIE mannequin. Cut out around outlines. Grey tabs are folded back..

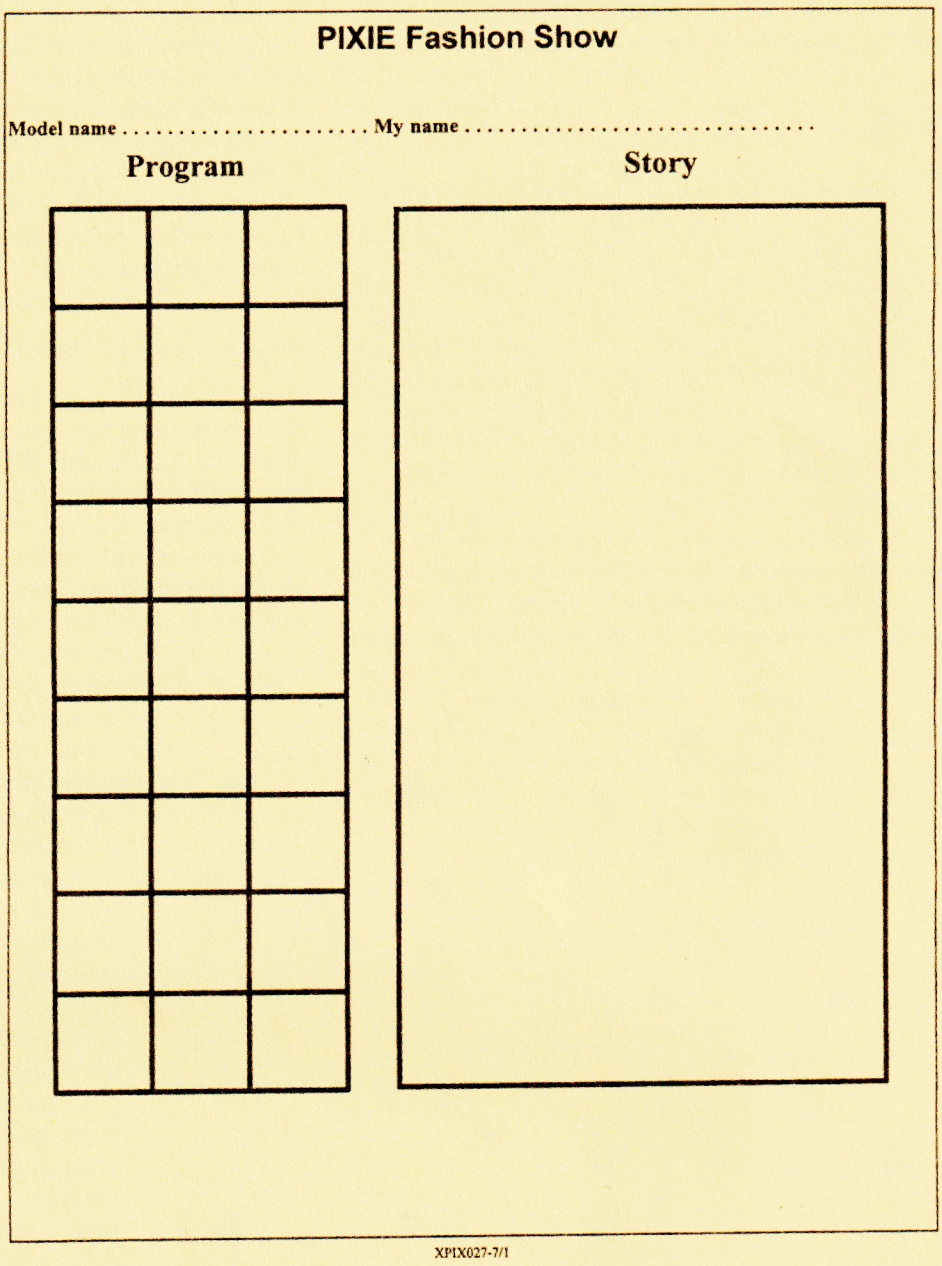
XPIX025-3/1

Recording

It is important that children record both their program and their story. The sheet provided is an example of how to do it with both the program and the story on one sheet. The full record for one child will also include the outfits and mannequins that they have made.

Apart from the benefits to the teacher of having the child's efforts recorded, the child should use the record to program PIXIE and read out the story as the program is run. It should help the child remember exactly how the performance goes.

For a full fashion show, there will be several models and different outfits. A record of the running order will be needed to allow time for outfits to be changed if one mannequin is used for several outfits. It is quite an exercise in social skills for the children to negotiate the running order between themselves to get the best overall effect.



Fancy bits

There are a few ideas to make the fashion show even more professional.

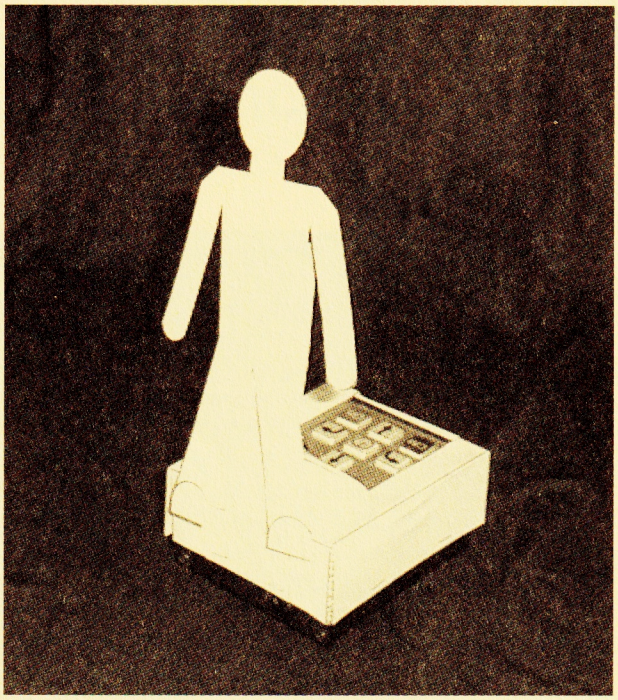
- make an archway for PIXIE to appear and disappear through.
- change the unit of turn for PIXIE. If you set it to 30° or 45° the movements, you will get a much better effect.
- get the children to read their stories into a cassette recorder for replay during the show.
- If you have more than one PIXIE, you could have two on the catwalk at once, or you could have one on the catwalk while the other has its mannequin or outfit changed.

Co-ordinating the movements of two PIXIEs is surprisingly difficult to work out.

Related ideas

You may decide that a fashion show is a bit too 'girly' for the boys in your class but you can get over this to a large extent by getting them to show football strip for their favourite club.

- *Historical pageant*
  You could have a Caveman, an Ancient Briton, a Roman, a Saxon, a Viking, a Crusader etc. With this idea, the children's story could be a snippet of history to go with the figure, e.g. 'Veni, Vidi, Vici' for the Roman, a description of a longboat for the Viking, or a bit of Shakespeare for someone in Elizabethan costume.
- *Geography*
  You could do a selection of national costumes. The commentary would include some information about the country itself.
- *Pop music*
  One idea that I would like to try would be a pop music pageant. The mannequins are dressed up as a Teddy Boy, a Hippie, a Glam Rocker, a



Punk etc. The 'story' is just a few seconds of each of the types of music recorded on a cassette recorder.

- *Ballet*
  You could have two PIXIEs doing a 'ballet'. For this you will definitely need the turn units set to something like 45°.
- *Plays*
  If these ideas generate a lot of interest in the theatre and you have several PIXIEs you could go further into this area by getting the children to present 'plays'. It is obviously best if you can get the children to create their own ideas. If you feel really brave, you could try and put on a pantomime complete with 'behind you' and 'oh no he isn't'. This may be particularly appropriate for children with mobility problems who could then put on their own Christmas play using PIXIE with mannequins as the actors.
- *Carnival*
  Carnival floats can be made as covers for PIXIE. These can be shown individually mounted on a PIXIE to give movement or they can be linked together with string so that PIXIE can tow several of them. This will work well with lightweight paper covers as they will just slide on the floor. If the covers are made too heavy, PIXIE will not be able to tow many. This could form the basis of a science experiment to see how many carnival floats PIXIE can tow. If you decide to do this, you should make the floats quite heavy and experiment yourself before the children have a go. The floats should be of a weight so that PIXIE can only tow three or four of them.



Contact

Swallow Systems
134 Cock Lane, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 7EA
tel: 01494 813471
fax: 01494 813552
http://www.swallow.co.uk

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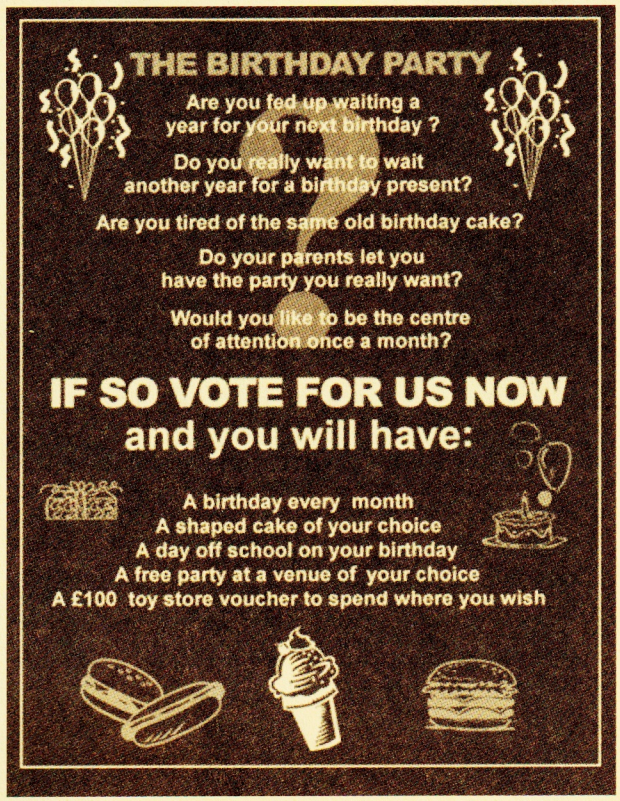
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Have you seen . . . the Tea Council's website?

It includes some excellent educational material developed by teachers. At the moment there are English, Maths and Science activities for KS2 children based on the theme of Healthy Living. Visitors are guided round the site by Char Lee and Rosie Lee, two space-suited children.

The Science section gives lots of information and statistics about human organs and their functions In addition there is an interactive game, the Organisation Game, in which children have to replace the body's internal organs correctly. A strict system of marking means that it is very difficult to achieve 100%! Accompanied by suitably 'gloopy' sound effects this game is sure to be a winner with the children.

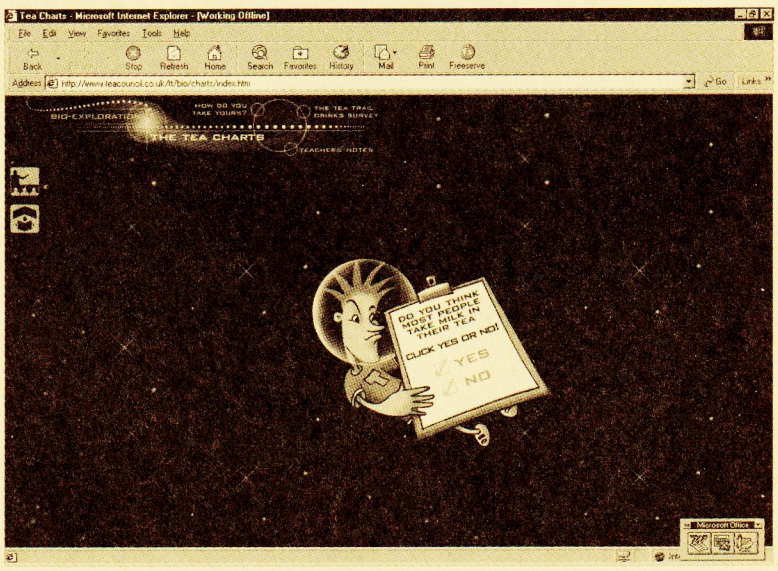
English activities include an invitation to create a poster for the Tea Party, a political organisation, or to write either a party political broadcast, or a mailshot for the same party.



Some things to think about:

- The information to go on the poster (refer to information contained within the *'Journey Into Inner Space'* activity)
- A slogan or catch phrase to use.
- The images you are going to use
- The persuasive language you are going to need
- The badge of the Tea Party
- The presentation of the poster (colours of text and background – size of text)

Soon Char and Rosie Lee will be asking you to send them your poster for a chance to WIN some great prizes. . . . Tune in when you get back to school for all the details!



Maths activities focus on data handling, and include a Carroll diagram, and surveys on when adults (and children) drink tea. Children are asked to submit their findings, and the displayed data will then be updated.

Most of the sections have activities differentiated for lower and upper KS2 pupils. There are appropriate teachers' notes, and icons indicate whether the activity is interactive, or is suitable for use as a homework activity.

Immediate plans for development include a module on the Environment, to be published later in the year. The site has NGfL approval and is well worth a visit.

MAPE Publications Group – Telephone conferencing

Barry Wake and Rhona Dick
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In October the Publications Group met by telephone! Our past meetings have either been mid-week (when class teachers can't come) or on a Saturday (when people don't want to come). There has been a noticeable fall in attendance, and we wanted to do something about it.

Heather Govier had been involved in telephone conferencing and suggested this might be a way forward which would enable more members of the group to participate.

There were obvious advantages to this:

- No travelling was involved, we could all sit in the comfort of our own homes.
- It was efficient in terms of time, a real advantage in our busy lives. Obviously if overseas delegates were involved timing would be even more critical.
- It was actually financially beneficial to MAPE, costing less than a face to face meeting which would have entailed not only travelling expenses but also refreshments.

There are some difficulties, too, but as this is a strategy other groups might choose to consider let us give you the benefit of our experience.

1. *How does it differ from a face to face meeting or video conference?*
   It relies on one sense (hearing). Other participants may not always be fully concentrating on the discussion and there are no visual cues. How important is this to you?
2. *How do you plan the meeting?*
   Preplanning is essential. A time that suits everyone has to be chosen, but latecomers can still join in.
3. *What about other preparation?*
   Paperwork needs to be circulated in advance, not just the agenda, but anything for discussion.
4. *How easy is it to set up?*
   Very easy – the telephone number for information is 0800-51-55-50 or to book a conference the number is 0800-77-88-77. We had to give details about MAPE, including our registered charity number, which made it even more economical, as well as an address for the bill.
5. *How do you get into the right meeting?*
   That's easy too. You simply dial a number, give the code number of your conference and your arrival is announced by a member of BT staff.
6. *What are the roles of the participants?*
   As for any meeting – to offer comments and suggestions, and to take an active part in the work of the group. In our face to face meetings the chair usually acts as secretary too. In retrospect we feel that this is not really practical in telephone conferencing. The two roles have distinct identities.
7. *What is the role of the chair?*
   The role of the chair is subtly different. Not only does he/she have to control the meeting using tone of voice only, raised eyebrows have no effect down a telephone line, but also encourage contributions from the reticent. The latter is less easy in a big telephone conference than in a face to face meeting.
8. *How easy is it to take minutes?*
   Sitting with a telephone jammed to your ear holding a pen and flicking over pages of a notebook requires three hands at times! A hands-free kit may be the answer, although it does give the impression of someone shouting down a tunnel.
9. *What are the protocols?*
   You are supposed to say your name every time you speak. It is quite difficult to remember to do this. However in a group like ours where the members are fairly well known to each other and the voices were fairly familiar it wasn't essential, and was fairly soon dispensed with.
10. *Was the 'cloak of invisibility' a help or a hindrance?*
    Both. For the participants it meant you could actually be doing something else if the topic under discussion did not directly involve you. The main disadvantage was in the deathly silences that followed when Rhona asked for volunteers. There is also no possibility of 'eyeballing' someone. It's a two-edged sword, however, as it is just as easy to say 'Barry, I

thought you might do this.' and rather harder, perhaps, for Barry to decline!

11. *How do you deal with difficult situations?*
It didn't arise in our case; however, we should think the same way as in a face to face meeting. If someone has had enough, for whatever reason, they can just put the phone down. (Not as effective as storming out of a room and slamming the door, but probably less embarrassing when tempers have cooled.)

12. *What about security?*
This is clearly not really of strategic importance to a MAPE publications group meeting, though for some it obviously would be. We suspect that security is about as good as you could expect. Clearly there is always the risk of a member of BT staff listening in. You would have to decide whether secrecy is top priority. As everyone who joins is announced there is no chance of anyone else eavesdropping. Contact the information number (0800-51-55-50) if you want to check it out.

There were ten participants in our meeting, ranging geographically from London to Newcastle; many of these people have not been able to come to meetings frequently, so telephone conferencing proved to be a real bonus here. However we did decide that we would like to have at least one face to face meeting a year.

When it was set up we had to give details of MAPE, including our charity number as there is a good discount for registered charities, and we told them to send the bill to Keith. We have not spoken to him about whether or not they have yet. For future use they will keep our details on file and it will be even easier to set up subsequent conferences.

The only security really is the information we all gave when we dialled in. We had to give the name of the conference and the convenor – did we have to give a password too – Rhona can't remember?

Letters

Dear Rhona,

When I started working as a primary teacher I began to write BASIC programs for the BBC micro. They were too simple for a 'proper' software company to produce, but little gems when used in the right way. A simulation of fair and unfair dice required little programming but it could stimulate a wide range of probability investigations.

The program itself was less important than the way it was used.

Staff in my own school would share their ideas and make use of some of my programs, but that was as far as it went.

Today my programs are written in *JavaScript* and the burble in the corner of my classroom is the sound of a modem rather than an audio-cassette driven BBC.

Using the web it should now be possible to share activities and ideas for activities nationally. This is not really happening in a co-ordinated manner – unless you are prepared to pay. I would like to see this change.

I have put together some simple web pages to help teachers and computer enthusiasts work together to produce and distribute some of these 'little gem' programs.

Teachers have the best ideas as to how ICT can help their pupils but seldom have the time or knowledge to create even the smallest programs to support pupil learning. Teachers can publish these ideas for simple activities at the above site. Computer enthusiasts (including many teachers!) are able to pick up these ideas and create the software required. Both contributors to the outcome can be acknowledged when the activity is available on-line.

The end result could be a growing bank of imaginative computer-based activities to support teaching and learning. I am aware that some programmers might have ideas of their own and that many teachers write programs for themselves. What is important is that this is a bottom-up approach where the beneficiaries are pupils, wherever they may be!

If you are interested, take a look at
www.supported.org.uk

David Channon
Deputy Headteacher
email d.channon@virgin.net

Dear David,

What an excellent idea promoting the 'sharing' philosophy that was rife in the early days of educational computing and we would love to see it thrive.

There are several small sites like this already, but as you say what is needed is co-ordination. You have started the ball rolling, let us hope that teachers who read this will join in.

Thank you for sharing this idea.

Yours,
MAPE

Reviews

Connecting Schools, Networking People 2000
BECTa

In the year or so since the first edition of this was published, schools have made enormous leaps in IT provision. This progress is recognised in the updated version, which aims to help schools in several ways; there are detailed sections dealing with and offering advice on:

1. **Setting up an effective ICT plan** that will take account of national targets and reflect a school's needs and strengths. There is no room for complacency, however, as schools with ICT development plans in place are advised to revise and refine them. Plans must indicate how ICT is used to deliver the whole school curriculum with emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Staff development is important, but stress is also placed upon the value of ICT as a tool for management.

   The key words used to assess the value of a development plan for ICT are
   - credible
   - manageable
   - sustainable

   Advice is given on all of these.

2. **Advising on funding and purchasing** including clear information on the total cost of ownership of equipment. Schools are now fairly comfortable with budgeting for consumables, paper, print cartridges and the like, but sometimes forget the 'hidden' overheads, for example management and training costs.

   Advice is given on different methods of funding, purchase, leasing and extensive information about managed services, an option that is becoming increasingly popular outside as well as within education. A case study involving a small, rural primary school serves as an example of why governing bodies may prefer a managed service.

3. **Suggesting and explaining available resources** including local area networks (LANs) and intranets, as well as digital cameras and interactive whiteboards. Clear explanations of all these terms are given.

   Different types of computers, desktops, portables and palmtops are described and their relative merits and demerits discussed. Additionally there are brief paragraphs on peripherals – scanners, digital cameras, video conferencing, interactive whiteboards and data projectors, some with examples of how they can be used effectively.

4. **Providing case studies illustrating good practice** using ICT in teaching and learning as well as management. This gives good, clear information on using email and video conferencing, both as a learning tool and for administrative purposes. Unfortunately I felt some of the examples were rather lack-lustre. I found the section dealing with web publishing and design more informative and interesting, but perhaps this just reflects my own needs. Schools will find the checklist of issues to consider when publishing on the web of value.

   There is even an extremely welcome section on copyright and the Internet.

Apart from providing a valuable framework, each chapter has as an appendix section entitled 'Going Further', providing further reading (whether this be paper-based or from the Internet)

This is a useful publication, particularly for schools who still have some way to go to reach government targets, and is available free of charge by telephoning the Order Hotline 024 7641 6669, or it can be downloaded direct from the Grid.

From Chalk Board to Internet: The Internet Starter's Handbook
BECTa £7.50

From Chalk Board to Internet is aimed at the non-specialist teacher who, perhaps, feels in need of a bit of hand-holding when taking the digital plunge. There are several handy check-lists dealing with such things as having the right equipment, and level of motivation. There is also something, too, for the more experienced Internet user.

The book is divided into seven sections covering such subjects as email and using the World Wide Web. An important section is the one covering issues, including safe use of the Internet. In addition there is a useful chapter on projects, giving suggestions of ways in which the Internet can be used to enhance teaching and learning in Maths, English and Science. There is also a glossary as well as a list of sources of further help; other URLs are given throughout.

I like the layout of the pages. Margins (in grey) give definitions, helpful hints and information about the text. Once or twice I did feel I wanted to know a little more about some aspects of the technology, but by and large this is a well balanced publication. My major problem with this book is that many of the illustrations are just too small. For instance, in the section on using search engines:

> "For example, using the search engine HotBot to find sites on the 'Tudors' will offer about 1,100 sites, ranked in order of relevance to the word. However, as you can see from the picture . . . "

What follows is a screen shot measuring approximately 3 inches by 2 inches, I can hardly make out anything, and I certainly cannot read it. This is generally true of all of the screen shots in the book, which is a real pity.

This handy little book is written in language that everyone can understand, so making it a particularly valuable addition to every staffroom bookcase.

The Literacy & Numeracy ICT Exhibition

Those of you who were fortunate enough to be able to attend the Literacy and Numeracy ICT Exhibition at Northampton on October 15th will know what a very worthwhile day it was.

There were several notable speakers including Mike Rumble, Bernice Barry and Janice Staines, and audiences left enlightened.

Some 28 Exhibitors demonstrated how their products could be used to enhance literacy or numeracy lessons. MAPE was also represented. The Maths Focus Pack was available, and we were able to demonstrate an early version of the History CD-ROM to be included with this mailing.

However, for those of you who were not able to go to the Exhibition, don't despair. Another Literacy and Numeracy ICT Exhibition will be held on 17th March 2000 in Stockport. The venue is Stockport County Football Club. Once again there will be three excellent Keynote presentations (a small charge will apply) and a comprehensive exhibition. Entrance to the Exhibition is free for delegates, so make sure you put the date in your diary now!

For further information on how to book a place at a Keynote Presentation please contact Wendy Richardson at:

Cambridgeshire Software House (Exhibitions)
PO Box 163
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE17 3UR
Tel: 01487 741223
email: 106066.2173@compuserve.com

Edfuncation *or* Putting fun back into education

Reg Eyre
reg.eyre@northampton.ac.uk

I would like to suggest a MAPE publication based on the theme of having fun with ICT.

I am looking for like-minded teachers to share some of their favourite lessons and ideas when using the technology. In other words, I would like to put together a document that shows why we are enthusiasts for using the technology in our 'normal' teaching practice.

The activities will probably relate to the National Curriculum, but this is not essential. Additionally they may be for any age group, and involve any aspect of ICT.

I have assured the rather sceptical editor that I can gather enough responses and will put together such a publication!

Please contact me at:

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Many thanks in anticipation of your support.

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Published for MAPE by The Castlefield Press, Northamptonshire.