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**Nowadays networking and community of practice (CoP) are popular terms, especially with the advent of the Internet, which makes networking a relatively painless process**

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Were you able to find all the answers? Not yet? Well, keep trying, but there's no need to worry, as we will be discussing this further in the next issue, Inshallah. Stay tuned...

#### More online journals to explore:

The Electronic Journal of e-Learnig

<<http://www.ejel.org/main.html>>

Journal of Online Learning and Teaching

<<http://jolt.merlot.org/>>

Computers and Composition Online

<<http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/home.htm>>

#### Notes

1. If you are not yet comfortable conducting a search on the Internet, do the following: Type this address [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) into the address bar of your browser (i.e., the place in your open Internet page where the webpage addresses appear), and then hit the "Enter" button on your keyboard. Next, type the word "netiquette" in the empty search bar in the middle of the page and hit the Enter button again.

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**The failure of universities to provide the historical, cultural, and ecological background for understanding that computers are not a culturally neutral tool also has consequences for younger students**

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breakdowns and misunderstandings. In fact, in some circles this has even led to a misunderstanding about Iranians in general. For this reason, it would be a very good idea for you to first familiarize yourself with Netiquette before sending any emails to your colleagues on the mailing lists.

**Task 2:** Do a quick Internet search<sup>1</sup> on the word Netiquette. Were there any Netiquette “rules” you were unaware of? How might your unawareness have possibly led to a misunderstanding? Now try to find out what Netiquette has to say about the following specific behaviors:

- Sending an email message without any subject line, or with a vague subject line, such as “Hi” or “Salam”
- Sending an email asking for help on your research
- Writing in ALL CAPS (capital letters)
- Sending a personal message to the mailing list
- Sending unsolicited attachments to the list
- Sending cross-postings or multiple postings
- Using emoticons and e-breviations

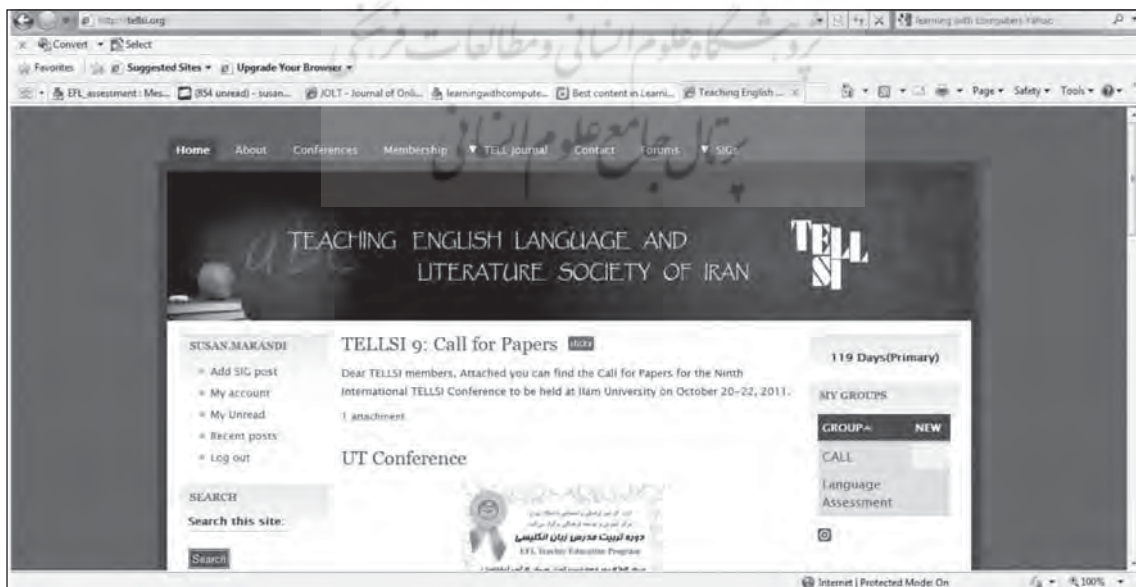


Figure 3. Home page for TELLSI

to the situation of each country. And in any case, it is indubitably important for you to know what is being done by your colleagues, classmates, and students in Iran. Therefore, I also strongly urge you to become a member of the new Iranian CALL group, the *TELLSI CALL-SIG*. This group belongs to TELLSI (i.e., the Teaching English Language and Literature Society of Iran; see Figure 3), and is a Special Interest Group for those interested in CALL. As a member of the TELLSI CALL-SIG, you will be the first to learn of any CALL-related workshops, conferences, speeches, courses, etc. to be held in Iran, and can follow and participate in CALL discussions led by your compatriots. In order for you to become a member of this Iranian group, you must first become a registered member of TELLSI (or renew your membership if more than a year has passed since you last paid your subscription fee). For more

information on becoming a member or renewing membership, go to the following URL:

<http://tellsi.org/membership>

After your membership has been confirmed, visit the following page to become a member of the CALL-SIG:

<http://tellsi.org/SIG>

Once you have become a member of the CALL Special Interest Group, it is a good idea to send an email to the list to introduce yourself to the other members.

Now that you are a member of an online society, it is extremely important for you to realize that there are some commonly accepted rules for online social behavior, or appropriate networking etiquette, called *Netiquett*. Unfortunately, many Iranians interact online without being sufficiently aware of Netiquette rules, involving them in unnecessary communication

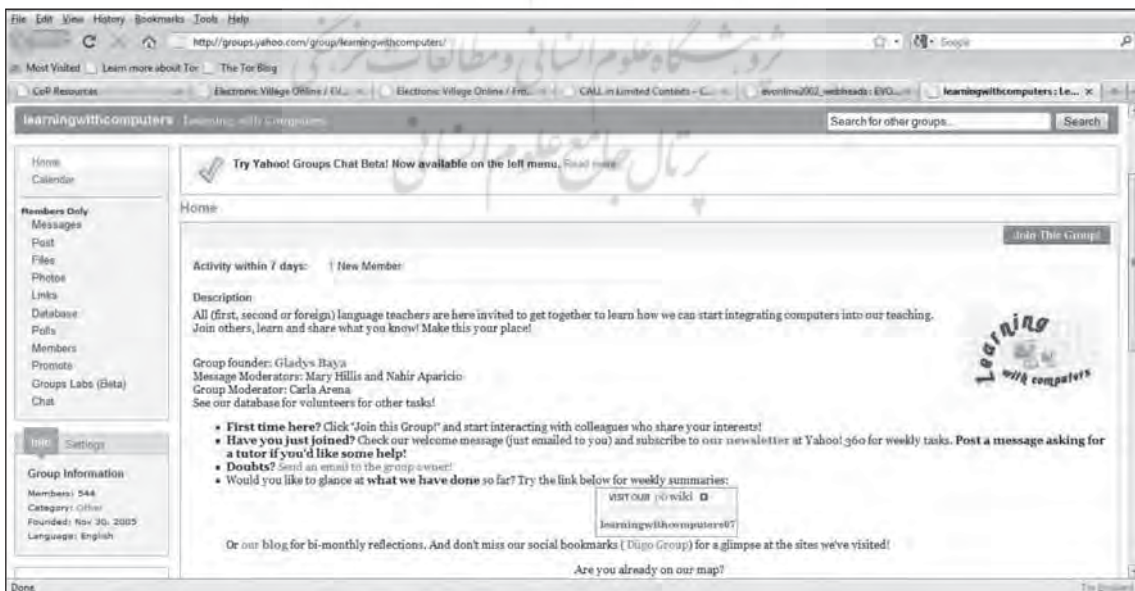


Figure 2. Home page for Learning with Computers

that have sufficient potential for CALL (especially those which are free of charge!); ask for and receive help from one another; become informed of various CALL-related events, such as online conferences and workshops; and so on. (Remember that there is no obligation to participate in the discussions, so if you are too busy or are still not comfortable with sending messages to the group, you can merely read the emails being sent back and forth, and follow the discussions without participating in them yourself, something which is called *lurking*.)

Another useful mailing list for you to join is called *learning with Computers*. (See Figure 2.) This is another friendly Yahoo! Group, run by some of the Webheads. If you find the large number of emails of the evonline 2002\_webheads Yahoo! Group to be too overwhelming and intimidating, you may like to consider

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**Joining a CALL community of practice can truly help you learn more easily, since you will benefit from the experiences of like-minded people with varying degrees of experience with CALL, who you can consult and collaborate with as and when you wish**

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joining Learning with Computers at the following address:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/learningwithcomputers/>

Both of the above mentioned groups are very friendly and useful. However, as you know, in dealing with CALL, there are often some problems which are unique

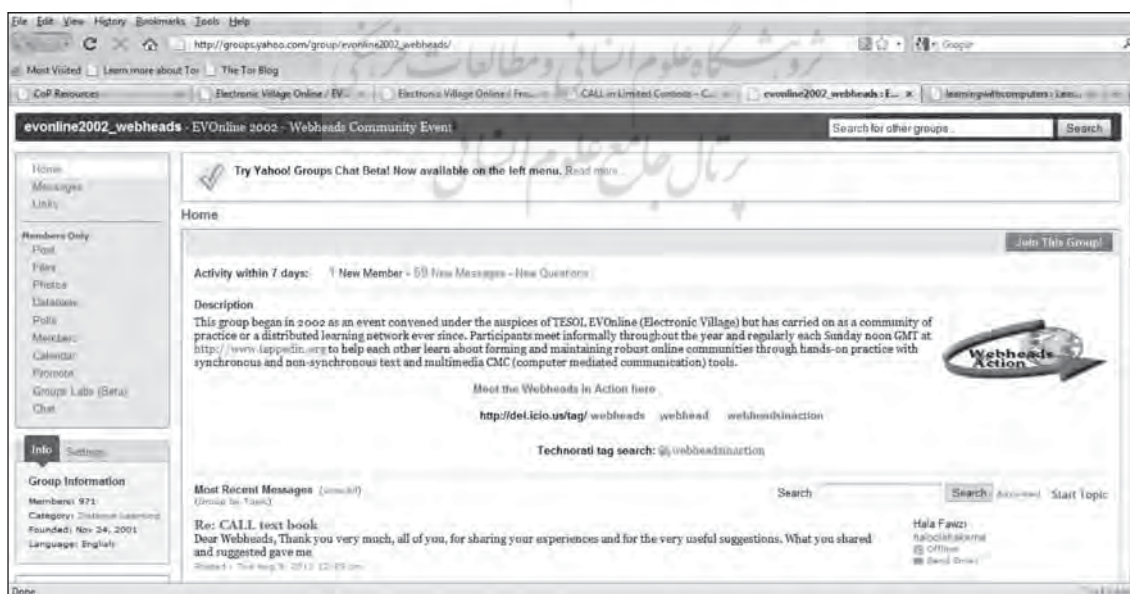


Figure 1. Home page for evonline2002\_webheads, the Webhead's Yahoo! Group



## Join a CALL Community of Practice

“Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, 2006).

Nowadays *networking* and *community of practice (CoP)* are popular terms, especially with the advent of the Internet, which makes networking a relatively painless process. People easily connect with those who have similar interests, whether for professional or pleasure purposes. Hanson-Smith (2006) urges would-be CALL practitioners to benefit from teacher CoPs, which she defines as including the following criteria:

- ◆ A common *purpose* or *domain* of knowledge
- ◆ The generation and discussion of *ideas*, the creation and sharing of *skills*, and *reflection* on these operations, carried

out through *experimentation*

◆ *Collaboration*, often through reciprocal *mentoring* or apprenticeship - *praxis* as opposed to talk

◆ *Social support* or *scaffolding*

◆ *Appropriate tools*

◆ *longevity* (adapted from Hanson-Smith, 2006, p. 302)

As I have mentioned elsewhere, networking is not one of the strengths of the Iranian TEFL community, and many of those working on CALL do so without being aware of similar efforts (Marandi, 2011). However, joining a CALL community of practice can truly help you learn more easily, since you will benefit from the experiences of like-minded people with varying degrees of experience with CALL, who you can consult and collaborate with as and when you wish.

One of the most popular CALL communities of practice is called the *Webheads* or *Webheads in Action (WiA)*, a group of language teachers interested in learning/teaching language with the aid of technology. (See Figure 1.) Anyone with similar interests is welcome to join this group by simply registering at the Webhead's Yahoo Group at the following URL:

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/evoline2002\\_webheads](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/evoline2002_webheads)

On so doing, you will automatically receive all the emails of the Webhead mailing list, in which members discuss various tools/ programs/ websites/etc.

“Unfortunately, many Iranians interact online without being sufficiently aware of Netiquette rules, involving them in unnecessary communication breakdowns and misunderstandings”

“Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, 2006)

And yet the dominance of amateur knowledge and mistaken information may not be the only hazard of espousing an uncritical view toward technology, nor even the most dangerous one. Bowers (1998) insists that “thinking within the decision matrix of the software program really involves using the pattern of thinking of the people who designed the software” (p. 54). He strongly censures the prevalent naïve view of technology, and forwards the idea that passing a course on the cultural dimensions of technology should be made a prerequisite for obtaining *any* university degree. He laments:

The failure of universities to provide the historical, cultural, and ecological background for understanding that computers are not a culturally neutral tool also has consequences for younger students. These students are being indoctrinated into believing that computer mediated thought and communication represent a superior and more empowering form of learning. (ibid)

Scholars interested in computer-assisted language learning also highlight the necessity of a critical approach (Albirini, 2004;

Chapelle, 2003; Reinhardt & Isbell, 2002). In fact, Lamy and Pegrum (2010, pp. 111) lately put forward the idea of “hegemonies in CALL,” proposing that at least 6 hegemonies may exist in CALL: *technological hegemonies* (“including hegemonic implications of the Internet and Web, commonly used Web 2.0 tools, and mobile technologies”); *pedagogical hegemonies* (“including hegemonic implications of social constructivism and associated interactive, collaborative, student-centred pedagogies; curriculum and course design; and the design of open access materials and digital repositories”); *educational hegemonies* (“including hegemonic educational and institutional policies, expectations and norms”); *social hegemonies* (“including the hegemonic implications of norms and practices of online interaction”); *inter/cultural hegemonies* (“including hegemonic implications of Western cultural norms and Western approaches to tolerance, openness, relativism and the skills associated with intercultural competence”); *sociopolitical hegemonies* (“including the hegemonic implications of democratic structures in education, and resistance to hegemonies”).

**Task 1:** Take a minute to think about the above classification of CALL hegemonies.

a. Try to come up with an example for each type of hegemony. Are the various categories equally important? Which hegemonies pose a greater threat? How should you deal with them?

b. Can you think of any CALL hegemony not mentioned here? Give it a name, and provide an example to illustrate it.

## **A**dopt a critical stance toward CALL

In the preceding issue, some of the difficulties of using technology for language learning were mentioned, such as insufficient facilities, cultural conflicts; frequent website filtering; slow and/or unreliable Internet connections; the “digital divide”; lack of a community of practice; insufficient tech support; the rigidity of the educational curriculum; and resistance of the various stakeholders (Marandi, 2010; Marandi, 2011). These limitations are mostly imposed by circumstances and may be considered practicality issues. However, even under ideal circumstances, one very important *self-imposed* restriction should remain: The good CALL practitioner will remember that technology is by no means neutral, and will restrict her/his use of it accordingly.

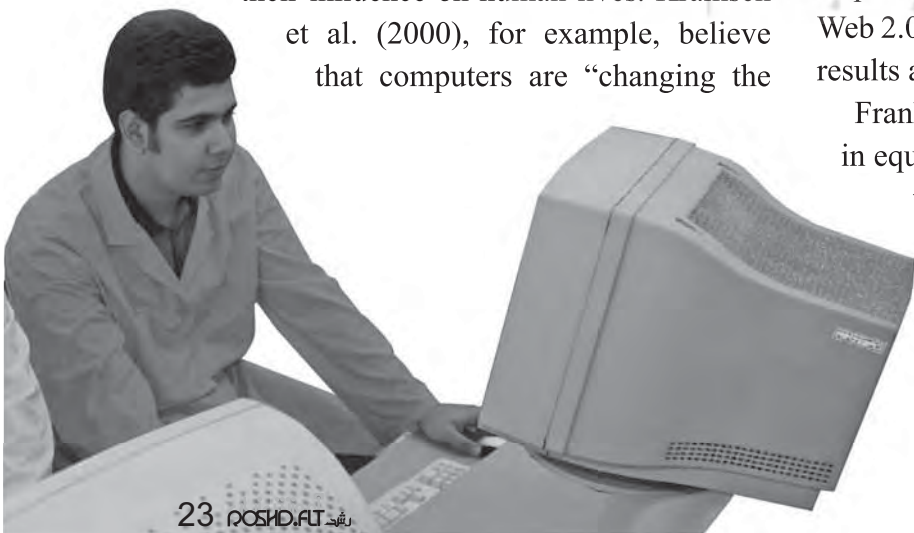
Although some scholars still appear to underrate the influence of technology and some even voice doubts about the inevitability of computer literacy (Murray, 2000), others attribute much more power to computers and believe more strongly in their influence on human lives. Kramersch et al. (2000), for example, believe that computers are “changing the

very notions of who we are” (p. 99) and that they “define our actions, that is, our existence” (p. 83).

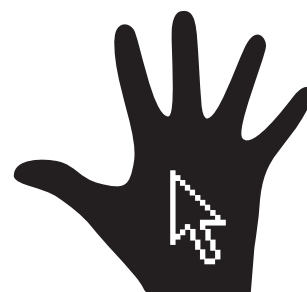
However, not everyone is as satisfied with this influence as Kramersch et al. seem to be. Keen (2007), for example, insists that the Internet is responsible for destroying much of what is admirable and desirable in human civilization. In his popular book entitled *The cult of the amateur: How today's internet is killing our culture*, Keen seriously questions the accuracy and truth of information on the Net, averring that (2007, p. 30) “on a Web where everyone has an equal voice, the words of the wise man count for no more than the mutterings of a fool.” To illustrate the unreliability of information received from the Internet, he cites the example of the all-important search engines (Keen, 2007):

Search engines like Google... answer our search queries not with what is most true or most reliable, but merely what is most popular. As a result, our knowledge - about everything from politics, to current affairs, to literature, to science- is being shaped by nothing but the aggregation of responses... But the problem is that the Web 2.0 generation is taking search-engine results as gospel. (pp. 92-3).

Franklin (1999, cited in Chapelle, 2003), is equally skeptic about the reliability of the Internet as information source and likens it to a big garbage dump, where what the “scavengers” ultimately find depends on which part of the garbage dump happen to dig!



# CALL 101: More basics you need to know



Classroom Techniques

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چکیده

مقاله حاضر، بخش دوم از مجموعه جدید مقالات «آموزش زبان به کمک فناوری» (یا CALL) است. بخش اول در شماره قبل نشریه چاپ شد. در شماره گذشته، پس از ارائه تعریفی از CALL، به اهمیت آن اشاره شد و برخی نکات مهم برای «مبتدیان» عرصه آموزش زبان به کمک فناوری مطرح شد. تعدادی نشریه مهم بر خط (online) هم درباره این رشته معرفی کردیم. در مقاله حاضر، مباحث «برتری طلبی‌های CALL» و «CALL نقادانه» مطرح شده و تعدادی از اجتماعات مفید CALL و آدرس اینترنتی چند نشریه مهم دیگر نیز معرفی شده‌اند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: برتری طلبی‌های CALL، CALL نقادانه، اجتماعات CALL، آداب اجتماعی بر خط (آن لاین)

## Abstract

This article is a follow-up on the first of a series of articles on Computer-Assisted Language Learning (i.e., CALL), which appeared in the previous issue of Roshd FLT magazine. In the previous article, as you may recall, CALL was defined, its necessity was briefly touched upon, and some caveats were mentioned for CALL “newbies”. Some important online CALL-related journals were also introduced. In the current article, CALL hegemonies and “Critical” CALL are discussed further, some useful CALL communities are introduced, and more links to useful online (free) journals are provided.

**Key Word:** CALL hegemonies, critical CALL, CALL Communities of Practice, Netiquette