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This newsletter aims to keep people informed of the progress made in the PROACTIVE project. It is a three monthly communication available both in print and digital format.

www.proactive-project.eu

ProActive's Concepts

When teachers become game designers...

In ProActive, teachers are not any more just teachers - they are also game designers. Through a creative process, they are creating their own GBL scenarios, i.e. a digital game embedded in an educational scenario, specially adapted to their teaching contexts.

Many of the successful GBL experiences have used "Commercial-Off-The-Shelf" (COTS) games, like Civilization or The Sims, which are ready to be used. Creating games can be a time-consuming task, so, **"what's the point of teachers creating their own educational games, if there are things out there ready to be used?"**

> Games created by educators are easier to integrate in the official curricula.

Mainstream games may provide valuable educational contents. However, they do not always meet teachers' expectations, as they might include misconceptions to make the games more fun. Besides, they can be difficult to align with current curricula, or do not meet educational standards. **When teachers create their own games, they can control what content is being introduced. They can profit from developing games for themselves that have direct relevance to their teaching objectives / students' profile.**

> Technical and logistical issues can also be controlled.

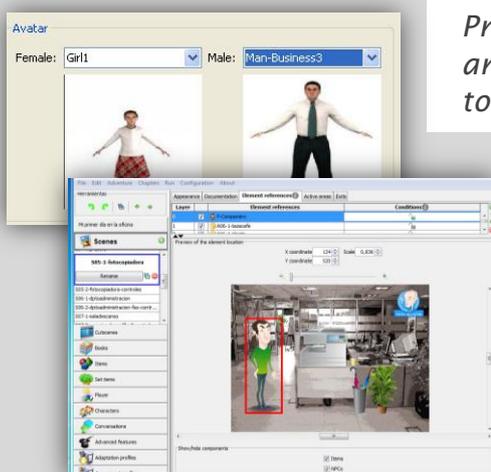
Games can demand last generation computers that are not always present in educational institutions. Moreover, educators may not have the adequate privileges / support to install them. **When teachers create their own games, they can ensure that the requirements of their own institutions or educational standards will be met.**

ProActive proposes a constructivist approach, in which teachers and trainers create their own learning games, in direct to their teaching objectives.

Approaches to Game design

There are lots of approaches to create games. Professionals usually combine complex design and artwork tools, game engines and programming skills to produce top quality games.

ProActive proposes two **game authoring tools** that are usable by teachers: **EUTOPIA** and **<e-Adventure>**. They are easy to use and do not require programming skills. Besides they include educational functionalities, such as tracking and assessment capabilities.



Ongoing Activities: Co-design workshops

More than 50 teachers have already participated in the ProActive training sessions. They have learnt about ProActive concepts, and have been provided practical training in the use of EUTOPIA and <e-Adventure>. Now, let's make games!

Spain

In Barcelona, 21 primary and secondary school teachers participated in training sessions that were conducted by the University of Barcelona (UB) in February. With the help of UB researchers, teachers are now developing their first educational games with <e-Adventure> and EUTOPIA editors. In a next stage, they will implement them within their educational settings.



Two workshops were organized in Madrid by the UCM team in December and January. Nine teachers and 18 teacher trainees working at University enjoyed two memorable sessions where they experienced <e-Adventure>. They have already started creating their games. More training sessions will be held in June in Cadiz.

Italy

ProActive in Rome...

Three workshops will be organized in Rome on March, 30, and April, 4-5. The second workshop will be delivered in close collaboration with the University of Naples (UNINA) in order to promote a dialogue on GBL between institutions from different LLP sub-programs.

... and Naples

On March 22nd, six University teachers (Pedagogy, Dynamic Psychology and History) joined a ProActive workshop in Naples. The meeting aimed to train teachers in employing the EUTOPIA game editor to empower their didactic approach.

Romania

UNIBUC organized a training session in February, gathering 10 professional trainers from CEEX Entrepreneur (entrepreneurial education), CISCO Academy (computer network courses) and ECDL Training Centre (ICT training). Most of the participants wish to improve their teaching methods and to explore the way in which they can add value to instructional process. Outcomes of the workshop include a wish list of possible GBL scenarios.

UK

On 23rd March, Malcolm Padmore from CAST led training at Tower Hamlets, London for teachers at the Phoenix School and Tower Hamlets Parents' Advisory Group.

Phoenix School

Staff from the school are really excited with the outcomes from the workshop. The three teachers featured here at a session are involved in developing training materials that will help teaching assistants to teach autistic children navigational skills. The challenge is to develop a game that will keep pupils motivated in what may seem to many of us simple tasks but which are a real problem to a significant number of autistic children.



Tower Hamlets Parents' Advisory Group

The three trainers have lost their jobs due to the cuts in local government spending. They will be giving their time free of charge to create content for games that will help train parents to cope with family breakdown. This is so that their wider work can continue. They say that the software they are developing will be of enormous benefit to the parents and their children because it can be accessed from a Parents' website. And it will be fun to use!

Next Steps



ProActive final conference: Games and Creativity in Education and training (GACET'11) – Rome, Nov. 17-18, 2011

ProActive organizes the Games&Creativity in Education and Training conference (GACET'11) which will be held in Rome November 17–18, 2011. It is a refereed scientific conference acting as a forum for scientists, engineers, and practitioners to present their latest research, results, ideas and developments on games and learning. The focus will be on the use of educational games in creative teaching methodologies.

For more information on the conference, visit: www.proactive-project.eu/conference

Calling out to all creative minds: be sure to participate in the ProActive teacher competition!

ProActive is organizing a competition for rewarding the **best game-based learning scenarios**. Winners will have the chance to **participate in the ProActive conference**. The reward includes travel, stays and entrance to the conference. All teachers / trainers that create a GBL scenario with one of the *ProActive* game editors (EUTOPIA or <e-Adventure>) can participate.

Judging criteria: The jury is composed of members of the *ProActive* consortium, who will evaluate the creativity of the game created and the educational scenario it is embedded in. The following criteria will be considered:

- › **Learning aspects:** Does the scenario answer to a clear learning objective? Is the game adapted to the specific students' profile? Is it likely that the scenario will result in good learning?
- › **Gaming aspects:** Does the game engage the player? Are the game's rules clear and consistent throughout the whole game? Is the challenge in the game appropriate?
- › **Technical aspects:** Is the game easy to use? How appropriate are the graphics for the target group? Can the game be used in different contexts without the need of complex modifications?

▶▶ To participate, you should get in touch with the institution of *ProActive* you are in contact with, so to be informed of the conditions of participation, or visit www.proactive-project.eu

Dissemination Activities

Education 2.0

ProActive has been promoted in Education 2.0, a relevant online network where teachers who use technologies in their educational practices can share their experiences. A brief article on *ProActive* has been published on the Education 2.0 website in Italian language.

A new related publication

A paper by Malcolm Padmore about the *ProActive* project is due to be published in the Journal of Gaming and Virtual Worlds in Spring 2011, entitled '*Gaming in education – a Trojan mouse?*'

ProActive at EDUCON 2011

Javier Torrente, from the Complutense University of Madrid, will be representing the *ProActive* project in the International Conference of Engineering Education that will be held in Amman (Jordan) during the first week of April.

SPECIAL FOCUS: <e-Adventure>



<e-Adventure> is an **educational game authoring** platform centered in the creation of **point-and-click adventure games and simulations**. In these games, which are fully **2D**, the player explores the game world using the mouse. When the mouse pointer is over an interactive element (e.g. a character the player can talk to) visual feedback is provided. Then the player can trigger the interaction (e.g. start a conversation) by clicking the mouse. The range of games that can be created with <e-Adventure> is heterogeneous, ranging from simple drill and practice games to rich adventure games. <e-Adventure> provides teachers with a **user-friendly** game editor that allows them to define the characters, items, and scenes that will compose the game. Then they also define how they are linked within the game.

Besides, <e-Adventure> games can be delivered through a wide set of e-Learning platforms like **Moodle™** or **Sakai™** which can also establish an active communication with the games. This is useful to **exchange information for assessment and debriefing**.



<e-Adventure> is free and open source. Try it out!
<http://e-adventure.e-ucm.es>.

The next issue of the newsletter will focus on the EUTOPIA game editor.

Learn more about <e-Adventure>, GBL, and other stuff on our website.
▶▶ Visit www.proactive-project.eu

MEET OUR TEAM

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