



DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT MULTIMEDIART

The European Socrates Programme

Socrates is the European programme which finances projects in the education sector. The objective of the Minerva programme in particular is supporting the development and use of new information and communication technologies in the world of education.

Through the Minerva programme the European Commission supports four large categories of action running in parallel with the Socrates programme: the improvement in understanding of the innovative processes in education; the clarification of new methods and teaching resources; the information and the access to the results of the projects and the circulation of the developed standard procedures; the creation of transeuropean networks favoring the exchange of experiences in relation to the use of new technology in the education sector.

How the MultimediArt project was born

MultimediArt was born from the positive experience gained from a previous project, which was financed by the Socrates Programme ODL action (now Minerva). The objective of the project, which was concluded in December 2001, was the distance training of art teachers in secondary schools in the use of new technologies for teaching and learning.

The content of the project, entitled ARTE (<http://socrates-arte.net>), was the theme of contemporary art. Six European countries, thirty schools, sixty teachers and around three hundred students were involved in the project and took part in discovering, studying and publicizing the contemporary artists of their countries and their works of art.

The website of the ARTE project has formed a point of contact in which teachers and students were able to exchange information, materials and dates on the theme of contemporary art. The results of the work gained in the two years of the project are collected today on the ARTE CD, through which it is possible to learn about the contemporary art of six European countries.

Some of the teachers involved in the ARTE project have tried experimenting with the use of technology not only for communication and research (as in the objectives of the project) but also for artistic creation and they have verified that the number of artists who are turning to new technology and to multimedia for research and for creating art is growing little by little across the world. The Internet, new technology and multimedia are therefore contributing to the adoption of a new method of art expression.

From here, the idea at the root of the MultimediArt project was born: technology can serve a teacher of so as to provide them with new tools for artistic expression.

The MultimediArt project, organized by Pixel, is co-financed by the European Commission in the same area as the Socrates Programme Minerva Action.

Objectives of the MultimedArt project

The MultimedArt project has two main objectives:

- To inform art teachers in secondary schools about new forms of artistic expression based on the use of technology
- To promote the use of new technology in the art creation process, training, at distance, secondary schools art teachers.

The actions which allows to reach these targets are:

ACTION 1: RESEARCH

Research on the application of new technology in the process of artistic creation: examinations of the works of multimedia art and analysis of the artists.

The multimedia artists are studied and also interviewed by the students involved in the project, who then go on to present the work in the *Art Gallery*, which is accessible through the project website.

ACTION 2: TRAINING THE TEACHERS AT DISTANCE

The distance training course on the theme of the application of new technology in the process of artistic creation is accessible via Internet on the project website.

The course is available, free, to all schools that make a request by sending an e-mail to the address of PIXEL (staff@pixel-online.net).

We have chosen to supply the course at distance so that we can obtain the participation of a high number of teachers from different European countries.

As a support to the distance training a Forum section is available in which it is possible to leave questions for the teachers of the course or to provoke topics for discussion; furthermore, as a support to the distance training we organize monthly on-line reunions (in the Chat space), in which the teachers involved in the project can participate and they are able to meet virtually with the teachers of the course.

The course is structured in three modules:

- The new teaching technology
 - Internet as an aid to the teaching of art, research and socialising
- Art and new technology
 - Technology as an aid to traditional artistic expression
- Technology and new arts
 - Technology as a means of alternative or traditional artistic expression

The developed methods put forward here have put the creation of multimedia art at the centre of the teaching route. Departing from an introduction to the employed techniques, with reference to previous "traditional" art, so as to arrive at a series of examples, construction tutorials and pieces of information on the software used.

Learning how to use one or more pieces of specific software is therefore not the objective of the training, which would mean putting something forward that already exists and that one can download, usually for free, from the web. The objective is rather to make the artistic potential of these softwares known, whilst only studying a few aspects in depth. It is then up to the teacher to decide which of the suggested tools is the most congenial to their needs of artistic expression and therefore which of the suggested tutorials they decide to study in depth and download.

ACTION 3: PRODUCTION

The students, once trained, create multimedia works

The finished works are published in the Virtual Gallery on the project website. The virtual gallery collects works that combine art and technology developed by the artists and European students.

ACTION 4:INTERACTION

The art teachers involved in the project participate actively in the virtual reunions organized in the “*Meeting Place*” on the project website (www.multimediarart.net).

Therefore, we are creating a virtual community of art teachers interested in learning about multimedia art and exploring new forms of artistic expression.

ACTION 5:COMPETITION LOV’ART

Every student works in collaboration with another student from a partner nation (different to that of their origin), on the development of a communal artistic multimedia creation that is created on the web and that is accessible through the website itself.

A jury will evaluate the finished pieces of work. The creator of the winning piece of work will be invited to present it in Florence during the convention at the end of the project.

Expected Results

The results of the project are available through the project website.

The results are:

- A database of the schools involved containing, for each school, a presentation of the institute and photographs of the teachers and students working on the project.
- The Multimedia Art Gallery divided into two sections:
 - Artists (with the publication of the works and interviews from the authors)
 - Students (with the publication of their finished works and details of the techniques used)
- A virtual library that gathers information on the multimedia art in Europe with links to art galleries and museums across Europe and with teaching materials for artistic education developed by the teachers involved in the project.
- Distance courses on the theme “Art and New Technology”
- Forum and Chat, which provide points of contact between teachers and students of art in Europe.

The Target of the Project

MultimediArt addresses itself to two target groups:

- The art teachers in secondary schools (i.e. institutes of art and all the schools in which art and design is taught) can participate in the Project. Participation in the project is free and flexible. Every school is able to decide to which of the project’s activities they would like to contribute according to availability of time and teachers involved. Through participation in the project the schools can:
 - Discover multimedia art;
 - Be trained on the use of new technology for realizing artistic multimedia expression;
 - Collaborate with other schools across Europe to make exchanges (of methods, materials and people);
 - Contribute to creating the multimedia artists of tomorrow.

Today, forty-five schools from seven European countries are involved in the project, and around ninety teachers and seven hundred students. Our aim is to involve 150 schools across Europe in the coming months.

- The public and private corporations involved in culture. Through the MultimedArt project the corporations, museums and associations involved in contemporary art can inform a large public of students and art teachers in Europe about artists and works of multimedia art. The corporations involved in the promotion of cultural goods are therefore invited to contact us so that together, we can establish the formality of collaboration.

Partners in the Project

The MultimedArt project organized by Pixel involves 12 organizations in 7 European countries. In Italy, the following organisations are partner of the project: Accademia di Belle Arti in Brera, Connectis S.r.l., IRRE Toscana and the Educational Department of the Tuscany County Council and of the Municipality of Florence.

PIXEL is a Training Company based in Florence, with the mission to promote innovative approach in Education and Training, developing educational projects and fostering the application of new technology in the learning processes both at European and local level.

PIXEL is the promoter of the project; it is responsible for the co-ordination and monitoring of all the project's activities that take place on a national and European level.

PIXEL is also responsible for the coordination of the Italian schools involved in the Project

The Academy of Fine Arts of Brera (Art and Multimedia Department) is responsible for the development of the training course's contents on the theme of the use of technology in the artistic creation process; the Academy has also planned and created the teaching methodology to be used in the distance training.

Connectis S.r.l. is the technical partner, who is involved in the development and constant updating of the project website. Connectis is also responsible for the technical aspects of the distance course

IRRE Toscana collaborates with some of the Italian schools involved, with the aim of monitoring the teaching methodologies. IRRE Toscana also participates in the dissemination phase of the project.

Municipality of Florence (Educational Department) collaborates on the protection of equal opportunities in the sphere of the project. It is carrying out a research on the appropriate language to be used in the context of artistic education in order to respect equal opportunities principles.

Tuscany County Council (Educational Department) collaborates on the dissemination of the project's results both within public authorities and schools.

The European partnership is composed by a Greek University Department (Computer Technology Institute of the University of Patras); two public institutions from the United Kingdom and from Spain (Aberdeen City Council and the Andalusia County Council); two corporations for the teachers' training in Germany and Finland (Bildungswerk Ver.Di and Ilomantsin Oppimiskeskus) and an association of Swedish schools (De Geergymnasiet).

All of the European partners have the co-ordination of work in schools at a national level as their main role.