



Business Territory 1 is a CD-ROM package based on a series of authentic video interviews at a Cambridge electronics company. It is a multimedia product, incorporating audio, video and text. I found the program easy to install and - as far as I can see - admirably free from glitches.

Video clips

The video clips are all of a reasonable length for pedagogical purposes, so that they do not require extensive ability to memorise what one has watched. The sound is of good quality, and the authentic accents can only be of benefit for learners of English. The video element is accessed by clicking on a face in the initial screen, which opens up a new screen with the same face attached to several "cards", each of which has a summary text on it, e.g. "Role Martin". Clicking on the card produces an audio question, and then, a trifle irritatingly, one has to click on the "play" button under the screen in order to view the video extract. If the student views the video clip twice, s/he can then have access to the text of the clip, which includes excellent links to hypertext dictionaries containing both lexical and cultural information, some of which is conveyed orally - a very good and original idea. A further, very minor irritant here: the two viewings must be consecutive; if the learner views the clip once and then goes to look at something else, this initial viewing is not remembered.

Tasks

This package distinguishes itself, firstly, by good, authentic video input, but also, secondly, by extensive exercises attached to the video sequences. Tasks include: gap-filling (quite demanding and really only possible after several viewings of the relevant video clip), roleplays, information-gathering and evaluation, oral presentations, groupwork and written work.

It should be added that the course is clearly designed to be used with a teacher in the background, which is not to say that it is useless for self-study. The gap-filling and text work can be done on one's own, but the remaining exercises require a teacher for part of the time.

A couple of complaints here. Firstly, a minor one: it is mildly irritating that one is forced to use the mouse to navigate within the texts; there is no obvious reason why the cursor or the page-up/page-down keys should not also be usable. Secondly, potentially a major irritant: users are not allowed to type wrong answers, all wrong input being greeted with a loud "peep" and a refusal by the machine to display the offending letter. This characteristic does not encourage people to do this particular exercise (gap-filling), nor does it function in a very communicative way, since, arguably, synonyms could easily be accepted and possibly commented on, a procedure which would make this exercise more enjoyable and less stressful. In my opinion, this could profitably be re-thought, even if the possibility of rehearsing the appropriate extract or skipping the item in question makes it possible to avoid becoming bogged down in a circle of wrong answers and rejections.

Support for teachers

Business Territory 1 contains a very useful database of materials of all sorts whose function is to support the teacher (called "Teacher's Territory"). This is a kind of electronic teacher's



book, and contains, for example, "Background information", which includes a host of tips on how to get the best out of the package and even runs to pedagogical items such as "Teacher as facilitator". Naturally, it also includes standard chapters such as transcripts of the video clips, but also a useful selection of task sheets and an excellent "Learning review" for the student to chart his/her progress.

Summary

While not technologically world-shattering, Business Territory 1 is noteworthy because it seems to have actually been designed by teachers for teachers, and is well suited to use in the classroom. It is a well-assembled course, with a good range of tasks and use of resources.

I think the use of authentic language is a very good idea, since students are thus exposed to English as it is spoken in everyday life and the video clips are thus more authentic and more interesting than they would if they were acted. Indeed, this aspect of the package could probably be used outside the context of the course itself, e.g. in a course on communication skills. The authentic language should provide a good stimulus to ensuing authentic communication, and this is one of the main strengths of this course, that, unlike so many competing products, it aims to stimulate communicative activity.

Prof. Dr. John Bennett, Universität St. Gallen



Reviewer: Zoe Bartlett, The British Council, Quito

Business Territory 1 (Lingonet) is a CD-ROM which gives students access to authentic English monologues through video and audio. The package is easy even for the "technologically challenged" to use, although students and teachers who are totally unfamiliar with computers will need some initial guidance before they can exploit Business Territory 1 fully.

The package focuses on a real British company, located in Cambridge, and contains input from a range of employees including a technical manager, a secretary, an operational managing director and a security officer. Students are exposed to a variety of accents and structures and common 'business' vocabulary.

While advertised as suitable for lower-intermediate to advanced level learners, the material would, I believe, present difficulties for students below upper-intermediate level. Some vocabulary tasks are appropriate for intermediate level learners whilst some of the cloze exercises are advanced level. Because there is no labelled grading of different tasks, teachers with lower level classes would have to spend some time and effort selecting suitable material from the package.

The package is innovative in its support for teachers. There are clear and plentiful notes for teachers to refer to, including sample lesson plans, worksheets that can be downloaded and ideas for written follow-up tasks. These are accessed through the password-protected Teacher's Territory. The group-work tasks, such as preparing and giving presentations or drawing up organograms based on the input they have received about the company, are particularly valuable.

Business Territory 1 is flexible in allowing for use by a teacher-led class or by individual learners at home or in self-access facilities. As well as tapescripts and vocabulary explanations there are paraphrased versions of the monologues for those who cannot follow the original video material. It would, perhaps, be more flexible if learners had the choice of accessing the tapescripts during the recordings. While language is modelled, more guidance with phonology (such as marked word stress) would also be of use.

The presentation of the package is attractive, although I personally found the choice of colours and desert landscape perplexing when related to a British company environment. It also might be more relevant if the recordings included dialogues as well as monologues. The authentic monologues are, however, stimulating and relevant to students connected to a modern business or working environment.

My overall reaction to the CD-ROM is positive. This is a package that higher-level company students, learners in a Business English group or those interested in learning about business in Britain will enjoy using. I recommend it to modern English language institutes as a valuable resource.

Zoe Bartlett, The British Council, Quito



"Let me say I think Business Territory 1 is excellent! It's very "user friendly" and you get a very comprehensive overview of the company and the various positions there very quickly. The speeches and text are thorough yet not too difficult for ESL students and the whole package is very well coordinated and "cross indexed". Also the ideas for class projects, teacher aids etc. seem very creative."

Jeremy Davis, Taiwan

"Our school has been using Business Territory now for three months with very positive results. Students like the idea of "meeting" other native speakers apart from our teachers and the fact that they are real business people on screen and not actors pretending. The input from the ROM has led seamlessly to group work that has the feeling of 'real' Business English. All in all Business Territory is a valuable addition to any language school's CD collection".

Dr. Mike Nelson, Finland