

Editorial

To the readers of *Technology and Disability*

Change

The world is changing rapidly: we have faced terrorism and war and the world is suffering from what has happened in the year 2001. With lots of irony we know that war creates disability and, consequently, we know that often in those periods of time the interest in rehabilitation and support of injured persons is increasing. We can “use” that extra interest because so much has to be done in our field of Assistive Technology.

It is not just terrorism that changes the world, but even more the new technologies form a serious threat and a very challenging opportunity to our society and our target groups, people with disabilities.¹ Some examples are Nano-technology, MEMS (Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems integration of mechanical elements, sensors, actuators, and electronics on a common silicon substrate, making possible the realization of complete systems-on-a-chip), and Information and Communication Technologies at large. These technologies also cause fast developments in Mechanical engineering/Robotics and system developments as well as in material research.

The mainstream technologies provide our society with functions/systems which are completely new. Systems which, for example, measure body functions unobtrusively and allow an early and precise intervention. Looking at the 6th framework documents of the IST programme we see that a future society is depicted with technology for far-reaching interventions and support to “average” human life.² It is this mix of threats and opportunities that generates the interest for designing a society for all is now growing fast and this issue is now on the political agenda of the EU and the member countries. An e-Accessibility group is overseeing as far as possible the actions taken in the various countries.

Changes and *Technology and Disability*

We would like to think about the aims of the journal T&D in the context of change mentioned above. But what could we better promote than to enhance the same goals as in the past: bring together the best technological expertise and apply it for solutions aiming at disability compensation/support or better, aiming at improving the participation of people in our society.

Thus, *Technology and Disability* has not been changed with respect to the views as originally intended by the founders of the journal, but changes took place in respect to how the journal will represent the work in the field. In concreto, we are now aiming at contributions on free topics as well as on special topics in an issue of the journal. We are also inviting contributions which present a view on policies and prospects in Technologies related to disabilities. We are inviting contributions which review the past in order to learn for the future R&D to be created.

Prospects on contents

The start of the journal in the AAATE environment has been much slower than expected; it is still not very common for the members to think about our own journal as the prime possibility for publishing their material. But immediately I must thank all the contributors in the short past period for delivering their material. The review process is rather lengthy because our quality standards require several steps to be taken: find two reviewers, two reviewers will read and comment on the paper, comments are sent to the authors, re-submission after the necessary modifications, final check of the paper by the editor, lay-out and professional text correction by the publisher, proof sent to the author, preparing printing, printing and mailing.

We still believe that quality should come before speed, but we will look for a faster process.

As said, the journal is aiming for a mix of issues with free papers and a number of special issues. The preparation of special issues needs a long lead-time, but after that the process is a bit faster than for free papers because the review process is done by the guest editor and the journals editor.

¹Technology Trends; ftp://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/ist/docs/ka1/sn_tech_trends_at_study_report.pdf

²EU-report, ISTAG Scenario's on site: <ftp://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/ist/docs/istagscenarios2010.pdf>

A long lead time, but now an interesting list of special issues is about to come: the first special issues expected are on Measuring Effectiveness of Assistive Technology, and on State of the Art and Developments in Prosthetics. Furthermore, an issue is planned with selected topics from the Regional AAATE in 2001 in the UK. For these topics authors were selected to write full papers for the journal.

Many other topics are suitable for special issues, and upcoming conferences are asked to “hunt” for papers on the best subjects and authors.

An overview of the detailed plans will be given soon in the AAATE’s newsletter and on the discussion list of the society.

Inspiration

The increasing importance of technology in our society is not always in favour of our target groups for

our R&D and other activities. Effects of mainstream technologies on the participation of people with disabilities is not very predictable. And this is exactly the reason that *Technology and Disability* would like to see the technology presented and the consequences of the technologies being evaluated. Basically, it is always the same question we put to ourselves: “What will the mainstream development bring to us and how can we use it in the field of AT?”.

We hope that the readers have much pleasure in reading the content of T&D and we wish you all a lot of inspiration at your work that might develop into knowledge to share with others in the Assistive Technology field (. . . sharing via *Technology and Disability* of course!).

Thijs Soede
Editor-in-Chief