

## ON THE NET

### Internet Television News in the Classroom

#### TF1: Improved Features Make Sites More Useful

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Truly current, up-to-the-minute video by native speakers using the language for real communication can make the language and culture come alive for students. With the explosion of broadband Internet access through cable and DSL, better connections in schools, faster low cost computers, and better graphics adapters, access to authentic video on the Internet is approaching the promise of usable digital video for the language teacher. As more end-users get fast Internet access, media companies are targeting their video to these markets. Faster computers along with this fast connection have managed to improve quality through better use of compression. Also, newer video cards help speed the display of smooth, clear video while offering TV-out and full screen modes, providing more flexibility for the teacher. But the technology is just the first step. The design features of a media site can go a long way towards making video pedagogically usable. There are many television sites around the world that offer streaming video, especially for news programming. The French television channel, TF1, broadband video news site



<http://hautdebit.tf1.fr/hautdebit/newsjt/>

is an example of a well thought out presentation whose features help the language teacher use the video in a sound lesson. We will examine the features of the site and suggest ways that they can be best used, here as well as on other television sites around the world, to maximize the benefit for the teacher and students.

Media companies of this sort frequently redesign their Web sites for technical or advertising purposes, so one can expect that the main TF1 entry page, <http://www.tf1.fr/>, will be more stable than sub-pages such as their broadband video page. This is good to remember for the day the site changes, possibly right before a lesson! As it is currently configured, the broadband video page offers access to the TV News video, including current events, sports, weather, reports on holidays, arts, and music -- everything that one can expect to find in the news. But the site also has links to separate pages for astrology, the stock market, cinema, music, shopping, sports, travel, advertising, and even pages that a teacher might prefer to avoid, such as the "Sexy" link.



The screenshot shows the TF1.fr website interface. At the top left is the TF1.fr logo. A banner advertisement reads "ça vous dit de gagner un juke box MP3 avec MSN Messenger?". Below this is a navigation menu with categories: Accueil TF1, Astro, Bourse, Cinéma, Haut Débit, Jeux, Communiquez, Mobiles, Musique, News, Plurielles, Recherche, Rencontres, Services, Sexy, Shopping, TF1, La Chaîne, Sports, TFOU, Vidéos, Webcams. To the right of the menu are links for "Infos trafic" and "Météo". Below the menu is a search bar with the text "RECHERCHER une vidéo HD par mot clé :". To the right of the search bar is a "CHAINES LIVE" section with links for "La Ferme Célébrités Live 22h/24", "LCI LCI, la chaîne info 24h/24", and "tout sport". The main content area is titled "NEWS" and features a large graphic for "13 HEURES 20" (Le Journal Télévisé) with the text "Retrouvez la dernière édition du JT.". Below this are two news items: "Irak : pas de nouvelles du journaliste Alexandre Jordanov" and "Irak : nouveaux enlèvements d'étrangers". At the bottom of the page is a navigation bar with links: "» Accueil HD", "» Ushuaïa", "» Musique", "» Cinéma", "» News", "» Jeux", "» Sport".

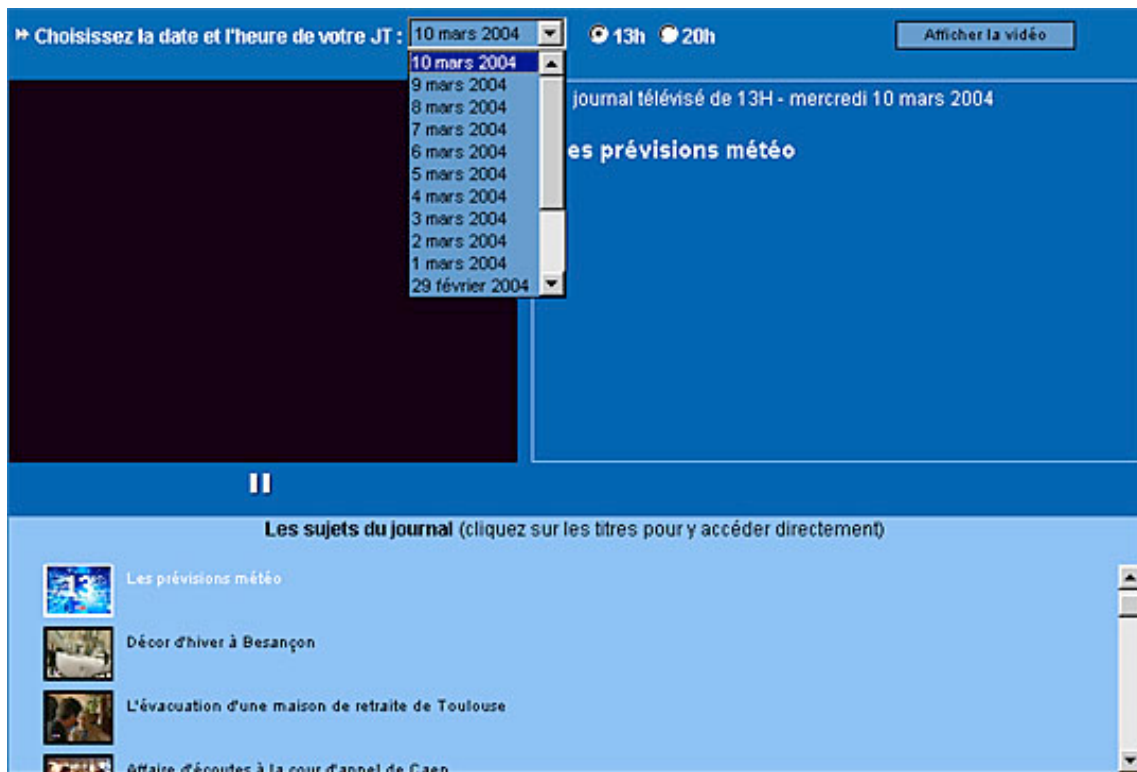
A wide variety of language and culture is available through this relatively condensed interface. The link to the news videos dominates the page, making it easy to locate in a hurry, and links to other videos scroll across the bottom of the page for leisurely browsing.

### Technical Features

The many video streams on the site are available in Windows Media or RealPlayer format and in small or large size. This variety makes it possible for the individual to select the best format for the computer system and connection speed being used or simply make a choice based on personal preference or on the particular features of the chosen software.

Options are also presented for accessing particular video segments. The news programs for both the afternoon and evening broadcasts can be accessed for any day in the past two weeks, as can be seen in the upper panel below. This allows a teacher the

time to choose an interesting news story, design a lesson plan, develop materials, and prepare the students before the video disappears forever. It has been rare on video sites for such video archives to be maintained long enough to allow teachers to carefully prepare lessons in this way.



Another valuable feature is the ability to access individual news stories just by clicking on the topic, as shown in the lower panel above, much as one can jump to the separate chapters of a DVD. This segmentation of the news program makes it possible to locate a particular news story without wasting time searching through the video and to easily and quickly replay a segment from the beginning, as often as desired for intensive study. In the evening news for March 23, for example, the program was divided

into 23 separate segments. One may also prefer to view the entire news program from start to finish for more extensive viewing.

Some teachers prefer to take advantage of the TV-out feature of many of today's video cards to make a copy of a segment to VHS videocassette. Generally these use a video overlay technology to send the video out as a full screen TV image. A VHS backup avoids the potential drawbacks of technical problems preventing online access when it is needed in class. In addition, the teacher might not have adequate Internet access in the classroom or may simply wish to have a backup in a different medium -- to keep on reserve for absent students, for example. This quick access to individual news items also simplifies the task of setting up the connection and cueing the video segment in just the right location and at the right time for recording.

## Print Media

Printed news stories appear on the site as well: <http://news.tfl.fr/news/>. These cover a wide range of topics including, of course, the same topics found in the video news. For this reason, the printed material can serve as an additional pedagogical support for pre-viewing activities or vocabulary building. Careful adaptation of the print material into advance organizers may help prepare students for the video segments, which can be far too challenging if the students' level and familiarity with the content are not taken into account when designing activities. These pages can also provide additional background information, taking both students and teachers beyond the content of the video segments.

**Les NEWS** Vous êtes ici: Accueil > News Mardi 23 mars - Mise à jour : 23h25

**ACCUEIL NEWS**  
 ECONOMIE  
 FRANCE  
 MONDE  
 BOURSE  
 SPORTS  
 MULTIMEDIA  
 PEOPLE  
 INSOLITE  
 SCIENCES

**1 SMS GRATUIT PAR JOUR**  
 Cliquez ici

**Flash Shopping**  
 Yves Rocher: Nouvelle boutique Minceur à partir de 4,90 euros  
 Vepe.net.com: Spécialiste Multimédia: découvrez nos promotions  
 Région par région, quel second tour?  
 metro: Téléchargez votre quotidien gratuit au format PDF  
 A VOTRE AVIS: Selon vous, le sort du gouvernement est-il lié au résultat du second tour des Régionales?

**Listes bouclées pour le second tour**

UDF et UMP présenteront des listes unies dans six régions, dont l'Île-de-France, au second tour des régionales.  
 Mais aucun accord n'a pu être trouvé en Franche-Comté, Languedoc-Roussillon, Bourgogne et Basse Normandie.  
 Pour sa part, la gauche a réalisé l'union partout sauf en Midi-Pyrénées et en Champagne-Ardenne.

**A voir aussi**  
 Les listes après fusion pour le second tour (23/03/2004)  
 Régionales: le point sur les fusions... et sur les désaccords (23/03/2004)

**LE FOCUS**  
**Pourquoi Yassine, pourquoi maintenant ?**  
 Ariel Sharon a personnellement supervisé l'assassinat du chef spirituel du Hamas, qui était l'un des farouches ennemis d'Israël. Mais plusieurs raisons stratégiques ont également présidé à sa décision.  
 Par Léonard VINCENT

**Régionales 2004**  
**FIL NEWS**  
 21h25 Le président allemand Johannes Rau annule une visite à Djibouti pour cause de menaces d'attentats  
 Lire tout le fil news

**Perpétuité pour le meurtrier d'Anna Lindh**  
 Mijailo Mijailovic, reconnu coupable et pénalement responsable du meurtre de la ministre suédoise, a été condamné mardi à la prison à vie.

**FLASH VIDEO**  
**Abdelaziz al-Rantissi, nouveau leader du Hamas**  
 Reportage sur la "brigade anti-drogue" à la frontière franco-espagnole  
 Le rôle des soldats français de l'Otan en Afghanistan  
 Frédéric Bourdin, profession: imposteur

**L'CI LIVE** TOUS LES JT EN VIDEO  
**24H EN IMAGES**  
**Au coeur d'une comète**

**FRANCE**  
**Terrorisme** - Lettres de menaces aux ambassades françaises  
**Justice** - Emile Louis confronté à sa fille

**MONDE**  
**Russie** - Bisbille nucléaire dans la marine  
**PO** - Israël va poursuivre les "liquidations"  
**USA** - Les révélations mi-encourant Bush

### **Options for Use in the Classroom**

Many different types of activities may be designed around authentic materials, and the National Standards for Foreign Languages clearly support such activities when they integrate the products and practices of culture leading to the understanding of cultural perspectives. Further, frequent use of authentic materials as a basis for classroom tasks prepares students to become life-long users of the language by teaching them how to access information in the language long after their studies are completed. Activities may be designed around well known pedagogical models, or they may simply serve as the starting point for class discussion in the target language.

From a purely practical point of view, Internet video sites -- either in digital format on the Web or copied onto videocassettes -- may be used with students in a number of ways:

- A teacher might make video available to students individually for access outside of class.
- Students could work in small groups or pairs in lab or at classroom stations.
- The teacher can present/project a video to the entire class, all at once or stopping frequently.
- Video copied from the Internet to a VCR can be used in all of the ways mentioned, bypassing the computer and avoiding possible network connection problems.

### **Caveat**

The Internet contains much material that may be inappropriate for children or even adult learners. Teachers have long known that sending students to the web requires paying attention to possible misuse of students' time and intentional or accidental browsing of material, er, shall we say ... not included in the lesson plan. One might expect a television news site to be fairly safe, but it always behooves us to carefully examine any site before using it in class. One of the rubrics on the TF1 site, for example, is titled "Sexy." This word itself might even prevent the entire site from being accessed on some school networks. This "Sexy" page includes a warning about adult content as the site goes beyond inappropriate, leading to erotic images and even offering pornographic films for sale. In order to use the excellent features of the site, one needs to take care to avoid allowing students to access this other area. On a school network, filters may be available to do this automatically and local tech support might be able to help. The teacher may also avoid problems by carefully selecting a safe entry point URL, if possible directing students to pages that do not contain links to those places one might not wish students to go.

### **Conclusion**

We want our students to be able to work with authentic materials and receive comprehensible target language input as often as possible. In addition, the National Standards charge us with integrating cultural products, practices, and perspectives throughout our curricula. Internet television news offers an excellent opportunity to achieve these goals by accessing current, timely, and interesting news stories from target language cultures that will be meaningful to our students. With purposeful planning and the use of broadband technologies, our "textbooks" can extend to "the world today."