

MAPE Newsletter

Summer Term 2001

Newman College with MAPE

MAPE Scotland Conference 2000

Nina Fugaccia

After a break of a few years, it was a most pleasant experience to get back into the swing of things at the autumn conference. How nice to meet up with old friends from years back! I even received a note from a former teaching colleague who recognised me. As I had come to expect I found all MAPE personnel extremely helpful and could not wait for the workshops.

MLPS Software (Modern Languages in the Primary School)

In the Virtual and Real Content section of 'Citizens of a Multicultural Word' recommendations 7 and 8 state:

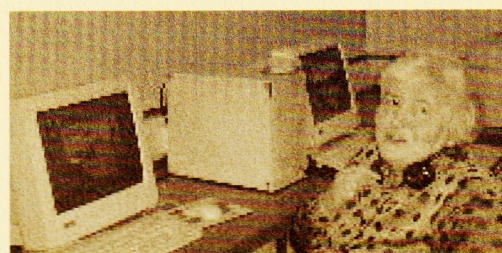
'Information and Communications Technology should have a central role in supporting languages learning' and 'There is evidence that ICT can transform students' motivation for learning and using languages as well.'

It also recommends that

'Students from Primary 6 (Y5) onwards have regular access to ICT for language learning and use, both in and out of normal class-time, and that all language teachers have access to computers.'

MLPS Software Solutions presented a range of twelve foreign language CD-ROMs and two sheets giving a summary of the main features in each. After a quick overview the class was free to browse at will, to explore further those that seemed to present possibilities to suit themselves. This workshop was good for people trying to decide which program to buy for a class rather than to guess from the adverts in a publication. I did not come away with any definite decision but was able to eliminate three as not suitable and to decide on strengths of others, leaving me with two real possibilities once the

- ▶ Wordsearch software
- ▶ 2simple 4words
- ▶ Grand Prix Maths
- ▶ Using spreadsheets with book tokens



money becomes available. What would have been helpful was a guide to costs including group/school licences.

Web Authoring for Children by Children

I wandered in here by chance as it was suggested that my chosen workshop would be repetition for me. How opportune! Anyone afraid of the web would no longer have any fears left after this session. The software used was bright and easy to use with almost immediate results. Things like linking pages were so easy to produce and the on board clip art was most imaginative. I had a great time giving my school a cowboy web page linked to others of different themes. It was very well presented and I would not be surprised to learn that many people left with this being top of their shopping list!

Multimedia – Textease 2000

A workshop set at those with some previous experience of *Textease* (there was also a workshop on *Textease* for beginners). The workshop moved at a good pace to show linking pages, animations, hiding graphics etc. The range of possibilities on hand and in reach of children was opened wide to the classroom teacher. Scanners and cameras were mentioned but not in any detail – another workshop offered this precise choice.

At lunchtime an entertaining and informative Australian lady gave an overview of the status quo down under.

As usual the day was over all too soon, leaving me full of great ideas and promises to myself to produce more and inspire others! If only! . . .

A Day at BECTA II

Angella Streluk and Alan Rodgers
arodgers@rmplc.co.uk

Have you ever looked at any of the ideas on the *Teachers' Resource Exchange* of the *Virtual Teachers' Centre*? When did you last visit the *Virtual Teachers' Centre*? It may well be worth a visit. Whilst teachers often pass on worksheets and resource material to fellow colleagues in school it isn't often practical to pass them on to others further afield. The *Teachers' Resource Exchange* is one of the facilities which enable teachers to do just that. Either go to the *Virtual Teachers' Centre* and click on the link to the *Teacher's Resource Exchange* or type in the URL: <http://contribute.ngfl.gov.uk>.

All web-based teaching support agencies are constantly trying to fine-tune their provision to be as helpful as possible. Nobody wants to visit a site that was set up and then forgotten. The *Virtual Teachers' Centre* is developed and maintained by a team aiming both to keep the site relevant and to increase people's awareness of it. This is not easy. If a site has nothing on it nobody will stay and investigate it, let alone contribute to it. A contributory site can't have anything on it until people have visited. At BECTA organisers have made a positive effort to break this cycle by bringing in groups of teachers to put teaching ideas of quality into the database helping to bring it to that level where people can usefully visit it, and then hopefully contribute something themselves.

Being invited to put in a bid to take a group of MAPE members, Rhona put together a group of people and the date was set for 18 January 2001. People began to beaver away researching and collecting material and ideas. Wherever possible discs and CD-ROMs were used to save files, text, images, sounds, spreadsheets, web links, anything that a primary teacher might use. A file containing text for titles and descriptions was prepared for cutting and pasting into the fields of the database. Some material was submitted before the day; the group used the database to get an idea of what was expected and where any gaps might be.

On that Thursday people converged on BECTA II at Coventry from various corners of the country. A welcoming cup of tea or coffee was a foretaste of the care that would be taken of us. In the computer suite Richard Hammond, Education Officer, gave an introductory demonstration and explained the theory behind the day's work. Everyone then set to, working in ones and twos at PCs to enter useful items onto the database.

All subjects and Key Stages are catered for. There is also scope for contributions concerning non-curriculum areas. After the group's work many more areas had an increase in the items on offer. Many useful features of past publications and the MAPE web site now have a presence on this part of the web too. To see some of the contributions browse the *Teacher's Resource Exchange*

by date and see what was added on and around 18 January. The group continues to build on work done on the day. Could you add any helpful notes to these items, or indeed any others? We built on previous contributions by adding comments and attachments. You could do the same.

There are several ways to find what you want in the Exchange, which comprises a three tier system of contributions. The *First Thoughts* section has the basis of an idea, perhaps needing more work at a later date. *Developing Ideas* are more structured contributions, include objectives, learning outcomes, ideas for whole lessons or a whole topic. *New Resources* are complete, structured learning resources. These have ideas contributed from multiple sources. You can browse these various levels, looking under different subjects where possible. The search facility allows you to be more focused.

If you are going to submit material you will need to register, a simple procedure intended to make monitoring entries easier. When you decide to contribute, you need to have all your materials ready. The intention is that you submit your new idea as a *First Thought*, however, if you have supporting materials, an idea of the age range for which your material will be most useful for, and a clear idea of the activity's objectives, you may be best to submit it as a *Developing Idea*. Have all your text ready written, in Word or similar, as this can check your spelling for you. When prompted cut and paste your material into the boxes provided. Files are attached easily in a way similar to making an attachment to an email. Most common file types are supported. Naturally large files will upload and download slowly. Keep images to a sensible size and submit files zipped (using WinZip) if they are numerous or too large. As you cannot be sure which word processing packages users have it is most helpful to save and upload your documents in rich text format (.rtf).

Our group got into the swing of things. We had support from Richard and were made very welcome with lunch and various other refreshments. I cannot guarantee you such treats on your visit to the site but you can be certain that you will not find anything if you don't log on at all. Please look at our ideas and see who worked there on that day. Search out your ideas and share them with the country, if not the world! Also visit the MAPE website and see the on-line features which can be used in the classroom as well as more general help with ICT provided in various forms by MAPE.

Many thanks to Rhona, Richard and everybody who worked to make the day interesting, enjoyable and, hopefully, productive. Now it's over to all you teachers out there. It's your database.

Grand Prix Maths Challenge – a nail-biting finish to Maths Year 2000

On a cold, day in December representatives from schools from all parts of the United Kingdom met at the Jaguar works at Castle Bromwich near Birmingham for the final of the Grand Prix Maths Challenge.

All the schools taking part that day had won the right to be there by competing against and overcoming challenges from within their own and other school teams from their regions.

In the morning while the teams fine-tuned the engines of their cars, and made last minute calculations based upon weather predictions and the plan of the track, accompanying teachers had an opportunity to tour the Jaguar plant.

All Grand Prix races are run in the presence of celebrities and this one was no exception. Watching the race from a strictly neutral viewpoint were Michael Wills, Minister for Technology at the DfEE, and British tennis star Greg Rusedski. After a fine buffet lunch the final took place. All the teams, teachers and visitors sat spellbound as the race began. Everyone held their breath as the screen announced that one car after another was cornering too quickly, or running short on fuel. Gradually the polite excitement gave way to loud cheers of support, or groans as team cars failed to negotiate bends correctly. As the race progressed, the outcome was never really in doubt, and democratically the prizes were distributed around the United Kingdom.

1st place **Sanquhar Primary School,
Dumfries and Galloway**
2nd place **Oval Primary School, Croydon**
3rd place **Ysgol Bryn Coch, Flintshire**

Before presenting the prizes, Greg Rusedski spoke with enthusiasm about the motivation that this type of event can engender within pupils, and rued the fact that his own education had not been so inspiring.

It certainly seemed that everyone who took part

thoroughly enjoyed themselves. There were no losers here. Everyone went away with a goody bag, the winners got computer equipment for their schools, and for many (myself included) it was probably the only chance we'll have to sit inside a brand new Jaguar!

Congratulations to all schools who took part.

Schools Representing the Regions at the National Final of the Grand Prix Maths Challenge

Ancrum Road Primary School representing Scotland – East
Bugbrooke Community Primary School representing England – Central
Danygraig Primary School representing Wales – South
Elsecar Holy Trinity CE Primary School representing England – North East
John Wilkinson Primary School representing England – West Midlands
Meavy CE Primary School representing England – South West
Oval Primary School representing England – South East
Sanquhar Primary School representing Scotland – West
Spindle Point Community Primary School representing England – North West
St Bernard's Primary School representing Northern Ireland
St Helen's Primary School representing England – Eastern
Woodmansterne Primary School representing England – London
Ysgol Bryn Coch representing Wales – North

MICROS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2000

	Notes	2000 £	1999 £
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS			
Incoming resources			
Subscriptions		39,556	37,713
Trading income		5,381	5,463
Investment income		4,127	4,747
Surplus on conference		767	458
		<u>49,831</u>	<u>48,381</u>
Resources expended			
Other expenditure	2		
Management and administration costs	3	52,688	50,501
		<u>52,688</u>	<u>50,501</u>
Total resources expended		<u>52,688</u>	<u>50,501</u>
Net outgoing resources		<u>(2,857)</u>	<u>(2,120)</u>
Net movement in funds		<u>(2,857)</u>	<u>(2,120)</u>
Fund balances brought forward		98,212	100,332
Fund balances carried forward		<u>95,355</u>	<u>98,212</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2000

	Notes	£	2000 £	£	1999 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	4		3,346		3,462
CURRENT ASSETS					
Sponsorship advance		3,334		6,667	
Debtors	5	4,034		315	
Bank and cash		<u>84,641</u>		<u>88,181</u>	
		92,009		95,163	
CREDITORS: amounts due within one year	6	—		<u>(413)</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>92,009</u>		<u>94,750</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			<u>95,355</u>		<u>98,212</u>
CAPITAL FUNDS					
Unrestricted funds			<u>95,355</u>		<u>98,212</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2000

1 Accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and are in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Charities Accounting Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP). There have been no changes in the accounting policies.

a) Corresponding amounts

The corresponding amounts have been reanalysed to ensure consistency with the SORP.

b) Grants and voluntary income

All grants and voluntary income are accounted for gross when receivable, as long as they are capable of financial measurement.

c) Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for gross, and when incurred.

d) Fixed assets

Fixed assets are included at cost or valuation. There are no uncapitalised items.

e) Depreciation

Depreciation is provided to write off the cost or valuation, less estimated residual values, of all fixed assets except freehold land, over their expected useful lives. Depreciation is charged on a reducing balance basis as in previous years at the following rates:

Office equipment 25%

2 Analysis of resources expended

Other expenditure	Depreciation	Overheads	2000	1999
	£	£	£	£
Management and administration costs ³	<u>4,449</u>	<u>48,239</u>	<u>52,688</u>	<u>50,501</u>

3 Management and administration costs

	2000	1999
	£	£
Audit fees	470	374
Other	<u>52,218</u>	<u>50,127</u>
	<u>52,688</u>	<u>50,501</u>

4 Fixed assets**Office equipment**
£**Cost**

At 1 January 2000	16,198
Additions in year	<u>1,000</u>
At 31 December 2000	<u>17,198</u>

Depreciation

At 1 January 2000	12,736
Charge for the year	<u>1,116</u>
At 31 December 2000	<u>13,852</u>

Net book value

At 31 December 2000	<u>3,346</u>
At 31 December 1999	<u>3,462</u>

5 Debtors – due within one year

	2000	1999
	£	£
Sundry debtors	2,000	—
Value added tax	<u>2,034</u>	<u>315</u>
	<u>4,034</u>	<u>315</u>

6 Creditors – due within one year

	2000	1999
	£	£
Sundry creditors and accruals	<u>—</u>	<u>413</u>

7 Building society shares

The charity holds 1,092 shares in Halifax Group plc (1999 – 1,092 shares). At 31 December 2000 these shares had a market value of £7,251 (£6.64 per share).

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2000

	2000	1999
	£	£
Subscriptions	39,556	37,713
Sales of software and magazines	5,381	5,463
	<u>44,937</u>	<u>43,176</u>
Return on capital invested on Halifax Group plc shares	—	736
Dividends received	180	241
Bank interest received	3,947	3,770
	<u>49,064</u>	<u>47,923</u>
Surplus on conference	767	458
	<u>49,831</u>	<u>48,381</u>
LESS EXPENDITURE		
Publications	27,330	20,224
Regional expenses	343	1,602
Council expenses	4,705	6,935
Administration expenses	14,009	15,330
Bank charges	1,252	1,126
Direct debit charges	875	797
Website development	(275)	—
Amortisation of sponsorship advance	3,333	3,333
Depreciation of office equipment	1,116	1,154
	<u>(52,688)</u>	<u>(50,501)</u>
DEFICIT OF INCOME AGAINST EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR	<u>(2,857)</u>	<u>(2,120)</u>

TTS

Following Reg Eyre's article about using digital cameras in MAPE 4, published last term, TTS has kindly offered a discount to members of MAPE.

They can be contacted at: TTS, Monk Road, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7RL, or see their website: www.tts-group.co.uk



D&T Art & Design Science Maths Religion Social History Literacy ICT

MAPE Member Voucher

This voucher entitles you to 5% discount off your next ICT order

TTS Group, Monk Road, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7RL.

Send this voucher to the above address with your order to receive your discount

Using spreadsheets with book tokens

Claire Arthur

I first thought of this idea when I was officially delegated as 'token counter' shortly after the Walkers Crisp scheme began last year. I decided to get something out of the hard work of cutting out the hundreds of tokens, lovingly brought in each week! I set up the first spreadsheet for the children (Year 6), as they had not used one before. I also put in the formulae and told the children I had done this but that I wanted them to try to tell me what the formulae were doing to the numbers.

For the first test I entered fictitious data so that the children could see the formulae working. After a few rows of data had gone in some were able to work out that the formulae were adding certain parts of the data together. Others were able to guess at what the formulae were doing by reading the column headings (Weekly Total and Running Total).

I then moved away from the computer and used an overhead transparency showing a blank table, to explain how the computer performed the sums and how we would write that down.

The next challenge was how to write these formulae onto the computer. I used RM *Number Magic*, which has a delightful formula calculator. (The voice that announces that they are using the 'formula builder' did get wearing after a while though!) The children soon got the hang of selecting boxes to add together and understanding which formula to put in and what it would do.

For the following few months, my class would religiously cut out and count every token handed in. They then worked in small groups to set up a spreadsheet, enter the data, and try putting formulae in. Then they printed graphs to show the data they had selected, (They enjoyed this bit the most, I think!) The whole class were also asked to interpret the data at different points during the project. They were asked questions such as:

- Why do you think there were so few tokens brought in during the first week?
- Which week showed a big increase in tokens? Why do you think this was?
- Why were there a lot fewer tokens collected from the *Sunday Times* than from the daily *Times*?
- Look at the general patterns of token numbers. Can you make a prediction for the amount of tokens we will collect next week? Give a reason for your answer.

A wonderful display of data sheets, analysis, and graphs was displayed on the wall in time for parents' evening and was added to throughout the term as new groups got to grips with the work.

Learning outcomes

The children gained a lot of information from this project including:

- The difference between using a database and a spreadsheet
- What a formula is and how it can be used to do the hard work!
- How data can be interpreted by different kinds of graphs – and which graphs are useful and which are just pretty!
- Interpreting data.
- Suggestions for improving the way we collect tokens in schools for the next year 6 group, i.e. making sure that tokens are cut out and counted before they come into school!

Overall, although this was a tough project to do (and quite time consuming), both the children and myself gained a lot of ICT experience from it. What's more, all of the tokens were counted and collated into bundles ready to go straight off. The new Year 6 teacher in our school is just setting this up to run it again this year (taking into consideration the suggestions for improvements!).

Correction

In our article about *Caterham Software Factory* in Issue 4 of the MAPE Magazine we gave an incomplete URL, it should have been printed as

<http://www.catsf.co.uk/>.

MAPE apologises for this error.

Software to create wordsearches

For some time I've been looking for a program that will allow me to create simple word searches to be printed out and used later.

I know exactly what I'm looking for – I always was fussy.

- A program that will allow me to decide upon the size of the grid.
- A program that will allow me to use upper or lower case letters (both in one word would give away starting points).
- A program that will allow me to select the complexity of the grid so that I can differentiate for different groups.
- A program that will allow me to select not only the font but also the size of text.
- A program that will allow me create lists of words by copying from other files. When I've made a topic word list or a spelling list I would like to be able to import the words to my wordsearch creator and have the program

magically give me a file that I can print out for my class to use later.

Perhaps I was being over optimistic but the program I've found does most of this. It's called *Toolbox* and comes from Discovery Educational Software. It does not meet numbers four and five on my wish list but there are ways of getting around the font size.

When I contacted Fred Martin of Discovery Educational Software about my last requirement he replied

'As regards the pasting of pre-typed lists into Toolbox, virtually nothing is technically impossible as far as computers are concerned. No doubt other people could come up with other suggestions for improvements. What we have to ask ourselves is how many man-hours would it take to make the improvement, and would people be prepared to pay more for it?'

How to make a wordsearch

Filename:	Words:	Clues (optional):
LIST2.TBW	above	above
	across	across
	almost	almost
	along	along
	also	also
	always	always
	animals	animals
	any	any
	around	around
	asked	asked
	baby	baby
	balloon	balloon
	before	before
	began	began
	being	being
	below	below
	better	better
	between	between
	birthday	birthday
	both	both

Go to <http://www.discoveryeducational-software.com> to download the program.

Create your list.

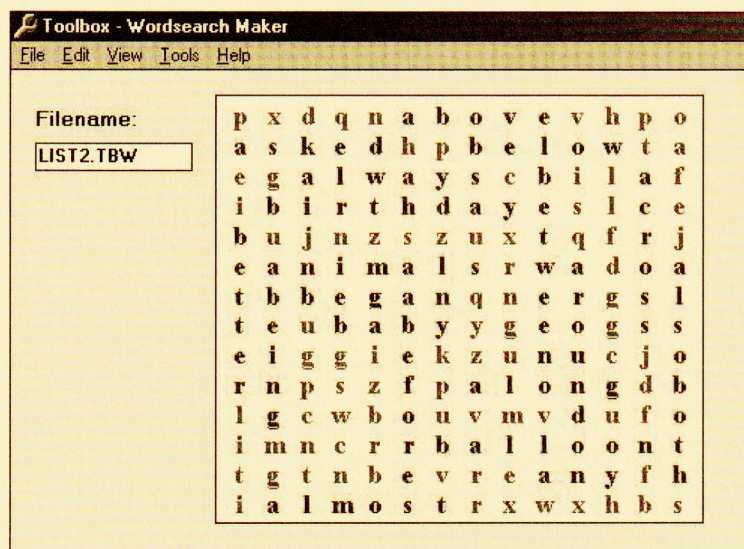
This one is taken from the National Literacy Strategy's list of medium frequency words to be taught in Years 4 and 5.

Click on *View Options* and decide upon the format of your grid.

Don't try to squeeze too many words into too small a grid, it will be confusing.

When you are satisfied that your selected options are correct click *OK*.

You are returned to the Wordsearch Maker as above.



Now click *Edit Make Puzzle* and you have a ready made Wordsearch.

The Wordsearch grid is created in red (for the words you enter) and green for the 'filler letters' that the computer enters. This makes it much easier for you to check the layout. If you don't like it simply click *Make Puzzle* until you are satisfied.

The grid will print out from the program in black and white.

If you want to enlarge the grid click on *Export* in the *File* menu. This will copy the screen to the clipboard it can then be pasted to a wordprocessor or dtp. You need to select a fixed font, for example *Fixedsys* or *Courier*, to make sure the letters are correctly aligned.

Wordsearch is not the only program available in the toolbox; there is a *Crossword* creator and *Word scrambler* too.

Crossword

The clues for the crossword might take teachers longer to create than they'd like, so why not let children generate the clues as a form of assessment activity. The crosswords could then be shared round among the class, and saved as a resource for the future.

Word scrambler

You can use the same word list here as for the other programs, which is handy. If you are using proper nouns the program will scramble them whilst leaving the correct letter capitalised, an additional clue for children.

I found this little program on the Internet, just

This Wordsearch is Level 1 difficulty, that is all the words are written left to right or top to bottom.

The list of words can be printed with the Wordsearch.

The words from the list are shown on the screen in a different colour to make it easier to your to check the layout, but all words print out black on white.

one of many, but I was attracted to it because it is British, and that would remove any inherent spelling problems. As I was downloading it I accidentally clicked the 'download' button twice. I received an email shortly after asking if I'd had any problems, and if so to make contact, good support, then, is also available.

The deal is that you download the software and can use and evaluate it for a month before having to pay £5.99. At the end of the month the *Toolbox* locks itself and won't work again until you buy the key to unlock it.

As it has lots to offer it seems good value to me, and I shall certainly be buying it.

Payment

Most people do pay on-line. Fred told me that the website has a direct connection by SSL to Discovery Educational Software's bank, and the company doesn't have access to anyone's credit card details. When you reach the credit card page a padlock symbol appears on your browser to show that the connection is secure. The bank simply confirms that the payment has been made and the keycode can then be released.

Some people do prefer to send a cheque, but that takes a few days, whereas by paying online a reply with the keycode can be sent within hours.

You can download *Toolbox* from www.discoveryeducationalsoftware.co.uk

Sample copies of other educational software are also available from this site. These are sold on CD-ROM as they contain large numbers of sound-files, and it would not be practical to download complete programs.

More information about *Crossword* creator and *Word Scrambler* will appear in a future Newsletter.

2simple 4words?

A review of the *2Simple Infant Video Toolbox*

Barry Wake

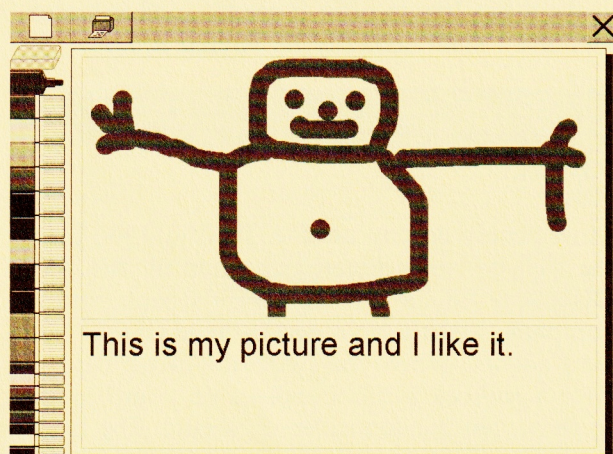
University College Worcester
b.wake@worc.ac.uk

Introduction

'Great, great and great!' – a comment from a reception teacher.

Every so often, along comes a new program or new approach that marks a watershed, a new stage, or benchmark for future offerings to be compared with. The *2Simple Infant Video Toolbox* must surely rank as one of those.

The Infant Video Toolbox consists of a suite of programs aimed at Foundation and Key Stage 1 children which are 'great': simple to use, clear and uncluttered, with a common, intuitive look and feel about them that ensures only the smallest of learning curves before young children can feel in control and happily get cracking.



It comes with a straightforward user guide, with simple instructions and easy installation. The reviewer's version had a few problems, exacerbated by hardware faults which were diagnosed only later, but the odd phone call and email brought immediate responses from the support desk, and the latest version (1.5) went in trouble-free.

On top of that, the 'video' part is a real added bonus. No unfathomable documentation here – click on a video training clip and you can actually hear and see what Max is doing as he

models an activity or the features of each of the programs. For each program there is a variety of examples, which can be used by both children and teachers. In fact it is not clear who the intended audience is; however, the video clips are short, about 2 minutes long, and replayable using the Lotus *ScreenCam* package. The voice of the narrator is clear and informative, and he is not averse to making the odd error, which he then shows you how to correct. It's a very clever, realistic touch, giving an indication of the author's practical educational pedigree as well as demonstrating to children (and teachers) that it's often all right to make mistakes.

Such a simple notion that it makes you wonder why MicroSoft and others don't do it! The DfEE might note too, that 'training' videos don't have to show perfection each time. It is not really comparing like with like but anecdotal evidence shows that a significant number of classroom teachers are easily put off and respond to such videos by saying: 'Well *I* could never do that!', 'Where's the *rest* of the class?', 'My children *never* behave like that!' or 'And where's the planning and paperwork then?' The *2Simple* videos here are gently supportive and realistic, and totally non-threatening.

The suite of programs

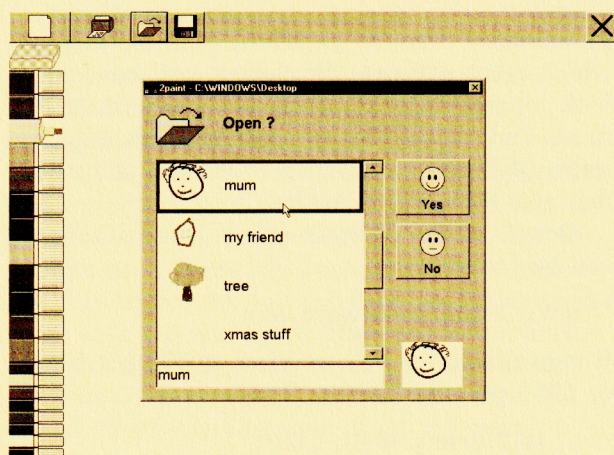
The suite itself comprises six programs, and meets various units of the QCA Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Schemes of Work (SoW) for England, as well as having a place in some literacy and numeracy activities. In brief there is:

- *2paint* – probably the simplest painting program for nursery, reception and Year 1 (Unit 2B)
- *2publish* – extending *2paint* to combine text and graphics in a variety of formats (Units 2A, and some of 1B and 3A)
- *2count* – a simple data handling program producing pictograms (1E and 2E)

- *2go* – a simple directions program leading to an early turtle graphics program (Units 1F and 2D)
- *2graph* – simple graphing program to create histograms, bar, line and pie charts (Units 2D and 4D)
- *2question* – simple, pre-formatted branching database (Units 2E and 4C)

In general, the suite of programs has a unity of look and commands which means a useful compatibility throughout. The icons are clear and intuitive, and reading is no barrier as the text is kept to a minimum. (Version 1.5b will allow text to be changed to other languages.) Teacher Options are available to allow some icons to be available on screen or not, such as loading and saving, types of graphs, font, size and colour, and especially printing to prevent inordinate use of the printer.

Two other nice friendly features are the animated yes/no icons (nodding or shaking faces) and the save command which saves a thumbnail of the file along with the file name.



No program does everything for everybody and even amongst this excellent suite there seem to be a few things missing. None of the programs has a proper 'undo' for instance, and neither is there the usual reminder about saving your work *before* exiting. As indicated in the documentation, teachers need to be aware, too, that the whole suite does cover a wide range of ICT skills and will need to choose the relevant program with care to match the expertise and experiences of the children. There is also a potential problem in the name: if for some children these programs are not in fact 'simple' but still quite hard, that could have a detrimental effect on their self-esteem and confidence. And then some might take issue with them being 'too simple' – should children be involved with activities that are too easy for them? There is

possibly that old tricky problem too, of using a program from an 'Infant' set with older SEN children, for example, who are not 'infants'. But then, what's in a name...?

The programs in detail

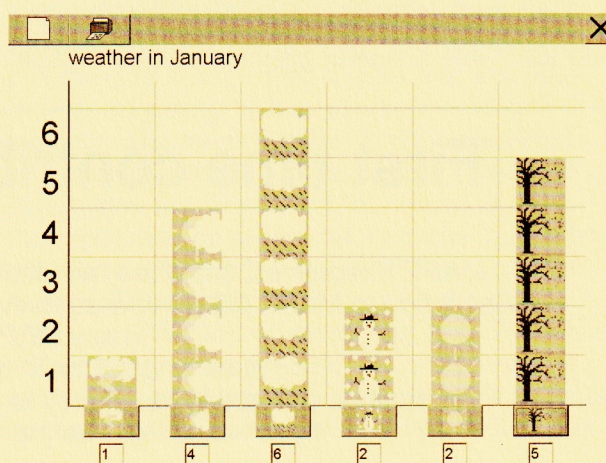
In terms of individual software *2paint* has to be the simplest graphics program. It has twelve thick coloured 'felt tips' and eight thin ones. There is a rubber too (i.e. white, on the white background), which you need to use carefully because it 'rubs out' slightly ahead of its image on the screen.

The use of the 'felt pens' is a clever metaphor. It is very obvious what they are and what they do, and are part and parcel of young children's experience nowadays. What happens on screen is more like the real effect of felt pen on paper, and not the same as a paint brush. Some children may at first need help in realising that they need to 'pick up' or click on paint-brush/felt tip icon before painting but as long as they can manage a mouse, either button here, they are well away.

This is a graphics at its very simplest: no fill, no spray, no straight line or shape facility, no different coloured backgrounds, no accompanying sound effects! As such it makes a very straightforward introduction to how, in some way, ICT is different even at this simple level from other media and activities.

With *2publish* children can extend their *2paint* expertise and enter the world of simple DTP by mixing text and graphics, choosing from a variety of useful and attractive formats including cards, posters, menus and stories. It makes good use of some of the benefits of ICT and provides a real stimulus for children's early writing. In fact, until the children grow out of it, you may not need another for some time.

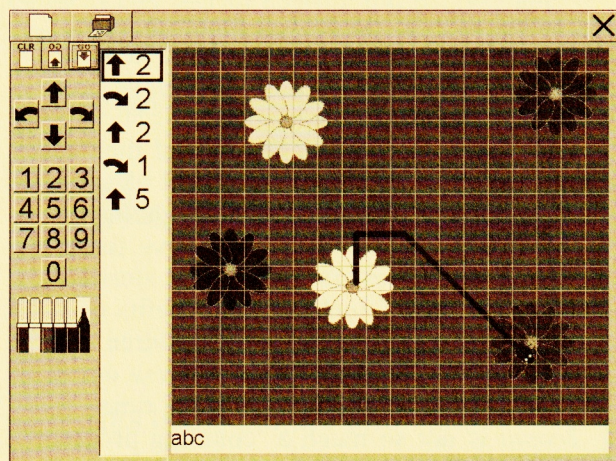
2count is not so much a 'counting program', but rather offers a very simple, easy to use data



handling or graphing activity which makes use of nineteen sets of pictograms, from teddies, to shapes, to feelings to weather, with up to six fields or headings. The teacher options also allow you to choose the alignment of the chart, and set a maximum value, up to 99, and the chart will automatically adjust itself on screen.

With *2go* you have an introduction to early logo, with four levels of programs to control movement on the screen. There are five sample backgrounds to choose from, such as a race-track with a car, a field of flowers and a lady-bird. The first three levels use simple direction arrows and the teacher options offer choices of speed, unit length, line width and diagonal stretch (so that you can draw a triangle easily). There is also a grid option.

The fourth level gets nearer to Logo but provides quite a conceptual leap from the 'up and across' instructions of the earlier levels. Here you can input a sequence of commands according to the orientation of the pointer or 'turtle', and although you can retrace your steps there is no 'undo' as such. You can't disappear off the screen, but remain on the last spot or square. The equivalent of the Logo command Pen Up is simply to drag the pointer.



2graph builds on the experiences of *2count* and leads into a simple graphing program which

produces the information in a variety of graph formats. Again there is auto scaling, up to 10,000 here though the input boxes find that difficult to handle. There is a maximum of twelve fields allowed, there is a limit to the amount of text you can use and there is no facility for changing the colours of the graphs. Nonetheless, it is again a very simple and effective program for young children beginning to make sense of graphical representations.

With *2question*, you enter the world of branching databases. Here you can select from three given formats, 7, 15 or 31 boxes, or ends of the branches. They do not work like *FlexiTree* or *Decisions3*, but do allow you to enter, and edit, the questions, the choices and the drawings (although you cannot really edit these, nor import clip art or other images which would be useful). It seems a bit inflexible but with careful planning and preparation it offers a good introduction to this type of database.

In conclusion

In summary then, an excellent suite of programs which other software developers will have to look to, especially for such an awareness of the needs and capabilities of early learners. And, in terms of becoming familiar with new software, that also includes us adults!

Details of the *2Simple Infant Video Toolbox* can be found at

www.2simplesoftware.com

It is available for PCs or Macs at £75 per copy, or £350 per site licence, from

10 Nursery Walk Court,
Nursery Walk,
Sunningfields Road,
Hendon,
London NW4 4RJ

Tel: (020) 8203 1781

Fax: (020) 8202 6370

email: nigel@2simplesoftware.com

First time contributors to MAPE

MAPE Executive Committee has decided that from April 2001 one year's free subscription to MAPE will be offered to everyone for the first contribution that appears in any MAPE publication.

The qualifying author in this Newsletter is Claire Arthur.

We shall be contacting her shortly to tell her how to claim her free membership.

If you would like free membership you know what to do!

Review – *Imperata*

Dr. Bob Fox

School of Education and Psychology, University College Worcester
b.fox@worc.ac.uk

The Technological Imperative leads us to do some strange things. Even when financial circumstances allow a rapid increase in the number of computers available in the primary school, our ways of deploying and using them are not always determined by considerations of good primary pedagogy. Thus we have seen a headlong rush into networked computer rooms and suites in primary schools, and my view is that headteachers, governors and Ofsted do not always give sufficient thought to how computers might best be used to enhance primary pupils' learning across the curriculum.

So how do you use your computer room, if you have one?

How do you balance teaching *about* computers with teaching *with* computers?

Imperata is a splendid piece of software, designed to assist in the organization and management of a class set of computers. Teleste, its makers, describe it as an 'application and activity control system'. I have had it installed in a computer room for more than six months now. From my base machine (which could in theory be any machine on the network) I can lock anyone else's keyboard or monitor, send the contents of my screen or look at the contents of anyone else's, I can take over the operation of any computer from my own keyboard, or send messages to any or all users. I can view the contents of several other screens simultaneously as thumbnail images. Crucially, I can send bundles of files to the hard discs of any of the other machines on the system.

Imperata performs all of the above apparently effortlessly, and it is very straightforward to use – you do not need a degree in computer science to get to grips with it.

Two possible modes of operation spring immediately to mind.

- Firstly, I can be like a security guard, and sit at my station, watch the thumbnails to see who is surreptitiously accessing the Manchester United or Westlife website, and send them a message telling them not to. I can stop people from doing things – particularly I can lock users out from their systems while they are supposed to be listening to me. Perhaps

there are easier and cheaper ways of doing this – Terry Freedman recommends starting your session with the computers turned on and logged on but the monitors turned off. I am a teacher, and I don't want to spend the bulk of the lesson spying on people, though it is perhaps no bad thing to let them know that I can.

- Secondly, I can help individuals by linking my machine to theirs, or I can get pairs or groups of users to support each other remotely. It's a bit like distance learning without the distance.

The trouble with this is that is not really the way I want to work. It has not proved helpful so far to operate someone's machine remotely in order to show them what to do – it is a great deal easier (and perhaps educationally more sound) to stand or squat beside them and talk them through.

With a little further thought I came up with two other modes of operation.

- In the absence of a large screen device, using *Imperata* to share a demonstration around all the monitors is vastly preferable to having to crowd the whole class round a single small monitor.
- A much better model, in my view, is to think of it as a means of sharing, particularly in the plenary part of the teaching session.

Imagine your Literacy Hour session taking place in a computer room. I will be generous, and grant you a data projector. You start with a piece of text (perhaps downloaded from the Internet, perhaps typed in by you beforehand), presented in a large font size so that everyone can see in clearly. When you have read it together, discussed it collectively, considered why certain phrases are used, how mood and atmosphere are developed, or whatever, you then speculate on where the narrative might lead (or where it might have come from). You then work collaboratively as a class on the text, adding, subtracting or modifying bits. Then at a certain point you save your file, send it out to everyone's machine, and children work in pairs or small groups to continue the text. When it is

time for the plenary, you lock everyone's keyboard, and invite pairs or groups to present their text on the large screen and comment on what they have done. I think *Imperata* could be an invaluable tool in this type of context, particularly as I can prepare files beforehand to incorporate an appropriate measure of differentiation into the task, and then be selective about which files I send to whom.

Future versions of *Imperata* will include the facility to send predefined portfolios of web pages to be used in an activity, as well as a cut-down browser with no 'favourites' or history icons to lead users off the point. This should be a great asset in keeping children focused on the task in hand, and in minimizing the risks of inappropriate use of the web; and it should go a long way towards allaying the fears of parents nervous about children's access to the web.

So – overall, I can heartily endorse *Imperata*, though I think primary school users should think carefully how to make the best educational use of it. I am aware that there are other

packages that provide broadly similar facilities, but frankly I have found them rather restrictive. *Imperata* has a considerable potential for flexibility and imagination, and I think it will continue to develop as a first-rate resource.

Factfile

Imperata is made by:

Teleste Educational (UK) Ltd., 7 Hales Road, Leeds LS12 4PL. Tel: 0113 263 6700; Fax 0113 263 6705.

Version 4.0 is due for release on 30/04/01.

Recommended end-user prices are: Tutor Software = £225 per tutor workstation; Student = £20 per student workstation. A Primary Site Licence is also available and allows for an unlimited number of tutors and students to be installed.

Imperata is sold through a nationwide network of accredited partners who have been fully trained to install and support the software locally to the school.

MAPE news

Welcome to all new members of MAPE.

New additions to the MAPE website

There have been several new additions to the MAPE website since the last mailing.

On KidsMAPE you'll find:

- Several sorting game activities that are suitable for every age group.
- More Big Books are added regularly.

In Curriculum Support there are:

- Electronic copies of articles from past publications. These will be of particular interest to new members and those who have, perhaps, changed schools and had to leave their old copies behind.
- Some photo resources. Those there at present illustrate aspects of life in some contrasting parts of Britain. There are photos from the Lake District and the centre of Birmingham as well as a suburb of Birmingham. These might be of use in teaching about contrasting locations in Geography.
- *Shape Bingo*. This is available as a resource to be printed off. There are property cards for 2D and 3D shapes as well as randomly

generated playing boards. It is simple enough to make your own property cards tailored to your pupils' needs.

Are you on email?

We now have a list of about 500 members who are on email. To be honest we are certain there are more of you. If you now have an email address **OR** if you have changed to a new ISP please contact Val Siviter at: val@bethesda.demon.co.uk to let her know.

Did you know that you can be kept informed of any new additions to the site? Register with the mailing list and items of news will automatically be sent to your email address. All you have to do is go to the MAPE home page (www.mape.org.uk) and click on About MAPE. Alternatively go straight to <http://www.mape.org.uk/about/index.htm> and under the heading **Keeping you informed** hot links will take you to the necessary pages.

Talking of changing email addresses – I seem to do it rather frequently. The reason for the latest change of ISP was the opportunity to have 24-hour unlimited access to the Internet (no phone charges) for an extra £10 per month, so if you want to contact me please use my new address: rhona.dick@blueyonder.co.uk

Future publications

Plans for future publications include:

Autumn Term 2001 – a Focus pack taking traditional stories as a starting point. This will be edited by Andy Pierson with the help of Yvette Blake and Moira Monteith.

Andy Pierson: andy@ExsoftPr.demon.co.uk

Yvette Blake: yvette@yblake.freemove.co.uk

Moira Monteith: MMonteith@losehill.demon.co.uk

Summer Term 2002 – following a request, MAPE is going to update the popular 'Lost Owls' pack which first appeared in 1988. Di Mavers is taking on the role of Guest Editor for this publication: d.mavers@mmu.ac.uk

Autumn Term 2002 will see the publication of MAPE Focus on Thinking Skills. Please contact Nick Packard for further information: nick@editsite.demon.co.uk

Summer Term 2003 Modern Foreign Languages will be the theme of this publication; Barry Wake, who has just edited From Home to School, will be in charge of this publication: BarWake@aol.com

If you would be interested in contributing to any of these please contact the guest editor or MAPE Publications Co-ordinator: rhona.dick@blueyonder.co.uk

MAPE Council has decided that in future many of the illustrations in our publications will be in colour.

Regional News

Cheryl Granville is starting up a regional group in and around Cambridgeshire. If you are interested or would like more information you can contact Cheryl by email at: cheryl.granville@ntlworld.com

or write to her at:

1 The Paddock, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 1TP

Scottish News

Last November MAPE Scotland held the annual Conference in Dundee where we always get a welcome and support from Northern College. The workshops and presentations were many and varied, covering many aspects of ICT within the Scottish 5–14 curriculum plus ones covering pre5 and special needs. The presenters were mainly practising teachers or seconded teachers who brought a wealth of first-hand experience which they readily shared. Thanks to some very generous donations of software from Crick Software, Softease and Sherston we were able to have a prize draw after the AGM – I've never seen so many folk at an AGM! For the first time we were truly an international conference as we had a visitor from Victoria, Australia – Wendy Worrell. Wendy gave delegates an overview of ICT within her area and of the work done at computer and technology centre where she is based. She also gave us a different meaning to Victorian schools and Victorian teachers! Feedback from the conference was very positive and, as usual, delegates had thoroughly enjoyed the day and I quote, 'Well worth giving up a Saturday for!'

Following the Conference we have been able to recruit some fresh, new faces to the committee. Welcome to Mary, Jeannie, Wendy and Andrew. Welcome back to Nina Fugaccia who has been a stalwart of the committee and conferences over a number of years. We will be putting them to work shortly preparing for the next conference and supporting MAPE members in their local area.

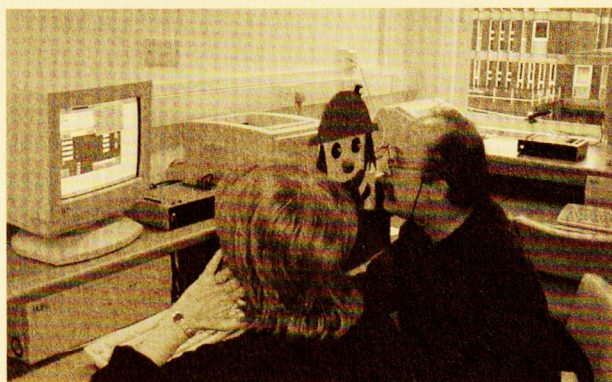
West Midlands MAPE

West Midlands Region – **MMM (Micros, Movement and Models)** – February 2001

This was an all day event to look at a range of control software and hardware. Everybody seemed to learn something from the day. The main software used was 'Control 95' from Deltronics (Tel. 01269 843728).



Wendy (on the left), our Australian visitor, discovering the delights of Clicker 4.



Delegates were able to construct moving models that could be controlled via the interface.

Many thanks to committee members who helped to support delegates and who got all of the facilities ready for the day.

On Saturday 1st July 2000 a group of people attended a morning's session on **Web Publishing**.

The group were given guidance in using either AOL Press or Microsoft Front Page.

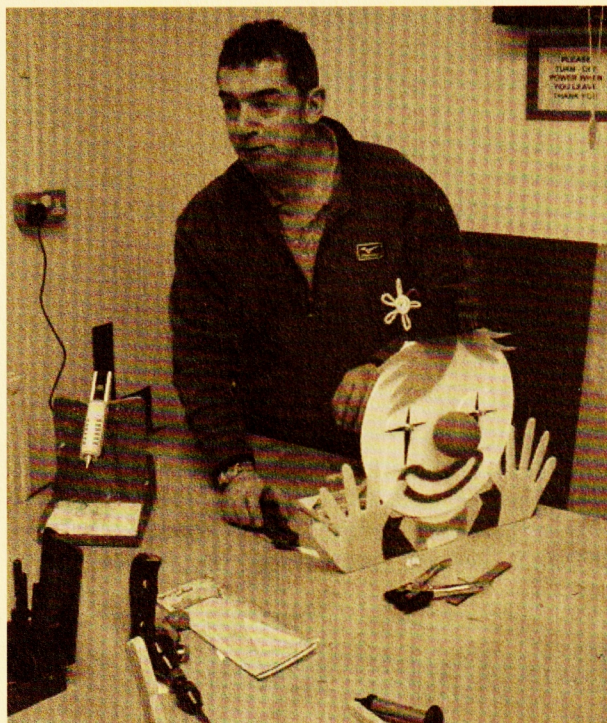
Roger explained the different stages in producing a good web site. The key areas were:

- Web design
- Preparation of content
- Using technical skills to produce the site
- Uploading the site to an ISP

Microsoft Front Page

This session was led by Angella Streluk and Alan Rodgers.

Delegates practised building a web site from scratch.



They used the wizards and themes supplied by the program. This helped to produce an instantly professional-looking site.

News from the North East

An Internet day had been planned for March, but this clashed with a two day event planned by Northern Grid, so our Internet day has been postponed.

The Chris Robson Memorial Prize

Steve Bailey and Sally Smith

Choosing this year's Chris Robson memorial prize-winner was not an easy task. First there was reading a whole year's worth of articles. The quality was excellent and there were many examples of good classroom practice, and plenty of ideas to use. We were both inspired by what we read and have used some of the activities with our classes already. So deciding which of the articles was to win was difficult.

'Spreadsheets – less headache, more understanding', by Tomas Smith, which originally appeared in the MAPE Focus on Maths, tackles a difficult area that teachers regularly ask for help with. He has produced a clear series of

activities that develop the children's knowledge and understanding of spreadsheets and the teacher's confidence in their use. We liked the versatility; the activities can be used with any spreadsheet, making it accessible for all teachers and children. It would be interesting to hear from anyone who has used the ideas in the article, and how they moved on from the basic ideas.

Well done Tomas, a very interesting and useful article.

Tom was presented with his prize, a certificate and a cheque for £250 at the MAPE conference held at Newman College, Birmingham, on April 7th 2001.

Correspondence to the Editor: Rhona Dick, MAPE Publications, 121 Fitz Roy Avenue, Harborne, Birmingham B17 8RG.

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