

Language Learning Center
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POLYGLOT

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Inside this Issue of POLYGLOT

**New at the LLC: Videoconferencing
and a Plasma Screen (p. 1)**

LLC seeks students/alumni for advisory board (p. 1)

Tips on viewing web pages with Unicode fonts (p. 2)

**A View from the Window:
Our window staff share their experiences (p. 3)**

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<http://depts.washington.edu/llc/main/polyglot/index.html>

News and Information from the Language Learning Center

POLYGLOT

Volume 3, Autumn Issue
November, 2004

We at the LLC want to partner with you to develop effective multi-media language learning materials and to ensure the pedagogically sound integration of technology into the language classroom. We welcome your ideas, comments, and inquiries at any time. Contact the LLC or your department's SA.

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New at the LLC: Videoconferencing and Plasma Screen

The LLC is now home to a 42" plasma screen and a multipoint conferencing unit. The new video conferencing suite was purchased with an award from the Student Technology Fee.

What does the new setup mean for students? Students can reserve the facility for presentations using the plasma screen. Presentations can also be streamed live via the internet for simultaneous viewing by multiple parties anywhere in the world.

The conferencing unit allows up to three remote sites with similar technologies to participate in a video conference. This new technology can be of great assistance for dissertation defenses requiring remote participation by a committee member.

(continued on page 2)

CALL Lab Upgraded: Classic Programs Still Available

Over the summer, the LLC upgraded the computers in the CALL lab (Denny 112). The 33 Mac workstations now run OS X.2, and the 11 PC workstations now run Windows XP. Language learners can now enjoy the latest and greatest computer

(continued on page 2)

LLC Technology Connects You with the World

LLC Advisory Board: Seeking Student or Alumni Members

The LLC has gathered a group of language and technology professionals to serve as an advisory board. The board has three major goals:

1. Development of strategies for the LLC's continued advancement in the face of state budget cuts.

2. Technical and pedagogical advancement and direction.

(continued on page 3)

Videoconferencing & Plasma Screen (cont'd from p. 1)

It can also help students “attend” virtual conferences.

The video conferencing suite is housed in Denny Hall, room 109 (just down the hall from the LLC main entrance). Room 109 is also equipped with 23 Dell PCs. The lab is conducive to presentations requiring participants to use the web or run particular programs.

Currently, the Linguistics 472 course (Introduction to Computational Linguistics) is taking advantage of the new technology. In the winter quarter (2004), Linguistics 480 (Programming with Perl) will also use room 109 as its primary resource for computing and presentation.

If you have questions about the video conferencing system or would like to reserve room 109 for a class or event, please contact the LLC.

CALL Upgrade (continued from p. 1)

ing functionality on both platforms. Significantly, Mac OS X supports the Unicode Standard, a character-encoding schema that facilitates computing in any world language (*see related article below*).

The upgrade posed challenges: some of our instructional software were developed with tools that are no longer supported by the new operating systems. Among these are HyperCard and HyperStudio, the traditional “stacks”-based software. In order to be able to continue to offer these resources, we are maintaining Mac OS 9.x along with the upgrade on all the Mac workstations.

In response to requests from departments, we have installed or reinstalled the following resources:

Russian-Nachalo Listening Comprehension Exercises, *Russian Vocabulary Tutor*, *French-Reflets*, *Linguistics-Sounds of the World's Languages*, *Japanese-Nihongo Partner*.

Multilingual Computing: The Unicode Standard

Unicode is a character-encoding system that assigns a unique number to every character in each of the world's major languages. It also covers many mathematical and other symbols. The current version of the Unicode Standard (4.0) assigns a unique identifier to each of 96,382 characters.

With each new generation of operating systems and software, functionality with Unicode increases. Cross-platform computing still has its problems, but with advances made by Windows XP and Mac OS X, the future of multilingual computing looks bright. The LLC's computers provide the maximum Unicode support available today.

You can view web pages that use Unicode fonts. Here are some tips on how to set up Internet Explorer to properly view them:

Enabling Unicode Fonts in Internet Explorer 5, 5.5 and 6:

Select Internet Options... on the Tools menu.

Select the General tab in the Internet Options dialog box.

Click the Fonts... button to choose a language script and the Web page (proportional) font and plain text (fixed-width) font to be used with it.

IE 5 and 6 can use several fonts to display a single page that contain multiple scripts for which you have selected fonts.

We will include more tips and useful information on Unicode in future editions of Polyglot.

Views from the Window

Some of our Window Staff shared their experiences of working at the LLC and interacting with our customers

“...I have been here for a few years and have met some great students who frequent the labs. I have especially formed bonds with the ESL students, who could easily get intimidated here and are really appreciative when people are extra helpful and make them feel more comfortable with our resources...”

I became friends with two girls from Taiwan who would come in every day and chat with me, and they even made an effort to keep in contact when they moved back. I try to be especially supportive to students who are learning on their own.

Recently an adult student who is Russian but speaks English very well brought his mother in and asked me for advice on how she could learn English on her own. I ran into them a couple of weeks later and they had found some materials and were getting started.

Things like these are so rewarding and make me really happy to be working here and meeting people every day.”

“...The ESL students are my favorite because they are often so eager to study English. Sometimes it is difficult for an ESL student to navigate our computers, and as the window staff, it is my responsibility to help them. I remember one instance in particular when a Korean gentleman had difficulty finding the English audio he needed. After I helped him, he was so thankful and kind that he gave me a beautiful souvenir bookmark from Korea. After that, I saw him almost daily and we would talk and exchange smiles.”

“...One part of working at the LLC that I enjoy is that I get to meet a lot of different people. When students are particularly diligent about learning a language, they come into our labs often. I get to know them first by the language they're studying, then by their names. When I see them outside of the LLC we often say hello because we know who each other is.”

LLC Advisory Board: Seeking Student or Alumni Members (cont'd from p. 1)

3. Connecting the LLC with the community, including education, business, and industry.

The LLC is seeking student and/or alumni members to participate in the LLC

Advisory Board. The time commitment is low, and meetings are quarterly. It's a great way to share your ideas and make a difference! Please contact the LLC for more information (llc@u.washington.edu).

Have you checked out the LLC's website?
<http://depts.washington.edu/llc>

Interested in teaming up with the LLC on a project?
Contact your Staff Associate!