

Maria Bortoluzzi

Language Learning and Technology: a refereed electronic journal.



Introduction

Language Learning and Technology is an example of free on-line quality publication aimed at readers involved in education. On-line resources for teaching and learning are innumerable; however, the quality of what can be found on line is not always satisfactory: quantity on the web is often more evident than quality even in sites that are aimed at an audience of teachers and teacher-trainers.

Language Learning and Technology can be found only on line and it is an excellent example of high-quality, refereed and free publication. The journal, aimed mainly at an academic readership, can be an excellent resource of information and education for teachers, teacher trainers and university students in the EFL/ESL field. As clearly expressed by the editors of the journal, "the focus of the publication is not technology per se, but rather issues related to language learning and language teaching, and how they are affected or enhanced by the use of the new technologies." ([About LLT](#)).

To devise the framework of analysis used in this review, I drew and adapted ideas from the following sources: Windeatt *et al.* (2000: 33 *et passim*), [the information for contributors in Language Learning & Technology](#) (2003), the framework for evaluating web resources by [Grassian \(2000\)](#) published on the UCLA College Library site and [Eastment \(2000\)](#).

ON-LINE RESOURCE: an overview	
Title	Language Learning & Technology
First published	July 1997
Frequency of publication	3 issues a year (January, May and September) since 2000
Versions available	HTML version (including hotlinks) and PDF version for Adobe Acrobat Reader
Publisher	NFLRC - University of Hawaii at Manoa - Honolulu - USA
Sponsors	Sponsored by several academic and educational

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<http://all.uniud.it/simplegadi>

	institutions (about LLT)
Support offered	About LLT; Masthead
Target language	English
Target audience	'foreign and second language educators in the U.S. and around the world on issues related to technology and language education' (about LLT)
Price	Free
Subscription	the editors ask for a free (non-obligatory) subscription - no hard copy available

Overview of the site

Language Learning and Technology (from now on LLT) is an invaluable and rich on-line resource for educators. The stated aim of the journal is "to disseminate research to foreign and second language educators in the U.S. and around the world on issues related to technology and language education." ([About LLT](#)).

The journal is fully-refereed and the editorial board consists of scholars whose research interests are second language acquisition and computer-assisted language learning ([About LLT](#)). The emphasis on the fact that the journal is refereed and academic is rather pervasive and it is the evidence that the editorial board wants to set it apart from other on-line non-academic or commercial journals.

Structure and content of the on-line journal

The [homepage of the journal](#) is the content page of the latest issue. Its layout is very simple and reader-friendly: all the sections of the journal are immediately visible and are all linked to their content pages, as are the titles of the articles and contributions.

The simplicity of the layout seems to emphasise the importance of the content rather than the co-text (all that is often considered prototypically "multimedia" effect has no place in the journal: complex icons, graphics, animations, colours, sounds etc). The journal, therefore, does not exploit the electronic medium to attract the viewer's and listener's attention, but focuses on the careful attention of a fairly traditional reader. This does not imply that the journal could be printed rather than on-line; in fact, articles and contributions exploit the flexibility of the electronic medium to make the pages interestingly hypertextual.

The homepage of the journal has a search engine for the site which allows a quick and reliable search through all the issues of the journal. This is a very important tool, but does not make up for the only real drawback of the homepage: the menu is at the very end of the homepage, which means that it is necessary to scroll down to the bottom of the page with the cursor to find and

use it. In other words, access to the main information about the journal (About LLT, Subscribe, Information for Contributors, Masthead, Archives) is hidden from the immediate view of the web-user unless s/he scrolls the page down. This is particularly awkward because access to the previous issues is given through the hotword Archives at the very bottom of the homepage. Not only is the menu containing the main links of the page hidden to the viewer at first, but also it is written in a fairly small (if bold) typeface.

Articles: the audience addressed

All articles and contributions can be opened in HTML or opened and downloaded as PDF files. They can be accessed either from the links of the homepage or by finding the issue and the article through the Archives page. When using the search engine, the HTML version will be given first. Since the year 2000 whole issues of the journal can be downloaded in PDF.

The contributions are highly academic, but also extremely clear due to the general policy of the journal to publish articles which should be "accessible to a broad audience of language educators, including those individuals who may not be familiar with the particular subject matter addressed in the article" ([Information for contributors](#)). The majority of the articles do indeed adhere to this principle and, in my opinion, are both academic and clearly explained and structured.

The journal deals with a variety of language learning aspects (e.g.: communication theory, discourse analysis, listening, vocabulary): the full list can be found clicking [Archives](#) (bottom of the homepage) and Topic. Some special issues deal with one specific theme: some examples are *Literacies and Technologies* (4, 2, September, 2000), *Computer-Assisted Language Testing* (5, 2, May 2001), etc.

Conclusion

LLT is a very authoritative and enriching source of critical ideas about the influence of technology on EFL/ESL. The journal, while viewing technology as an asset for learning and teaching, is not uncritical towards the difficulties that technological changes bring about in the life of learners and educators.

The academic origin and aims of the publication do not imply an esoteric use of technical terminology, but, rather, the journal offers an interesting and informed voice discussing outcomes, drawbacks, limits, potentialities and future perspectives of the very medium which allows the journal to reach its readers / users. The free access on line, the simplicity of the layout and search facilities, the speed of the downloading process and the flexibility of hyperlinks make the journal a tool far easier and more flexible to consult and read than any journal issued in print.

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Maria Bortoluzzi ha insegnato italiano come lingua straniera nelle università di Lancaster ed Edimburgo, dove ha conseguito un Master in Linguistica e un PhD in Linguistica Applicata. Ora insegna Lingua e letteratura inglese al Liceo e collabora come professoressa a contratto all'Università di Udine.