

Editorial

A massive book from the AAATE 2003 conference in Dublin lies on my table, illustrating that the area of Assistive Technology is growing not only in size but also in content. Once again, the conference was recognized for the progress in quality and quantity. Congratulations to the AAATE board and the Dublin organisers with this result.

The ambition of the literal title, “Shaping the Future”, may not have been achieved, but this type of conference ensures that the future is different, better, for many persons in our society. The growth in size and quality of the conferences also reflects similar growth in our journal *Technology and Disability*. My presentation at the conference was about the size (in numbers of pages) of the volumes; they increased from about 160 pages for volume 12 to an estimated 250 pages for volume 15. Like the conference, the journal is also very dependent on the quality and quantity of the input from our members and other authors.

Having now experienced a couple of years of editorship, it is worthwhile making a few comments. The first is about the length of the review procedure: It is long for scientific journals. I haven't looked at the statistics of other journals but the quality process of review takes time. Major time is needed for the review process. The whole process (submission by the author, acknowledgement of receipt, appointment of reviewers from the Editorial Board, or, if none of the right discipline are available, the *ad-hoc* appointment of external reviewers, the review, returning comments, an advice/decision to the authors, the correction by the authors, a check on the corrected version, eventually a re-review, decision, sending to the publisher, correction by professional correctors, typesetting, scheduling in an issue, printing and mailing), takes 6 months but can be even 8 months. We hope that this is well understood by the authors.

Secondly, our journal has a very broad scope and we do have persons with a wide range of expertise on our board. It sometimes happens, however, that in spite of a list of more than 30 people, we cannot find a reviewer on our board. It is now too early to say that we may have to adjust the composition of the reviewers list, but it is something we shall have to consider in the near future. It is good to see that we do have a majority of reviewers coming from different countries (most from the European Union).

Thirdly, the contents of the issues are intended to make a mix of special topics and free paper issues (or even a mix of free papers and a special topic in one issue). In reality, the flow of free papers is such that we have been able to have 7 free paper issues and 5 special issues since the journal was adopted by the AAATE. The special issues were on Rehabilitation Programmes, Assessment of AT, the “best of the RAATE conference”, Prosthetics, and one on Smart Homes. There are many more topics to address. In practice, special issues have a Guest Editor who takes responsibility for a major part of the review process: Communication with the authors, organising a review panel, writing an introduction/editorial and communicating with the Editor-in-Chief, who maintains overall responsibility for the quality of the process. We do have a list of topics to be covered, but please contact us if you have an idea or a proposal for a special issue.

We hope you will find the papers of this issue interesting for you as a professional. It is again a selection of free papers, and a novelty, a book review.

Thijs Soede
Editor-in-Chief