

Literacy Live



In 2005 ACAL is implementing three eTools to support our strategic directions. Our aim is firstly to improve the relevance, accessibility and speed of our communication to the field, and secondly to encourage and support adult literacy practitioners to develop skills in the use of new technologies. We're calling these tools *Literacy Live*.

Our **Literacy Live eNewsletter** will replace some editions of our journal Literacy Link. The aim of the newsletter is to provide relevant, up-to-date news and links to resources, papers etc. If you are not yet on the mailing list for the eNews please contact Don MacDowall on acal@pacific.net.au

Our other two eTools, the online forum and virtual meeting room outlined below, have been funded through a national Flexible Learning Framework eLearning networks project with the generous support of Lynne Matheson and the Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre in Melbourne who are acting as our sponsoring RTO.

Our **Literacy Live forum** makes use of an EdNA Group, a free service used extensively by VET, community and Higher Education sectors in 2005. We are using the forum to plan online events, for posting links to resources, and asynchronous discussion. You can introduce yourself, ask questions, seek teaching ideas, share great 'finds' and so on.

The **Literacy Live meeting room** is what is known as a virtual synchronous meeting room. It enables you to talk to others via the web within a private 'room' while also typing messages and viewing files or websites in a shared work space. To speak you need a computer microphone which may be separate, built into your computer or combined with headphones. Headphones enable you to listen to the conversation without disturbing those around you. If this is not an issue, speakers work well however most people find the combined headphones/mic set is simplest. The equipment is cheap (around \$10-\$20) and easily purchased at any office supply or electronics store.

Instructions for accessing these two tools is included on the following pages.

We intend to use the *Literacy Live* meeting room for meetings and events with online guest presenters from Australia and internationally. The beauty of the room is that we can access people from all around the world. Let us know who you'd like to hear from.

The room is also **available for use free of charge**, by any adult literacy team Australia-wide for your own private meetings and events. It's simply a matter of emailing Robyn Jay (robyn.jay@det.nsw.edu.au) to make a booking. If you are part of a geographically dispersed network the room may be just what you need!

Robyn is also available to provide initial assistance or to meet your group in the room to get things rolling. If the room sounds of interest but you feel a little nervous about trying it out, contact Robyn who will walk you through the process and assist you to get the technology working.

We hope that the eTools will enable teachers to connect and discuss issues and ideas, to access guest presenters, and to obtain support regardless of location or circumstance. They make use of email, forums and chat sites selected for their ease of access and range of opportunities.

Now it's over to you to make full use of the potential the eTools offer!

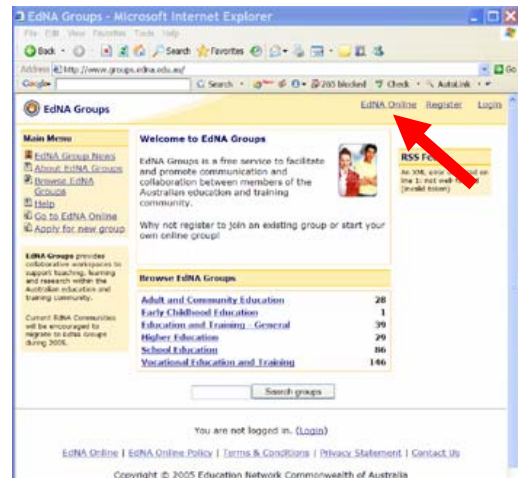
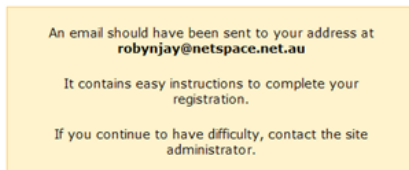
Instructions for accessing the Literacy Live forum

Our Literacy Live forum makes use of the EdNA Groups facility, a free service to facilitate and promote communication and collaboration between members of the Australian education and training community. EdNA Groups makes use of Moodle software which allows file sharing, discussion areas etc. To make full use of the Forum and EdNA Groups you need to register with the community. This is quick, secure and easy.

TO REGISTER

Go to <http://www.groups.edna.edu.au> and click on the REGISTER link in the top right hand corner of the EdNA page.

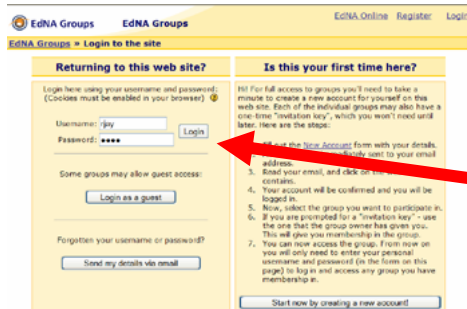
Complete the form provided and click on the CREATE MY NEW ACCOUNT button. An email will be sent to your email address. This has a link included that you need to click on to activate your new account.



LOGGING IN

Return to the homepage at <http://www.groups.edna.edu.au> and this time click on the LOGIN link in the top right corner.

Provide your username and password, and click on the LOGIN button.

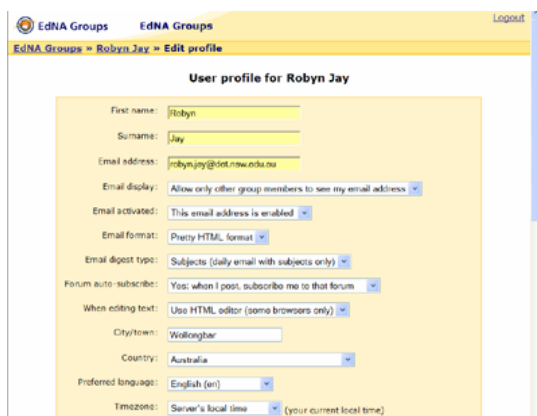


CREATING A 'PROFILE'

You will now see your name in the top right hand corner of the screen.

Click on your name to change your personal profile and adjust the settings.

Then click on the EDIT PROFILE button on the following page.



Most of the default settings are OK to leave as is.

However it is important to change the EMAIL DIGEST TYPE to the Subjects (daily email with subjects only) option. You will receive ONE email per day when new information is added to the forum.

If you do not change this you will receive an email EVERY time something new is posted.

Also check the timezone is correct for your location.

Provide a description for yourself. This allows others to find out who you are, where you live and what you do. This can be altered at any time by Editing your profile again.

Most people provide a small thumbnail photo of themselves. Prepare this first by saving a suitable image onto your hard drive – it is best to resize the image to around 150 pixels wide if possible.

To add a photo click on the BROWSE button next to the New Picture option. Locate the photo on your hard drive and then click UPLOAD to save it to the site.

To save your settings click on the UPDATE PROFILE button at the bottom of the page.

TO JOIN LITERACY LIVE

You can join public Forums like Literacy Live in one of 2 ways.

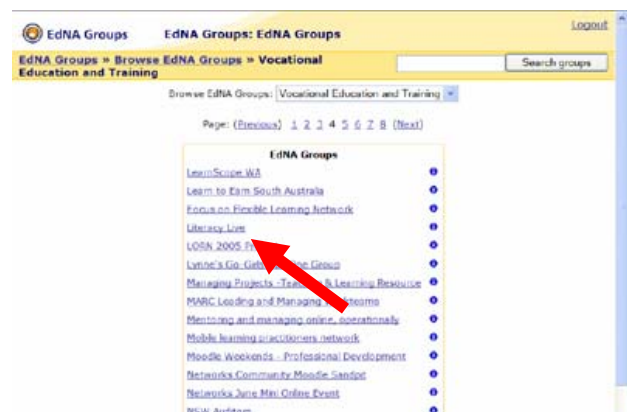
1. Click on the BROWSE EDNA GROUPS link in the left hand menu bar. This will open a directory listing. Literacy Live is housed in the Vocational Education and Training directory.



There are now 8 pages of Forums listed alphabetically (see **Literacy Live** on page 4). Some of these are private and closed – if you click on the name you will not be allowed to join without a 'key'.

Many of the Forums however are public and have very interesting and productive discussions and links. You are welcome to join any of these. IF they are public you will see a page asking you if you wish to join when you click on the name.

Click YES to join the group of your choice.



2. If you know the URL for the particular Forum you wish to join you can go directly to that site by entering the URL in your Browser.


The URL for Literacy Live is
<http://www.groups.edna.edu.au/course/view.php?id=221>

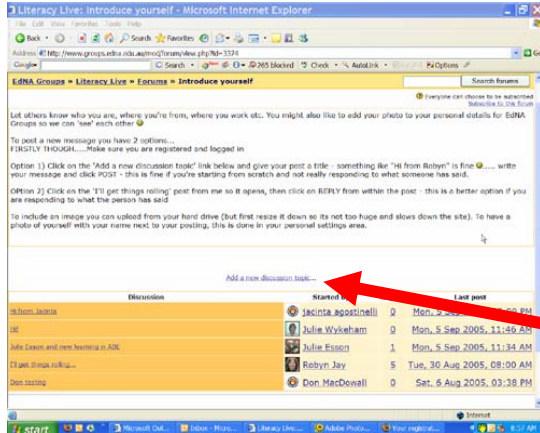
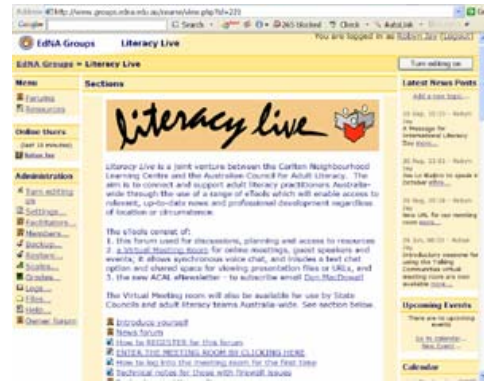
Don't forget to LOG IN as above.

GENERAL LAYOUT

Moodle software has its limitations unfortunately and we have to work within what it allows.

The homepage is broken into sections with headings. Scroll down to see what's available. Links are underlined and will take you to resources or discussion forums. The resources have an icon indicating a word, web or html type of resource

The links with the  icon indicate Discussion Forums.



POSTING A NEW MESSAGE in a DISCUSSION FORUM

The 'Introduce yourself' discussion forum is shown to the left. When a forum is designed some expansion is given and this is shown at the top. Responses are shown in the orange section with their author next to each link.

To read the messages click on the Discussion link.

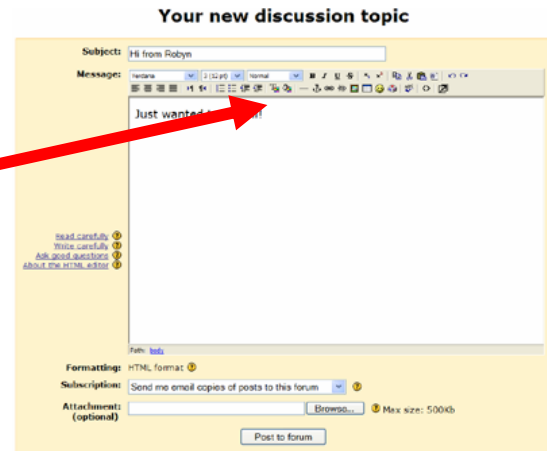
To start a new topic click on the ADD A NEW DISCUSSION TOPIC link above the orange section.

The SUBJECT you give is what will show up in the orange section for that particular forum.

You can adjust the font size (10pt is good), font type and colour etc using the icons above the text box.

File attachments can be added using the ATTACHMENTS option at the bottom – these show up as a link in the corner of the persons message.

When complete click the POST TO FORUM link at the bottom.



REPLYING TO A PREVIOUS MESSAGE

Next to the names of contributors above you can see the number of replies to their message listed in the REPLIES column.

To reply to someone else's message – open their message and click on the REPLY button in the bottom right hand corner. A similar text box to the one shown above for new messages will appear and the process is the same but your reply will show up as a link below their original posting.

Instructions for accessing the Literacy Live meeting room

We have purchased a private virtual meeting room through Talking Communities or iVocalize in the USA. This is totally separate to the EdNA Forum although there are links provided from the Forum site to the meeting room.

To use the room you will initially need to download a small piece of software onto your hard drive so that the room can operate. It is accessible to both PCs and MACs. The process is very straight forward.

It's always a good idea to head into the room 10-15 minutes before the start of the event to make sure everything is working OK. We provide an opportunity for you to test and adjust your mic/headphones volumes.

FIREWALLS

Some workplaces have very tight security measures in place. You may need a technical support person to download the software for you. If you get any kind of error message at work this is most likely a result of a block on software downloads.

Your workplaces firewall (like a brick wall stopping access by outsiders) may also stop you entering and using the room even once the software is installed. If you cannot access the room you will need to speak with your technical support person regarding opening of the 'Port' to allow the room through. I'm told it's a fairly straight forward procedure – here are some notes for your technical person...

In relation to the setup of the ivocalize client, it seems pretty straightforward. Our server appears to use TCP ports 9000 for client data connections. The client operates on Port 443, which is the Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol used by Web browsers when they access secure sites (the padlock appears on the bottom right of the browser, banks that sort of thing!). Therefore, there should be minimal configuration required from a client point of view, unless the firewall is blocking any ports required.

You shouldn't have this problem via laptops or home computer systems. Some people needing to access the room from the workplace simply use a laptop with modem plugged into a phone line rather than the workplace network.

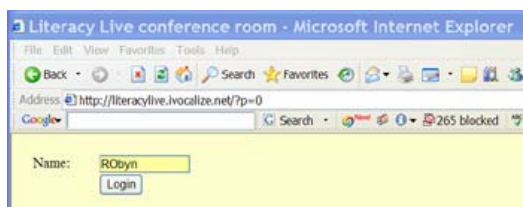
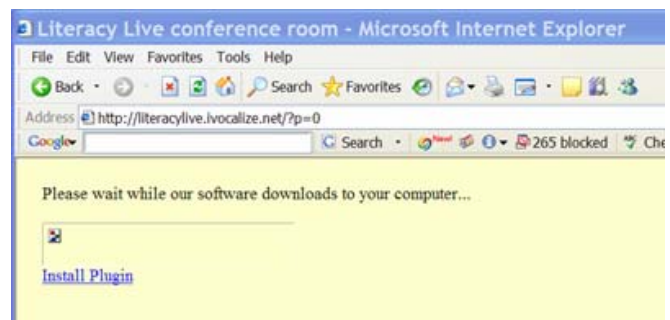
NOTE: Before accessing the room you need the password – please email Robyn on robyn.jay@det.nsw.edu.au or your State ACAL representative for this.

INSTALLING THE SOFTWARE (Client)

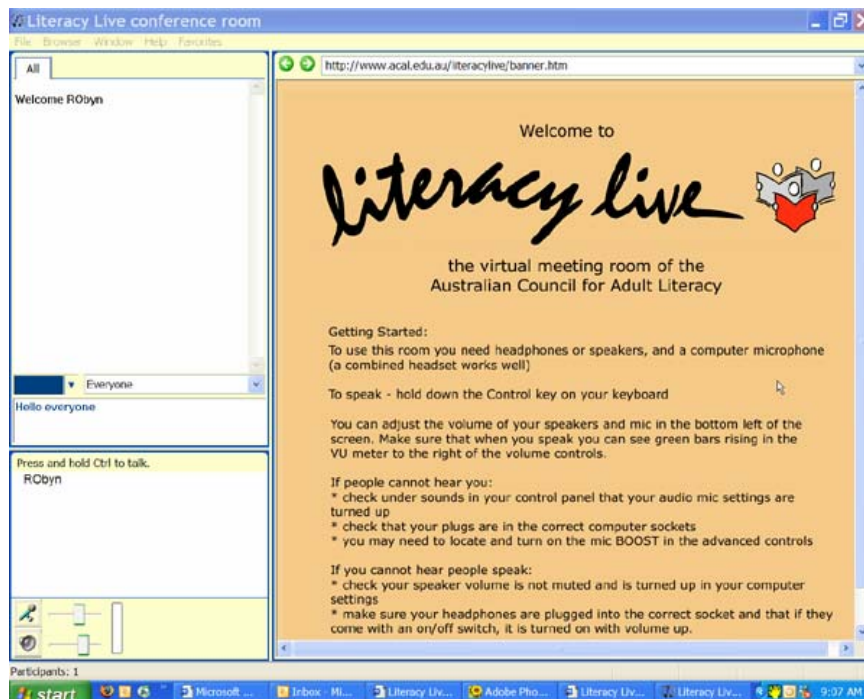
Go to <http://literacylive.ivocalize.net>

The first time you access the room you need to allow the software to download and install on your computer. It will often do this for you automatically.

If it does not – click on the INSTALL PLUGIN link and choose the SAVE (rather than RUN) option provided.



Once the software is installed type your name and password (see above) into the text box provided and click LOGIN – you do not have to reinstall the software each time you access the room.



When you enter the room you will notice that it is broken into 3 main sections.

The large window on the right is a shared space for viewing files and websites, and a whiteboard area. What is shown in this section is controlled by the meeting 'moderator/s' who can synchronise viewing to ensure that everyone stays in the one place.

The bottom left window shows who is in the room at that time. The name shown is what you type in upon entry.

Below the names you will see a volume control for your microphone and speaker/headphones. The microphone is usually set around 2/3 of the way along.

To speak you need to hold down the CONTROL (CTRL) key on your keyboard. You should see green/blue bars rising in the VU meter to the right of the volume controls.

Above the names you'll see a small white text box where you can type messages. Click your ENTER button on the keyboard to post what you've written. The messages appear next to your name in the window above the text box. You don't have to type your name in.

It is possible to send private messages to another participant by selecting their name from the drop down menu that defaults to EVERYONE. You can also change the colour of your text with the colour menu.

IF YOU CAN'T HEAR PEOPLE SPEAKING:

- Test that your headphones or speakers are working beforehand by playing a music or sound file on your computer.
- Make sure your computers main volume control is not muted, and that the volume is turned up. Often there is a small grey volume icon in the bottom right hand corner of your computer screen. Otherwise you'll need to get into the computers CONTROL PANEL to adjust these (see following page).
- Make sure that you have the headphone/mic plugs in the correct sockets on your computer – they are often colour coded or have small icons to assist.

IF PEOPLE CAN'T HEAR YOU SPEAK:

- Again make sure your mic is plugged into the correct socket
- If your mic has a control switch half way down the cord – make sure that is switched ON and the volume is turned UP
- Make sure your MIC is selected and turned up in your volume controls on the computer.
- Try an alternative microphone – they don't last for ever!

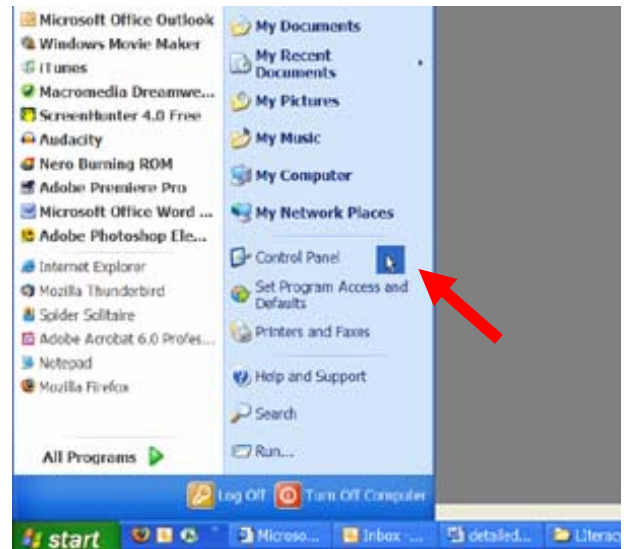
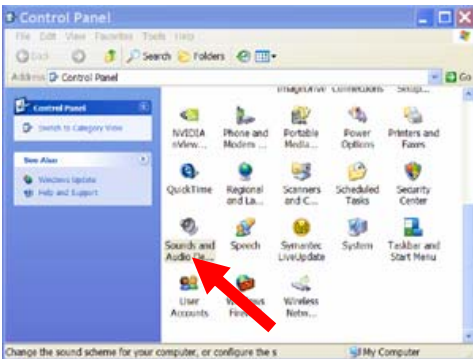
RECORDING THE SESSION

We record all major events and house the files on our ACAL website. The URL to their recording will be provided in the Literacy Live forum space.

How to check your computers sound settings in Windows XP

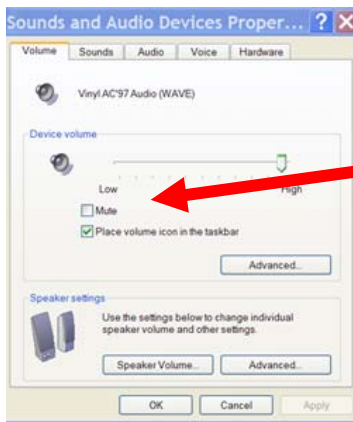
Click on the START button at the bottom left of your screen and then choose CONTROL PANEL from the options.

IN the CONTROL PANEL select the SOUNDS and DEVICES option.

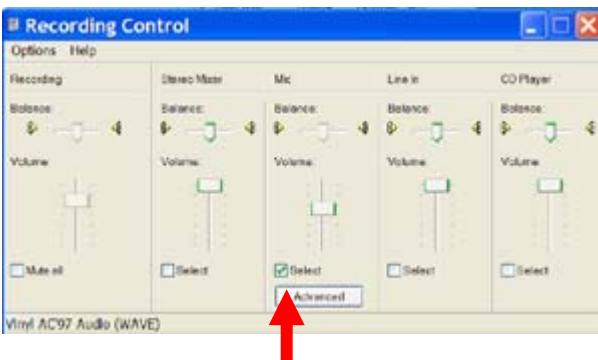


SOUNDS and DEVICES will automatically open at this screen...

Make sure the DEVICE VOLUME does **NOT** have a tick in the MUTE box and that the volume is turned up to high.

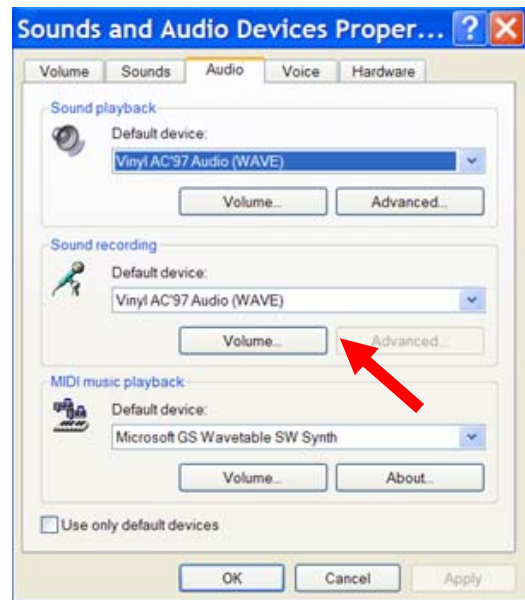


Click on the tab at the top that says AUDIO and then on the VOLUME control in the SOUND RECORDING section.



The MIC should have a tick in the SELECT box and the volume should be at least 2/3 up.

Click on the ADVANCED button in the MIC section and tick the BOOST box (you may need to turn this on or off according to your equipment)



By clicking on the VOICE tab at the top you also have an option to test your hardware before entering the room.