

schoolzone *newsletter*

educational intelligence

message from the editor..

If one of your roles as a teacher is to keep up-to-date with new education products and services, or procuring resources, then the chances are that you are familiar with some of the main education exhibitions. One of the regulars in the Schoolzone calendar, along with BETT (the biggie!), and The Education Show, is the annual SLF (Scottish Learning Festival) Conference held in Glasgow each year, which is why last week saw members from the Schoolzone team (including myself) heading off to Scotland.

Previously billed as the Scottish BETT, this year's event was distinctly low key, with fewer publishers and suppliers exhibiting than in previous years, and fewer teachers attending.

While we know that software budgets are lower than in previous years, there is a major factor in Scotland's education strategy that sets it apart from the 'harnessing technology' agenda here in England: one VLE serves all State schools in Scotland. GLOW, developed and managed by 'Learning and Teaching Scotland', also rolls out online content that has been created or adapted for the Scottish Curriculum.

The implications of this are significant, both for commercial suppliers and for teachers themselves. On the upside, schools and authorities don't need to decide which VLE (or Learning Platform) to buy into. This saves time, provides economy of scale, and means that 'interoperability' is simply not an issue - data and resources can be shared between all schools without any technical glitches.

Because the system comes already populated with teaching resources and content which are constantly updated, schools aren't faced with the problem of either 'tagging up' their own content and dropping it into their VLE, or buying commercially produced material that is compatible with their system.

Many publishers now sell directly to GLOW, which is arguably more cost-effective, and certainly saves the expense of 'packaging' content for 10 or more different VLE systems (even SCORM compliant content runs better on some VLEs than others).

All of this explains why fewer publishers are going along to exhibitions aimed at schools and fewer teachers are going to see what's on offer. Which on the one hand is very efficient and a far cry from the mixed market economy that English schools operate within.

But it does mean far less choice, for schools and for publishers and suppliers. We're about to run two syndicated research projects, both of which look at the relationship between suppliers and schools and would really value your input into both. The first looks at effective marketing channels and offers paid-for discussion panel work. The second is a survey into VLE usage. Please tell us what you think; we rely on your involvement in our research to gather valid and useful data. If you would like to comment directly, please email Melissa@schoolzone.co.uk.

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Schoolzone Evaluations

Each month we bring you the latest product evaluations created independently by Schoolzone's specially trained teachers. We have 419 current evaluations live on the site. Once a term some of the evaluations that our teachers have created are published and highlighted in 'The Independent'.

Camtasia Studio 6

Camtasia Studio 6 is a suite of applications for recording, editing and sharing videos. Camtasia Studio allows the user to record what's happening on their computer screen - cursor movements, typing - any action at all. Additionally, Camtasia Studio facilitates drawing and annotating on the screen, and adding effects to the recording.

To access this evaluation please go to:

<http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/evaluations/evaluation.asp?evalid=5066>



Schoolzone Virtual Tours

Virtual Tours are interactive demonstrations of educational content with independent reviews by UK teachers as voiceovers. All Virtual Tours are available as News Feeds and Podcasts, as well as interactive presentations.



Interactive simulations for science

These interactive simulations cover a huge range of science, maths, and technology concepts. Each comes with a guide to the age groups targeted, a brief summary of the learning objective it addresses and, for students, a more detailed explanation of the scientific ideas covered. Most simulations are aimed at the 16-19 age groups and the majority cover biology and physics concepts.

To access this virtual tour please go to:
http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/evaluations/ieval_view.asp?productcode=EDUMEDIA

Don't forget ... to have your say

Last month we asked our website users the following question...



Do you think school league tables give a true indication of your school? Of the respondents, 41% voted YES and 59% said NO.

This month we ask: **Would the Tories be better than Labour for education?**

The vote is now accessible from several pages on the site including: <http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/updates/news.asp>

Each month the Schoolzone website brings you details of events of interest to the education community:
<http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/events/index.asp>

For example:

What Makes for a Successful Geography Department?

Are you a newly appointed head of geography, or an existing head looking to further improve the standards of teaching and learning in your department? This course offers the complete guide to the running of a successful geography department.

For more information go to:

<http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/events/moredetails.asp?id=29202>

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Further details on the website
<http://www.creativeeducation.co.uk/>