AAATE Newsletter: Winter 2002/3

FROM THE EDITOR

Lawrence Normie *lnormie@jdc.org.il*

Before me, as I write, is the official text of the first call for proposals in the IST priority area of the Sixth Framework Programme. The call was published on 17th December and remains open until 5.00 pm Brussels local time on 24th April 2003. In addition, I have just downloaded the latest version of the IST work programme. Upon a cursory reading I am encouraged to see that things really don't seem as bad for the AT sector in FP6 as we originally feared they might be.

For example, in Section 2.3.2.10 (*e*Inclusion), the second of two objectives is *"to develop intelligent systems that empower persons with disabilities and ageing citizens to play a full role in society and to increase their autonomy"*. It goes on to identify the following sub-priorities:

- Research on advanced interfaces, low cost sensors and possibly robotics to be integrated in assistive devices, and information modelling and web semantics to improve web usability for digitally [*sic*] disadvantaged persons.
- Development and demonstration of intelligent housing for persons with special needs to be addressed in an integrated approach.
- Networking of research teams, in the domain of *assistive technologies* to strengthen the research effort on the quality of life of users with physical, sensory or cognitive impairments as well as in the domain of *design-for-all* for mainstream products and services exploring, for example, cognitive demands and new multimodal platforms.

*e*Inclusion has a pre-allocated budget of 30 million Euros but – in my personal view – it is regrettable that the *design for all* theme does not figure at all, either in IST or any other priority area. Likewise for the key action on ageing and disabilities (in the Quality of Life thematic area), which has not been carried over into FP6. Overall, I believe that we should be quite upbeat concerning the scope for involvement by the AT sector in FP6. Do you share this view? Write and tell us.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Renzo Andrich *renzo.andrich@siva.it*

Dear AAATE Members, the agenda of our Association has been quite busy this autumn.

The annual seminar – successfully organised by IRV in Hoensbroek, The Netherlands – marked a milestone in the life of the AAATE. First, the theme – *Assistive Technology and Mainstream Technology in debate* – was extremely significant and challenging for our community, as this debate comes to the forefront every day when selecting a technical solution to one's own problems, when providing services to individual users, when designing service delivery systems and funding policies, when addressing research and development. The seminar also came very timely at the onset of the 6th Framework Programme, and allowed for a lively discussion among the over 70 participants from the research, industry, service delivery and policy field. A concise report is offered in the newsletter.

The Annual Assembly, held in Hoensbroek in conjunction with the seminar, offered the opportunity for informing members about activities carried out and in progress, discussing several aspects of the Association's life and mission, renewing by elections the AAATE structure, seeking how to fix problems and improve its functioning, and designing the way forward. The minutes of the Assembly, including the board report, have been sent out in conjunction with this Newsletter.

We warmly welcome the "new entries": Erland Winterberg as new Secretary, Toril Bergerud Buene as Auditor. We also heartily thank the outgoing Secretary Helen Petrie and the outgoing Auditor Luc de Witte for their collaboration and commitment so far. The nomination committee did a great job in promoting several qualified candidacies so we were able to hold "real" elections, which is a witness of increased maturity of our association. We are most grateful to all candidates for volunteering to serve the Association. For sure the newly elected Nomination Committee – Wolfgang Zagler, Jan-Ingvar Lindstrom and Christian Bühler – will

work in the same direction to mobilise the great capital of expertise and commitment existing among our members.

It is worth pointing out that it is not just the Board carrying out the Association's mission. Increased expectations towards AAATE are placed from both the inside (e.g. networking, working out position statements, etc.) and the outside (consultation, representation etc.) that hardly fit with the limitations imposed by the voluntary structure of AAATE. However, we feel it is important to meet such expectations and take advantage of increased visibility for the sake of the advancement of Assistive Technology.

That's why this year we worked at identifying other members prepared to volunteer for specific tasks: Jan Engelen was appointed as AAATE representative in the European DATSCG (*Design for All and Assistive Technology Standardisation Group*); Lawrence Normie as editor of this newsletter; Thijs Soede was re-appointed as editor-in-chief of our journal *Technology and Disability*; Past President Christian Bühler continued to offer the website service. We are grateful to them all for their valuable contribution and we are sure there will be the opportunity (and the need) to involve more and more members. Last but not least, the role of the national contacts is fundamental and should be more and more exploited, especially in those countries where the number of members is considerable or key initiatives are in progress in our sector. For the Dublin conference, for instance, we greatly rely on national contacts soliciting good papers from their countries.

Well, there are many other things to tell, for instance on the preparation of the Dublin conference, on the emerging AAATE Forum of Institutes ... However, it is better I stop here otherwise I risk monopolising this newsletter. And you are going to read about them in the following articles.

All my best wishes for a happy and rewarding (both in professional, private and family life) New Year.

AAATE ACTIVITIES

AAATE Board at work
Renzo Andrich *renzo.andrich@siva.it*

The AAATE new Board held its first 2003 meeting in Belluno, Italy on January 17–18. As in the AAATE tradition, this face-to-face meeting had a very busy agenda. The Board worked at planning details of this year's activities, finding out organisational solutions,

implementing Assembly decisions, identifying strategies for action, finding out effective ways to involve and network the AAATE membership for the sake of the advancement of the AT field in Europe.

In the next months the Board will go on with audioconferencing meetings (usually on the last Monday of each month), until a new face-to-face meeting will be possible. For sure this will happen in Dublin at the time of the Conference, although another meeting may be needed in between. The work done will be reported at the 2003 Assembly, scheduled in Dublin on Tuesday September 2 in conjunction with the AAATE Conference.

AAATE Seminar 2002
Harry Knops *h.knops@irv.nl*

The major AAATE event in the year was the Annual Seminar held in Hoensbroek, the Netherlands, on November 22–23. A report of the event will be provided in the next issue of the newsletter as well as on the website.

AAATE Conferences 2003 and 2005
Renzo Andrich *renzo.andrich@siva.it*

Work is in progress for the organisation of the major 2003 AAATE event, the Dublin Conference (Aug 31/Sept 3, 2003). A concise presentation is provided in this newsletter under the heading "forthcoming events". Most of you should have already received the Second Announcement, or had the opportunity to visit the Conference Website *www.atireland.ie/aaate* where a facility is provided for online submission of abstracts (please hurry up in case you haven't yet sent your submission!)

Although our efforts are strongly focused on the Dublin Conference, we also must start thinking towards the 2005 Conference. In compliance with our tradition, in Dublin we must be prepared to announce the host and the location of the 2005 Conference. Thus *the call for bids for the 2005 AAATE Conference is now open*. All members are invited to consider submitting bids, with the support of either their Institutes or other qualified organisations. The guidelines for submission are available on the AAATE website. Deadline for submission is May 1, 2003. In order to help the Board to efficiently organise the bids selection process, those who are interested are encouraged to announce their intention as soon as possible by sending an email message to the AAATE Office *aaate@hmi.dk*.

EMBEC 2002
Wolfgang Zagler *zw@fortec.tuwien.ac.at*

Wolfgang Zagler, who represented AAATE at EM-BEC 2002 (*2nd European Medical and Biological Engineering Conference*) held in Vienna on 4–8 December (see picture), reports: "We had five complete sessions with good participation and an excellent dialogue between the speakers and the audience. I guess some of the people got interested in participating in the AAATE Conference 2003 (I distributed the call for papers) and maybe even in joining the AAATE as members. In total we had 32 presentations in our special session on Assistive Technology with participation from 13 different countries (Australia, Austria, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, UK, USA)".

NATIONAL NEWS

Reports from AAATE national contacts

Denmark
Niels-Erik Mathiassen *ne.mathiassen@hmi.dk*

ISAAC 2002
The ISAAC 2002 conference, *www.isaac2002.dk*, held in Odense, Denmark, on August 10–15 was a great success. The Danish Centre had a significant part in the planning of the conference.

Disability no obstacle
The Danish Centre has contributed to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation's plan of action concerning the topic "Disability no obstacle".

Projects

SMART (Society Moves with Advanced Research and Technology)
The objective of the project is to turn the public's attention to the importance of science and technology in modern society. By using examples from the latest technology for disabled people the SMART project wants to show that technology can benefit all of society. The SMART project contains a travelling exhibition. The exhibition was in Denmark two weeks in September 2002 in respectively Copenhagen and Aarhus.

SmartLab
The Danish Centre has sent an application for funds in order to be able to build a SmartLab in Aarhus. The objective of building a SmartLab is to advance the fact that disabled persons (elderly people and handicapped persons) get the opportunity to live securely in their homes with maximum independence.

I-Deksy
The objective of the project is to develop and establish an Internet solution containing advanced tools for searching adjusted to the target group of deaf blind persons. The prototype of the mailing system has been developed.

Research and Development

User satisfaction with rollators
The use of rollators is increasing in a number of European countries, but only few attempts have been made to evaluate the outcome of the use of rollators. A study was carried out in eight Danish municipalities in 1999 where 64 users were interviewed about their satisfaction with their rollator by means of QUEST. The objective was to describe users' satisfaction with rollators and to identify characteristics of the rollators associated with users' dissatisfaction. The users seem to be very satisfied with their rollators. Only 6% are not satisfied with their rollator after four months if satisfaction is considered to be more than 3 on the satisfaction scale from 1–5.

Is support to cars for disabled people worth the effort?

In Denmark people with mobility disabilities may get support to buy a car and/or to have it adapted. In order to investigate whether support to cars for disabled people is worthwhile a cost-effectiveness analysis was carried out. The perspective was that of society and the alternative to cars was the use of taxi as means of transportation. The result was that if the need for transportation exceeds more than about 50 km a week, support for a car is the best solution. Furthermore, the analysis showed that the user pays the main part of the expenses.

Do certain groups of older people benefit the most from the use of powered wheelchairs?

An increasing number of older people want to be active and get about in spite of impairments, a fact causing pressure on public budgets. A study of 111 older people's use of powered wheelchairs has been carried out in order to investigate whether some groups of older people have better outcomes of powered wheelchairs than other groups. The results showed that a vast majority considered the powered wheelchair to be important and that they were satisfied with it as a whole. The characteristics of the users who seemed to get the best outcome were diverse and so were the outcomes for various groups. Since one sort of outcome cannot be regarded as more important than another, no group of older people who benefit the most from powered wheelchairs is identified in this study.

United Kingdom
Nick Hine *nhine@computing.dundee.ac.uk*

Projects at Applied Computing, University of Dundee

The work of Applied Computing at the University of Dundee has recently been recognised in an award by the British Computer Society for its ICU-Talk project. ICU-Talk is a computer based communication aid for intubated patients within an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). These patients are temporarily unable to communicate and current low tech solutions such as alphabet charts or picture boards are unsatisfactory, slow and frustrating for the patient and nursing staff. The ICU-Talk system was built in a three year EPRSC funded research project involving the departments of Applied Computing and Nursing and Midwifery at Dundee University and the Speech and Language Therapy Department and the ICU at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee. This work built on the extensive research expertise in AAC that has been established over a number of years in Dundee.

A number of other research projects are currently under way at Applied Computing, including: Memo-Jog, a hand held memory aid for older people which has live telephone facilities included in the service to ensure that care staff can follow up ignored prompts; CIRCA, a project developing a multimedia based reminiscence conversation aid for elderly people; UTOPIA, a Scotland wide project considering the research agenda within Scotland to address the needs of older people and to alert industry to these needs; FRR, a European project that is developing adaptive public toilets to meet the needs of disabled and elderly people; RAFT, a European project providing fully accessible live interaction between school classrooms and remote field trips. These research projects provide important background material that is fed back into the standardisation process via ETSI project teams. Issues concerning the use of ICT by children (STF201) and the multimodal interaction with transactional services by disabled and elderly people (ST204) are currently being investigated by staff at Dundee as part of teams of investigators from across Europe. A major role of Dundee in these project teams has been to gather opinions of users through a series of workshops and personal discussions.

A major development planned for the future is a new research facility to be located within the new building currently being planned for Applied Computing. This research facility will be known as the Queen Mother Research Centre, and is scheduled to be opened in 2004. The primary research focus of this centre will be the optimising the use of technology by and for older people.

Hungary
Andras Arato *arato@sunserv.kfki.hu*

3t-book

3t-book is a European experimental project aiming at developing a new reading method, which will ease the access to culture and information to visually impaired people. The core of this project is a single structured document, integrating different reading methodologies (a textual one, an audio one and a tactile one) which allows you both to normally scroll and read the text on your PC and make searches within the document and hypertextually browse it.

The first prototype produced using the "3t-book" system is an audio-hypertextual book consisting of a CD-Rom and a book containing some tactile drawings. The CD-Rom includes the text of Ruskin's masterpiece *"The Stones of Venice"*, its audio-digital recording in

ADPCM format and the browser. The product can be used on any PC you have at your disposal and it can even work in combination with the standard peripheral devices used by blind people. There are three reading methodologies:

– *Talking* (*audio*)*:* the entire audio version of the book is read by a professional reader and is digitally recorded using a technique, which allows you to easily reach all the different paragraphs of the book: you can therefore browse the audio document as if it were a textual one (you can make searches within the document, insert bookmarks, notes and so on).

– *Textual:* when listening to the text of the book you have the chance to read it on your screen using an enlarged format or a Braille display also. This method, which allows you to combine the synchronization of reading and listening and the browsing of the audio file is called *Digibook* and it was developed by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' research institute KFKI-RMKI in Budapest, in collaboration with the CNR Institute in Florence.

– *Tactile:* iconographic material (e.g., drawings) were reproduced with the so-called *Gauffrage* technique (a three-dimension-printing obtained through the pressing of a piece of card between two dies). The tactile drawings were created by the French partners of the "3t-book" consortium: the BrailleNet Association and the Department for the accessibility of blind people of the City of Sciences and Industry (La Villette) in Paris.

The "3t-book" version of John Ruskin's "*The Stones of Venice*" was published thanks to a financing of the European Commission, within the framework programme "Culture 2000", Grant Agreement No. 2001-1411 / 001 – 001 CLT-CA2. For more information: www.comune.venezia.it/letturagevolata/3t/.asp.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Reports

From the 4th Gerontechnology Congress, Miami Beach, Nov 9–12, 2002
Lawrence Normie *lnormie@jdc.org.il*

The tri-annual meeting of the International Society for Gerontechnology (ISG) had a modest turnout of some 160 delegates. Nevertheless, there was a busy schedule of interesting sessions and symposia. At the ISG General Assembly, held during the conference, Jan Ekberg was elected as General Secretary.

From the 4th DATSCG meeting, Oct 29, 2002, Sophia Antipolis
Jan Engelen *jan.engelen@esat.kuleuven.ac.be*

The eEurope2002 action, started at the end of 1999, gave a new impetus to standardisation initiatives in the domain of DfA, mainly related to ICT work (which is the focus of the eEurope action). Quite a lot of new initiatives started and therefore a need for co-ordination arose.

The ICT Standards Board (ICTSB) is an initiative of the three European standards organisations (CEN, CENELEC and ETSI) with the participation of specification providers as partners to co-ordinate specification activities in the field of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). The ICTSB listens to requirements for standards and specifications that are based on concrete market needs and expressed by any competent source. The Board then considers what standards or specifications need to be created, and how the task will be carried out.

Under the ICTSB, the Design for All and Assistive Technology Standardisation Co-ordination group, DATSCG, was created as a direct response to the eEurope2002 plan. Its main objectives are to be the overall focal point on design-for-all and assistive technology standardisation and to promote the knowledge and awareness of existing guidelines and tools by the market-players. Although membership is by invitation, DATSCG tries to have as many organisations as possible involved in their work, including organisations of or for persons with a disability. AAATE has observer status at DATSCG meetings.

It was announced that CEN, CENELEC and ETSI organise on March 27 and 29, 2003 a conference on "Accessibility for All" in Nice. A draft agenda can be expected at the beginning of 2003. Several research teams have been sponsored over the last two years by ETSI TC HF (Technical Committee Human Factors) to tackle eEurope priorities. Some of these teams have now produced their final report. A CD-ROM containing several reports, some standards and an ETSI produced video on the Paddy (speaking Braille keyboard that can be linked to mobile phones) were distributed at the meeting.

Mr Eric Cornez (CENELEC) presented the "Broadcasting for All" conference in Seville (June 2002). Its

main result was the EBU decision to develop a guide for best practices for subtitling and audio description for mid 2003. Mr Dardailler reported the WAI work on web site evaluations. Strategies for coherent testing have been set up and applied to testing a first batch of official websites in EU countries. Cathy Toscan presented the objectives and current plans of the eDeAN network, which has been accepted as a permanent DATSCG member.

The next DATSCG meeting is to be held in Geneva on March 18th, 2003.

> During the annual AAATE meeting in Hoensbroek, Nick Hine and Jan Engelen discussed the relevance (actually the need) of a Special Interest Group on standardisation. We would appreciate it if those who are interested to join this SIG, would send an email to both Jan Engelen and Nick Hine *nhine@computing.dundee.ac.uk*. If we have enough interested people, we could start the SIG and set up an *ad hoc* discussion list.

Projects

PALIO – Personalised Access to Local Information and services for tOurists
Pier Luigi Emiliani *p.l.emiliani@ifac.cnr.it*

The aim of this project is to provide new free services, directly available for tourists and citizens by developing and implementing complex data systems with user friendly and personalized interfaces. The design of PALIO service is driven by the combination of new concepts such as: personalisation, accessibility anytime, from anywhere and with any communication technology, real-time interactions. These objectives will be gained through the development of some technological and service innovations and in particular:

- Integration of mobile and fixed telecommunication networks;
- Methodologies and technologies for the design of scalable and personalized access, information and services;
- Tools for service personalisation and for interaction through mobile and portable terminals.

The PALIO system is based on the concurrent adoption of the following concepts:

- Integration of different (wireless and wired) telecommunication technologies to offer services through both fixed terminals in public spaces and mobile personal terminals (e.g., mobile phones, PDAs, laptops);

- Location awareness to modify dynamically the information presented, according to user position;
- Adaptation of the contents to provide automatically various presentations depending on user requirements, needs, preferences;
- Scalability of the information to different communication technologies and terminals.
- Interoperability between different service providers in both the envisaged wireless network and the World Wide Web.

For the realization of PALIO objectives, four main phases have been identified, mainly oriented to the foreseen experiments:

- Identification of user and applications requirements: context analysis, scenarios, user requirements, and application requirements;
- System design: hardware and software platforms, system architecture, adaptation of communication and information technologies;
- Implementation of hardware and software modules of the information system;
- Integration, test and validation of the whole system.

In terms of adaptation/personalisation, as well as in terms of location awareness, PALIO is based on the outcomes of recent projects funded by the European Commission (i.e. TIDE-ACCESS TP 1001 *Development Platform for Unified Access to Enabling Environments*; ACTS-AVANTI AC042 *Adaptable and Adaptive Interaction in Multimedia Telecommunications Applications* and ESPRIT-HIPS 25574 *Hyper-Interaction within Physical Space*), which have proven the technical feasibility of adaptations for both information contents and human-computer interfaces.

Disabled people currently have serious difficulties in accessing information services. Even though access to software systems would be technically possible for people with various types of impairments, their access is usually not proactively taken into account during the design process. In PALIO, the *Design for All* principle will be adopted from the design phase in order to ensure access to users vision and motion impairments, which are also common for many elderly people. The proposed project will perform a considerable step towards the objective of universal accessibility to the emerging telecommunication infrastructure, services and applications by users with different requirements, abilities and preferences.

FP6 Expressions of Interest

In this section, we continue to showcase expressions of interest submitted by AAATE members for projects in the 6th Framework Programme.

VISIT

Virtual Knowledge Based Network for Integrating Assistive Technologies
Mounir Mokhtari *Mounir.Mokhtari@int-evry.fr*

This is a proposal to build a *network of excellence in the field of rehabilitation engineering* as a catalyst of emerging technologies to favour the integration of assistive technologies dedicated to handicapped people. VISIT network covers five sub-networks according to a theoretical classification of the handicap in terms of assistive technologies. Each VISIT sub-network is composed of specialized and multidisciplinary partners. VISIT focuses on two distinct application areas: assistive devices and therapy systems. For each of these applications the following research themes are identified, but not limited to:

– Human machine interfaces and accessibility
– User needs evaluation methodologies and tools
– Virtual prototyping
– Telediagnostic and remote maintenance
– Security
– Teleworking and tele-learning
– Intelligent environment and home care

NANSAT
New Advanced Solutions in Assistive Technology
Julio Abascal *julio@si.ehu.es*

Due to ageing or disability the autonomy and social integration of a large segment of the population is decreasing. To overcome this situation assistive technology must incorporate state of the art techniques and methods in order to face up to the increasing needs of this population. For this purpose, NANSAT aims to integrate three technological areas: Information Access, Smart Home and Bioengineering. In addition, partners are conscious that one of the reasons for previous failures in this area is the lack of knowledge about the needs of the end users to produce useful, attractive and reliable solutions. NANSAT aims to use sound and suitable methodologies which take into account the user's real needs, ensuring the involvement of users, service providers and care experts among the partners. Even if "Design for all" is the main focus of this proposal, special products and services will be developed for those people who are not able to use products "designed for all".

The aim of this integrated project therefore is to mobilise the European scientific and technological expertise in AT to provide Assistive Industry, Health Care Institutions, Research Communities, Community Care Centres and Administrative bodies (including European Commission) with relevant, up-to-date technologies, practices, methodology, information and tools for the solution of elderly and disabled people care all around Europe.

NEXDAT
Network of Excellence on Design for All and Assistive Technology
Pier Luigi Emiliani *p.l.emiliani@ifac.cnr.it*

This NoE addresses long term, multidisciplinary activity dealing with the socio-economic integration of people with disabilities and elderly people in the Information Society through the synergy of Design for All and Assistive Technology approaches.

NEXDAT seeks to attain the following specific objectives: to elicit experience and practices in the above sectors; to analyse the foreseen impact of ongoing changes on people with disability and elderly people and the new challenges and opportunities for their integration; to consolidate these findings into a virtual resource centre; to assess the value of the current state of knowledge using benchmarking tools; to advance policy recommendations towards standardisation and legislation and formulate guidelines for public procurement; to raise awareness on design for all and assistive technology through specific outreach activities.

ATINFONET
Increasing the effectiveness of AT through Information Management
Alan Turner-Smith *alan.turner-smith@kcl.ac.uk*

The aim of this NoE is to facilitate well-informed, first class research and development of AT with an EU-wide relevance. The focus of ATinfoNet is improved information gathering and dissemination systems. Without an EU-wide pull, such research would most likely be focused on local or national needs. ATinfoNet will promote the exchange of information about AT and its service provision across the EU and beyond. It will

sponsor mobility of researchers, pilot studies and grant applications for research in and development of effective AT information systems. These will include studies of the influence of information and its management on decision-making by AT designers, manufacturers, users and services in different EU countries supported by local, national and/or EU funding.

IMSA
Integrated Mobility and Service Approach
Wolfgang L. Zagler *zw@fortec.tuwien.ac.at*

Europe faces a constant increase of the percentage of old and disabled persons. To raise the life quality of old and disabled persons, tools for mobility and manipulation are required which are cost effective, easy to use and can be integrated into modern IT networked homes and buildings. The objective of IMSA is to create a supply of novel robotic modules for mobility and manipulation tasks to be carried out by disabled or old persons. A component-based approach will lead to standard modules for versatile assistive devices, tailorable for different personal health situations, social needs and individual abilities. Integration of standardised components is the key to provide efficient, reliable and safe systems at reasonable costs. The goal is to become a world-leader in providing modular components (SW/HW tools and machines) for assistive and care systems.

The vision of IMSA is to provide a modular mobility and manipulation support system for old and disabled persons at the lowest cost possible. The components of the system should facilitate or enable personal mobility by providing assistive techniques via intuitive interfaces. Activities of daily living such as moving to other places (including coping with stairs, toilet etc.), handling of objects or delivery of medication, shall be easy and restore the integrity and dignity of the person.

Being a modular system, all components can be assembled in a way and in a combination to respond to individual users needs in the best and most efficient manner. The objective of the Integrated Project IMSA is to design and create a set of components for assisting the mobility, manipulation and communication of old or disabled persons. The component-based approach enables the development of standardised modules for versatile aids, designed for different personal health situations, immediate social needs and individual abilities. Development and integration of standardised components is the key to provide efficient, reliable and safe systems at reasonable costs. While applications for

specific (dis-)abilities will be the first for market entry, the project will later provide fundamental commercial components for general "butler"-like personalised service robot systems.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NAT-C
Nordic Assistive Technology Conference
Lawrence Normie *lnormie@jdc.org.il*

This conference is going to be held between the 19th and 20th of May 2003 in Bella Centret, Copenhagen. The topic of the conference is "AT and Equal Opportunities" with the following sub topics:

1. Arrangement of assistive technology
2. Results and documentation/outcome
3. Assistive technology – focus on product use, safety and development

It is intended that at least one track of the conference shall be in English and the conference proceedings to be translated into English.

AAATE 03 Conference
Gerald Craddock *gcradd@crc.ie*

On behalf AAATE we are delighted to announce that the 7th European Conference for the Advancement of Assistive Technology, "*Shaping the Future*" will be held in Dublin, Ireland, August 31st – 3rd September 2003 (www.atireland.ie/aaate). Dublin is renowned worldwide as a city of writers and literature, home to Joyce, Shaw and many others. As one of the oldest cities in Europe, Dublin's is steeped in history and archaeology, yet combined with a growing modern city

The conference is timely, coinciding with the *European Year of People with Disabilities*, so it is appropriate that we focus unambiguously on the users of assistive technology. With themes centring on *User Centred Approaches, Guidelines & Standards, New Technologies,* and *Interdisciplinary Approaches*, there will be much to debate and discuss. The conference will provide a valuable opportunity for everyone involved in the field of AT to exchange information, to update their knowledge in a rapidly developing field, to meet old friends and hopefully make some new ones. Both the European Commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society, Mr. Erkki Liikanen, and the Employment and Social affairs Commissioner, Mrs. Anna Diamantopoulou, have been invited to participate in the conference.

ASSOCIATION MATTERS

New Board member and auditor

At the AAATE general assembly last November, Erland Winterberg was elected Secretary to the Board. Also, Toril Bergerud Buene was appointed as the new auditor.

Erland Winterberg is Managing Director for the Danish Centre for Technical Aids for Rehabilitation and Education. Formerly he was a project leader at The Danish Muscular Dystrophy Organisation, where he developed wheelchairs for children. He also helped form the Danish Centre of Technology for Disabled Persons (DATCH). He is a representative on several cross-ministry committees, including applied research on elderly people and accessibility to the physical environment. He is also a member of the board of the Danish Knowledge Centre on Ageing and Chairperson for the Copenhagen School of Occupational Therapy.

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