EDITORIAL

Throughout history, pedagogy has always integrated technology, in one way or another. In recent years, as computer and Internet technologies have evolved to acquire a ubiquitous role in our lives, developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have asserted a central function in all forms of learning, and even more so in language learning. This Special Issue of *Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning* focuses on these developments and, in particular, on the nature and impact of "new media" in English language teaching and learning.

But how best to define ICTs? In 2001, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) offered the following definition of the term: 'ICTs are basically information-handling tools […]. They include the 'old' ICTs of radio, television and telephone, and the 'new' ICTs of computers, satellite and wireless technology and the Internet. These different tools are now able to work together, and combine to form our 'networked world' […] which reaches into every corner of the globe'.[1] To that definition we could add the growing sense of community and collaboration between people brought about through the so-called "new technologies" (which include the social media and numerous applications for phones, tablets and PCs).

This Special Issue hosts reports on the implementation of many different facets of ICTs and new media, such as webquests, blogging, twitter, wikis, interactive whiteboards, forms of digital media production such as digital storytelling, as well as uses of mobile phones and video games, and how they can facilitate language learning and the promotion of various language and communication skills. There are papers on all levels of schooling (primary and secondary) and tertiary education (an in-depth account of the use of ICTs at the Faculty of English at the University of Athens), together with discussions of the ways in which web technology can enhance teacher communities and learner communities, and an awareness of the broader meaning good use of ICTs can have for lifelong learning.

What permeates all papers is the awareness that what differentiates the "new" technologies from the "old" technologies is that the former are not just a means of helping learners build up language skills, they are a fundamental ingredient in the construction, and essential empowerment, of learner and teacher communities. In fact, at their best, the new technologies have provided what language learning needed for a very long time, namely, a seamless link between learning the structures and functions of the foreign language and using it in authentic ways that reflect the way people live, express themselves and communicate with one another today and, inevitably, in the years to come.

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Nicos C. Sifakis
Editor-in-Chief

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[1] 'Information communications technology for development.' Essentials: No 5. UNDP, Evaluation Office. http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/essentials_5.pdf (accessed 5 Apr 2014).