



Teacher's Manual for the makeITfair WebQuest Updated in September 2011

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1. Introduction

Every day, students are using electronics, mobile phones, MP3 players and game consoles. Not many people know about the problems involved in the production of these products for example, the environmental impact of the mining of metals used in mobile phones, or the terrible working conditions in Chinese factories producing laptops. Without making students feel guilty about using a phone, an MP3 player or a computer, this WebQuest will raise awareness about the problems involved and will also discuss how consumers and other actors could contribute to a different attitude and a change in behaviour and production techniques. They will also learn about the links they have with citizens in developing countries.

Using a WebQuest, students can gather information independently but in a structured way, and organise this information to produce their own piece of work. The quest represents the motor as well as the motivation for the student to embark upon a guided investigation.

In this quest, students are being challenged to be a critical consumer. Through this lens, students can take a good look at the whole production chain in the mobile phone market. While they focus attention on appearance and goals, they are also learning about issues such as working conditions or environmental problems along the supply chain.

The quest

You would like to buy a new mobile phone. Which one should you choose? It's a difficult choice. You can judge the phones by their appeal; you can base decisions on the price; you can look at which company has the most trendy phones.

It's hard to imagine a world without electronic devices. We all rely on Information Technology (IT) every day. In fact, IT has improved our lives in many different ways. But it has also created many new problems around the world.

Nowadays more and more attention is given to the circumstances under which the production of goods takes place. Consumers have started asking critical questions about child labour and how the environment is protected. Maybe you have heard about child labour in Asian sweatshops, about people who are working unprotected with the poisonous chemicals that bleach your jeans in Asia, or people who work overtime for very little pay. But did you ever make a connection between these conditions and your mobile phone, for example?

How are mobile phones made, who makes them and where does the production take place? Conscious consumers pose critical questions to themselves, their friends and family, but also to companies and their policies.

2. Subjects and levels

This WebQuest is suitable for lower secondary education, for students aged 14 to 16. It corresponds to the following subjects: social studies, geography and economics.

3. Learning goals

After completing the WebQuest, the students will:

- understand the complex supply chain of electronic products.
- be able to name social and economic consequences and environmental effects of the production of electronic products.
- acquire an opinion about the causes and consequences of these problems in the production processes.
- be able to describe possible ways to influence these processes for individual citizens, consumers and lobby and pressure groups.
- be able to describe the meaning of sustainable trade and the role (and power) of retail trade and consumers.
- be able to describe how their own life and actions are related to the life of people in developing countries.

4. Requirements and brochures

In order to carry out the assignments in the WebQuest, the students should have access to the following:

One computer with access to the Internet and Microsoft or Open Office Word, Acrobat Reader and a soundcard for one pair of students – or one per student if you would like them to work individually. Use headphones to reduce noise in the class room.

Four information brochures on production and waste disposal of mobile phones and other electronics are available for each (pair of) student(s). The brochures provide clear and concise information about the production of mobile phones.

You will receive the brochures by return of post from SOMO. Phone: +31 (0)20 639 12 91. Fax: +31 (0)20 639 13 21. Mail: info@somo.nl. Or you can download them from www.makeitfair.org. You can choose between a normal version and a print version.

The titles of the brochures are:

Would you like a phone made of gold?

About the origins of raw materials.

Find out the true cost of a phone call...

About the labour conditions for workers in the factories and mines.

MakeIT fair for workers in China

About IT production in China.

Make IT green

About e-waste dumping

5. Method

During the WebQuest, students fill in a worksheet. This will take 1,5 hours. The worksheet is a Word document that they can save on their computer.

Students can work in pairs so they can discuss their answers. Or they can work individually, if you prefer. (You will need one computer and soundcard for one pair of students, or for each one if you would like them to work individually.) The students will be using the Internet and brochures to gather all the information they need.

You can check and mark the completed worksheets afterwards.

You may use the E-quiz as a test.

If you would like to invest some extra time for the solution of the WebQuest, you can ask the students to answer the questions in the web quiz. Or visit the Take Action pages of the makeitfair.org website.

6. Additional assignments

If you and your students would like to explore the subject in more detail, there are three options:

- Students could design their own certification mark for mobile phones. This assignment represents an additional challenge because such a certification mark does not exist, and creating it is – in political and economic terms – so complicated that it will probably not exist in the near future.
- You could organise a flash debate of one hour.
- You could use the web quiz by making it a class quiz, discussing all questions and answers.

1. *Design a certification mark, possibly in Powerpoint*

Take a look at the Electronic Industry Code of Conduct (EICC), formulated by the cooperating companies at www.eicc.info.

Take a look at Nokia's Code of Conduct (<http://www.nokia.com/A4254189>) or look at the codes of conduct of other electronic companies.

Take a look at existing certification marks (e.g. in the Netherlands: www.keurmerken.info).

Now design your own certification mark for mobile phones.

- What does your certification mark look like?
- Which demands must be met before a company is allowed to print your certification mark on their telephones?
- In what way will you try to persuade companies to really make the commitment to working on it?
- What will you do about the e-waste that is created when consumers discard their phones? Is this covered within your certification mark? If yes, why? If no, why not?

You can send the results of this assignment to makeITfair by email: info@makeitfair.org. Good ideas will be published on the makeITfair website at www.makeitfair.org.

2. *Flash debate*

The students can play the roles of people they have read about in the information brochures. They have to empathise with the opinions and circumstances of these particular people along the production chain.

Divide the different roles among the students first:

Jean – the miner

Maew and Siu – the factory workers

Jenny – the representative of the trade union

Sana and Charlotte – the customers

To prepare the debate, ask the students to read the brochures again to find out the opinions of these people, and challenge them to think of more arguments they can use in the debate.

Four students will get the more difficult roles:

Michael and Sarah – the representatives of the big brand company

Justin and Kappa – the owners of the mining company

They can prepare themselves by reading the brochures and see what companies do and don't do to improve the situation of the workers. For each action, they can think about the arguments they will raise in the debate.

You can start the debate with one of the following questions:

- What can be done to improve the labour conditions of workers in the factories, and of the labourers working in the mines?
- Who has the (final) responsibility for the labour conditions throughout the entire production chain?
- As long as 'fair' telephones are unavailable, you should not inform consumers, or is it better to inform them?

If you would like to make the role play more challenging, you could introduce a specific case, to be found as an attachment at the end of this manual. Divide the different roles of this case among the

students, and don't forget the representative of the international trade unions. Use the case as the starting point; now the workers can establish a union and raise their demands. How will the management react?

The flash debate will gain a lot by inviting someone who is involved in the makeITfair campaign or a trade union representative; someone who can liven up the debate with their background knowledge. To find out who you could invite, please visit the following websites:

- FNV Mondiaal - www.fnv.nl/mondiaal
- Friends of the Earth International - www.foei.org
- GoodElectronics - goodelectronics.org
- SOMO - www.somo.nl

3. The web quiz

The quiz can be used as a class quiz or as a WebQuest test. Used as a class quiz, you can turn the e-quiz into a lively lesson with a lot of discussion. Each question can be answered by one of the students. Every time, you can briefly elaborate upon the question and the answer, looking for causes and consequences. (The correct answers are given in the feedback on the website.)

7. Free documentary and extra information

'The hidden costs of your mobile phone' is a documentary about the consequences of the growing mobile phone sector, and can be ordered free at makeITfair from info@makeITfair.org.

Web page 3 – extra information about the movie Congo's Tin Soldiers: This movie shows the terrible conditions for people who work in the mines, particularly young people. The circumstances are really bad and very dangerous. There is hardly any space to move about and it is hard to breathe. And the risk of mines collapsing is enormous. After extracting cassiterite out of the mine, there are armed soldiers to contend with. They steal all the cassiterite from the miners, who are therefore stuck in the mines. The soldiers who rule the mines are the only people who benefit from the miners' work.

8. Timetable

Introduction and WebQuest	Resolution of the WebQuest	E-quiz - as final test	Extra assignments
1,5 hours (or 2 x 45 minutes)	40 minutes	40 minutes	1: variable
			2: variable
			3: 40 minutes

9. Evaluation

We only provide broad guidelines for the evaluation of the worksheets. A number of questions are designed to make it possible for students to form an opinion. In those cases, it is more about the quality of the arguments than the correct answers. Other questions can more easily be labelled as right or wrong, and show whether the student has studied the text sufficiently.

You can make your own calculation on the basis of the following data.

The 1,5 hour WebQuest contains opinion-forming questions and questions about facts, right/wrong questions, and questions as an introduction. We would recommend that you score the opinion-forming questions a little higher than the factual questions.

10. Answers to the worksheet

1. Different answers are possible.
2. Different answers are possible.
3. For instance: harsh labour conditions for workers, working with dangerous chemicals, working long hours (12 hours a day), working seven days a week, very low salary, obligation to do overtime.
4. Here the student's own opinion should be clearly stated and argued.
5. a) Russia, China, Congo, Chile, South Africa, Indonesia.
b) Soldiers will often steal the cassiterite; there is no protection for the workers.
6. Here the student's own opinion should be clearly stated and argued.
7. True costs mean that not only purely financial and economic factors are considered but also indirect costs, such as: people working in the factories for low wages being exploited; mine workers risking their health and doing work in harsh circumstances; environmental pollution.
8. Here the student's own opinion should be clearly stated and argued.
9. If not dismantled well and with appropriate safety precautions, the toxic materials leak out and will harm the environment. Moreover, they will poison the person who is dismantling the product if he is unprotected.
10. Different answers are possible.
11. Here the answers will vary, depending on the company the students have chosen.

11. Background information

In case you would like to explore more in-depth information on these subjects, makeITfair has produced a series of informative brochures with a summary of recent research. The brochures are available in English.

12. Colophon

The WebQuest is produced by Alice O education in global perspective, commissioned by SOMO as part of the makeITfair campaign.

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www.aliceo.nl
www.somo.nl
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13.Attachment

Extra information concerning WebQuest page 5:

A letter from poisoned Lian Jian workers to **Apple Inc.**

15 March 2011

Dear Mr. Jobs,

Hello, how has your health been recently? Despite being thousands of miles away, we, the poisoned workers, have been concerned about your well-being. In the last few days, we learned from the news that you and President Obama had a dinner party together. From the look of it, you have recovered well and we congratulate you on having beaten your serious illness. You are an asset to society and a source of pride for all Apple fans. We don't want to take up much of your time, but at the moment we have been encountering many difficulties. We hope you can take some time to consider the problems we are currently facing.

You have said before that you would rigorously supervise the production processes and production environments of your OEM supplier companies. You also said recently that there were no problems in the supervision of your OEM companies. At present, however, the poisoning of over 200 workers at Lian Jian Technology (Wintek) is an established fact that cannot be denied. Perhaps you still do not understand our current situation, so let me tell you everything. Currently, 22 Lian Jian workers who were poisoned by n-hexane are experiencing recurrent signs of their illness and among them fourteen have sought medical testing elsewhere and they have all been tested and have problems. Some of the workers (who were tested at an out-of-town "level three"[1] hospital) have been issued notice for hospitalization treatment as their illnesses have reached the standard needed for hospitalization. As a result of the constraints of Chinese law, examination and treatment must be done at a local hospital. But Lian Jian does not grant approval for the workers to get hospital treatment. After countless requests from the workers, Lian Jian finally agreed to arrange for workers to be admitted to a local occupational disease treatment center but this was met by a heartless refusal from Suzhou No. 5 People's Hospital.

Because we workers are sick and are racing against our illnesses, arrangements for treatment must not be delayed. Yet negotiations and communications with the company are still underway. After numerous requests, Lian Jian agreed to arrange for us, the poisoned workers, to undergo testing at the Second Affiliated Hospital of Suzhou University. The purpose of this testing was to get a second opinion regarding the exam results from the out-of-town hospital, to perform further examination in order to determine whether or not our symptoms were caused by n-hexane poisoning. These poisoned workers either received hospitalization treatment or out-patient treatment and have continued to go to work at Lian Jian. When we were discharged from the hospital, we had just taken a turn for the better and were not actually fully recovered. Isn't that worth wondering about? We are very confused. This is not just about isolated cases; all of us who got poisoned have had recurring symptoms. Could this merely be a coincidence? The only result of the examinations was medicine not even worth 30 RMB that was given to treat those who met the requirements of a hospital stay. The rest of the workers have not been treated and we are still waiting—waiting for treatment or for paralysis. The Second Affiliated Hospital said that

they were not an occupational disease treatment institution, and sent us back to Suzhou No. 5 People's Hospital. We are like lambs to the slaughter, rubber balls being kicked back and forth, with nobody taking an interest in us. Shouldn't you supervise your suppliers to push them to resolve the problem of their poisoned workers? We just want our normal life back.

On February 22nd, 2011, your company sent two employees to Lian Jian to conduct interviews. They sincerely and earnestly told us that they would send the content of the interviews back to their headquarters, but afterwards it was like a rock dropped in the ocean—we never heard another word from you since. Could such a large company really just be going through the motions?

You and your suppliers have constantly avoided the appeals that we, the poisoned workers, have made and have said that you would act in accordance with insurance laws and regulations when it comes to buying us life insurance and helping us find employment. Now that we have recurring symptoms, though, you have not urged your supplier to give us treatment. We haven't seen that you've taken a clear position and this has made us very disappointed.

We hope that you can truly do as you say in terms of social responsibility, to promote production methods that allow for a greener supply chain, to stringently supervise your suppliers' behavior, and to take effective action to resolve the long-unresolved issues relating to n-hexane poisoning at Lian Jian.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

The poisoned Lian Jian workers

[1]
Hospitals in China are assigned a grade, with "level three" considered the best.