Project: ParlEuNet
Partner: Pegasus Foundation
Author: Christina Hazard
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Population of the ParlEuNet database

General Considerations

The ParlEuNet database will be initially populated by what in the contract is called the " Parliament Content Provider". Our research shows that the best source of public information available in digitalised form on the Parliament is on the Europarl server. JRC (the main database builder) is able to transfer this material on to the ParlEuNet website. Furthermore, the Pegasus Foundation is conducting a survey and contacting all relevant departments of the Commission to identify the availability of materials on the Community level. On this level of content development, material is not structured, simply inserted into the database in its available format.

The second step in the population process involves "The Curriculum Developer" as mentioned in the contract. As it is impossible to hire any one organisation that is capable of developing content in English, French and German and is as well competent in developing materials for a variety of European schools, it is thought that three organisations be targeted to do this work. (It is stated in the contact that the material be available in the three aforementioned languages.)

Another important consideration is that the organisations chosen have a in-depth understanding of the curriculum requirements of schools in the UK, France and Germany as well as the ability to consider the curriculum needs of schools in other European countries targeted for our chosen age group, 15-17 year olds. Furthermore, it is desirable that the organisation have links with teachers in the pilot schools that will be conducting ParlEuNet. The materials need to be classroom based and to fit in with the educational and research objectives of the project. (The research and educational goals of the project are described fully in the technical annex and in the ParlEuNet booklet distributed to partners.) Feedback from real users as to how these materials are used will be collected during the project's duration.

The institutions will also preferably be publishing houses, and may wish to publish part of the materials as a result of the project. It is also necessary to establish links with the educational ministries to get feedback on curriculum requirements and to ensure that the materials developed may be of maximum use for other schools in their countries and in Europe. The main task of these curriculum developers will be to search for relevant materials and to put structure into identified Parliament content.

In France, the CRDP of Burgundy, Centre Régionale de Documentation Pédagogique, has agreed to participate.

In the UK, The Nuffield Foundation has agreed to participate.

In Germany, a similar institution is being sought.

It has become apparent from our preliminary research that a team of persons representing various competencies in each of the countries needs to be identified:
an educational documentalist/librarian
curriculum developers per se, as an editing function of content
IT support persons familiar with searching databases
Classroom teachers in history, geography, civics or social studies education who have experience in developing content for 15-17 year olds.

Each of the three educational institutions will receive 15,000ECU for their work. Their work will commence in July 1998 and will be completed on 31 December 1998. We request that about 30-40% of the work is completed by September to allow ParlEuNet teachers and students participating in the training workshop the opportunity to experience the database. Each of the three institutions must invest 50% in the project, notably in manpower investment. Furthermore, national investments, such as national bodies who would like to contribute to the further development of content are welcomed.

A third step in the content development process will be the conducted by the students and teachers in the ParlEuNet schools that will be using the materials from the beginning of the training period in

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September through to the whole course of the project in the year 2,000! They will be working with the materials and developing their own content that will also populate the slave or student developed database.

IPR considerations

IPR to content rights will belong to The Pegasus Foundation, the three organisations and to the European Commission. An IPR agreement will need to be drafted.

Content and Topic Development

It is estimated that 70% of the content will be on the general functioning of the European Parliament. As students will be working on a challenging education task for eight weeks, on the topic "The World of Work", about 30% of the content will be devoted to supplying information on this theme to support students' work. The content itself will be made up of text, sound and video files. The MINIMUM amount of data to be entered as specified in the contract is 100 images, 30 minutes of MPEG video and 100 Kbytes of ParlEuNet toolkit. The toolkit refers to structured information on the Parliament.

Translations

Not all information on the Parliament may be available in the three target languages. There is a separate translation budget of 30,000 ECU for translations. This budget is administered by the University of Antwerp.

Technical Considerations

JRC and Arboth, the two organisations concerned with building the database and its tools will provide an easy to use, Internet based manner on uploading content on to the database. A prototype will be available for testing at the Teacher Induction Workshop on the 18-20 of September.