Over the last few issues we have featured a series of articles about digital video (DV) and its potential uses in the classroom. So, if that has whetted your appetite, here's a look at what's on the DV scene at BETT.

A glance round the BETT show this year for exhibitors of digital video products will no doubt reveal some 'new kids on the block' as well as a few 'old favourites'. The following round-up is not comprehensive but it should give visitors to the show some idea of what are the 'must sees' for DV in the potentially overwhelming sea of stands that make up BETT.

We start with the 'godfather' of digital video in the classroom, Apple, who never fail to disappoint. Their stand is always a joy to look at, with beautiful kit set in a well-designed space.
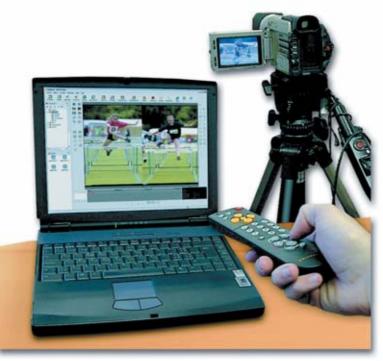
The *iLife* suite, including *Garage Band* and *iMovie*, *Final Cut Pro* and a host of other tools, can be seen alongside digital video cameras from Canon and others. Also, the new iPod Video is sure to offer a number of curriculum possibilities, in addition to its home appeal.

Another nice feature of the Apple stand is the opportunity to see the software demonstrated by experts, often ones who have experience of using the software with pupils. The stand will also a feature a rolling programme of presentations throughout the show covering all aspects of Apple and education.

Media on demand

Classroom Video offer a range of solutions for 'Media on Demand' in schools. These essentially allow schools to set up and manage a digital video library. A combination of software and hardware lets schools download educational videos from a selection available on the Classroom Video website, and these can be searched by subject and age range, previewed online (in a try-before-you-buy manner) and then downloaded. The school collection can also be categorised and searched, and existing videos can be digitised and added to the collection. This method could also be used for keeping an archive of pupils' films in a structured way.

On the trail of digital video

The option to preview materials online before purchase is a useful way of ensuring 'fitness for purpose' and therefore saving money. The indexing system at the school side ensures that teachers can always find the appropriate resource when it is needed. The electronic nature of the materials allows the required sections to be selected in isolation, enabling tightly focused teaching.

Dartfish have been around on the educational and commercial scene for quite a while now. Dartfish software has become well known way for schools to make use of digital video for 'gait analysis' – that is, using analysis of body position to help pupils (and teachers and coaches) improve sports performance by analysing body position and comparing it to model performances by professional athletes. New technology makes it possible for this to be done simply using a high-performance PC, digital video camera and tripod, whereas in the past you would have needed very specialised equipment, dark rooms and 'ping pong ball' suits.

This year Dartfish are showing *Dartfish TeamPro*, which has been nominated for a BETT award in the category of Secondary Software, Content, and Tools. This software allows the analysis of team games to allow development of tactics. It is described as: 'powerful software used for capturing games/ matches and tagging events ... an ideal high performance solution for all team sports and other sports or activities where tactical analysis provides a leading edge. In addition to tagging, the software has a full range of the most advanced functionalities to communicate and give visual feedback, analyse tactical performance and share video or analysis in the team or on the Web'. This software is also used commercially by professional sports teams, including the US women's' soccer team.

Cuddly?

It took me many years to suddenly click that Kudlian soft isn't pronounced 'Could-lee-ann Soft' but rather more amusingly 'Cuddly and Soft', and it now always makes me smile every time I see it written. Kudlian have a vast number of titles worth looking at this year and their move into digital video has introduced innovative and motivational software for the home and classroom. Visitors to the stand can experience *I Can Animate*, a stop-motion animation application, broadcast online with the new *Podcaster* or build on Mac curriculum content with *Essential Tools for iLife*. *I Can Animate* has been shortlisted for a BETT Award in the category of Early Years and Primary Software, Content and Tools.

Immersive Education are best known for *Kar2ouche*, described as a 'cross-curricular role-playing software for producing pictures, storyboards, animations, movies, comics, handouts, posters and magazines'. They also produce *Krucible*, a unique science simulation software for secondary schools.

Continuing with Immersive's work in simulations, *Media Stage* is an innovative piece of software that provides a 3-D representation of a television or film studio and allows pupils to take on the role of media professionals to make decisions and make their own television programme. They can act as director, cameraman, lighting director or producer. Positioning set, placing autocues and lights and supervising the action in real time, this simulation allows pupils to have a creative experience that could not be delivered in the classroom in any other way. *MediaStage* has been nominated for a BETT award in the category of Secondary Software, Content and Tools. Immersive have worked with the renowned educational publishers Heinemann to produce comprehensive support materials for teachers on the use of this package.

Market leader

Planet PC Digital Video is certainly a company that anyone with an interest in DV needs to check out. They describe themselves as 'an innovative market leader in the supply of customised desktop, portable and rackmount solutions for video acquisition, editing, archiving, streaming and distribution'. Planet PC is a supplier of top-of-the-range digital video resources and authorised resellers for many companies, including JVC, Matrox, Canon and Panasonic. They also offer training courses in a huge range of video editing software, including *Avid*, Apple *Final Cut* and *DVD studio*, Adobe *Pinnacle* and *After Effects* and others. A visit to the stand and a discussion with their staff will enable you to see how they can help design a solution to meet your needs.

As well as the big names in the education software and hardware supply market, a number of less well-known names have offerings at BETT 2006. The show presents a valuable opportunity to talk face to face with companies offering training and consultancy and with those resellers selling software and hardware from a number of manufacturers. It enables educators to make an assessment of the quality of offering and is a chance to compare similar offers from different companies.

For example, there's ICT Links, who provide resources, training and advice in the field of video animation for the classroom. They act as resellers for the aforementioned Kudlian's *Essential Tools for iLife* and the impressive *iStopmotion* from Boinx Software for stop motion work in *iMovie*, along with other classroom accessories for animation – so they are well worth a visit.

OpTex International describe themselves as 'one of the largest manufacturer and distributors of broadcast video and film equipment and are a well known supplier to the television and film industries for over 30 years'. Based in North London, their products are apparently distributed worldwide.

They supply complete systems to leading broadcasters and production companies, and visiting their stand will give you an opportunity to have a discussion about the features of a whole range of cameras and to work out what matches your requirements.

Library

Finally in this all too brief selection of exhibitors to visit for digital video, the Digital Video Library is a collection of CD-ROMs containing royalty free video and still clips that can be used by teachers and pupils in 'interactive whiteboard presentations, lesson starters and multimedia work' – including digital video projects.

Each CD contains around 100 video clips with still images, covering such places of interest as Barcelona, Berlin and Paris. Geographical sites such as the Jurassic Coast, limestone features of Malham and the Yorkshire Coast are also included. There are other titles covering Creative topics, Culture, Transport and Water, and the company also provide video assets to publishers, Grids for Learning and software and multimedia authors.

So, whether you're already using DV in your classroom or are just taking your first tentative steps in that direction, there's plenty at this year's BETT to investigate. Good hunting!

BETT checklist
- Apple (stands E34, F34): www.apple.com
- Classroom Video (LR4): www.classroomvideo.com/aboutus/
- Dartfish (M15): www.dartfish.com
- Kudlian Soft (M100): www.kudlian.net
- Immersive Education (D70): www.immersiveeducation.com
- Planet PC (O2): www.planetdv.net
- ICT Links Ltd (P20): www.ictlinks.co.uk
- OpTex International (M85): www.optexint.com
- Digital Video Library (G100): www.dvlibrary.org.uk