REVIEWS

THE LLTI LISTSERVER: A World-Wide Electronic Bulletin Board for Lab Directors

by Read Gilgen
University of Wisconsin

The Language Learning Technology International list server (bulletin board) has been announced in earlier editions of this journal. It operates out of Dartmouth and is run by Otmar Foelsche, Joel Goldfield, and Kurt Fendt. The following are excerpted and/or edited messages (used with permissions) from the first few of months of operation. As you will note, the messages and responses tend to be practical and timely (and also informal). And even if you don't yet have a question, many of the answers tend to be informative at the very least.

Unfortunately we can't print all of the messages here. If you have connections to your university's Internet or BitNet (see your campus computing center for details) then you can send and receive messages that are inexpensive (if not free) and quick. We encourage our members to take advantage of this valuable service. We also thank the system operators (Otmar, Joel, and Kurt) for their efforts.

GETTING STARTED WITH LLTI

LLTI is a moderated listserver and messages will not automatically be posted. Current moderators are Otmar Foelsche. Kurt Fendt, Joel Goldfield.

To subscribe (i.e. all messages posted will also be forwarded to you), send an electronic message to:

LISTSERV@DARTCMS1.BITNET
(If your connection is via BitNet)

LISTSERV@DARTCMS1.DARTMOUTH.EDU
(If your connection is via the Internet)

In this first message, you can ignore the subject line, and then on the first (and only!) line of your message, include the following command and information:

SUB LLTI firstname lastname

After you are notified (from Dartmouth) that you have been added to the list of subscribers to LLTI, then you post messages by sending electronic mail to LLTI@DARTCMS1.BITNET or LLTI@DARTCMS1.DARTMOUTH.EDU. Messages are reviewed and then posted by one of the three LLTI operators.

In order to help everyone know who you are, it is useful to conclude your messages with your name (and email and university addresses, etc., if you so desire)

If you want to know more about LLTI send an electronic message to listserv@dartcms1 with the command REVIEW LLTI as the one and only line of the message. If you have any problems, send mail directly to Otmar.Foelsche@mac.dartmouth.edu

EQUIPMENT NEEDED (*Although not many messages were posted regarding needed equipment, this could be an excellent forum for quickly matching those needing and those having used equipment*)

Read Gilgen is Director of L & S Learning Support Services at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Editor-in-Chief of the IALL Journal.

Reviews

Date: Thu, 8 Nov 90 15:30:27 LCL
From: Ruth Trometer (M.I.T.)
Subject: Tandberg 5500/IS8

We need 10-20 of the student control boxes (or the main board from this box) for the Tandberg 5500 series - the IS8 system. If anyone is getting rid of Tandberg IS8 equipment, we would be interested in purchasing these.
Ruth Trometer
(rmtromet@EAGLE.MIT.EDU)

Date: Mon, 28 Jan 91 08:34:16 LCL
From: Irene Starr
Subject: Beta Tapes

I am writing because I have beta video tapes to give away. If anyone can use them, please contact
Irene Starr@langlab.umass.edu.
If anyone needs beta 1 tapes copied to vhs, 3/4", or 8mm, I have the equipment.

This bulletin board is interesting. Thanks. Irene Starr

EQUIPMENT   RECOMMENDA-TIONS *(Several "threads" or topics revolved around specific equipment considerations. One such thread concerned recommendations for videodisc players. Often no conclusions are reached, but current users can offer their experiences so those looking can make informed decisions.)*

Date: Tue, 27 Nov 90 08:06:05 LCL
From: Mike Ledgerwood
Subject: Videodisc Players

In the process of ordering equipment for our new lang. lab, I have been asked to get Sony videodisc players instead of Pioneer 4200. I have been told the Sony is a better machine and more reliable.

I wonder 1) if this is true and 2) if the interactive video software a lot of you are developing would work with the Sony?

LEDGERWOOD@RHODES.BITNET

Date: Tue, 27 Nov 90 12:01:06 LCL
From: Otmar Foelsche (Dartmouth)
Subject: Videodisc Players

Some users report that their experience with the Pioneer 4200 and the Sony 2000 has been satisfactory. The Sony 2000 appears to be a more "industrial grade" machine, and is slightly faster, at a higher price.

LLTI cannot endorse a specific product. But LLTI will post problems with certain products. In this case, there is no negative feedback on either machine (if you know of any problems, send them to LLTI!). The purchasing decision should depend on a careful evaluation of the local needs and service availability for the type of machine to be considered.

Otmar Foelsche

Date: Tue, 27 Nov 90 12:23:01 LCL
From: Robert Henderson (Pitt)
Subject: Re: videodisc players

In response to Ledgerwood, there doesn't seem to be much difference between the SONY and the Pioneer 4200 in terms of quality. Whether or not given software would work depends not on the videodisc player but on the computer being used to control it. By the way, there's a new Pioneer 8000 videodisc player that allows you to use CLV discs (which includes most commercial discs...movies, etc.) as well as the usual CAV format, but the 8000 is a good bit more expensive than other Pioneer models.
—RTH@PITTVMS

Date: Tue, 27 Nov 90 12:58:31 LCL
From: Joel Goldfield (Duke/North Carolina)
Subject: RTH@PITTVMS' reply on Pioneer 8000

Most industrial quality videodisc players allow both CAV and CLV use. The Pioneer 8000 has other distinguishing features, such as .5 second maximum random access time, ability to digitize a full-motion

frame into a buffer, continue displaying it and allow random access of either audio channel simultaneously. I'm using it for courseware design in French at the moment. —Joel G.

Date: Tue, 27 Nov 90 13:06:46 LCL
From: Otmar Foelsche (Dartmouth)
Subject: dual standard videodisc players

Our experience with Pioneer 4200 and 6000A has been good. We are running several of these machines in the Language Resource Center here at Dartmouth.

Language Laboratories should be careful in purchasing just NTSC machines. Sony builds a dual standard machine (#3000) (PAL/NTSC) which could be a useful item around for videodiscs coming from European sources. Obviously you will need a monitor or television set capable of displaying PAL and NTSC to make these things go.

Otmar Foelsche

Date: Tue, 27 Nov 90 13:18:34 LCL
From: Tom Browne (Macalester)
Subject: Re: videodisc players

BROWNE@MACALSTR.EDU

I can't give you a definitive answer on the Sony vs Pioneer machines. I think both are good. My experience is that most schools use the Pioneer and I have not heard about anybody having a lot of trouble with them. Many people just prefer anything that says Sony on it. Sony makes good equipment and it is a reliable name. I still like the Pioneer.

My software should run on either machine... I just looked in the Voyager VideoStack manual. It says the Sony players will not play in reverse, not play multiple chapters, and on CLV discs not pause at the end of a motion sequence. The manual is a couple of years old and these problems may have been fixed. My software does not use these features at this time, I don't know if other packages might. Anyway, I should

be able to set up my Tele-Douzaine software for either machine. I say should because when I tried briefly at the Calico '90 conference, I couldn't get it to work. It could be that I didn't have all the information I needed at that time. Voyager has a new version of the VideoStack software out that may also solve my problems.

Let me know what you finally decide. -Tom

Date: Tue, 27 Nov 90 13:24:26 LCL
From: Joel Goldfield (Duke/North Carolina)
Subject: Query about the Sony 2000 vs. Pioneer 4200

Just a quick comment on the Sony 2000 vs. Pioneer 4200, aside from access times & features: the Humanities Computing Facility at Duke has both. One of 2 Sony players broke down after 6 mos. and has been out for repairs for the past three weeks. The Pioneer 4200 has never failed.

Date: Thu, 29 Nov 90 21:00:48 LCL
From: Mike Ledgerwood
Subject: thanks from Ledgerwood

I just want to express my thanks to everyone who replied so quickly and helped me get out of a tight spot. You guys are great.

SERVICE/PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS (*In addition to hardware, software and services are also of concern. Several messages dealt with language-specific software, such as Chinese programs that would run on AT&T 6300 computers, or Russian character sets for the Mac. The following thread concerns an alternative foreign language satellite source.*)

Date: Wed, 28 Nov 90 14:33:56 LCL
From: Marta Lipski (Brandeis)
Subject: International Channel

LIPSKI@BRANDLOG.BITNET

Would anyone have any comments about the International Channel (FL satellite service) as to quality of their programming, and dependability of the service? I am trying to get our local cable channel to carry it, and any ammunition would be welcome.

Date: Thu, 29 Nov 90 08:06:11 LCL
From: Joel Goldfield (Duke/North Carolina)
Subject: International Channel

In reply to Marta Lipski's query about the International Channel,

Perhaps our satellite TV & lang. lab director, Pegge Abrams, knows something about this. You can reach her at 919-684-2857 or 3767. Duke seems big on SCOLA, however.

Date: Thu, 29 Nov 90 08:08:19 LCL
From: Otmar Foelsche (Dartmouth)
Subject: International Channel

Our Arabic department finds the material in Farsi and Arabic interesting and useful. We are not subscribers. We had received permission to look for one week.

Date: Thu, 29 Nov 90 08:09:27 LCL
From: Sharon G. Scinicariello (Case Western Reserve Univ)
Subject: Re: International Channel

The International Channel was discussed at the October MWALL meeting. You might contact Ginger Vehaskari at Washington University, St. Louis. Read Gilgen might also be able to give you the names of those who said something about it. *(Editor's note: UW-Madison does subscribe. Contact Chick Mitchell at 608-262-4965 for more information.)*

Sharon G. Scinicariello, Director of Foreign Language Studies
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, CWRU   sgs3@po.cwru.edu

Date: Thu, 29 Nov 90 09:25:21 LCL
From: Michael Zimmerman (Amherst)
Subject: RE: INTERNATIONAL CHANNEL

Amherst College received permission to tape and broadcast the International Channel for 1 week to evaluate the programs. The signal was never good enough to make a recording worth keeping. Their strength is in giving live programs to the Asian and Middle East communities. For more details and full program contact their Eastern representative at (213) 826-2429.
Michele Zimmerman
MEZIMMERMAN@AMHERST.BITNET

Date: Thu, 29 Nov 90 13:42:42 LCL
From: Otmar Foelsche (Dartmouth)
Subject: International Channel

I have taken the liberty to edit several responses re: International Channel.

1. from   Michele   Zimmerman   at   MEZIMMERMAN@AMHERST.BITNET

The East Coast representative is Karen Livingston, she can be reached at (617) 566-4441. The Head office is in California at (213) 826-2429.

2. from   Carmen   Greenlee   at   CGREENLEE@BOWDOIN.EDU

Give me a call if you'd like to talk about the International Channel. I have had some experience with it, both good and bad.
Phone: 207-725-3286 or
cgreenlee@james.bowdoin.edu

Carmen Greenlee, Language Media Center, Bowdoin College