2012 - A year of anniversaries
Happy New Year to Intersteno and to our readers.

Irsteno e-news 50

Contents

Intersteno e-news 50

Celebrating anniversaries is always a moment for rethinking the past and placing a question mark over the future

By Gian Paolo Trivulzio

Next 26th September will mark the quasquicentennial anniversary of our Federation.

According to a theory of Prof. Okuma Shigenobu founder of Waseda University, the most important and reputed in Japan, human beings could reach 125 years of age. While waiting for this to happen, we can say that we are glad that Intersteno is reaching this goal in good health, surviving all the turbulences of two world wars, technical evolutions with their impact on professional and personal lives, as well as quarrels and discussions about new ways of managing them.

I am of the opinion that, when the inaugurator of the first Congress in London expressed the hope that the Congress would not be an isolated event but would be the first in a long tradition he was not fantasizing about such a long life for our Federation.

Thinking back to that *'first Intersteno Congress',* which took place in the Geological Museum of London, we must recall that in that year Marconi had not yet invented wireless radio, the telephone was a mysterious object, the designers of automobiles had taken their first footsteps and typewriting was a curiosity looked upon with distrust and still produced at handicraft level.

Capable stenographers assured the recording of parliamentary debates and their diffusion through the newspapers, which received the texts via the telegraph, which was the principal source of news transmission.

Certainly the 'founder of Intersteno' could not imagine how much, over the years all the aforementioned means of work and communication would be drastically improved, or that most of them would also evolve into new tools, easier to be used and cheaper.

Young people can hardly imagine a life without TV, computer, Internet, portable telephones and all related tools such as e-mails, Facebook and Youtube, while some other seniors can only contemplate with sorrow the death of traditional shorthand and typewriting. The history of Intersteno shows well how this transformation was made possible: forgetting the words (sometimes misleading or wrongly used) indicating a specific technology, by overcoming the quarrels about steno, stenotype, speech recognition and keyboarding, investigating how to merge human abilities and new tools, Intersteno was and is able to show how we can meet the eternal question: 'How can we quickly and clearly communicate?' The answer is regularly given in the report of our Congresses, and in the competitions that we arrange: these are facts and not empty words.

Perhaps it is necessary to have a wider view of Intersteno's history: to this effect the new Board has decided to sponsor the preparation of updated information, after the one prepared by Marcel Racine in 1965 and available at the Congresses page of our website. We hope that this update will be ready when the 125th Anniversary will be celebrated.

By reading the history we will see how Intersteno has changed its organization to prepare to face new ways of life. This was done after the Second World War and again after the Congress in Rome 2003, with a new board. Then a new structure was created for the better management of the many competition formulae, and, later, came the empowerment of the IPRS steering committee and creation of an Education Committee.

These are certainly not final steps and other adjustments will no doubt be needed and the history will go on. Maybe we will have to provide answers to new questions such as how to improve communication between our members, how we can better and (maybe differently) organize Congresses and competitions, how can we improve teaching and achieve even better results, but Intersteno will surely not be a sleeping Federation.

2012 - The tenth anniversary of the Internet contest

The rules for the next Internet contest are now available online in three languages and, as announced in our last release, this contest will take place from 10th April till 11th May next. Registration will be possible from 5th March.

On this occasion we celebrate the 10th anniversary of an Intersteno event that has become a tradition and has widely contributed to spreading news of the excellent results that can be reached with a good keyboarding education.

The majority of our reader know very well the importance of a rational approach to keyboarding, notwithstanding the opposition that we are experiencing in several European countries, even though an increasing number of elementary schools teacher are becoming aware of need to begin at an early age when teaching this ability which will have a high impact over many school years and in the subsequent working life. In the following pages you will read how this problem is faced in United States.

Computer and software producers know that they cannot ignore the need to provide good keyboarding methods in new equipments, even though tests on alternative methods are improving.

We hope that the 10th edition of this contest will again be a success and we take this occasion to thank everybody who has contributed to past editions: first of all, the hundreds of motivated and motivating teachers in over 16 countries, the school masters who supported them and the people behind the scene who prepared the training exercises and the texts for competitions in 20 languages. We must not forget those who followed with attention and emotion the birth and growth of this important event, lending support as well preparing and shipping thousands of diplomas. The list of these people would be too long; we know that there is no need to mention their names since they are well known to each other.

Of course we cannot forget all participants over these many years: their names and results are available on our website. We congratulate everyone who took part and advise newcomers (and new teachers) to consult the classifications which show what can be attained by joining a good education with training online.

The 50th Issue of our e-newsletter.

This is the 50th issue of our e-newsletter. The first was released in November 2004 and consisted of only one page with a general announcement and brief information about the Council meeting in Helsinki.

The first issue was sent to about 1000 persons: gradually it has grown, both in

the quantity of pages (an average of 20 in the last year) and of the persons who receive it. This issue will be sent to 4180 mail addresses.

We hope that these numbers will be further increased, but at the same time we invite everyone to send in information on their activities.

Some have asked for the release of this newsletter in other languages. This is a hard task which involves many important aspect (including that of related costs). We will try to find a solution so that the newsletter may be available to an even wider audience.

E learning: USA experiences constant growth with some challenge

In a radical rethinking of what it means to go to school USA states and districts nationwide are launching online public schools that let students take some-or all-of their classes from their homes. Other states and districts are bringing students into brick-and-mortar schools for instruction that is largely computer-based and self-directed.

Thirty states and more than half of the school districts in the United States offer online courses and services and online learning is growing rapidly, at 30% annually. This growth is meeting demand among students, as more than 40% of high school and middle school students have expressed an interest in taking an online course.

Recently Virginia has authorized 13 new online schools. Florida began requiring all public-high-school students to take at least one class online, partly to prepare them for college cyber courses. Idaho will soon require two. In Georgia, a new app lets high-school students take full course loads on their iPhones and BlackBerrys. Thirty states now let students take all of their courses online.

Nationwide, an estimated 250,000 students are enrolled in full-time virtual schools, up 40% in the last three years, according to Evergreen Education Group, a consulting firm that works with online schools. More than two million pupils take at least one class online, according to the International Association for K12 Online Learning, a trade group.

Advocates say that online schooling can save states money, offer curricula customized to each student and give parents more choice in education.
One promising approach, many experts say, is hybrid schools, which blend online study with face-to-face interaction with teachers.
The practice first cropped up in secondary schools in the early 1990s, when a few states began offering virtual Advanced Placement and foreign-language classes to high-school student

VIRTUAL CLASSROOM
Number of students enrolled in full-time cyberschools

175,000 — 2008-09
200,000 — 2009-10
250,000 — 2010-11*

At online-only schools instructors answer questions by email, phone or the occasional video conference; students will often meet classmates and teachers on optional field trips and during state exams.
The growth of cybereducation is likely to affect school staffing, which accounts for about 80% of school budgets. A teacher in a traditional high school might handle 150 students. In Georgia, state and local taxpayers spend $7,650 a year to educate the average student in a traditional public school. Florida saves $1,500 a
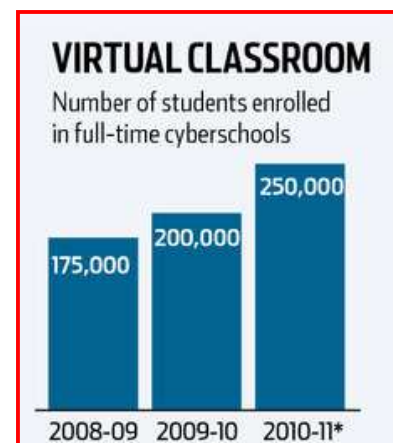
year on every student enrolled online full time.

A few states, however, have found that students enrolled full-time in virtual schools score significantly lower on standardized tests, and make less academic progress from year to year, than their peers. This is shown by the following image, which specifically refers to the reading and writing abilities.
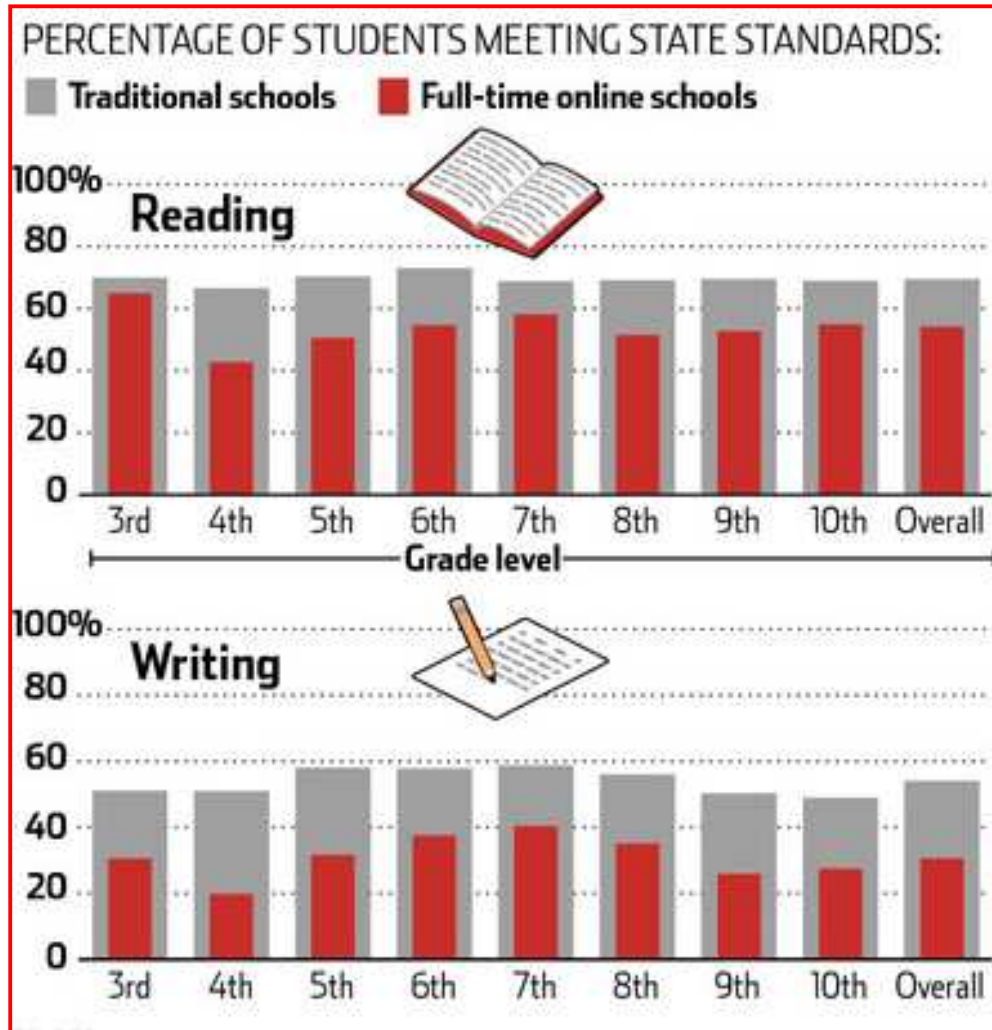
Critics worry that kids in online classes don't learn how to get along with others or participate in group discussions.

Some advocates of full-time cyberschools say that the disappointing results are partly because some of the students had a rough time in traditional schools, and arrive testing below grade level in one or more subject

Dennis Van Roekel, president of the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers union, says that his organization opposes full-time online schools but supports integrating virtual lessons into classrooms. "Obviously, we all want to save money," he says. "But to replace teachers with online learning is a mistake".

Many parents and pupils who have tried online education appreciate the benefits. The curriculum is flexible, and while many lessons look like digitized workbooks, some online classes are more creative.

Out of touch with typing

In August 2011 the Technology review published by MIT, released an article with the same title as above, written by Anne Trubek, associate professor of rhetoric and composition at Oberlin College, who is the author of A Skeptic's Guide to Writers' Houses.

We give below a short summary and we suggest that you read the whole article which is available at the following link http://www.technologyreview.in/blog/guest/27077/#comment-238869. You can also read and comment her articulated article: Handwriting is history.

Most children start typing on cell phones and computers long before they take keyboarding classes, so many schools, noting this trend, have stopped teaching typing. "The kids already know how to type," the staff at my son's school told us at curriculum night, "so we have decided to use computer time on something else."

But how are kids typing? Most develop idiosyncratic, personalized hunt-and-peck methods. Many do not touch type, or type without looking at the keyboard by placing the fingers on the home keys (asdf jkl). I see many young people typing pretty fast, but some of them only use two fingers and no home keys. If there's one "right way" to type I don't think many of us know it."

Since the late 19th century there has been a "right way" to type. In 1889, there was a "duel" between two teachers who claimed to have devised the best methods. The winner, who used something called "home keys," typed a then-astonishing 126 words per minute. Afterwards, the inventor, Frank McGurrin, toured the country, performing his feat in front of large crowds. Over the next few decades, international typing races—a sort of So You Think You Can Type? — were arranged.

Typing became the standard of teaching in high schools.

Ironically, in our era of keyboard ubiquity, typing has fallen out of the curriculum. Since most students come to school familiar with keyboards, including cell phone keypads, educators are letting the ad hoc habits of six-year old computer gamers stand, although these same teachers spend hours laboriously showing their pupils how to hold a pencil and the correct way to write a cursive capital G—skills that the kids will likely rarely use once they get to high school, when typed assignments are the norm. Does it matter how we type?

Touch typing is an example of cognitive automaticity, the ability to do things without conscious attention or awareness. Automaticity takes a burden off our working memory, allowing us more space for higher-order thinking. When we type without looking at the keys, we are multi-tasking, our brains free to focus on ideas without having to waste mental resources trying to find the quotation mark key. Keyboards morph, and smart phones and tablet computers render the home keys method almost impossible. Strangely, we are adopting new devices at the cost of cognitive automaticity. There was a 15-year lag between the development of touch typing and when the neologism "touch typing" entered the English language. Perhaps we need another duel - a reality TV iPad typing show? - to spur new keyboarding innovations?
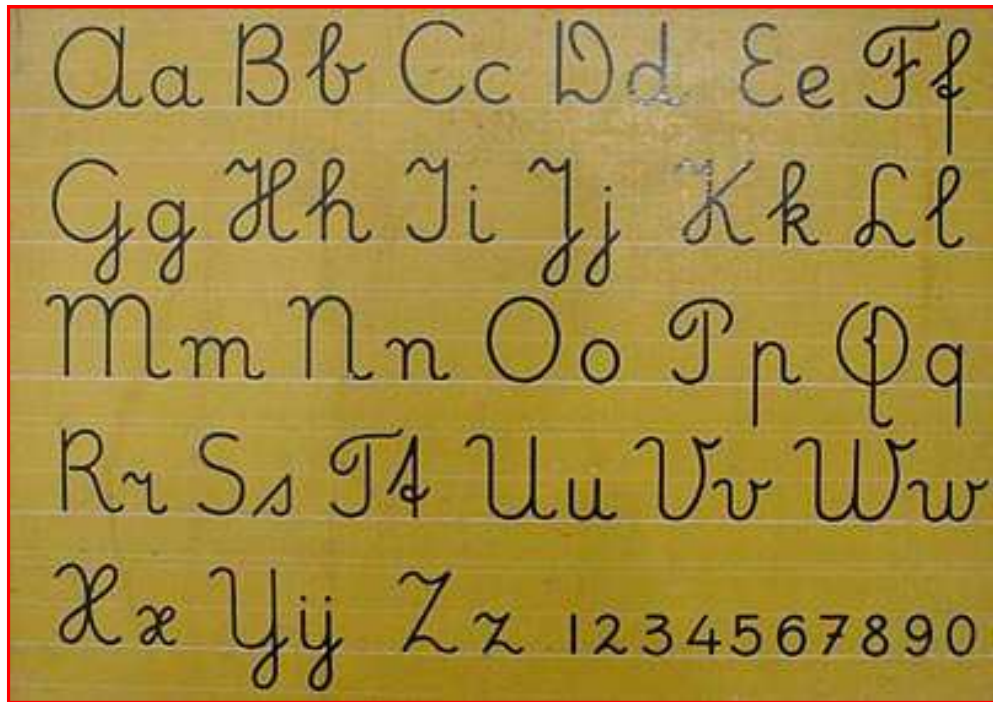
Education officials say the move makes sense in a computerized world. Indiana is the latest US state which will not require its schoolchildren to learn joined-up, or cursive, writing.

But students will have to learn basic typing skills, which education officials say are more useful in the modern employment world.

The move is part of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, which aims to ensure consistency in US education and makes no mention of handwriting.

But critics say writing well is a vital skill for life and builds character.

US schoolchildren currently learn to write with joined-up writing from about the age of eight.

But under the core standards - which were released in June 2010 and have been adopted by nearly all US states - there is no requirement for them to do so.

Children from grade six upwards - about 11 years old - will, however, be expected to "demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting".

Many schools have said there simply is not enough time in the term to teach children both.

Dr Scott Hamilton, an Indiana clinical psychologist, said the time children spend labouring over script could be better used.

Indiana officials have stressed that the standards are not exhaustive and that teachers could continue teaching handwriting if they chose.

But some parents, teachers and psychologists have reacted angrily to the move, saying there is more to handwriting than being able to write quickly.

"The fluidity of cursive allows for gains in spelling and a better tie to what they are reading and comprehending through stories and through literature," Paul

Sullivan, head teacher of a school in California, told CNN.

"I think there's a firmer connection of wiring between the brain's processes of learning these skills and the actual practice of writing."

Parent Jerry Long told the Indianapolis Star he was worried about what the new system could mean for his sixth grade daughter in the future. "I don't agree with it. How are they supposed to know how to sign their names?"

Exploring new avenues and new contexts: live subtitling and other respeaking applications for media accessibility: third international seminar on live subtitling with speech recognition.

by Carlo Eugeni

The third international seminar on live subtitling with speech recognition, called "Exploring new avenues and new contexts: live subtitling and other respeaking applications for media accessibility" was held in the aula magna of the Artesis University College of Antwerp (BE), on Friday October 21, 2011. Six panels were organized discussing seven different topics related to speech-recognition technology.

In the first panel dedicated to new perspectives in media accessibility and subtitling through respeaking, Andrew Lambourne, CEO of Sysmedia (UK), talked about Zen as the main aspect respeakers should develop in order to ensure that simultaneous complex activities do not negatively influence their performance; independent consultant Peter Olaf Looms (DK) discussed three possible scenarios for media accessibility over the next 5-10 years and what this means for the various constituents which work to make it possible; Gion Linder, from the Swiss Teletext (CH), discussed the tricky question broadcasters are confronted with of doing more with less money. Finally, Pablo Romero Fresco, from Roehampton University (UK), gave an overview of how respeaker training is currently being tackled at university by addressing the question of its online teaching and of its teaching to a multilingual class.

In the second panel dedicated to new developments in broadcasting, Alison Attenborough, from Red Bee Media (UK), gave an update on respeaking methods, technology and development at Red Bee Media; Erik De Snerck, from VRT (BE), illustrated how an antenna delay in the broadcasting of some VRT live programs allowed VRT to deliver synchronous subtitles; finally, Carlo Eugeni, from the University of Macerata (I), illustrated live subtitles produced by means of a new method called live editing, consisting of automatic transcription being edited live by two operators.

In the third panel dedicated to new tools and smart systems for accessibility, Prof. Pilar Orero from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (E), illustrated a system for integrated production/delivery/reception of subtitling, audiosubtitlting, audiodescription and sign language interpreting over smart telephones; Margot Mieskes, from the European Media Laboratory and Juan Martínez, from Swiss Teletext (CH), talked about audio titling (the process of transforming text to speech in the context of media applied to audio descriptions; Alessandro Tescari, CEO of PerVoice (I), introduced a revolutionary subtitling machine (the PerVoice Subtitling Workstation) that allows for subtitling programs in real time in live editing mode.

In the fourth panel dedicated to revision, error, correction and collaboration, Carlo Aliprandi, from Synthema (I), introduced SpeechTitle 2.0, a web-based respeaking asset management system, which is based on a multilingual ASR engine that can be accessed over Internet, thus allowing for remote subtitling; Luuk Van Waes, from the University of Antwerp (BE), illustrated a study aiming at a better understanding of the causes and consequences of revision in a live subtitling context; Mike Wald, from the University of Southampton (UK), described a tool that facilitates collaborative correction of speech recognition captioning errors to make videos of lectures accessible.

In the fifth panel dedicated to training and quality, Clea Tavella from SubTi Access(I) illustrated a study aiming at analyzing aired subtitles to single out the most common mistakes and develop practical exercises for trainees; Tom Wootton, from Independent Media Support (UK), suggested a broadly viewer-centred approach for commercial quality assessment and for development and evaluation of subtitlers' output; Ales Prazak and Jan Trmal, from the University of West Bohemia (CZ), introduced a special four-phase training methodology using a specific SW equipment with quantitative indicators about the trainee progresses;

In the sixth panel dedicated to training and interpreting, Jan Craenen from the Artesis University College (BE), discussed a study which analyzed the quality of interlingual subtitles according to criteria such as delay, reading speed, display time and length of the subtitles; Rita Geens, from the University College Ghent (BE), illustrated how they train interpreters into respeakers, after a thorough understanding of the competences and skills required for a respeaker; Pablo Romero Fresco concluded by putting into question the respeaking training method based on the belief that candidates should have an interpreting background.

More information at www.respeaking.net

ZAV Hodonin - 17th edition of the International competition in text production.

This competition is intended for students and young people. It is organised by the Academy for Commerce in cooperation with the ZAV Internet school, and

Interinfo of the Czech Republic which represents Intersteno. The preparation of texts in four languages, the practical organisation, revision and grades up to the release of the classifications lists have been organised by Helena Matoušková.

The deputy mayor of the city of Hodonin and the mayor of the nearby Slovak city of Skalika took part in this event.

Pictured above are the best three participants, who also were successful in the worldwide competition in Paris: Karin Cieslarová, Luboš Beranand Karolína Foukalová.

This meeting was also attended by **Janka Borguľová** from Slovak Republic, **Anita Dobos** from Hungary and **Teresa Wawrzynek** from Poland with their competitors.

Marlis Kulb, Honorary President of Intersteno and **Danny Devriendt**, Secretary Treasurer, were also present.

In the photo below, **Fausto Ramondelli** (Interteno President) **Georgette Sante** (Jury President) and **Jaroslav Zaviačič** (Vice President) are shown during the prize-giving ceremony.

Jaroslav Zaviačič

The "DAY OF THE KEYBOARD", 33. Croatian national competition – Zagreb 2011

The 33rd nation competition in computer typing-text production named Day of the keyboard 2011 was held on 12th November in Zagreb. It was attended by more than 40 participants in the largest-ever turnout, embracing all of Croatia, from Varazdin and Zagreb in the north to Cavtat and Dubrovnik in the far south.

In the professional typist category involving a 30–minute text transcript Kristina Zlodi, an employee of the Croatian Chamber of Crafts in Zagreb won first place, with a score of 443, representing 60 characters per minute. Second place went to Andrea Muženić-Vidak from Jablanovec near Zagreb (437,60 char. per minute), and the third to Tanja Ivana Juričev from Vodice (427,67 characters per minute).

The high school students competed in the category involving a 10-minute transcript of the text. First place and title of master was won by Suzana Bafti with a score of 430,0 characters per minute. Second was Nikolina Radmanović (391,4), both from the School Administrative Office in Zagreb, and third was Dora Nikolić, a pupil of the Economic and Trade School in Dubrovnik (363,9)

By tradition, a very interesting discussion was held with the Informatics tribune about the 48th Intersteno Congress and the World Championship in Paris from 9th-16th July 2011. This is organized by the Croatian Stenographic Society in cooperation with the Croatian Association for Technical Culture and the Zagreb Fair, during the 34th International Book Fair Interliber.

All competitors have already announced their participation at the upcoming world Intersteno online contest in April 2012.

Shorthand and peace

The annual meeting of "Servas Italy", the humanitarian and cultural international association, involved in peace and non-violence through cooperation and hospitality, friendship and study, was the occasion for a show dedicated to Danilo Dolci, an Italian sociologist (1924-1997), whose biography exudes feelings of peace and non-violence and which led him to be considered the "Italian Gandhi,".

The social commitment of Danilo Dolci, who - in the fifties - moved to Sicily, has been commemorated by some shorthand panels made by **Anna Maria Trombetti**, stenographer and president of the Institute "Scripturae Munus", and **Franco Verruso**, journalist and stenographer (father of Fabrizio Verruso, stenographer at the Sicilian Parliament). The result was an exhibition of panels in shorthand, entitled "Shorthand pays tribute to Danilo Dolci. Peace flowing through Shorthand".
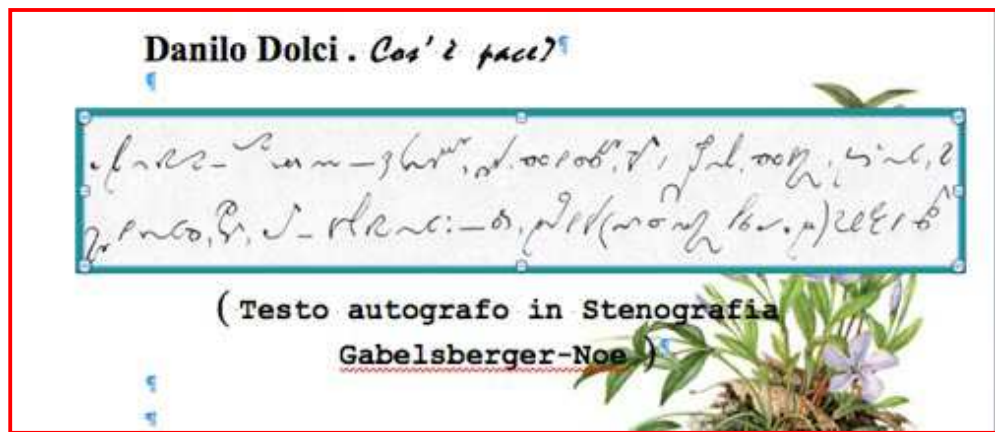
Stenoscripts, made in ten panels, exposed in two systems of shorthand admitted to public education in Italy, (the Cima and Gabelsberger-Noe methods) emphasized Dolci's messages of peace: in a literary work of the sociologist, in particular "Communication is the law of life", we find the reasons for a link with shorthand, because in shorthand is amplified the reproduction of the word, the transmission of communication.

According to the journalist and stenographer Verruso, the teachings of Danilo Dolci continue to be current and vibrant. Another aspect of this homage to Danilo Dolci deserves the involvement of reporters. In his work we can find short rhetorical components and the use of concise beats, scratching, the "brachylogy" (from the Greek meaning short oratory). In shorthand, "brachy writing" (from the Greek, "short graphic signs") we can recognize the graphical tool par excellence, that can reduce even the most complex oratory.

On this occasion, perhaps for the first time, the concept of shorthand was made known to people not involved in our field, as well as fuelling its spread among those who participated in the conference and who appreciated this combination of shorthand and art. Thus science and magic in writing made a service to peace!

Fabrizio Gaetano Verruso

18-20 November 2011 - The profession of stenographer - Reality and Challenges. XIX Jornadas Nacionales de Taquigrafía of AATP - Alta Gracia (Cordoba) Argentina.

To celebrate its 65 anniversary, AATP, the Association of Parliamentary Stenographers of Argentina, arranged a championship with two levels of speed. .

Here are the results:

Category A: (speed of 140 words per minute, i.e. about 350 syllables)

1st place: Paul Pelissier, of Buenos Aires, who will take part in the next competition for stenographer at the National Senate.

2° Place: Leandro Iezzi, of the National Senate

3° Place: Débora Loreley Fernández, of the National Chamber of Deputies.
Category B (Students - beginner):
1° Place: Cintia Vera, from Rosario de Lerma, Salta.
2° Place: Fidel Alancay, from Rosario de Lerma, Salta.

Category B (Advanced students)):
1° Place: Rosana González, from Córdoba.

President of the Jury was Jorge Bravo, President of the Asociación Argentina de Taquígrafos Parlamentarios (AATP) and General Director of the stenographers of the National Senate. All transcriptions were of a high level.

At the opening session of this meeting, **Fausto Ramondelli**, as President of Intersteno, delivered a video message in the Spanish language. You can hear it at our website" Latest news of November 2011." This video was seen more than **15228** times, from 18th November to 31th December, over the internet.

Intersteno on the Web

In addition to our portal (www.intersteno.org) and the national websites, our Federation now has an important presence on Facebook, as can be seen from this image

Visitors on www.intersteno.org website in 2011 (up to 25 December 2011) totalled 559.927, consulting 21.995.452 pages

Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals							
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	kB F	kB In	kB Out	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
Dec 2011	90354	77440	58755	1374	12107	420481176	0	0	21997	940094	1239044	1445664
Nov 2011	66009	56914	40808	1236	18581	380122382	0	0	37107	1224254	1707420	1980296
Oct 2011	67654	58015	41087	1111	18670	81093203	0	0	34452	1273714	1798478	2097292
Sep 2011	61982	52751	34525	1143	19284	107088125	0	0	34306	1035750	1582538	1859484
Aug 2011	38498	33676	22862	1227	18648	118183158	0	0	38047	708734	1043976	1193446
Jul 2011	47605	40430	26543	1290	21217	189354035	0	0	39993	822844	1253340	1475778
Jun 2011	65528	56399	38359	1429	22120	211455634	0	0	42878	1150794	1691990	1965858
May 2011	149877	123924	88945	2225	27463	178216461	0	0	68986	2757324	3841652	4646202
Apr 2011	153219	128888	97988	1881	26095	161646339	0	0	56447	2939642	3866644	4596584
Mar 2011	168544	139972	103417	1857	33325	164001193	0	0	57588	3205946	4339132	5224888
Feb 2011	156837	131977	94948	1973	35521	132732348	0	0	55261	2658568	3695372	4391452
Jan 2011	160723	136804	105735	2350	47604	157023497	0	0	72865	3277788	4240952	4982432
Totals						2301397550	0	0	559927	21995452	30300538	35859376

NEXT EVENTS

The events listed here have been given to us by their organizers. If you wish to have your event in our next issue please send the information at least one month in advance. The next issue will be released in March 2012.

Board Meeting - Ghent - 10-13 February 2012

The members of the Board, as elected by the General Assembly during the Intersteno Congress in Paris, will meet in Ghent. This will give them the opportunity to evaluate the location of the next Congress planned for July 2013, as well as to appreciate the many efforts already made by the Belgian colleagues.

Organizing Committee of the Congress in Ghent 2013 meets

All members of the Belgian Organizing Committee of our next Congress met on Saturday 17th December. You can see the photos of this event on the page http://nl-nl.facebook.com/Gent2013 where you will be able to follow the information that will be released, in addition to our .org website.

What's new?

The info herewith is based upon reliable information gathered from various sources but it is not intended as an advertisement of products, services or producers.

Opening a world of educational content with YouTube for schools

Sight, sound and motion have always had the power to engage students and complement classroom instruction by bringing educational topics to life.

YouTube has been hearing from teachers that they want to use the vast array of educational videos on YouTube in their classrooms, but are concerned that students will be distracted by the latest music video or a video of a cute cat, or a video that might not be appropriate for students. While schools that completely restrict access to YouTube may solve this distraction concern, they also limit access to thousands of educational videos on YouTube that can help teaching.

To address this issue, on December 11, 2011 Y**ouTube for Schools** was announced, a network setting that school administrators can turn on to grant access only to the educational content from YouTube EDU. Teachers can choose from the hundreds of thousands of videos on YouTube EDU created by more than 600 partners like the Smithsonian, TED, Steve Spangler Science, and Numberphile.

Essentially, it's the perfect tool for network administrators and fussy librarians to keep students away from lolcat videos, all the while steering the kids towards what they're actually supposed to be doing — studying.

With the flick of a switch, admins can restrict YouTube access solely to videos found on YouTube EDU, a destination site within YouTube that curates all partner educational content into one central location. While users have always had access to YouTube EDU, the new YouTube for Schools network extension will make sure that students are actually learning while watching online videos in the computer lab.

The partner content includes upwards of 450,000 videos from major educational institutions like the Smithsonian, TED and the University of California at Berkeley. Users can navigate the different videos by subject matter or grade level, and teachers can run down a list of all hosted content to use in lessons.

While YouTube for schools isn't a major launch for the online videos, it's indicative of the direction the site has been moving in over the past year. Instead of being a mere repository for uploaded user-generated content, YouTube has spent much time courting content providers and media institutions to bring more original content to the site. In November, YouTube inked a major content-sharing deal with Disney, bringing web-exclusive shows to the platform in an attempt to draw in younger audiences. And in October YouTube announced it would launch dozens of new online channels, organized around specific topics and featuring a mix of original and user-generated content.

The company finally tied everything together in early December, launching a complete YouTube redesign that put far more emphasis on channels and content than ever before.

The educational sector, then, is a natural extension for the platform. It's yet another channel that needs its content distributed, and the more places YouTube can get its new user interface in front of consumers, the better. Ultimately, YouTube's aim is to increase "stickiness," or the amount of time a given user spends on the site. That means further acquainting users with the new interface by getting more major institutions to use YouTube as a delivery platform.

One to one computing in Ethiopia

This report is fully reproduced from eLearning Africa News portal 16th Dec. 2011.

The notion of transforming education through one-to-one computing is currently a hot topic across Africa. Initiatives are under way in various countries including Nigeria, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Ghana. But is one-to-one computing really possible for every child, and is it the most appropriate and cost-effective use of resources? After a lively session at the recent ONLINE EDUCA conference in Berlin, David Hollow a founding director of Jigsaw Consult in England examines the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) initiative in Ethiopia.

There are 33 million children out of school in sub-Saharan Africa. The number of children out of school has stopped decreasing, and it is now likely there will be more children out of school in 2015 than there are today. Such a situation clearly warrants radical action. We have a shared conviction that technology has a role to play in helping provide the education that is so urgently required. There are many initiatives, one-to-one computing amongst them, claiming to be the solution to educational challenges in Africa.

One notable example of one to one computing in education is that of OLPC in

Ethiopia, where for the last three years a pilot scheme has been underway in five different schools with 5900 laptops. In Ethiopia 2.7 million children of primary school age are not in education. There is an average of 59 primary school pupils for every teacher, and educational resources such as textbooks are in incredibly short supply.

At the Royal Geographical Society in London in May 2011, I listened to a talk by Nicholas Negroponte, founder of OLPC, where he spoke about their pilot programme in Ethiopia. Having worked in the schools that he was using to illustrate how laptops are currently revolutionising education, I became curious.

Negroponte gave anecdotes that justified a specific course of action. He suggested that in Ethiopia most of the children given laptops learned not only how to use them but how to become programmers. He then went on to explain how the positive impact that the laptops had on education was inevitable, that the only valid question was that of whether the laptops could be afforded.

The idea that most children who had received laptops in Ethiopia could undertake sophisticated programming is a long way removed from the reality that I encountered. Whilst many children enjoyed playing on the laptops, there was limited, if any, integration into the classroom routine. Most teachers objected to the way the laptops were distracting the children, leading to some of them banning laptops from the classroom entirely.

My experience regarding OLPC in Ethiopia would suggest that the rhetoric does not match the reality. The aspiration for a laptop for every child and the transformation of education makes it tempting to ignore the lived experiences of students and teachers.

The harsh reality in Ethiopia is that finances for education are limited: What is spent on one initiative is, by implication, not spent on another initiative. So how do we decide how to quantify educational value? How do we decide if laptops are the most cost-effective way to provide good quality education in Ethiopia?

If the One Laptop Per Child initiative were to have achieved its aim of ensuring that every primary school child in Ethiopia received a laptop, then the total basic cost (including distribution, training and maintenance) would have been approximately 2.4 billion USD. Estimating that the laptops might last five years, this equates to a subsequent annual follow-on cost of 297 million USD (total cost of ownership of each laptop multiplied by 1/8th of national enrolment). In the first year, this would constitute 214% of the national primary education budget. Therefore, to provide a laptop for every child in primary school, it would be necessary to spend no money on teacher salaries, textbooks, electricity, infrastructure or any other educational resources for over two years.

In contrast, the price of a textbook in Ethiopia is 0.5 USD (c. 8 ETB). Textbooks are in short supply, and many children attending school cannot access any. Providing every primary school child in Ethiopia with a full set of textbooks would cost 38 million USD. Assuming that the books and laptops would have comparable durability, then providing every child in primary school with a textbook for every subject would require approximately 1.5% of the money required for every child to have a laptop.

This illustration should not necessarily lead us away from promoting one to one computing in Africa. But it should provoke us to consider carefully our approach in a context of limited financial resources and prioritise integration with pre-existing educational infrastructure. If education is the ultimate goal, then additional options should also be considered: One appropriate choice might be textbooks for every child; another choice might be laptops for every teacher!

From Intersteno with love

It is well known that Intersteno Congresses are a good ground for new acquaintances, but now we have an official confirmation that is it also a good opportunity for a new love. From a report of Gregor Keller on www.intersteno.de we learn that Mr Uwe Brüdigam met Marion at the Intersteno Congress in Florence 1987: they married in 1989.

We congratulate this couple. Marion is well known at international level for her constant presence and organisational abilities.

This also gives us the opportunity to send congratulations and best wishes to Uwe Brüdigam who recently celebrated his 50th anniversary.

Hand and Keyboard: the Story of a Misunderstanding

by Martine Pineau

Martine Pineau is a keyboarding teacher in Toulouse (France). She edits the blog 'L'écho des claviers'.

She attended the Intersteno Congress in Paris for the first time, and released an attractive report about the keyboarding competitions (Grêle à Paris! Hail in Paris!) that can be read in our .org website: Latest e-news September 2011.

At about the same time as the Congress was being held, the Revue de l'Institute des langues et cultures d'Europe et d'Amerique published an interesting document about several aspects of keyboarding, in which Intersteno and Ms Helena Matouskova are mentioned. The review is specifically addressed to interpretation, and the aim of the article is to give interpreters a better understanding of the advantage of a rational keyboard and keyboarding. Experts in the field will surely be in accordance with the message given by Madame Pineau, who has the ability to address the subject in a very interesting and clear way. Here is a summary of the content.
Writing is essentially regarded as an exclusively intellectual activity. However, it is also a physical activity, with its own specific gestures, which may generate various health problems. The main tool used in writing today is the keyboard. Unfortunately for those who use it on a daily basis, it is usually ignored and even poorly considered in the framework of current social representations. This article sets out to analyse this phenomenon and explore ways of reconciling the hand, as an extension of the human brain, with the keyboard, as an extension of the hand. Diverse solutions exist and complement each other, such as adequate training in typing, optimizing key distribution, creating new keyboard forms, organizing work differently.

The whole text can be read at http://ilcea.revues.org/index1067.html

Fasse dich Kurz! Be brief! Shorthand at the Bonn University (DE)

In the era of computers and speech recognition shorthand has a difficult position. Nevertheless at Bonn University it is enjoying a new renaissance.

So begins a report of Martin Dommer in the online Frankfurter Allgemeine.

The answer to the usual question 'Who needs shorthand today?' is given by Prof. Friedrich Koßwig who for 40 years has taught mathematics and statistics at the Universy in Bonn. and who shares with 22 studens his knowledge and enthusiasm for shorthand. He says that 'Shorthand has in principle a problem of image'. It is no longer dedicated to taking dictation in an office but is an important tool for taking notes and concepts.

Prof. Friedrich Koßwig teaches his lessons with the basic rules of Einheitskurz-schrift (the Unified system of Germany), but with a reduced number of rules. At the end of a semester, his students can write at a speed double that of cursive writing.

Italian magazine Civiltà della scrittura - formerly Rivista degli Stenografi (Stenographers' review) ends printed publication.

The last printed version of this Italian review (founded in 1877, ten years before Intersteno) was issued on December 2011.

High printing costs forced this decision and caused the publishers to think about a digital version to be released on web. This change is in line with the evolution of many printed newspaper and books, which are becoming available online. even though most people will regret and miss the good quality of printing and the collection on the bookshelf.

Director of this review is Prof. Paolo Antonio Paganini - Milano who is President of Fondazione Giulietti devoted to the diffusion of shorthand and fast writing in line with technical evolution. During the last 20 years under the direction of Prof. Paganini the review has dealt with matters of interest involving linguistics and informatics.

We have to remember that Fondazione Giulietti played an important and active part at the Intersteno Congress in Rome, with the sponsoring of printing and delivery of the 176-page report of Congress.

We all hope that the digital format on the web will retain the same quality of contents and layout.
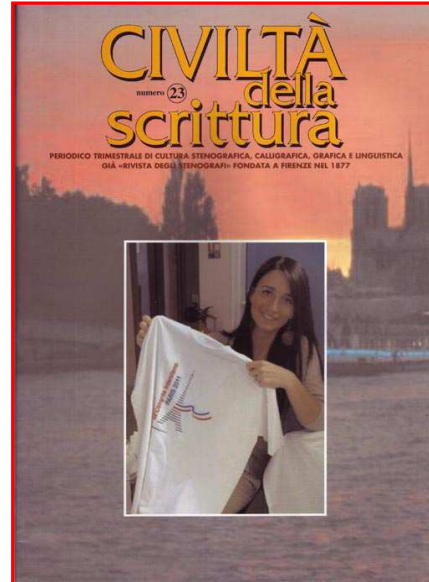
Many thanks to Peter Walker for the revision of these texts.

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