University of Nottingham

Using LiveCode as a Research Tool at University of Nottingham

Dr. Walter van Heuven is a lecturer at the School of Psychology, University of Nottingham. His research interests are in language processing, computational modelling, and the bilingual brain. Dr. van Heuven came upon LiveCode and chose it to create software for a research project that involved testing Chinese student in the UK and China to find out how to improve their English listening and speaking skills. The project was funded by a University of Nottingham Annual Fund grant and involved colleagues from the School of Education, School of English, School of Psychology and researchers in China.

Dr. van Heuven: "I considered using Java, REALStudio or HTML 5. But in the end I decided that LiveCode was the best for this particular project." Walter explains that he needed something he could use himself to create the programs. "I had limited time and like many Universities we did not have enough funding to hire a programmer to create the software. Development in LiveCode is faster relative to Java. You could do the same thing with Java but it would take a lot more time. One of the key features in this particular project was that we needed to record speech. LiveCode worked really well for that."

Dr. van Heuven: "Using LiveCode was a good experience. I liked the workflow. I created two projects using LiveCode, one to test English pronunciation and language abilities, including some general language tests. The other was to help Chinese students improve their English listening skills by teaching them to distinguish between very similar pair of words, where pronunciation only varied by one phoneme. The students listened and indicated whether the pairs were the same or different."

"Besides its speed, the other major advantage of LiveCode is its cross platform nature. Rapid prototyping means that I can quickly put something together that looks nice and add logic with LiveCode's powerful language. But because LiveCode runs on multiple platforms, the students can use the courseware on their PCs and I can develop the apps on my Mac, where I am comfortable programming".

"LiveCode worked really well and I was able to use it myself to get this task done. It was fast, cross platform and the multimedia abilities and audio features worked really well."

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