

We've moved!!



Our new website is now open, offering . . .

- ★ *better, clearer access to articles,*
- ★ *a wider range of published material,*
- ★ *faster uploading of news and information,*
- ★ *advanced, integrated search facilities, and*
- ★ *more information on JALT and its publications*

Take a look for yourself!

<jalt-publications.org>

The story behind our new website

In May, 2009, two far-reaching decisions were made. One was to change *TLT* to a bimonthly format, and the other was to strengthen our web presence. Central to this decision was the realisation we needed a new website. Our old one had served us well, but it was definitely showing its age. Our first thought was that we could recruit someone with enough skills to build a site from within JALT. However, while a few prospective candidates were looked at, the biggest problem was time . . . everyone was just too busy. Hiring a company to do it was out of the question—it would just be too expensive and we’d quite likely be locked into a proprietary system.

After discussing the issue at the last editors’ retreat, we decided to investigate hiring a freelance web designer to do the job. We placed a tender on *Scriptlancers*, a freelance finder service. Within minutes we were inundated with dozens of offers, most originating from India. After a week, we began sifting through them, and settled on three likely candidates. Our criteria were simply experience and ability with using the Drupal content management system, and a proven track record of satisfied clients. Our final choice was a coder named *drupaller*—he shone out from the rest with a clear understanding of our needs and the initiative to actually look for us and check out our existing site.

So began our relationship with Jenz—a Swede web designer now residing in France. He began working for us at the beginning of November and had a shell in place by JALT2010. After a long session of tweaking and adjusting, we moved the site to our server for final bug-testing and uploading of content. In early January, we went live, and the site is approximately 50% complete at the time of writing. We still have lots more to transfer and format for the new site. However, once complete, the amount of material available will be impressive, to say the least!

We have nothing but praise for the work Jenz has done, and look forward to his helping us add even more functionality to the site.

Interview with Jenz Ekedahl

It’s a strange experience to work with someone you’ve never met. Through the hundreds of emails we have exchanged, I’ve got to know him quite well. I know he works all hours, enjoys hard rock, and lives in France. However, I only actually learned his full name the other day. Taking on a freelancer sight unseen is a leap of faith but, in this case, it paid off for JALT!

Malcolm Swanson: How long have you been a web programmer?

Jenz Ekedahl: I have been interested in computers since I was very young, and did some BASIC programming on my Commodore 64, but it wasn’t until the mid 90s that I got the chance to create my first website. This was when it all started. I got hooked at once and I have been doing it ever since. In the beginning it was a hobby, I made websites for friends and family just for the fun of it. A couple of years later I was hired as web developer in a local company and this started my professional career.

MS: Is this your full-time job?

JE: Web development has been my full-time job for about ten years now, and I still like it just as much. Each day the web evolves and you always meet new people with new ideas. No project is the same which makes every day fun. It’s a great job with great possibilities, and now working as a freelancer I get the freedom I want and need.

MS: You’re Swedish, but based in France... what took you there?

JE: My beloved and beautiful wife led me to France which is her home country. It’s a beautiful country with friendly people, and much warmer than Sweden I might add.

MS: What type of work does your company usually handle?

JE: My company does everything within the frame of web development, which is a rather wide concept, but to narrow it down I have specialized in the Content Management System named Drupal which is an extremely powerful and flexible CMS for all kind of websites. It works as well for personal blogs as for communities and ecommerce solutions, and it makes it really easy for a single developer/designer to set up an easy to manage and professional website, and also to be competitive with larger firms. With that said, it’s mainly Drupal related work nowadays.

MS: On your days off, do you manage to avoid your computer?

JE: The difference between a regular work day and a day off is most of the times a 2 hour pause with a good movie. ☺ The work takes a lot of time, but I do take some time to enjoy the company of my wife and playing bass guitar.

- Company: deuxcode.com
- Location: Pays de Loire, France
- Web: deuxcode.com
- Author: Jenz Ekedahl