Welcome to the ninth issue of the Xplora newsletter!

Since Xplora announced the launch of its new and improved portal, the number of visitors has been increasing. Xplora now also features an RSS channel informing about the news and special events. In order to improve further the portal, we are launching a survey where you can make your voice heard. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. In this newsletter, find more about how to participate in the survey!

Also in this issue, you can read the recent news releases, be aware of the upcoming events and read the calls for partners.

Would you like to be featured in our newsletter or send us a contribution? Just get in touch: agathe.djelalian@eun.org

Agathe Djelalian
Xplora Web Editor

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XPLORA AT A GLANCE

XPLORA WEBSITE: GROWING NUMBER OF VISITORS
Since Xplora announced the launch of its new and improved portal, the number of visitors has been increasing. In October and November 2006, more than 7 300 unique people visited the Xplora website and around 95 % were new visitors. Most of you use regularly the community section.

SURVEY: XPLORA NEEDS YOUR FEEDBACK
To continue improving the Xplora portal, we are launching a survey where you can give your feedback and comments about the site. You also have the opportunity to let us know your willingness for cooperation. As an active teacher in science education, this is your chance to get more involved in Xplora and make your voice heard.

XPLORA RSS CHANNEL
Xplora is now providing an RSS channel informing about the news and special events. RSS is a family of web feed formats used to facilitate distribution of updated content. You can reach the channel by clicking on the RSS icon on the left part of the Xplora website, or directly from here:
MEGALAB

MILLIKAN OIL DROP EXPERIMENT READY TO BE INSTALLED
Xplora has got a grant from the Agilent foundation in order to develop, together with the University of Kaiserslautern, the Millikan oil drop experiment. This development should enable physics teachers and students to easily run the experiment and to insert their results into a database to follow the argumentation of Millikan.
Xplora is now looking for interested schools, science museums and teacher training institutes who volunteer to host the experiment and therefore enable schools around the world to access it.
Interested? Contact Karl Sarnow (karl.sarnow@eun.org)

More about web experiments:

LIBRARY

MAXIMA AND WXMAXIMA, FREE SOFTWARE FOR MATHS
Maxima is a computer algebra system, that manipulate symbolic and numerical expressions such as differentiation, integration, systems of linear equations, vectors, matrices etc.
Palmira Ronchi, an Italian maths teacher, enlightens you about this software.

SCIENCE EDUCATION RESOURCES
Recently the following items were added:

- "HydrogenLab": What does an atom looks like? Available in German, English and Spanish, this resource is a gallery of pictures of the hydrogen atom.
http://www.hydrogenlab.de/

- "Fraktalwelt": Web page with a lot of information about fractals.
http://www.fraktalwelt.de/

- "Science Center at School": 'Science Center at School' is a project that challenges pupils to design and create their own exhibits.
http://www.sciencecenteropschool.nl/index.php?id=95

- "Space Time Travel": Visualization of the theory of relativity. Online papers, images, movies and paper models by the physics education group Ute Kraus (Theoretische Astrophysik Tübingen).
PRACTICE

Assimina Kontogeorgiou is a secondary school science teacher from Volos, Greece and Lidia Minza is teaching chemistry at the “Vasile Alecsandri” National College in Galati, Romania.
Both Xplora teachers describe their favourite websites in two different articles that you can read here.

Assimina Kontogeorgiou:

Lidia Minza

Do you want to let us know about your teaching activities? Would you like to present your favourites? We will feature them on Xplora.
Contact: agathe.djelalian@eun.org

ABOUT XPLORA PARTNERS

LAUNCH OF THE CINEMA AND SCIENCE (CISCI) PROJECT
How to raise young people interest in studying science? Created for pupils and teachers, the Cinema and Science (CISCI) project is intended to offer an answer to this question. CISCI will set-up a free online database with video-clips and movie-scenes which illustrate scientific themes and analyze their scientific content from the point of view of different disciplines - physics, chemistry, life sciences or mathematics. The CISCI project has been launched on Wednesday 15 November 2006 in Milan, Italy.

HANDS-ON & BRAINS-ON SURVEY
During the last decades, science centres and museums have been leading the way with hands-on learning and teaching in Europe. The multidisciplinary contents of modern science centre exhibitions are large and unique forming a reliable learning source. In the Hands-On & Brains-On project, a network of eight institutions (science centres and museums) is now developing
educational programmes for primary schools in co-operation with school authorities, teacher education institutes and schools. Science teachers of primary schools are invited to participate in the project and contribute to its validation. Take part in the “Start-up/ Mid-Time or End-Time Survey” and tell us your expectations or your practical experiences about the project.


EUROPEAN SCIENCE EDUCATION PROJECTS: HAVE A LOOK AROUND

EDUTAIN@GRID
“edutain@grid” is a new project funded by the European Commission under the 6th Framework Programme. Intended to use Grid technology, traditionally applied to “big science”, it aims to improve user experiences in both online gaming and distance e-learning systems. It focuses on the creation of real-time online interactive applications and endeavours to reduce the development and hosting costs.


SCIENCE IN PUBLIC AREAS
“Science in Public Areas” is the name of a project developed by the European Physical Society (EPS) in order to promote science awareness within the wide public, through attractive series of questions and answers, displayed in public areas.


AWARDS AND NEWS

SCHOOLS AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE - COST AND TIME SAVING
Educational organisations have recently been pointing out the huge potential benefits to schools of Open Source software: they can save time and money. This fact was acknowledged by a leading independent public school in the UK, King’s College School, Cambridge, which is starting to make these benefits a reality.


THE VIRTUAL TELESCOPE: AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE FOR PUPILS AND TEACHERS
Have you ever dreamt to control a telescope via your computer and getting unlimited real time observing? A team of astronomers have launched “The Virtual Telescope”, a new initiative bringing the exploration of the universe accessible to everyone. The objective of the project is to manage a global network of robotic telescopes dedicated to educational purposes.

“DISCOVER THE SKY!” COMPETITION
To celebrate its launch, the Virtual Telescope runs a competition entitled “Discover the Sky!” Participants - pupils and teachers - are invited to design scientific projects and activities involving the use of its facilities. Entries should be submitted by 28 February 2007. Prizes will consist in free observing time at the Virtual Telescope, books and other astronomical gadgets. The winners will be invited to share their experiences at the 2nd Virtual Meeting on Amateur Astronomy in April 2007. 

WONDERS FINALS IN FINLAND
The finals of WONDERS (Welcome to Observations, News & Demonstrations of European Research and Science), the first European Science Festival, took place on 8 and 9 December 2006 in Finland. During these two days, the best activities of the "Carousel of Science," an exchange between about 21 science communication events in Europe, were rewarded. 

EVENTS

- DESIGNING THE SCHOOL OF TOMORROW: ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES IN EDUCATION
26-27 January 2007
Athens, Greece

The Educational Symposium called "Designing the School of Tomorrow: Advanced Technologies in Education" will take place in Athens, Greece, on 26-27 January 2007. Organised in the framework of Discovery Space and CONNECT projects, funded by the European Commission, the symposium aims to present today's achievements, future challenges and expectations in the field of educational technology. 

- CONFERENCE TO STIMULATE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN E-HEALTH
8-9 February 2007
Madrid, Spain

The @Health team will hold, on 8-9 February 2007, a workshop on the topic “@Health: a meeting point to foster international cooperation in eHealth”. Taking place in Madrid, the workshop will promote new collaboration opportunities within the field of e-health among organisations, institutions and companies from Europe and Latin America. The aim is to pave the way for new projects and technology transfer, as well as creating an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas and needs. The agenda includes topics such as best practices in e-health on both continents, the next FP7 funding opportunities for e-health projects, and the needs of the sector. 
WORKSHOP ON THEORETICAL CHEMISTRY 2007: ELECTRONIC AND GEOMETRIC
20-23 February 2007
Salzburg, Austria

At the 2007 workshop on Theoretical Chemistry, experts will present special topics in Theoretical Chemistry, basics as well as new developments and advanced techniques. The workshop is intended to senior students, postdocs and all senior scientists who want to practise life-long learning.
http://www.kfunigraz.ac.at/tchwww/sax/mariapfarr/

GENE TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASS
19-23 February 2007
Berlin, Germany

The Lise-Meitner-Oberschule, a German Gymnasium, offers a seminar for the use of gene technology in the class. The seminar is the result of the Leonardo-da-Vinci project GENIAL (GENtechnik In Ausbildung und Lehre) and focuses on questions of the content and pedagogics of teaching gene technology in the classroom. Participants are teachers of biology in upper secondary classes as well as vocational schools.

FOSDEM 2007
24-25 February 2007
Brussels, Belgium

The seventh Free and Open source Software Developers' European Meeting (FOSDEM) will be held in Brussels, Belgium, on 24 and 25 February 2007. This 2 day-event, organised by volunteers, aims to promote the widespread use of Free and Open Source software.

GEOSCIENCES INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS (GIFT)
16-19 April 2007
Vienna, Austria

The European Geosciences Union EGU and Co-sponsors kindly invite for the fifth time teachers from Europe to a workshop ‘Geosciences Information For Teachers’ (GIFT). The workshop will take place during the EGU General Assembly 2007 in the Austria Center in Vienna. The EGU General Assembly is the largest conference in Geosciences in Europe and attracts every year thousands of scientists from all over the world.
Deadline for registration: 1 January 2007
http://www.atmosphere.mpg.de/enid/gift

2007 WORLD CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION
8-12 July 2007
Perth, Australia
The 2007 World Conference on Science and Technology Education hosted by the International Council of Associations for Science Education (ICASE) and the Australian Science Teachers Association (ASTA) will take place in Perth, Western Australia, from 8 to 12 July 2007. Designed for science teachers and educators, this event will address world health issues, science for life and citizenship, sustainable development and 'The Way Forward' (educational directions and priorities established by ICASE).


CALL FOR PARTNERS

- XPLORA INVITES TEACHERS OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE FOR COOPERATION
Xplora, the European Science Education Gateway, offers a rich variety of tools which enable teachers of mathematics and science to give exciting science lessons. To ensure the impact in the classroom, we need science teachers who could help us to develop material, search for good tools and report about their good practice. They should also be able to alert Xplora about science teaching relevant events in their local environment. The ability and willingness to use the Xplora environment is necessary for a successful cooperation. Teachers who are able and wish to cooperate with Xplora should contact Karl Sarnow (karl.sarnow@eun.org). Do not forget to include a short curriculum vitae, focusing on your engagement in improving science education.

- SEEKING PARTNERS WITH “SMARTS”
SMARTS (Science Matters: Age Relevant Teaching in Science), that stimulates communities to organise science education opportunities for learners of all ages, seeks partners for FP7 consortium. Expertise in life long learning, integration of informal and formal pedagogies, and programming for cultural minorities are especially welcome. Send note of interest to Dr. David Pundak, Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee, david@kinneret.ac.il.

About this newsletter

Please send all comments, criticisms and contributions to science-news@eun.org. For more information about Xplora, please visit http://www.xplora.org/ww/en/pub/xplora/about/the_xplora_gateway.htm.

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