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Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

As the millennium draws to a close, the prognosis for the economy in the U.S. continues to be positive and moving forward. The Dow is at an all time high, over 11,000. Every day we hear of new developments in technology and medicine. The telecommunication industry continues to advance at record speed. And progress on the international space station makes frequent headlines.

The Far East is slowly recovering from its state of depression. Business seems to be improving slightly in both Japan and Korea. China's relations with the United States have recently been strained over the spy scandal, which in turn affects business relations adversely. Yet China remains fertile for an explosion of industry, which will ripple across the globe in the new millennium.

Russia continues in financial turmoil, leaving the country woefully short of needed capital. Foreign business risks increase through rising crime (including countless organized crime groups), and continuing instability in the political arena. In large measure due to the many decades of communism, Russian business managers are often less interested in adopting social policies considered necessary and normal by western standards. The immediate focus is on prosperity. Long-term goals are not easily understood or planned for. Cheating, including cheating on the state and business partners, prevails in numerous companies. This attitude makes the rapid transition to a market economy difficult. Despite these problems, some significant strides have been achieved, and the U.S. remains supportive of Russia, even increasing its financial support again this year.

Latin America, particularly Brazil, which had caused concern in the stockmarket, is rallying once more. Mexico has attracted a substantial number of U.S. companies, due to the cheaper labor market and fa-

avorable tariffs since the implementation of NAFTA. Opportunities for expansion there abound.

Europe's high unemployment figures are slowly beginning to decrease. Labor mobility in Europe is at a much lower level than in the U.S. So, for example, if Italy were experiencing a recession and France were expanding economically, a movement of labor and capital from Italy to France could be expected. Accompanying that, prices and cost of labor would decrease in Italy and increase in France. A similar situation would result if Michigan were depressed and industry in Texas were on the rise. Even though the European Union assures workers mobility within the EU, Europeans are much more reluctant than Americans to pull up stakes and move if there is a better job opportunity elsewhere. Thus the unemployment recovery is slower in Europe.

Germany is recovering from the financial strain of its reunification and the enormous influx of refugees from third world countries in recent years. Here too, the boom in the telecommunication industry plays a role in creating many new jobs and thus opportunities for higher employment figures. These opportunities help in offsetting the positions that may be lost by recent mega-mergers, such as Daimler-Chrysler.

The eleven countries participating in the euro are the second most important economy in the world, thus impacting significantly on the U.S. dollar. Combined, these countries produce 18% of the world's G.N.P. and are thus on a level with the U.S. Export figures show that the euro lands account for 20% of world exports, which is significantly more than the U.S. and about twice that of Japan. The euro, for which the prognosis had been so strong just a year ago, has weakened vis-à-vis the dollar since its birth just six months ago, falling for the first time below 1.00. But optimism about an economically united Europe remains, particularly since the European balance of trade is positive, whereas the U.S. continues in deficit. The member nations gain financially in a number of ways: money can be saved, for instance, when borrowing at the much lower interest rates than when each acted independently; fees for foreign currency exchange rates within the euro states have been eliminated. This alone saves companies which trade among these European nations very large sums of money. If successful, "Euroland," a financial and economic union, which retains the distinct languages, cultures and politics of its eleven nations with 300 million peoples, offers a very unique model for economic success.

In the political arena, the conflict in the Balkans continues to dominate most of the headlines this year. The military response by NATO to the violence in Kosovo could not be averted. Again, as over fifty years ago, after several months of continuing bombing, allies on both sides of the Atlantic are working side-by-side to assure peace, and to make possible the safe return to their country of those driven out by terror and war. Entrenched dictators are hard to unseat, as the free world has so often experienced. Even with modern communication and sophisticated, instant information-gathering, the free world can still not fully assure protection of the oppressed. Alongside force, if necessary, economic sanctions seem to be ever more prevalent as a tool in the attempt to force the hand of a leader.

Because of the rapid advances in technology and communication, events in each country in the world affect us all more than ever today. This requires an ever-deeper understanding of cultures and languages.

In the four years that we have been publishing *Global Business Languages*, advances in electronic communication and technology have been enormous. In addition, the newer developments of only a few years ago have gained greater acceptance and more widespread use, bringing the global business community, and educational institutions scattered around this country and the world, closer together. Because of these “real-time,” instantaneous links, our students need to know not only the languages of business, but how language is being delivered today, specifically by video conferencing, email and the internet.

The current volume contains many articles that examine technological developments within the business community, and also as new pedagogical methods, providing new means for communication. In the first article, “On Using Technology to Help Blend Language Proficiency and Language for Special Purposes,” Orlando R. Kelm writes a useful and informative overview of the major issues involved in the interface between the newer technologies and business languages. Referring to the instruction of Business Spanish, he explores activities involving spreadsheet problems, e-mail, electronic slide presentations, video conferencing, internet surfing and word processing. In order to create effective learning exercises, he states that “the key is to see what people do anyway and model similar activities in the target language.” The articles that follow deal more specifically with applications of one or two technological developments. Atsushi Fukada examines a CALL (Com-

puter-Assisted Language Learning) system “to find an effective instructional method for teaching [Japanese] reading in technical areas and to develop materials for it” in his article “Teaching Technical Reading with Technology.” In her article “Teaching Business Languages via Distance Learning,” Christine Uber Grosse provides an extensive review of her survey of twelve business schools to see how faculty meet challenges to teaching online and via interactive satellite television. Much pertinent information is provided, dealing with such areas as “program structure, compensation, faculty profile, attitudes toward distance learning, training and support, student performance and course evaluation.”

In “Snail-mail or E-mail?—A Study of Communication Preferences in Print Advertisements,” Jutta Ulrich presents a study of print advertisements in two American and two German journals and the choices (telephone, fax, internet, email) offered readers for communication with the company. Carmen Vega Carney’s article “Using Technology as Context in the Business Spanish Program” describes a “task-based course project in which e-mail, the Internet, and Power Point are implemented as means to enhance the acquisition of both [Spanish] language and business skills.” The immense popularity and profound impact which the internet has had—and continues to have—on global business and pedagogical approaches can be seen in three more articles, which focus on French, Chinese and German business language. Elizabeth Martin and Douglas A. Kibbee describe several courses on translation, commercial French, and scientific and technical French which will be offered on-line in “Language for Specific Purposes Goes On-Line.” A Chinese course and means to create interactive web pages are discussed in Kylie Hsu’s article “Business Chinese through the World Wide Web,” while Norbert Hedderich’s study “Web-Based Audio: Resources for Teaching German” examines ways in which German radio programs can be accessed by internet audio “streaming.”

The last two articles do not contain examinations of technological developments, but should be quite useful for their discussions of issues pertaining to teaching business language. Chabong Kim provides a number of key elements (business fundamentals, business language training, and cultural issues) crucial for the design of a business Korean course at Brigham Young University in “Teaching Methodology and Creation of a Syllabus for Business Korean.” Finally, the article “What Are Japanese Employers Looking For?” explores matters of language

ability, culture competency and personality traits as they relate to Americans seeking employment by Japanese firms. Akihisa Kumayama and Yasuko Makita-Discekici demonstrate in their survey that personality, character and cooperation are highly valued by Japanese employers, and they explain how some of these traits are exhibited in the interview process.

We hope that you enjoy these articles, and find them useful. In addition, we encourage you to utilize the technological developments which allow us to provide you greater information *about Global Business Languages* by visiting our website at <<http://ciberweb.mgmt.purdue.edu/busilang/gblang.htm>>. We hope that this will help facilitate subscriptions and to disseminate the call for new articles.

We continue to receive very positive feedback about *Global Business Languages*. Foreign Languages Departments as well as Business Schools find the articles useful and informative. For our next issue we have chosen the theme "Internationalization and the New Millennium" which will include pedagogical and practical concerns influencing internationalization and the future. Please see our call for papers in this volume.

Again this year we would like to express our appreciation to the U.S. Department of Education for its support of our Center for International Education and Research here at Purdue University. This publication would not be possible without financial support from CIBER and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

The profession was saddened by the unexpected death of Al Brannan, Professor of French at San Diego State University. A longtime Director of CIBER at SDSU and a valued member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *Global Business Languages*, Al will be greatly missed by us all.

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