

# THE RETURN OF THE TELEMATICS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES COMMISSION

The Commission on Telematics and New Technologies is back! We are currently in the process of outlining new goals and recruiting members. One of the goals of our commission is to promote new trends and innovative ideas. This Commission also aims to act as a support for all levels of AATF technology users from beginners to the more advanced.

## Some New Technologies: A Brief Overview

Some technologies that we will be highlighting in the next year, either on our Web site, in the *National Bulletin*, or during conference presentations include wikis, blogs, and podcasting. Below I have included a short introduction to these technologies. Here are a few questions you may wish to consider. Have you spent much time browsing Wikipedia? Are you interested in learning about new French words? Or do you prefer listening to the French news? In the next year you will learn more about these new technologies.

### Wikis

A wiki is a Web site that allows many authors to collaborate in building its content. One can modify already existing content that another user has entered. Wikipedia is an example of one of the largest and most popular wikis [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)]. This free encyclopedia can answer almost any question you may have and is available in about ten different languages, including French [<http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accueil>]. LeLoup and Ponterio (2006) refer to it as "a multilingual treasure trove" (4). What might be some possible uses for wikis in a French class?

### Blogs

Blogs are electronic journals; they are maintained by a blogger, who makes regular entries. Blogs typically "function either as a personal diary or a news journal." (Ducate and Lomicka, 2005, 410). They differ from wikis in that they are usually maintained by a single author; users interact through comments rather than by modifying preexisting content. Another difference is that while wikis are organized by content, blogs are organized chronologically, with the most recent entry visible on the site (Godwin-Jones, 2003). While many blogs exist (over 50 million worldwide as of February 2006), it is more difficult to find blogs that have appropriate pedagogical value or that are simply maintained regularly (Riley, 2006). To gain a better understanding of these Web sites, you may wish to visit a blog that features French Words [<http://french-word-a-day.typepad.com>] or a blog detailing the life of an American living in

France called "Dispatches from France" [<http://dispatchesfromfrance.blogspot.com>]. How might you incorporate either reading or writing a blog into your French class?

### Podcasting

Wikipedia defines podcasting as a way of distributing files (electronic or video) on the Internet. These files can then be played on mobile devices (such as cellular phones, iPods, MP3 players) and personal computers; you can even subscribe to the podcasts you wish to listen to regularly so that they download automatically when you connect to the Internet. iPods and other digital music players are among the latest trends of students across the country as well as world wide. Like blogs, the number of podcasts is growing rapidly. Some resources that may be worth visiting for French include: Podcasts for French [[www.podcast.net/tag/french/newest](http://www.podcast.net/tag/french/newest)], a directory of independent Francophone podcasting [[www.podblaster.net](http://www.podblaster.net)], and for those interested in French you might want to listen to the French Podclass [[www.frenchpodclass.com](http://www.frenchpodclass.com)]. How could Podcasts be used to help your students learn French?

During the coming year we hope to encourage you to think about how you might use wikis, blogs, or podcasting in your French classes and provide you with some examples of successful projects.

### Commission Ideas

Some preliminary ideas that the Commission is working toward include promoting and supporting the use of technology in the AATF, making presentations and presenting workshops at conferences, featuring innovative projects in the *National Bulletin* or on the Web site, providing more information to AATF members on the use and implementation of technology in the classroom, highlighting new technological resources, creating materials and Web resources for members, and collaborating with other commissions on projects.

The commission will be presenting a AATF-sponsored session at ACTFL this November in Nashville, TN entitled "Video iPods, Blogs, Podcasts, and Telecollaboration in Intermediate French Classes." Please join us if you are interested in learning more! Also, look for a regular column on technology in subsequent issues of the *National Bulletin*.

### We Need You!

We need you! Do you have interest, knowledge, and/or experience in technology? The Telematics and New Technolo-

gies Commission is currently recruiting members. Being part of this Commission has many benefits, such as learning more about technology, sharing your expertise with others, and networking with other AATF members. If you are interested, please contact Lara Lomicka Anderson.

Visit our Web site regularly: [[www.frenchteachers.org/technology/telematics.htm](http://www.frenchteachers.org/technology/telematics.htm)]. You will find information on the Commission, news, a teaching with technology idea of the month, Web sites of the month, and more!

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