# Creating Machinima Empowers Live Online Language Teaching and Learning

## 2.5 Instructions on How to Produce Machinima

# Language Learning with Machinima
## EU funded CAMELOT project (2013-2015)

Lifelong Learning Programme

Deliverable Number: 2.5

Deliverable Name: Instructions on how to produce machinima

Description: Instructions on how to produce machinima aim to encourage teachers and trainees to use unconventional teaching tools in their didactical work. The language of advanced technology becomes simplified and more approachable.

Dissemination: Public

Signed off by: Project Coordinator

Date Signed off: 15 November 2015

## Six Stages in Making Machinima

Making a machinima falls into approximately six recognisable stages: finding the idea; the script; the machinima plan; filming; editing; and post production. Each of these stages is described below. Following this a series of videos made for or used in the project are listed below to help guide instructors through the process.

### 1. Finding the idea

Before you start, you need an idea – a situation or a learning need. This will act as the starting point from which the script or storyline may be developed; it will also establish the genre.

### 2. The script

The script can be pre-written or made up by the actors. It may originate from the re-telling of a well-known story, a sketch, a role-play (i.e., a language-learning roleplay, not the virtual-world roleplay based on written text only) or just an idea to be explored and developed.
Once you have established what format the script will take, it needs to be thought through and written, then tried out. As it will be read by actors, quite often words need to be altered to sound natural. The written word may sound very strange when it is being read out loud. The actors should read it through several times and get the wording and pronunciation right before the start of filming.

### 3. The machinima plan

The detailed plan produced in the initial stages is sometimes called a storyboard. This often consists of a chart or table of some sort, maybe a comic strip, or possibly a partly developed timeline in the video editor. It usually shows what should be filmed, when a character is in the action and where the filming is going to take place.

Different scenes, costumes and props can be added to the storyboard so that it is easy to see what you need to gather together for the next scene. The actors, with the right costumes and props, need to be in the right place at the right time; this is where the storyboard is especially useful. In the past, we have used a Google Doc, accessible by the whole team, to create the

storyboards. Everyone can edit it, adding a note when they have found and obtained permission to film in, places with suitable scenery for their machinima, or informing others that they have found costumes, props, and anything else pertinent to the scene. It keeps everyone up-to-date with the development of the machinima planning.

If not working with others in a class, then the person making the machinima may need to find actors willing to participate. Once they are in Second Life®, avatars often join groups. There are several groups concerned with machinima making, and so a simple request to an appropriate group will usually bring willing actors.

**4. Filming**

Once the script and machinima plan are complete, it is fairly safe to go ahead with the filming section. (See tutorial 1 or 4 if you are using Fraps or Camtasia for screencasting) The filming may take several sessions in different places with a variety of characters. Before starting, prepare the scene, put out scenery and props that are needed, and try to hide things that should not be seen. For ideas about what can be done as you get a little more experienced (see [Making a Market Scene](#)).

**5. Editing**

The editing stage involves choosing the right section of film for each section of the machinima. Most of any filmed material is scrap; only very small pieces, usually the best sections of the footage, are used.

Bring all of the footage onto the timeline, cut away what is not needed, and then add transitions between scenes. If the audio has been created separately, bring that onto the timeline, too, so that audio and facial movements can be synchronised. (See tutorial 3, 5 or 6 depending whether you are using Movie Maker or Camtasia)

At the beginning, people often take far too much footage and then try to use everything that is good. That will make the machinima too long. Be ruthless – keep it short! A word of warning: if the finished machinima is more than about 3.5 minutes in total, it will be hard for learners to concentrate on.

Filming and editing may be mixed at this stage: you may find that more or better footage is needed. Therefore, you often have to go back to filming at any point during the edit.

**6. Post production**

This stage is where the final touches are added: sound effects, background music, credits and any other interesting extras. (See tutorials 8 - 12 which show various post production techniques) The credits should include details of the filming locations where you got permission to film (if it was not automatically given), any pictures or photographs taken by other people, and any sound effects or music not in the public domain. Sometimes, people pay for the use of music and sound effects; in such cases, these often do not have to be credited. Decide with your group of actors whether their names will appear in the credits. Some people prefer to stay anonymous; after all, the avatar could be anyone!

Towards the end of the editing process, it is worth asking others for their thoughts on the machinima. People who have not seen it already will often notice things that the editor has not spotted: the voice may be too quiet, the background music too loud, or similar. It is easy to edit whilst the project is still open in the video editor. This is the point where it can be really useful to have a way of sharing your machinima with friends who can check it over.

**Videos to Help Teachers Learn How to Make Machinima**

| No. | Video | URL |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | Adding sound | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jY8ARHjCzT8 |
| 2. | The editing screen | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRlfwSNisQ0 |
| 3. | Audacity tutorial | http://camelotproject.eu/audacity-tutorial/ |
| 4. | Callouts and visual properties | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McodO2TvAoE |
| 5. | Camtasia for Macintosh | http://youtu.be/Eo0oNRDO10s |
| 6. | Camtasia tutorials | https://www.techsmith.com/tutorial-camtasia-8.html |
| 7. | Finishing off the video | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iwqeD3bCTQ |
| 8. | Film in film | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awaro0QMW_8 |
| 9. | Using a greenscreen | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2M3LsrJOmBc |
| 10. | Movie Maker tutorials | http://camelotproject.eu/movie-maker-tutorials/ |
| 11. | Screencasting with Camtasia | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VwO8BcFNug |
| 12. | The Clip Bin and transitions | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Spt8RjPTd6o |
| 13. | Using Fraps to screencast | http://camelotproject.eu/using-fraps-to-make-a-screencast/ |
| 14. | Zoom and pan techniques | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBJ--QlFAvQ |