

languages ICT

Languages in non-Roman scripts

School facilities

A simple rationale

Teachers need access to word-processing facilities in their language to enable them to create high-quality resources, both for use as paper-based worksheets and as interactive resources for use on a computer.

ICT offers appeal to a wider range of learning styles, through its facilities of text, image, colour, animation, audio and video, for example. It can enhance significantly whole-class teaching, through motivation, focus and/or support. It can bring the outside world into the classroom through the use of websites, video, audio or digital photographs. The **new secondary curriculum** also regards the use of ICT by pupils as a functional skill and “fundamental to learning across the curriculum”; as such it is embedded in the programme of study for modern foreign languages.

Schools should aim to give pupils access to word-processing in the language they are studying, both in lesson time and outside of lessons. Word-processing enables them to develop language through drafting on-screen and amending and refining their work to enhance its quality and accuracy. Word-processed text can be used in other programs such as PowerPoint, email and web publishing, contributing to many aspects of the languages curriculum.

Your language may be a recent addition to the subjects offered and/or you may be the only teacher. It may even be taught outside of the core curriculum, to only a small number of pupils or outside of the school day. High quality resources are important to ensure the status of your language in the eyes of pupils, parents and colleagues and, hopefully, its continuing provision. Where you are teaching your language as a community language, you may need to persuade parents of the value in their children pursuing their study; the ability to communicate with parents in their own home language via typewritten letter on school headed paper could be beneficial.

Inputting non-Roman script languages

Many schools have networks of PCs with a Microsoft Windows operating system and Microsoft Office software, which includes word-processing (Word), presentation (PowerPoint), email (Outlook) and other applications. Versions from 2000 onwards of (English) Windows and Office offer the facility to enable many non-Roman script languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, Panjabi, Russian and Urdu. Once enabled, you can use Microsoft applications in your language, without any effect on the working of the English system.

This solution is completely free-of-charge and should be the simplest option for most users. There are also a number of non-Microsoft solutions available in certain languages, some of which are low-cost or free-of-charge. Make sure that your network manager is aware of the possibilities; see the **Setting up your computer** section on the Languages ICT website.

If you cannot type directly in your language into the program you are using (e.g. PowerPoint,

in your language on the board, either with your finger or a special pen, whether labelling an image or writing sentences. The bonus of an interactive whiteboard is that you can then save your writing in electronic format. It is unlikely that there will be a handwriting recognition tool for your language, so most likely the writing will be saved as images; this means you will not be able to edit the text further once saved. However, you are still able to use a wide range of facilities offered by the software which comes with many interactive whiteboards, such as:

- labelling a picture
- dragging text to match a picture
- dragging a sentence to match another
- revealing text line by line
- annotating words in a text with colour circles and underline
- revealing parts of a text using a 'spotlight' facility

Whole-class teaching without an interactive whiteboard

If you do not have access to an interactive whiteboard, you may still be able to use a data projector, which projects anything on your computer screen onto a white surface, whether a wall, sheet, board or screen. You can then share resources with pupils which combine text, image, colour, animation, audio and video and appeal to different learning styles in a way that is not possible without ICT (certainly not combined together!) If there is no data projector available, be aware that some TV screens can be connected to a computer.

Some schools, particularly supplementary/complementary schools, may have very limited access to ICT facilities. If you have small groups, it may be possible to gather pupils around your computer for effective group teaching. You can use large-sized font to improve visibility; go to Format > Font in Word, for example, and increase the font point size. Or you can increase the percentage view on a document; go to View > Zoom and increase to 150%, for example. If you are using a web page, go to View > Text size, which will increase the size of text on many web pages (from Medium to Larger or Largest). If that does not work, try View > Full Screen. Some websites, such as the CILT website, have their own text size function.

Change Text Size



Recording and editing sound and video

Not all ICT requires the use of text. Many teachers are using audio and video technology to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their creative use of language. To create an audio file, plug a microphone into your computer and go to Start > Programs > Accessories > Entertainment > Sound Recorder. Sound Recorder comes as part of the Windows operating system and is very easy-to-use as it looks and works like a traditional tape recorder.



Sound files can then be saved and shared with others; either as stand-alone files or embedded into resources such as a PowerPoint presentation. A popular and more sophisticated alternative for sound recording and editing is the free, open source software **Audacity**.

If you have access to a digital video camera, be aware of the free Movie Maker video editing program which again comes as part of the Windows operating system. Go to Start > Programs. It is a simple program but an ideal place to start.

Do not forget the simple digital stills camera also. Photographs can be used in many ways to stimulate and illustrate teaching resources or language work by pupils.

For ideas on using audio, video and digital photos in language lessons, look at the **Technology for languages** and **Useful ICT ideas, effective language lessons** sections on the Languages ICT website.

Communicating internationally

With heightened focus in both primary and secondary curricula on intercultural understanding, it is worth investigating opportunities for pupils to communicate with native speakers in the target language country or local community, or with others studying the same language. The **Global Gateway** website from the British Council is an excellent way to find a partner school. See the **ICT international** section of the Languages ICT website for other suggestions.

If using email, explore the use of your language script in the email packages you have access to and whether your communication partner can open and read messages when they arrive the other end. If both partners are using the same Microsoft Office solution, you should be able to type and read directly from email messages. Otherwise, you could exchange messages in word-processed documents as attachments, if your word-processing packages are compatible. Some find that saving a Word document in RTF helps to avoid text turning into a nonsense of letters and symbols: go to File > Save As > Save as type – click on the downwards arrow and scroll down to Rich Text Format. Other options are to convert a Word document to PDF format using free software such as **PrimoPDF**; or to scan your written message and send it as a picture.

If your school has a video-conferencing system, ask if you can use it with your classes as you do not need any kind of special software for your language. Be aware that webcams and use of free software such as **Microsoft NetMeeting** have made video-conferencing over the web a simple and cost-effective solution. The **Global-leap** website offers useful information for schools exploring video-conferencing.

Creating interactive resources

There are still few examples of web-based interactive exercises in non-Roman script languages, but this may well change over the next few years. If you are a teacher of Arabic, Panjabi or Tamil, take a look at the **GISMO Authoring Package** for creating interactive activities in script.

It is usually possible to take advantage of matching exercises within authoring software such as **Hot Potatoes** or **TaskMagic**. Sound files can be matched with picture files or other sound files, for example. Word-processed text can be saved as an image file and matched with 'text', picture or sound files. It may even be appropriate to use a romanised version of your language, of course. Examples in Japanese can be seen on the **Katharine Lady Berkeley's School** website.

It is possible to replicate this kind of interaction, but it can be time-consuming. For example,

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in a PowerPoint presentation, you can create an interactive listening exercise by inserting a clickable sound file, a number of text or picture answers and a clickable sound file next to each to tell the pupil whether s/he is right or wrong. In a word-processed document, answers can be provided in white font, so pupils just need to highlight and change the font colour to read an answer and check whether it matches their own attempt.

Where to look

New secondary curriculum: <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk>

Languages ICT – Non-Roman scripts: www.languages-ict.org.uk/non_roman/setting.htm

Lingua: www.lingua-uk.com

Audacity: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>

Languages ICT – Technology: www.languages-ict.org.uk/technology/technology.htm

Languages ICT – Database: www.languages-ict.org.uk/useful_ideas/LinksDatabase.aspx

Global Gateway: www.globalgateway.org.uk

Languages ICT – ICT international: www.languages-ict.org.uk/ict_inter/ICT_international.htm

Primo PDF: www.primopdf.com

Microsoft Netmeeting download: www.microsoft.com/downloads

Gismo Authoring Package: <http://languages.londonmet.ac.uk/CALL/nonLatin/home.htm>

Hot Potatoes: <http://hotpot.uvic.ca/>

Global-leap: www.global-leap.com

TaskMagic: www.mdlsoft.co.uk

Links were correct at time of publication in June 2008.

School facilities

5

