

**BANGEMANN
CHALLENGE**

GLOBAL BANGEMANN CHALLENGE: COOPERATION THROUGH COMPETITION

When Stockholm mayor Mats Hulth put forth the Global Bangemann Challenge

nearly two years ago, few people believed it would become a major clearing house for the best and brightest ideas in the area of municipal information technology (see *IS News* N°19). But as

the Challenge draws toward a close (applications must be received before 1999), more than 454 projects have been submitted from 254 cities in 64 countries.

The Challenge and its wide-ranging 11 categories offer an eclectic group of IT professionals the chance to show how the Information Society improves lives around the corner and across the globe. In Ireland, the experimental field of visual art is being explored and in South Africa, it is the more pressing matter of implementing the democratic process that has IT professionals working overtime.

And it's all represented in The Bangemann Challenge.

Challenge known worldwide

Seen at first as a contest, the Challenge has grown into something much more important than a chase for a trophy. It has become both an educational tool and a place where forward thinking professionals can swap ideas, generate interest in a topic

or region and develop meaningful new contacts. The USA may be the leading country with 90 entries, but Europe has submitted more than 180 projects, and Africa and Asia are also well represented. Recently, the Challenge is becoming known in Latin and South America, and entries from those regions are beginning to dot the radar screen. In the end, it may be the contact between these countries, communities and projects that becomes the legacy of the Bangemann Challenge.

Global networking seminar

Already, a global networking seminar has been scheduled for October, when seven project contenders will meet on the Challenge Internet site to promote the competition and discuss the impact of a Global Information Infrastructure. Project designers from Africa (Namibia), Europe (Stockholm and Brussels), the United States (Stanford and Boulder), India (Madras) and Singapore will discuss their projects, the future of this emerging field and the educational components needed to drive the technology forward. This unique 'multicast' format will allow for live presentations and interactive Question and Answer periods between the web sites, with a special emphasis on student interaction.

The Challenge goes on the road

But The Global Bangemann Challenge isn't limited to cyberspace. The true strength of this initiative and its European predecessor – the Bangemann Challenge – is the practical hands-on focus of the projects it supports. These are community-based projects at work in city neighbourhoods around the globe. The Challenge simply permits the implementers to interact, learn and compare.

And in recent months, to meet in person, when the Challenge goes on the road as an advocate for improving people's lives with innovative Information and Communication Technologies.

In May, six project contenders from four continents presented their work at the ITU Telecom Conference in Johannesburg and recently the Challenge was represented at the World Expo in Lisbon.

What to do in the coming months ... visit The Challenge Forum: a new web site and meeting place designed to encourage interaction between project designers. ■

For more information:
www.challenge.stockholm.se



Editorial by Prof. Dr. Dr. F. J. Radermacher - Director of the Research Institute for Applied Knowledge Processing (FAW), Ulm, Germany
Chairman of Working Group 4 "Sustainability in an Information Society" of the Information Society Forum

SUSTAINABILITY: THE EUROPEAN WAY

As we enter the 21st Century, sustainability has become a central social and economic issue. High on the worldwide political agenda since the World Conference in Rio, the concept of 'sustainability' aims to balance the triangle of social, economic and ecological issues. This is a crucial factor for a world that may soon be inhabited by 10 billion people. While globalisation and open markets offer an enormous potential to satisfy the legitimate expectations of billions of people for overcoming poverty, significant new problems are emerging in the areas of equity, social coherence and participation – and even more importantly, ecological issues.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a central role in all of this. These technologies improve worldwide cooperation and provide many ways to increase resource productivity (so-called dematerialisation), which brings new opportunities to cope with the additional requirements that lie ahead. However, we are threatened with side effects which could result from the growth processes associated with these developments. These feedback phenomena are known collectively as the 'rebound, or boomerang, effect'.

The European Commission and its Information Society Forum (ISF) have looked deeper into the interplay between globalisation, the building of a worldwide Information Society and Sustainability. The topic was addressed broadly at a conference on 2 July 1998 in Stuttgart and backed by significant high-level political support. (See the Special Report of Working Group 4 "Sustainability in an Information Society" of the ISF and the document "Challenges 2025: On the way to a worldwide sustainable Information Society"; <http://www.faw.uni-ulm.de>.)

The major positions taken at the meeting were: Firstly that sustainability must be seen as a decisive challenge for the next Century, and secondly, that the question of whether sustainable development can truly be attained will be decided during the transition to a worldwide Information and Knowledge Society; and this will depend on what shape the society actually takes. A third position is that, over the medium-term, only those societal configurations and lifestyles can be implemented worldwide that can be expanded to support a world population 10 billion. Also, it is clear that if we are to avoid the rebound effect, the world's global economic regimes must be better matched with social and environmental requirements. One of the greatest challenges for Europe is to make its voice heard on these issues in the global debate – for instance concerning further development of GATT/WTO or in agreements such as the recent Kyoto protocol in the environmental sector. Europe has a role to play in all these issues, and we urgently need a European model of the future development, a model of global governance, worldwide cooperation and a sustainable world.

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EDUCATION SUCCESS STORIES

BLUEPRINT FOR AN
INTERACTIVE CLASSROOM

Looking into the BIC project in action is like peering through a window into the future. BIC (Blueprint for Interactive Classrooms) is designing, creating and overseeing 'telepresence' classrooms which permit teachers, students and outside contributors to interact over various telecom networks. A project funded under the European Union's 4th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, BIC is examining how telematics can have an impact on Tertiary-Level Education and Vocational Training. It's no small task. But BIC took a straightforward approach to completing its mandate. They built five fully functioning telepresence teaching sites across Europe. By comparing and contrasting the different characteristics of each programme, the BIC researchers collected data on teaching styles, learning environments and the effects of budget. The end result is the BIC handbook and its detailed conclusions. Jam-packed with great ideas on everything from furniture placement to technical guidelines, the handbook is indispensable for teachers and administrators planning to implement a telematic component to learning. Complex it is, but this advice is well within reach of educators and authorities. Most of the equipment is available off-the-shelf, easy to work with and highly compatible. The goal for project implementers was simple: distance learners deserve greater access to more effective courses at low delivery costs. And they made it happen. Interested in seeing this project up close? Then you might want to take part in the next part of the study, BIC begins its demonstration phase. For the next nine months, the project's creators will be conducting large-scale presentations of the telepresence classroom. In essence, the experiment continues outside the lab, as BICs wide range of fully interconnected telecom networks – ranging from standard telephone lines to satellite-TV – are put to the test. ■

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LEARNING TO LEARN

Extra on-line advice for students and parents

In France, the Microtuteur programme is bringing a new dimension to learning – by offering direct on-line tutoring and advice to students and their parents, and by focusing primarily on the needs of a disadvantaged community, which typically has less access to education.

Microtuteur started in 1993 as a non-profit student tutoring service which provided a telephone homework 'help-line' for disadvantaged children. Today, the Microtuteur team has taken the help-line concept a step further, by creating an on-line service that offers the services of tutors, with a university degree, who dialogue with students through an Internet link to help them with their studies. The goal of the service is to give more than basic homework tutoring. Tutors do not teach (nor do they give the answers!).

So Microtuteur is a type of correspondence course? "Certainly not!" says Gary Généreux-Prieur, the project creator, "It's an interactive 'mentoring' service, where students have access to an advisor, who – by helping them with their homework – helps them learn to study, and solve problems for themselves. A unique aspect of Microtuteur is that it allows parents to track the students progress, and become involved in the learning process. This is a complement to the National Education service, and the current work of teachers."

Here's how it works. Every day at a set time, a tutor, supported by an educational team engages video conference with several children, who participate in turns through two computers connected to the Internet.

This dialogue gives the children a daily contact point to another form of advice. The value of the tutors lies in their role as neutral advisors – between the teacher, student and parents – to help the student get organised, and to answer any questions.

The advisory role is especially useful for

Microtuteur is a good example of how cooperation between government, non-profit, education, publishing and community organizations can create new Information Society tools.

Project partners include: local government organisations (LGO), 'L'Ecole du Citoyen'



Microtuteur's primary target audience of disadvantaged or lower class families. According to programme managers, this new source of dialogue and advice helps reduce illiteracy and the social gap that exists between the middle class and disadvantaged families.

Microtuteur provides the software package that runs on a standard PC with an Internet link. Users are families that have computers at home, but it is expected that shared areas will be created by local government organisations. The programme is open to all secondary school children, but those whose families are not disadvantaged must pay for the service. Prices will be calculated based on the family's ability to pay.

One interesting tool is the Microtuteur Daily Home Organizer, which was developed for the telephone-based service for five years. It gives children and parents a permanent report about the progress in the pupil's homework. This is a good example of the type of on-line learning tools that will be used more in the future.

Another aspect is the Microtuteur Educational Mutual Aid Network. This is a Forum where the Microtuteur client-students reach out to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, giving the term 'distance learning' an entirely new meaning.

For the Microtuteur team, the result of this work is far more than an educational aid. They say that it's no less than what should be expected of a democratic society in the 21st Century. Where the Information Society is not high technology at the service of the economic elite, but a tool that brings direct help to those who need it the most – for the benefit of all of society. ■

*The Microtuteur package is now being offered to local governments across France. A future version will be adapted for use in other countries. For more information, contact:
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Tel: +33 1 40 11 90 68
e-mail: Gary.prieur@wanadoo.fr
www.microtuteur.com*

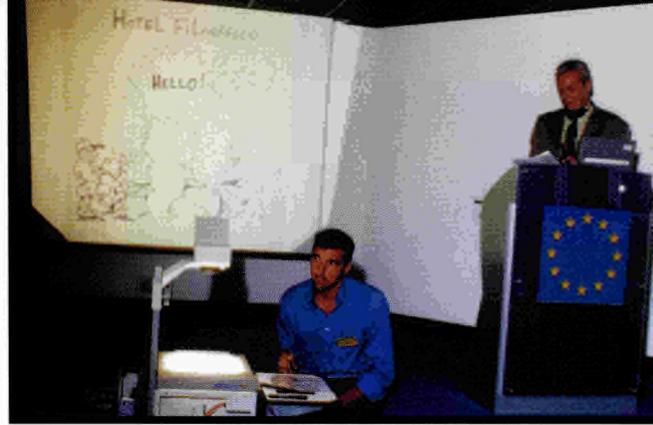
(citizens' school) of the RATP Foundation, (president, Gérard d'Andréa, negotiations on the way to establish a common multimedia central office in the Paris region to show LGO "how to do"), Havas Interactive and Editions Nathan (publishers).

Editorial continued from page 1.

Such a European position will sometimes differ from the US position – in areas such as social inclusion, environmental concerns, investments into cultural and linguistic diversity, people's role as a 'stakeholder' instead of mere 'shareholder', and other areas.

The year 2000 is an important milestone for dealing with these issues. The ISF is working on them, but we need a broad European dialogue and effective 'vehicles' to communicate these messages. The Information Society Day that is currently under preparation, and EXPO 2000 in Hannover are ideal platforms to move this work forward. ■

Jean-Marie Delmotte (Averbode publications) presenting the *Hôtel Philosophique* project during the ISPO conference organised at EXPO '98 in Lisbon. Speeches were illustrated in real-time by a cartoonist.



HOTEL PHILOSOPHIQUE

FOR KIDS ONLY

Philosophy discussions on the Web stimulate learning

If you thought your kids were only playing games and chatting with friends on their computers, you may need to check into the Hotel Philosophique: the only hotel in Europe without a checkout time.

Designed and maintained by Averbode, the educational and children's book publisher, the hotel is actually a fast-growing Internet site. Created for children between 10 and 14 years old, the site links schools and enables students to choose a philosophical issue and discuss it in a cyber room. On 16 October, the hotel underwent a major renovation as it expanded to offer automatic translation in four languages: English, German, Dutch and French.

October 19 was the grand re-opening when the site broadcasted live from the Brussels Cybertheatre complex. Here, the theatre was transformed into a hotel, where 40 children, from the four language groups shared the stage with four philosophers for an on-line videoconference dialogue. These discussions were broadcasted to computer screens in schools across Europe, where every classroom was able to submit e-mail queries that were then automatically translated on the screen, into the four languages.

Commissioner Cresson dropped in to

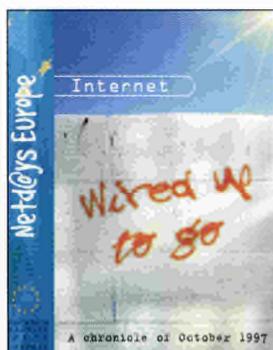
visit this special event, organised with the support of Averbode, Apple Computer, ISPO and European Commission Directorate General XXII (Education, Training and Youth).

This was one of the many events organised as a part of the European Commission's Netd@ys '98 initiative. Netd@ys is the EU initiative that aims to increase awareness of the Information Society in schools across Europe – last year it held some 700 events in 15,000 schools across the EU (see article IS News issue 22).

So the next time you think your child is shooting down an alien invader or choosing their favourite colour nail polish on the Max Factor Web site, take a look over their shoulder... they might just be discussing Plato with Belgian philosopher Richard Anthone. ■

<http://www.kidcity.be/hotel>
The Philosophical Hotel is among the projects summarised in the brochure "Internet: Wired up and ready to go!" Summarising some of the best Netd@ys '97 events.

To receive a copy, contact:
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<http://WWW.netdays.org>
<http://www.europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/netdays/home.html>



ISPO @ LISBON



INFORMATION INNOVATIONS FOR THE WORLD

For most of Europe, the Internet Fiesta is just around the corner – in March 1999. But the party already started at the Lisbon Expo '98 in September, with the launch of an extensive

Information Society awareness campaign.

Designed to highlight the benefits of information technology, the Internet and emerging technological advances, the new campaign will encompass home, business and classroom innovations. Unlike many recent efforts, the Lisbon event underscored the need to introduce IT capabilities to the average citizen. Its easy manner, video portions and real-time cartoons made the celebration both easy to grasp and a hit with the media. The day concluded with an awards ceremony saluting the most successful Portuguese projects, which covered areas such as traffic management, regional information,

transborder exchanges, intelligent management tools and telematic applications for disabled youngsters. Mariano Gago, Portuguese Minister of science and technology, participated in this event – in true Information Society style – by 'dropping in' through a video conference link. This event was also the perfect venue for a first announcement of the European Internet Fiesta. Expanded beyond the scope of last year's French Fête de l'Internet, this year's Fiesta will happen across Europe and throughout Cyberspace on March 19-21, 1999.

Underneath the sometimes fun and informal themes used to promote the European Information Society and the Internet Fiesta event, lies a hard-nosed message of increasing companies business competitiveness. Jörg Wenzel, head of the European Commission's Information Society Activity Centre summed up this view at the meeting: "Today more than 50% of Europe's citizens are unconvinced that Information Technology should play an important role in their lives. More than 85% of small and medium-sized companies do not realise that their future depends on the rapid introduction of these technologies into their business." ■

More information on the Internet Fiesta, see article below

INTERNET FIESTA

IF YOU'RE CONTRIBUTING TO THE INFORMATION SOCIETY... SHARE IT AT THE INTERNET FIESTA

Between March 19 to 21, 1999 the best of Europe's Information Society and Internet ideas will be on display. Where? On the Internet, of course, but also in your town, street, business community, school or local pub... The goal of the Fiesta is to get as many people as possible involved, and show as many different ideas, services and solutions as possible. Your contribution could be a children's demonstration for parents and grand parents; face-to face meetings between cyber communities; artists creating digital art; administrations opening their office to show new form of interactions with citizens; webcasting of short films festivals....

Some of the ideas that will be featured at Internet Fiesta '98.

- Schools: kids demonstrate Internet to grandparents at school
- Town hall: citizens explain Internet to officials
- Theatre: gags and unusual stories from cyberspace
- Café: Discussion on the Internet's impact on society
- Street: various shops organise the Internet street
- On the net: the neighbourhood sale, competitions, city twinning activities.

Do whatever you like for the Fiesta. But whatever you do. Get involved! ■

The content of the Internet Fiesta is up to you. So get involved. Organise your own event, let us know at: www.internet-fiesta.org (official launch on 20/11/98). Suggest your own ideas: info@internet-fiesta.org

IS FORUM

THE INFORMATION SOCIETY FORUM ENTERS A NEW TERM

It broadens its scope to include global aspects

The Information Society Forum which was established by the European Commission in 1995, ushered in a new era on 20 October in Strasbourg by welcoming new members, including representatives from Central and Eastern European Countries. The Forum acts as a "think tank" for the Commission on issues related to the Information Society and provides an opportunity for dialogue between all partners concerned. The 184 Forum members include representatives of the various user groups (consumer associations, public services, firms including small businesses, professions), social groups (trade unions, employers' organisations,

academics, family associations), content providers, equipment manufacturers and institutions. IS Forum president Claudio Carrelli announced that the work of the Forum will in the future focus on various issues including the development of a European model for the global Information Society. Industrial Affairs Commissioner Martin Bangemann welcomed the Forum's initiative saying: "The Forum should take a leading role in identifying issues and possible solutions in global communications and electronic commerce from the societal point of view. In this respect its work will be complementary to the Global Business Dialogue." ■

IS Forum:
<http://www.ispo.cec.be/infoforum/isf.html>

Global Business Dialogue:
<http://www.ispo.cec.be/eiff/policy/brtlaunch.html>

PUBLICATIONS

'E-COMMERCE' IN EUROPE

Tips for getting into this new market

Is there a European approach to electronic commerce? In what areas are European companies doing on-line business? What are the European areas of competitive advantage for e-commerce? How can my company get started? Two new publications and a special 'e-commerce' Web site answer these and related questions, as they reveal how companies across the European Union are getting into on-line business. The publications – *Business Transformation through Technology: 21 Striking Cases from Technologies for Business Processes and Accelerating Electronic Commerce in the Europe – Technology Development and Business Pilot Projects* – give unique insight into the activities of Europe's e-commerce pioneers. The projects profiled were funded by the Esprit Research Programme of the European Union.

These reports describe best practice in 'e-commerce' from several useful perspectives – including type of business activity (retail, tourism, high-tech), to business process management, quality, awareness and techno-legal issues. Critical success factors are explained by the companies involved. The information in these publications is supplemented by the Commission's e-commerce web site, that contains a wealth of useful information and contacts. ■

To receive your copy of the book, contact:
Anne.Sinnaeve@dg3.cec.be
or download a copy from:
<http://www.ispo.cec.be/ecommerce/>



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CALENDAR

Online Educa Berlin
2-4 December 1998
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Fax: +49 30 3249833
e-mail: ICEFBerlin@aol.com
<http://www.online-educa.com>

IDATE International conference:
Convergence: is it working ?
Internet: a new economic deal
19-20 November 1998
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2nd European RISI Conference
27-28 November, Graz (A)
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Prof. Dr. Otto Petrovic
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<http://www.telekis.at/RISI>

IST 98
30 November-2 December 1998,
Austria Center Vienna Living & Working in the Information Society European Commission
<http://www.cordis.lu/ist98/>
ist98@cec.be

2nd International Congress on Electronic Media & Citizenship
6-9 January 1999 Espoo, Jyväskylä, Oulu and Tampere (FI)
Finnish National Fund for Research and Development (SITRA) on the initiative of the Committee for the Future of the Finnish Parliament
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www.dipoli.hut.fi/pi99

"Interactive Multimedia beyond the Year 2000"
29 November 1998, Vienna (A)
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IST '98 INVESTMENT FORUM
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