# Remote, real-time teaching
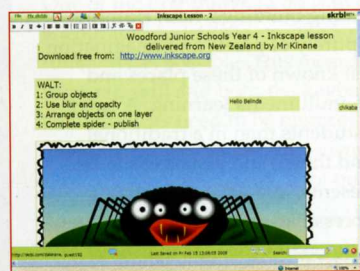
**A chance meeting led David Kinane to teach on the other side of the world without leaving the comfort of his Auckland home (and, as *INTERFACE* reported in the last issue, even caught the eye of the Minister of Education!).**

During International Education Week 2007, I got talking with Helen Hardie of Woodford Junior School in the UK and we decided to see if I could remote teach her class. The rationale behind this was simple: I had a skill that she did not and she felt that her class would benefit – teaching the software program Inkscape (www.inkscape.org).

Once we had decided to try out this experiment, the challenge was to deliver it. The simplest solution was a remote access connection to the computer connected to the data projector in Woodford Junior Schools' ICT suite. Not surprisingly, the Woodford techs were not to keen on the idea! So, I decided to utilise the power of Web2.0 tools to assist me. We would meet in the neutrality of cyberspace … and the techs could relax.

## Making it happen (at 10pm!)



The lessons were conducted over a period of two weeks, with two separate Year 4 classes (each with 32 students) and using a blend of skrbl, Skype and Camstudio. I used skrbl to place a series of screen dumps from Inkscape of the pertinent parts of the program that I wanted the students to learn how to use, plus some examples of what I wanted them to achieve. You can see the second lesson resources at **http://skrbl.com/dakinane**. On the day of the lesson, we established a video Skype call so that the students could see me on their interactive whiteboard and I could see their IT lab. The projected image on their screen was made up of the skrbl pad and Skype, so that they could see me draw, as well as see and hear me. At my end, I used Camstudio to record the skrbl edits that I made, the video stream from Woodford, and my voice. This recording would then be used as a learning object in the future.

### DAVID'S INKSCAPE LESSON



http://tohatoha.blogspot.com/2007/12/what-do-you-call-group-of-spiders.html

This lesson also made the local press in the UK:

www.thisisplymouth.co.uk/new/util/content.jsp?id=18958582

## A powerful experience

We had established a synchronous communication to the extent that I could see and hear the children raise queries with each other and I could answer their queries. It was a very powerful experience for all. The students quickly accepted the situation and regarded me with equal validity, as if had been there in person. They eventually came up to the webcam and microphone and were asking me one-to-one questions, just as naturally as they would to a teacher actually in their classroom.

The experiment was a success – I had remotely taught two classes of children half a world away. It was not without its glitches however. On one evening, my wireless network at home dropped my call several times. In order to deliver the lesson, I had to teach at 10:00pm but, despite this, it was perceived as a valid success by all those that observed it.

## Where to next?

I still want the students to be able to see and hear me, and see me move the mouse over the relevant parts of the program that I am trying to demonstrate. In the intervening period, I have researched the potential for me to do this and I have developed a solution. From two sources the students will be able to see me, hear me and crucially see the program being demonstrated, used in real-time, and projected onto the screen that they are sitting at. In other words, they will have a teacher at their desktop.

The partnership between Helen and I has grown over the last 18 months from one of emailing and discussing ideas to genuine collaboration and the formation of a thriving community of online learners. We'll be testing these new plans very soon and, when we do, we'll share our findings with you. ▲

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

http://dakinane.wordpress.com/2007/11/12/international-education-week-day-1/

http://dakinane.wordpress.com/2007/11/15/international-education-week-day-3/

http://tohatoha.blogspot.com/2007/11/lessons-around-world.html

www.woodford-jun.plymouth.sch.uk/

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