

PICtalk has arrived!

PICtalk offers us a new and exciting option for using PICs with a digital radio link and a transmitting and receiving board. Students learn about the nature of digital communication and can combine control and data logging opportunities. Designing circuits takes place on screen, where the hardware is developed using the popular Crocodile Technology software. From the graphic flowchart it is a few simple steps to transfer the program to the onboard 28pin PIC's.

We first hinted at the work in progress with PICtalk way back in issue two of News and Views. We are pleased to report that the resources have now been on test in a number of schools and we are delighted to offer to schools this latest resource from TEP. Thanks to the development work of Dr John Martin and his colleagues at the University of Salford and the support of Clive Seager and Revolution Education.

The PICtalk kit comes complete with all the hardware required as well as the 28 page TEP Teacher Guidance book and demonstration programme disc mounted in an easy store moulded tray and see through lid. The book provides a wealth of background material linking to National Curriculum before introducing the user to detailed structured activities and pointing the way to some interesting extension tasks.

We are sure PICtalk, as one of many new PIC based resources from TEP, is going to 'fire up' students' and teachers' imaginations and lead to some really exciting new coursework and project opportunities. The low power transmitter system does not require a radio licence yet has a significant range when we tested them in D&T departments. PICtalk is an ideal resource for teachers following the Marconi ECT training or accreditation route and will provide a low cost reliable alternative to other less flexible radio teaching modules.

Kit Contents include:

- » 2 x PICtalk Boards to transmit and receive AM digital signals and host the PICs
- » Digital Input Board with 8 input channels to connect to the PICtalk boards
- » Output Driver Board with 8 status LED's and connects to external devices
- » 2 x AM aerial modules plug into the PICtalk Boards directly
- » 2 x 6V mains power supply stabilised 6V source for both PICtalk boards
- » PICtalk Book 28 page Student/Teacher Guidance on PICtalk and programming
- » Output and Input transducers analogue temperature and light sensors
- » Demonstration CD-ROM to be used in conjunction with Crocodile Technology 1.53+
- » Serial Lead for programming direct from the computer without removing PIC's

PICtalk is available now from Teaching Resources and will be on the TEP stand at the D&T show this November for prospective purchasers to try out.

Schools wishing to find out more about PICtalk before purchasing can log on to the TEP website for a pdf download featuring the PICtalk book.

We are confident that you will want to share programming and application ideas and are making space available on the TEP website to feature your programmes. Schools submitting programmes can send them to: muraca@enterprise.net. Frank Muraca will make sure your efforts are worthwhile and will send you TEP resources back as a thank you, so please ensure you include your school's full postal address.

