

e-Update July 2009

Welcome to the 52nd edition of e-Update, the monthly electronic bulletin from the Buckinghamshire ICT Curriculum Support Team.

The purpose of this bulletin is to keep you informed with the latest developments in ICT.

Note: There will be no e-Update published in August.

The information in e-Update has been taken from Becta and other information sources. Details on how to subscribe to these can be found at the end of e-Update.

For information on how to subscribe to/ unsubscribe from e-Update, please see the section towards the end of e-Update.

e-Update can also be found on the Buckinghamshire ICT Curriculum Support Team's website at <http://www.bucksict.org.uk/e-update/> and on the Buckinghamshire Grid for Learning website at <http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk/resources/course/view.php?id=126>.

If you have any comments on e-Update, please send them to adickson@buckscc.gov.uk.

Jaguar Cars Maths in Motion Challenge 2009/10 in Buckinghamshire

Andy Dickson, ICT Consultant

The Jaguar Cars Maths in Motion Challenge has now become well established in the calendars of many schools across the UK as a way of engaging children of all ages in an exciting and motivating mathematics based project that is suitable for all ages from 10 upwards.

The Challenge is based on Cambridgeshire Software House's 'Cars Maths in Motion' software and is sponsored by Jaguar, Cambridgeshire Software House, iDesk, Quizdom, Rapid, Alta, Rewards4Schools, Stemnet and Wildern School.

The Challenge involves students, aged 10 to 16, working together in small teams to try and set up a race between virtual Grand Prix cars using tried and tested motor racing simulation software. The work needed to do this can be undertaken in a series of maths lessons or as part of a maths club activity - it's up to you! Both boys and girls will become involved in the delights of long division, long multiplication, percentages, scale, the measuring of angles with protractors, ratio and a whole lot more besides. A full list of what is covered can be found on the Challenge website <http://www.mathschallenge.co.uk>.

The aim of the Challenge is to help raise standards of achievement in mathematics in all schools and to demonstrate that mathematics is not only a useful skill to have but one that can be fun and stand students in good stead throughout life. The 2009/10 Challenge is open to any school in either the State or Independent sectors. There are three age ranges in the 2009/10 Challenge:

Age Range 1: Any child of Primary School age.

Age Range 2: Any child in years 7, 8 and 9.

Age Range 3: Any child in years 10 and 11.

The Challenge is run through a national network of Lead Centres. The ICT Curriculum Support Team is the Lead Centre for Buckinghamshire Schools.

Each participating school, whether Primary or Secondary, will run a series of internal races to find its own winner who will take part in a Buckinghamshire knockout round in March 2010. Schools that make it through the knockout round will meet in April 2010 for the Buckinghamshire Final. The Buckinghamshire primary, KS3 and KS4 winners will then race with other LA winners in the national semi-final knockout round to determine which schools are invited to take part in the National Final in June 2010.

A leaflet with information on the Maths Challenge including pricing and an order form for the Cars: Maths in Motion software is available here:

<http://www.bucksict.org.uk/Teacher%20Resources/CarsMIM.htm>

<http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk/resources/course/view.php?id=127>

Any Buckinghamshire schools who would like to be involved in the Maths Challenge should contact Andy Dickson, tel. 01296 334994, email adickson@buckscc.gov.uk

Cars: Maths in Motion training for schools

Andy Dickson, ICT Consultant

Where: The Buckinghamshire Teaching & Learning Centre

When: 25th September 2009, 9.30am-12.30pm (registration and coffee from 9.15am)

Session Leaders: Brian & Wendy Richardson. Brian & Wendy are partners in Cambridgeshire Software House and Brian is the co-creator of the Cars: Maths in Motion software.

Who Should Attend: Schools who have purchased or will be purchasing the latest version of Cars: Maths in Motion and are participating in the Jaguar Cars Maths in Motion Challenge 2009/10.

What You Can Expect: This hands-on course will show teachers how to use the Cars: Maths in Motion software. There will be discussions on how to use this with children and how the Jaguar Cars Maths in Motion Challenge works.

Note: The course is **free of charge** to Buckinghamshire LA schools providing that they submit an entry into the Jaguar Cars Maths in Motion Challenge 2009/10. **Schools that do not submit an entry will be subsequently charged for the course at the standard LA rate.**

How to apply: Please complete an application form, which is available from Karen Fagan, ICT Curriculum Support Team, Teaching & Learning Centre, Ellen Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP21 8EF. If you have any queries, please telephone 01296 334994 or email kafagan@buckscc.gov.uk.

Discounted Software

Andy Dickson, ICT Consultant

The ICT Curriculum Support Team has partnership agreements with the BLi Group (TAG, SEMERC, Sherston, Busy Brains and Economatics), 2Simple Software, Softease and Crick Software.

Software from the companies above can be purchased through the ICT Curriculum Support at an amazing **20% discount!!**

The ICT Curriculum Support Team can only supply software to Buckinghamshire LA schools.

To find out the products available and the prices **before** discount, please visit the websites:

BLi Group <http://www.blieducation.com>

SEMERC <http://www.semerc.com>

Busy Brains <http://www.busybrains.com>

2Simple <http://www.2simpleshop.com>

Economatics <http://www.economatics-education.co.uk>

TAG <http://www.taglearning.com>

Sherston <http://www.sherston.com>

Softease <http://www.softease.com>

Crick <http://www.cricksoft.com/uk>

To order software from these companies, please contact Karen Fagan on 01296 334994.

BucksGfL Learning Portal (BLP) – project update and an invitation!

Mike Woods, ICT Adviser

The story so far.....

Why are we developing the BLP system?

The DfES e-strategy document "Harnessing Technology: Transforming Learning and Children's Services" describes the use of digital and interactive technologies to achieve a more personalised approach within all areas of education and children's services. It identifies how we should harness technology such as Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) and e-Portfolios to satisfy the educational needs of children, learners, parents, teachers, carers and employers. In addition, the DCSF "Online Reporting" initiative requires parents to have secure, online access to information on their child's progress, achievement,

attendance, behaviour and special educational needs, when and from wherever they please. This Online Reporting requirement has to be achieved by 2010 in secondary schools and 2012 in primary schools.

In response to these initiative, the Buckinghamshire 'e-Learning' Strategy' encompasses the development of the BucksGfL Broadband Network and the deployment of our 'Moodle' based VLE which enables schools to manage learning content and resources and share these both within the school and also with the wider community. In addition, our vision provides for the deployment of a personalised on-line learning space, or e-Portfolio system. However, we recognise that any system we develop must be able to 'interact' and transfer data with other software platforms commonly in use in schools (e.g. MIS systems such as Capita SIMS) and also comply with Online Reporting requirements. Six months ago we instigated phase 1 of the **BucksGfL Learning Portal (BLP)** pilot as a means of providing a system for schools that not only complies with all DCSF requirements but also provides a range of extra features to support management, learning and teaching.

The BucksGfL Learning Portal (BLP) is designed to provide schools with an online 'Portal' through which users will be able to access their VLE and E-portfolio space. Among other features BLP will also allow teachers, pupils and parents to access information about learners and monitor their progress.

BLP is FREE for all BucksGfL schools.

Progress to date:

The BucksGfL Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is based on Moodle, possibly the most widely used open source VLE solution within education, and most County Schools currently use Capita 'SIMS' for their Management Information System (MIS). However, any e-Portfolio we use, while being able to interface with these systems, must also be able to do so with any other VLE or MIS chosen by a County school. To this end we investigated the utility of the government sponsored "Schools Interoperability Framework" or SIF interface (<http://uk.sifinfo.org/>), which promises to address the issue of data transfer with all commonly used VLEs and MIS systems. However, in addition to providing VLE and e-Portfolio functionality we also need to comply with the DCSF Online Reporting requirement. Unfortunately, SIF does not seem to be moving towards successful implementation within a satisfactory timeframe and we are therefore implementing a more proprietary system based on Microsoft "SharePoint" technology, whilst still hoping for a SIF based system to evolve at a later date.

Why use SharePoint?

Capita Education Services in partnership with Microsoft, have developed SIMS Learning Gateway, a solution that allows teachers, pupils and parents to access information about learners and monitor their progress. SIMS Learning Gateway is a SharePoint based system which allows schools to make available to parents pupil information held in their SIMS.net Management Information Systems via a secure website and thereby satisfy the DCSF requirements for 'Online Reporting'. Around 98 percent of Buckinghamshire schools currently use SIMS to record information about pupils such as assessment results and attendance information and SharePoint allows this information to be securely published on the web without the need for school staff to possess complex technical skills.

For example:

- Standard user interfaces are available as part of the system but greater personalisation can be added for particular schools or groups of users.
- Parents can access information such as the attendance records, assessment scores and home work diaries for their children.
- Teachers can use the site to update test scores or homework marks via the web from home and pupils can view coursework diaries, school announcement information or personalised timetables.

Virtual Learning Environments such as Moodle can also be integrated with SharePoint so that full access is available to course work, revision materials and completed assignments from a single computer screen. This can be combined with information from SIMS, such as future targets and past achievements, providing a truly individual work space for each student which meets the objectives of the government's Harnessing Technology education white paper.

Although the pilot project (so far) has been based around working with SIMS Learning Gateway, similar integration through BLP is also possible with other MIS systems such as CMIS.

BLP is based on Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS), which enables schools to create team workspaces, coordinate calendars, organise documents and receive important notifications through

announcements and alert services, making it simpler than ever for schools to create a dynamic online interface for teachers, pupils and parents. The BLP e-Portfolio is based on a Web2.0 enabled system linked to each user's personal 1Gb online storage space which is also integrated with the central SharePoint system.

The first phase of the pilot (which began in January) has concentrated on providing access for schools to SIMS Learning Gateway, with the other elements of BLP not enabled. This approach was taken since it was judged that the major technical hurdles to be negotiated would probably come through the integration of Capita SIMS systems into BLP, not least because of the complexity of SIMS systems and the wealth of data held in many schools. Through close working with the initial pilot schools (mostly secondaries, as they have to be ready for 'Online Reporting' by 2010) several major technical difficulties have been overcome and we believe we now have a robust and effective system. Currently we have 14 secondary schools and 1 primary school using BLP, with 3 further Primary, 1 Special & 4 more Secondary schools due to come on stream in September.

These 23 pilot schools all comply with the DCSF requirements for 'Online Reporting', and we would now like to move forward and **encourage all remaining secondaries to engage with BLP as soon as possible** but we would also like to provide an open invitation to primary schools to join.

Phase 2 of the pilot – an invitation to take part in BLP

For many primary schools (especially smaller schools) a question that might be asked is: *'Why bother with BLP? I see all my parents every day at the school gate and feed back to them whenever I need to'*. In answer to this, BLP offers learners, teachers and parents much more than just 'Online Reporting'. Phase 2 of the pilot (scheduled to start in the autumn term) will provide access to the rest of the BLP features - in addition to SIMS Learning Gateway.

These extra features will include:

- Texting to Parents: Use of the latest technology to allow text messages to be sent to school staff and parents, allowing a school to send an SMS message to any registered mobile phone.
- A county wide Exchange Server: This enables schools to have 'school based' email addresses for staff and access to common calendars, allowing scheduling of meetings etc.
- Integration with the BucksGfL 'Moodle' VLE.
- Access to a range of e-portfolio tools, including 'Web 2.0' applications such as 'Honeycomb' and 'Mahara' tailored for both primary and secondary pupils (and staff).
- High Security for BLP staff log-ins: due to recent guidance on data security produced by BECTA we have arranged for the provision of 'One Time Password' tokens to be made available to schools in the BLP pilot. These are physical devices given to each member of staff and offer '2nd factor authentication' (a unique and changing pin number) in addition to the normal username and password for staff users logging in to the portal site.

We are also part of the 'Gateway to Educational Services' project; this DCSF project, which is planned to integrate with BLP in the near future, will allow access for parents to a wide range of other services such as 'Online School Admissions' and 'Online applications for free school meals'.

For many schools these 'extra' features will be at least as important (if not more so) than access to SIMS Learning Gateway, especially since many of them will be useful in learning and teaching in the classroom. However, schools will still need to engage in the process of enabling SIMS Learning Gateway, as the information needed to set up log-in details of users initially resides within each school's SIMS server.

What do I need to do to join phase 2 of the BLP pilot?

There are 3 steps to joining BLP:

1. School managers have to decide how their individual BLP implementation will be personalised, e.g. what information within their SIMS systems will be made available to parents on-line. There is a choice of what to expose, although compliance with the DCSF Online Reporting requirement must be borne in mind when making this choice.
2. Although BLP relies on a centrally maintained (and hosted) SharePoint system, schools still have responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of all data. BLP only holds log-in information about users - all assessment, attendance and behaviour information about pupils never actually leaves a school's SIMS system. It might be useful to think of BLP providing a 'web based window' for staff/parents/pupils on information held by the school and experience has shown that a certain amount of 'Data Cleansing'

needs to be carried out before BLP can be effectively utilised. This is a task for a school's SIMS administrator.

3. Each school also needs to install a small extra piece of software on their SIMS server. This is something that our engineers will perform but your network support team may also need to be involved, although for most primary schools that buy support from the IT Schools' team (BEMIST), this job will be done for them.

This sequence might seem daunting, but to help each school through this process we offer a series of 3 FREE training sessions which will address each of the areas identified above and at the end of these a school will then be ready to go 'live' with BLP.

During phase 2 of the pilot we will be investigating schools' use of the 'extra' features of BLP above and beyond SIMS Learning Gateway and tailoring the system to match need.

I would also like to remind you not only of the deadlines for the Online Reporting requirements which have to be achieved by 2010 in secondary schools and 2012 in primary schools, but also that for BucksGfL schools all the features offered within the Bucks Learning Portal are **FREE**. In addition, following on from our successful roll out of 'Moodle' training, the ICT Curriculum Support Team (based at the Teaching and Learning Centre) will be offering training to BLP schools in the use of the non-SIMS part of the portal to enable you to get maximum benefit in the classroom for all your students.

Experience has shown that it can take several months for some schools to jump through all the technical 'hoops' before they can go live with BLP and as we will need to schedule implementation over a period of time, I would ask that you register interest as soon as you can.

BLP will continue to evolve and develop over the next two years and if you would like to take part in the next phase of these exciting developments then I would ask that you contact:

Paul Fenny, BLP Project Manager (pfenny@buckscc.gov.uk) with details of your school, including the contact details for the SLT member who will have responsibility for BLP, your SIMS administrator and information about your IT network support.

Paul will then be able to let you know the dates of the next available training sessions.

Further details about our e-learning strategy and BLP can be found in the 'Broadband' section of the BucksGfL website but if you have any questions about BLP or would like to discuss any of the issues detailed above then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Mike Woods – County Adviser ICT

email: mawoods@buckscc.gov.uk phone: 0794 123 9537.

New resource to support long-term planning

Futurelab

In this world of fast technological and social change, it is hard to plan effectively for the future. Creating strong, comprehensive long-term plans requires an understanding of the potential challenges that lie ahead for education.

Vision Mapper is a free online resource that provides inspirational and practical materials including six possible future scenarios, current trends that should be considered when planning for the future and case-studies of people who have successfully embarked on long-term planning initiatives. There is also a wide range of group activities and materials that will help you to create a reliable long-term vision and strategy for your organisation.

Vision Mapper is part of [Beyond Current Horizons](#), a research programme conducted by education innovator [Futurelab](#) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

The programme explores the future of education beyond 2025 and aims to help our education system prepare for and respond to the challenges it faces as society and technology rapidly evolve.

For more information please visit <http://www.visionmapper.org.uk>.

Inspired Issue 4

Futurelab

Welcome to inspirED - a collection of news and stories to inspire anyone interested in innovative approaches to teaching and learning. The website is updated three times a year; Issue 4 is now online.

News

News stories covered in this issue include: 'Young People's Geographies', a project involving students in geography curriculum-design, the launch of BFI's Future Film Club, the Digital Britain Report, e-safety resources, and details of Futurelab's 2009 conference 'Seen and Heard: Young people creating digital media'.

Cool stuff

Track environmental issues using Twitter, multimedia resources from the Prince's Rainforests Project, a simulation of world CO2 emissions, and virtual jogging, picnics and graffiti.

Video

The Greater Expectations project explores the issues that matter to young people in their lives and learning, asking how they can feel empowered and motivated to achieve their aspirations, learn about their entitlements and create change, and examines what role digital technologies can play in that process.

<http://inspired.futurelab.org.uk>

Ictopus – July's Lessons2go

Ictopus

Ictopus (ICT online primary user support) is a support service for primary education. Anyone can sign up for the service (free of charge) and will then receive each week a six page printable magazine and a set of activity suggestions. There will also be a regular newsletter or e-bulletin. These resources (and more) will be archived on the ictopus website <http://www.ictopus.org.uk> where there will also be access to classroom activities and a variety of other resources and projects. Ictopus builds on the Becta Direct2U service and also the legacy of MAPE (Micros and Primary Education).

Login first, then access the activities via Resources and lessons2go.

Available on 1st July 2009

Here are the next Lessons2go. Two of these use interactive activities which simulate particular experiences. In the case of the science activity the children can do this alongside practical work. The history activity gives access to a wealth of resources about Egypt.

This week they have activities for the following age groups:

- Age 6 to 7: Science, Electrical circuits
Children use Yenka Basic Circuits - a piece of software that can be freely downloaded from the internet. The program provides on-screen tools which allow pupils to select basic pieces of virtual electrical equipment and connect these together in a circuit. Connections are made by clicking and dragging virtual wires between the terminals.
- Age 8 to 9: History, Unearthing tombs
In this activity children will use some interactive websites to find out about the tombs of ancient Egypt.
- Age 10 to 11: English, The Book I'm Going to Write
Children will create a book cover for an imaginary work of fiction.

Available on 8th July 2009

The next batch of lessons2go is now available. The new citizenship activity is about staying healthy. It may prove useful for any age group if there is a threat of infectious diseases in the local area. This activity completes the set, providing a citizenship activity for every year group. Although the age 9-10 activity is linked to a food technology topic, the idea of teaching how to annotate texts using MS Word could be applicable to other subjects and other year groups.

This week they have activities for the following age groups:

- Age 5 to 6: Citizenship, Staying Healthy
This new activity makes use of a website about local government. By using the section on staying healthy the children will become aware that they can make choices which help themselves and others to stay healthy. This activity may also be used for times when somebody they know is in hospital, or when there is a particular infectious illness in the area.
- Age 7 to 8: Design and Technology, Design with ICT
Here, the pupils design either a new layout for the classroom or a design for the school/local playground. The aim is to use graphical modelling software to explore alternative designs and then prepare a report recommending the most effective design. This work will need to be covered over more than one session.
- Age 9 to 10: Design and Technology, Decorating Biscuits Annotating texts
In this new activity children make use of the 'Comment' feature of MS Word to annotate a help sheet on decorating biscuits. A link to an example is included. This work incorporates literacy skills into D & T work. The method could be used to support many other areas of the curriculum and it can help to develop thinking skills.

Available on 15th July 2009

Here are the last Lessons2go for this academic year. Ictopus hope that you have found this year's offerings useful. If you have used any of the lessons and have any interesting observations on them, please do contact them.

This week we have activities for the following age groups:

- Age 6 to 7: Art and Design, The Skyline in Art
In this activity children will look at photographs and paintings of building shapes silhouetted against the skyline and consider how these can create a pleasing image. Children will discuss their opinions before using a simple paint package to create a skyline of their own.
- Age 8 to 9: Design and Technology, Catering for a Class Picnic
This activity is based around a healthy eating campaign. In particular it promotes the notion that to maintain a healthy diet it is sensible to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Age 10 to 11: Maths, Yahtzee
This lesson is based on a well-established dice game. The children play a computerised version of the game and in so doing will get a feel for probability and strategy.

Subscribing/ Unsubscribing to e-Update

Teachers in Buckinghamshire schools that are connected to BucksGfL Broadband can receive e-Update by email to their BucksGfL email address.

To subscribe:

1. Visit the BucksGfL website <http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk>.
2. Click on the **Login** link in the top right corner.
3. Login using your BucksGfL username and password (your BucksGfL username is the first part of your BucksGfL email address i.e. the bit before the @. Your password is the same as for your email).
4. In the Course Categories section on the main page, click on **ICT**, then click on **e-Update**.
5. You will be asked if you would like to enrol on the e-Update course. Choose **Yes**.

Once you are enrolled, you will be emailed each edition of e-Update to your BucksGfL email address when they are posted on the BucksGfL website.

Note: If you don't wish to use your BucksGfL email address or don't have one (i.e. your school is not connected to BucksGfL Broadband or you are outside Buckinghamshire) then e-Update will still be available to you. However, you will have to download it from the Buckinghamshire ICT Curriculum Support Team's website at <http://www.bucksict.org.uk/e-update/> or the Buckinghamshire Grid for Learning website at <http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk/resources/course/view.php?id=126>

To unsubscribe:

6. Visit the BucksGfL website <http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk>.
 7. Click on the **Login** link in the top right corner.
 8. Login using your BucksGfL username and password (your BucksGfL username is the first part of your BucksGfL email address i.e. the bit before the @. Your password is the same as for your email).
 9. In the Course Categories section on the main page, click on **ICT**, then click on **e-Update**.
 10. On the left, click on the **Unenrol me from e-Update**.
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