

ALA KASSEL WORKSHOP PROPOSAL 2010

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Come with us to AVALON Island: Exploring language awareness in virtual worlds.

Areas addressed: Language awareness and the Use of Media, Cultural Awareness and the Use of Media, Language Awareness and (Digital) Literacy Development, Language Awareness and Business Communication.

Avalon Island is an educational space in the virtual world of Second Life.[®] It has been created under a 2 year multilateral project, AVALON, funded under *Key Activity 3 (ICT)* of the EU *EACEA Life Long Learning Programme (LLP)*. Key Activity 3 focuses on the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice embedded into long-term educational strategies. The 26 participating European partners include 10 state funded universities and 16 other public and private organisations operating in the following areas: language education, teacher training, intercultural training, language testing and certification, online education, publishing, business communication and networking, design of 3D environments and language learning in Second Life[®]. The project is a transversal programme which targets language learners from the Leonardo da Vinci (professional), Erasmus (university) and Grundtvig (vocational/adult) communities.

The workshop will start by illustrating the potential of virtual worlds for language education and business communication. It will achieve this by giving participants an overview of the different educational and communicative contexts in which virtual worlds are currently being used worldwide.

Secondly, it will provide participants with the basic knowledge to experiment with virtual worlds in their own professional settings. The workshop leaders will go through the practical and technical steps required to create a Second Life account and an “avatar” (a 3D representation of self) and will illustrate the guidelines for learner/user initiation into Second Life developed under the project.

Thirdly, the workshop will provide an overview of learning scenarios that have been developed under the project and point to areas of research in the field which are of particular interest to course developers, teachers, trainers and fellow researchers.

To conclude, the workshop aims to engage the language awareness community in a discussion about language awareness activities within virtual worlds which would be appropriate in their specific contexts.