



The Worldwide Universities Network Global Geographic Information Science Academy

e-seminars!

This document is an attempt to assemble all we have learnt about how to use the Marratech™ system to best effect in our e-seminars series. It certainly isn't complete, so I'd be grateful for any suggestions about materials, hints and tips to be included in future.

Getting Ready: 'lone' participants

The seminars use a powerful communications system developed by the Marratech™ Company. There are five things that need to be done and we suggest that you do these well before the seminars themselves:

1. No password or other registrations are involved, but as a courtesy please let the seminar organizer know that you intend to 'drop in'. This is Dave Unwin (d.unwin@wun.ac.uk)
2. You will need a broadband connection and, for best results, a microphone headset. A standard set of speakers and microphone will work, but experience shows that a good quality headset and echo-canceling microphone is necessary. The Plantronics™ headset has a good reputation and has been used without any problems. Note that poor audio can often be rectified by changing/updating the relevant device driver on your computer. If you aren't shy, a webcam can also be installed to broadcast

your picture to the other participants but isn't really essential and anyhow we ask you to switch it off during the presentations. We have had good quality results from the 'Trust320 Space Cam'™. If the quality isn't good, then do look into the Marratech™ system for settings that generally will help improve things.

3. Install and learn how to navigate through the client software, Marratech™. This will run in Windows, Mac OS X and Linux, but should run on quite modestly specified machines. Minimum system requirements can be found at http://www.marratech.co.uk/uk_pages/technical.html

There are two ways by which this client software can be accessed.

- The simplest way is to point your web browser to the URL given for 'Java Webstart', which is <http://marratech.wun.ac.uk:8000/launch.jsp?sid=10002> Clicking on this link will install some Java based software on your system. The install sequence is obvious and should give you no problems. We recommend you do this well in advance of the seminar;
- Alternatively, you can download a free desktop client (Marratech Pro) from the supplier's website at www.marratech.com/download/. And from this point to the slightly different URL at <http://marratech.wun.ac.uk:8000/connect.jsp?sid=10002> to direct it to the designated website.

Whichever route you chose, it may well be that a firewall somewhere along the line (especially a University firewall, please check this if you intend to use a machine on a LAN/WAN) will 'block' the application). At a couple of points you may need expressly to give permission for the installation to proceed. Around 11Mb is involved and the process will take a minute or so at 1.4GHz.

4. Familiarize yourself at the top level with the functions it provides. It is useful, but not essential, to print out the PDF 'Getting started Guide' in the downloads section of the Marratech website. There is also a Quick Time movie showing the system in use. A very rough and ready guide to the interface is echoed below. Whatever you do, don't enter the virtual room during a seminar without at least a passing acquaintance with the software. We can cope, but you can give the Chair and the 'assistant' some tricky moments if you haven't this experience.

Getting Ready: classroom mode

The system can also be used in what for want of a better word I'll call classroom mode, where a single client machine is used to broadcast the Marratech™ screen for viewing by a number of people via a computer projector. This helps conserve bandwidth, but has the disadvantage that it is harder to type in questions as the seminar proceeds. One system used over the summer was to have two clients running, one driving the screen, the other being used by all the group for interaction. All the notes above and below apply to this use.

The Marratech System: a quick tour

Participants
The Participants area gives you an overview of who is currently present

Video
If desired, video can be used within your environment, enabling you to meet others with high quality video

Whiteboard
The Whiteboard area is where all users can interact by sharing applications, MS Office documents, images and drawings.

Voice over IP
To talk to your group, simply press the microphone button. Low delay, crystal clear Voive over IP provided by Global IP Sound

Chat
Send a small message or a web link to everyone or to only one person

Significant increase!!

Region	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
East	890	900	1115	1290	1200	1220
West	612	660	690	720	740	1300
Central	480	510	480	640	920	930
Actual	1982	2088	2285	2818	2868	3158
% Achieved	115%	116%	115%	129%	125%	133%

As shown above, the interface is a fairly complex one, offering a wide range of communications routes. To follow the seminar and contribute you don't need to be familiar with all that the system offers, except perhaps the main functions which are:

- To access the **whiteboard** click the small icon at the bottom left of the screen. THIS IS SOMETIMES FORGOTTEN AND CAN LEAD TP PANIC. A series of icons on a menu strip provide a variety of tools for adding materials to this shared space and for saving the results.
- To speak using the **voice over IP** facility, click on the 'microphone' button on the interface to make it live (and Webcam if you want or need to be seen as well). These controls are on the right hand side and there is a volume slider. Check this works by watching the small 'volume thermometer' on the right hand side of the icon oscillate. You can switch the microphone on permanently using 'CTRL-click', but for the intended seminar environment this is to be avoided. Only switch on when you wish to speak. We assume that you will have something sensible to say;
- To **chat** using the instant messaging facility, simply type into the space provided. Similar comments apply!
- The **participants** window is useful for getting an overview of who is online. Participants not sending video are represented by name only and those sending video have a thumbnail image. Note that the name of the participant turns red when they are sending audio (or blue when sending 'private audio');
- Finally, the **video** window will show the presenter, but it can be set so that it automatically 'follows' who is speaking. You can also switch who is seen in the large video window by clicking on the thumbnail of another participant who has a webcam.

There is in-built help in the client accessed from the top menu bar. For those who want to know more, there is an excellent web manual at www.marratech.com/userman/client/index2.html

Getting Ready: presenters

The great thing about the format we use is that you can deliver a talk to an international audience from almost anywhere on the planet at any time of day or night. We have had successful talks given from hotel rooms in the USA using the local wireless internet. We have also had them given from the speaker's kitchen in his home in New Zealand at his local time of 5.00am.

The main thing to realize is that although the delivery medium is unfamiliar the usual rules for giving a presentation apply. There are some things that the medium offers that can greatly help make a presentation 'go well'. For example, the Chair can 'chat' privately to you as you talk, questions can be typed into the public chat area as they occur during the talk and not all at the end, the audience can 'talk' among itself as you present, and so on. However, to ease things along we ask that:

- Presentations should be in a standard format, using MS Word, PowerPoint or PDF. Dave Unwin will ask you for a copy of the .PPT or .PDF for mounting on the WUN website as a permanent record of the talk;
- Although the system is reasonably Mac friendly, it's generally best to use a Windows machine. At the time of writing we don't know whether or not the system is Vista™ friendly.
- PowerPoint presentations should not use transformations in slides;
- You may want to use a lot of bandwidth delivering fancy graphics and animations. We advise against trying this in Marratech™. Instead, prepare an HTML file that can be accessed by participants either before the talk or during it using an external web viewer running at the same time on their machine. To avoid a lot of download hits on the website concerned during the talk, it makes sense to do this and publicize well ahead of the event itself;
- In general, we advise avoiding the use of the application sharing facility of Marratech™;
- Speakers should have a plain neutral background behind them and ensure no-one is going to walk behind them;
- Speakers should be seated and the camera show a simple head and shoulders shot with the head in the middle of the screen;
- IN OTHER WORDS KEEP IT SIMPLE!

On the day

➤ **Uploading Slides**

It is probably easier and simpler as well as good for confidence if the speaker does this themselves. To do this go to the Marratech™ room and under Slides on the pull-down menu, check they are able to receive and transmit slides.

Next, in Marratech™, go to the Whiteboard (tab at bottom left hand corner of the screen), then File -> Open -> MS Powerpoint.

We suggest that this is done as early as possible and then leave Marratech™ open, ready for the seminar. There will be an inevitable wait as the slides are served out to the client machines, which is why we try to minimize the bandwidth needed for this.

➤ **The Talk Itself**

This is the sequence of events we use for a 1600 seminar start. Note that we have to designate several roles:

- **Chair:** who does the usual academic functions of welcoming folk to **the room, introducing the presenter and so on;**
- **Assistant:** this is a role not normally needed in f2f meetings, but we have found it useful for someone to 'roam' in the background, welcoming and checking out late entrants and so on. A key task is to ensure that all participants understand how the interactions will work, that there is no noise feedback from badly set up microphones and so on. The same person can also be made responsible for collecting all types comments (using the public window), organizing them and then posting them to the whiteboard for discussion at the end of the talk;
- **Recorder:** who switches the video recording on/off to give a permanent record;
- **Presenter:** who gives the talk;
- Even with fast Broadband, bandwidth can be an issue so it's necessary often to ask folk to switch off their webcams.
- **Security.** The system has fallen over during seminars, which is a bit of a risk, so you need to have a 'plan B' if this happens and a list of phone numbers of presenter etc.
- We also have developed **protocols** that enable us to make best use of the medium. A simple example is using the text area to type in questions as the talk proceeds, then having the assistant tidy these up and post them on the whiteboard to guide discussion.
- **Late entrants** into the room are a real pain, since you need someone around to look after them, especially if they are new users.
- **Oddly, too it's hard to get people to clear off at the end!** Maybe this is simply the novelty of being able to interact so easily despite often huge physical separations.

A possible event timetable

Assuming a 1600 start, this is a timetable of actions that we know works.

Time	Who	Activity
Pre1	ALL	Names and Nicknames set OFFLINE– Tools, Options, General
Pre2	Presenter	Send slides in powerpoint to be posted on web site Load slides onto presentation PC / Network drive
15:39	Assitant	Assistant enters Open slide 00Welcome note onto whiteboard – key points
15:40	Assitant	Assistant – helps Guests if/as required
15:41	ALL	Name and Nickname check – Tools, Options, General Sound + Video check – Mics ON, Videos ON – rotate test all

		Mics OFF, Videos OFF
15:45	GUESTS	Auditorium opens – people start to arrive.
15:46	Chair	Chair enters Mic ON - narrates 'Welcome' – hands over to Assistant Mic OFF Note names of attendees (shown in Public Chat as they enter)
15:47	Assistant	Mic ON Assistant narrates the Domestic & Protocols Invites users to test their; - On the Whiteboard - Chat in public chat –Ask for Name against nickname - Mic + Video each Invites users to leave Mic and Video OFF until Q&A Mic OFF
15:47	Chair	Note Nicknames against names too for Q&A during session Note against attendees list who is OK on Mic (for Q&A) later
15:54	Assistant or recorder	Recorder enters File, Instant Recording Use wun2345 as key Check Follow Page changes is Ticked Video OFF Mic OFF Start VCR recording
15:55	Presenter	Presenter enters Video OFF Mic OFF Open presentation into whiteboard File, Open, MS Powerpoint...
15:56	Chair	Start Private Chat with Presenter (for in session pointers)
15:56	Presenter	Join Private Chat with Chairman (Click Chairman tab in blue)
15:56-15:59	Assistant	Mic ON Assistant narrates domestics & protocols and advises session shortly starting
16:00	Chair	Chair Introduces the session, - finally repeats full key messages and introduces the speaker Mic OFF
16:00:30	Presenter	Document, Lead Page Changes – click to tick Page forward onto opening slide Video ON Mic ON

16:01	Presenter	Speaker – present Page forward for next slides
16:59	Assistant	Collate Questions – cut-n-paste from Public Chat – Create new page with collated Questions Lead Page Changes ON Navigate to Questions page
17:00	Chair	Mic ON Chair asks for questions / takes from those submitted in public chat forum Chair ‘invites’ all attendees to switch Video ON if they have it Chair ‘invites’ specific users to ask questions
	Presenter Chair GUESTS	Collectively respond to Q&A session Remind users to Press and Hold Mic to speak and release after Ask Qs in Chat OR with Mic by invite from Chair
	?	Do we have a couple of ‘tame’ questions that someone can be primed to ask
17:14	Chair	Chair thanks all and closes session
17:14-17:15	GUESTS	Guests Leave and Exit to virtual pint following seminar
17:15	Recorder	Stop recording Save file to known location
17:16	ALL	Comfort break
17:20	ALL	De-brief – Stop/Start/Continue (What did not work and should Stop, what didn’t we do and should Start and what worked well and should Continue) from each of the ‘role’s’ perspectives.
Post1		Post event – add Index to recording Create 3 versions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Video, Audio, Whiteboard – Audio, Whiteboard – Whiteboard Create downloading and running instructions Post to website zipped up for downloading and local running Website page updated with links to instructions & downloadables

➤ **Recording**

Note that anyone can switch on a video recording and save it for later use. To record

1. Enter the meeting and go to the whiteboard,
2. Menu:

File, Instant Recording,
Assign a password such as wun2345

A vcr participant will appear in the attendees list and just above the camera, speaker and mic buttons you will see conventional vcr controls.

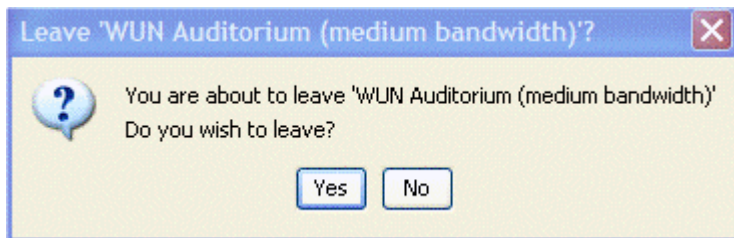
3. Press the Red button to start recording. The VCR participant will then appear in capitals / upper case and show it is recording.

The presentation should then be brought in by the presenter.

4. At the end of the session press the Stop button and it will prompt you for a file name and saving location.

➤ **Download & Playback**

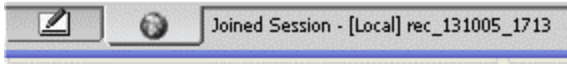
1. Download the relevant zip file,
2. Extract All files from the zip and note where you extract them.
(This is important, please do not try to run the recording from within a zip)
3. Launch Marratech in your usual wayby;
4. File, Leave (to go Offline)



Select Yes then it will show Offline - Marratech on the top blue title bar

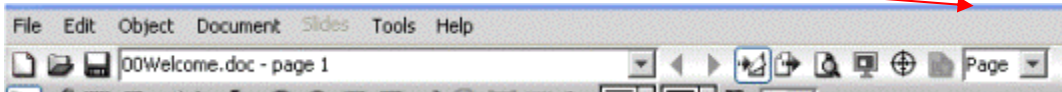
5. Move onto the whiteboard by clicking here;





6. Set sizing to 'Page' to fit your own desktop

7.



HINT: - If the page fits OK then leave at 100% AND when you get to any 'live demonstration/application sharing' please put toggle this back to 100% in any case.

7. File, Start Playback

- navigate via VCR Playback - Select recording to play back
- Select the file rec_181006_1715GIS2.sdp & Click Finish
- enter the key (wun2345) in the Security Alert box below



8. Press Play



To Pause the presentation, press Pause

9. To End the presentation, Press Stop then File, Exit to leave and close the application.

10. Confirm Yes to exit and leave and say No to saving the whiteboard.

Dave Unwin
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