AAATE Newsletter, Spring 2004

FROM THE EDITOR

Lawrence Normie *LNormie@jdc.org.il*

Several weeks ago, I was invited to a seminar on industrial design at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, presented by four internationally renowned designers, respectively from the UK, Germany, South Korea, and Italy.

The S. Korean speaker is the chief designer for a large S.E. Asian industrial conglomerate (construction, telecoms, entertainment electronics, energy, and heavy industry). He presented a rollercoaster survey of a project to develop a public "People Space" in the capital Seoul. What is envisaged is a capacious multilevel structure (as sort of mall) where the public can explore and interact with all manner of prototype ambient intelligence technologies.

The idea is that the People Space is a user test bed that logs information concerning users' behaviour and preferences whilst they interact with the various technologies on display. This data is then to be analysed and the results distilled and incorporated into the features of next generation products and systems for communication, entertainment, and interactive services, etc, eventually to be manufactured and marketed by the company.

As the PowerPoint images describing this blue skies vision rapidly flashed before the eyes of the audience, it became clear to me that accessibility to this facility by people with disabilities and seniors was going to be a serious problem, as accessibility issues patently were not part of the general strategy.

Upon questioning the speaker on this point, he made it plainly and unabashedly clear that the People Space and the future consumer electronic products and services it would engender will take absolutely no account of the needs of either of the above groups, whose welfare is regarded to be the exclusive responsibility of family members and the national health service.

This, then, is the flip-side of this company's mission statement: "In our future world of society and technology, older people and those with disabilities do not matter".

Apparently, this very influential industrial designer is by no means alone in such an exclusion mentality. Barring clear legislation, such as Article 508 in the USA – which ensures compliance (essentially by means of the financial rod) to accessibility requirements by mainstream industry serving public services and infrastructure projects, there really is little incentive to behave very differently than our South Korean friend and his employer.

Since my editorial in the last newsletter on the subject of industry representation in the AAATE, there has been some discussion on the listmail concerning the need for a mainstream industry senior executive on the AAATE board. Though all seem to agree that a "champion" from industry could help to promote AAATE's mission considerably, opinion is fairly equally divided regarding the appropriate method for recruiting such an individual. There are those who recommend direct appointment of such a person, following a search and selection process conducted by the current board members (who have the electorate's mandate to act in its best interest). Others maintain, nevertheless that board positions should be elected through the membership's direct vote, without exception.

Leaving aside due process and procedure, what is fairly clear to me is that without formal links to mainstream industry interests from *within* the Association, the potential impact of AAATE's activities upon Europe's future technological environment is limited.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Harry Knops *h.knops@irv.nl*

Dear AAATE Members, as incoming president of AAATE I first want to thank our past president, Mr. Renzo Andrich, for his excellent work and results that he achieved during his active period as president of our Association.

From my point of view, Renzo stimulated the Association to a much higher profile. It will be a hard job for the current board and myself to live up to these achievements and to continue the strategy started by Renzo.

I am sure that many members of our Association may know my name, but not my background. So I want to introduce myself briefly to give them a better picture. I have been active on the board of AAATE for 6 years, in several different positions. During this time I have had the time to learn from my experienced predecessors Thijs Soede, Gunnar Fagerberg, and Christian Buhler. In my daily work I am responsible for the strategy, programme and project development at the iRv, Institute for Rehabilitation Research in the Netherlands. My background is occupational therapy and I have been involved in research, development, and information provision on assistive technology for more than 15 years.

Now, turning specifically to association matters, of great importance for AAATE is our active participation in two new projects.

The first project is the CWST (Conferences, workshops, Seminars and Tutorials to support e-inclusion) proposal, submitted by Klaus Miesenberger under the 2nd IST call in FP6. This project will support the dissemination and workshop activities of AAATE. This Specific Support Action (SSA) proposes to organise a series of high quality scientific conferences, workshops, seminars, tutorials and meetings to support the objectives of eInclusion and related areas in relation to eAccessibility and Design-for-All in FP6.

The second project is a design-for-all and award, submitted by Christian Bühler, which will culminate to a European award ceremony during the REHA-conference in November 2004.

For the Board it is a challenge to continue to develop and extend the activities within our association. In the coming months we will prepare a work plan for the next two years, which will be presented at the next General Assembly this year.

Also in the next several weeks, we will be having discussions with the European Commission to evaluate the last call for proposals to work towards the improvement of prospects for our members to receive support for projects under FP6. In the next newsletter we will report on these discussions.

The preparation of our next conference in Lille in 2005 is in progress. Due to organisational reasons we had to change the date from 5–8 September 2005 to 19–22 September 2005. So, please make these changes in your diary.

The organisation of the 2004 Workshop is our immediate concern and we want to repeat the call for proposals to organise this workshop in combination with the General Assembly of our organisation.

So, this is my first president's message in the newsletter. I hope that we can co-operate and stimulate each other to strengthen our organisation on the European, but also on the individual membership, level.

All the best for you and your work and do not hesitate to contact me or the other board members.

NATIONAL NEWS

Reports from AAATE national contacts

Denmark
Erland Winterberg *EWI@hmi.dk*

Nordic Assisted Mobility Evaluation (*NAME*)

Mobility is often a prerequisite for activity and participation, and therefore rehabilitation measures that make this possible are of utmost importance. Assistive technology for mobility is a widespread rehabilitation measure, but even so, little is known about the outcomes. One reason is the limited number of outcome assessment instruments, and a literature search has revealed that some studies have been made about the outcomes of mobility devices, but that no standardised instrument is available.

Therefore, a Nordic project developing such an instrument was initiated in March 2003. The objective of the instrument will be to measure outcomes of mobility devices in terms of individually prioritised mobility related activity and participation. The perspective of the instrument is societal, so that results can be used for prioritisation and quality development.

All five Nordic countries participate in the project, and the instrument is developed simultaneously in all five languages and cultures. The basis for development of the instrument is The International Classification of

Functioning (ICF) and studies about outcomes and determinants for outcomes. Furthermore, it is developed using a described methodology that includes participation of users of mobility devices and experts in the field. Furthermore, pilot-testing and reliability and validity studies will take place.

At the time being, the instrument consists of three parts: background information, general mobility and mobility in relation to prioritised activities. The users will be interviewed twice: the first time just before they get their device and again about four months after they have received it, in order to measure change in relation to mobility.

Development of a standardised instrument takes several years, but hopefully a preliminary version will be ready by summer 2005. In addition, it is the intention to use the methodology to develop outcome assessment instruments for other sorts of assistive technology.

IT rucksack for persons with dyslexia as a concept causes interest abroad

Both in Norway (Nonite) and in England (British Dyslexia Association) interest has been expressed concerning the Danish concept of a joint project like IT Rucksack that the Danish Centre has developed and operates in Denmark.

In Norway and England the situation is rather different, regarding which IT technical aids persons with dyslexia are granted and used. This in turn makes job transition between sectors and the provision of optimal guidance and education for various professionals difficult. Partly through the conference "Dyslexia and IT" and, lately, the publication "IT rucksack for persons with dyslexia" it has been possible to unite both of the above objectives in the Folkeskole (municipal primary and lower-secondary school), continuation schools, vocational colleges and further and higher education in a joint project regarding equipment and programmes with the Danish Centre as the central player.

Method for usability tests

It is planned to carry out a usability test of stocking aids, which will lead to the development of a method that can continue in further new usability tests. The testing of stocking aids is as such going to be the first in a number of tests, which are intended to compare products on the Danish market by letting real users test them.

In connection with the testing of stocking aids we are going to develop and refine existing methods for measuring usability regarding assistive technology and use these methods in future usability tests.

A number of stocking aids exist on the Danish market. To find out which stocking aids are suitable for which users, we have carried out two usability tests. One of the tests took place at a hospital in the provinces, where 4 patients, who has had a hip operation, tested 6 stocking aids. The other test took place at a middle-sized municipality, where 8 home helpers tested 4 stocking aids for support stockings. A Danish report is to be written to describe the most important results.

Nordic co-operation regarding better classification of technical aids

The National Institute for technical aids in Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Denmark are to start a project in the spring 2004, to establish a joint Nordic foundation for classification of technical aids in connection with the classification "ISO 9999 Technical aids for disabled persons". The Nordic institutes use the ISO 9999 classification, but they also have experience with a sub-level to this classification consisting of groups and profiles for product-related technical specifications. It is this sub-level that the Nordic institutes wish to make inter-Scandinavian and qualify on the basis of joint guidelines and procedures.

The project is backed by NSH (Nordic Cooperation on Disability) and NUH (Nordic Development Centre for Rehabilitation Technology) and has duration of 2 years. For further information, please contact Thomas Lyhne from the Danish Centre at tly@hmi.dk

Germany
Christian Bühler *cb@ftb-volmarstein.de*

Informal Announcement of AT-DfA Award Scheme

The European Commission has decided to sponsor an Assistive Technology – Design for all award scheme in 2004. The rationale behind the decision is the acknowledgement that technology products and services provide a great potential of solutions to support quality of life and participation of people with disabilities. The objective to attract the interest of a wider audience to this potential of AT and DfA.

The award ceremony for the AT area is planned during REHA 2004 (November, 10–13) in Dusseldorf (Germany).

AAATE is represented by president Harry Knops and other AAATE members. Close cooperation is also in place with EDeAN, EIDD and of course EDF.

This is a great opportunity for our field to gain wider attention. AAATE will keep you updated on the issue.

Israel
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Israeli-Palestinian cooperation leads to establishment of Palestinian network of lending centres for medical equipment and assistive devices

A recently published report documents the five-year partnership of the Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (known as UPMRC), Yad Sarah, and JDC (JDC-Israel, JDC-Brookdale Institute, AJJDC), in developing and establishing a Palestinian network of lending centres for homecare medical equipment and assistive devices.

The network is based upon a model developed in Israel by Yad Sarah, a national homecare support services agency. All three partners are non-governmental organizations. UPMRC and Yad Sarah are service organisations in the fields of health and rehabilitation. JDC is an international social services planning and development organisation, working with vulnerable populations in various parts of the world.

The goals of the lending centres project were: 1) to assist people with disabilities and chronic illnesses to overcome physical barriers to living independently in the community; and 2) to overcome barriers between Palestinians and Israelis.

The Palestinian model was developed to complement the community-based rehabilitation (CBR) system developed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Twenty professionals from the partner organisations worked together to develop the model, operate, and expand it. Thousands have benefited and continue to benefit from the service established in five communities.

The project was made possible through the generous support of the Government of Japan, the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, the Clore Foundation, Dr. Alfred and Isabel Bader, the Welfare Association, and others.

For a copy of the report, please contact Randi Garber at meprog@jdc.org.il.

Italy

New legislation on accessibility of IT-based services

Renzo Andrich *renzo.andrich@siva.it*

The new Law 4/2004 "Provisions to support the access to information technologies for the disabled", enforced on January 17, marks a fundamental step in Italy towards the accessibility of services based on information technologies. It is a major achievement within the national initiatives related to the European Year of People with Disabilities.

The Law applies to any service provider of public nature, namely "... public administrations, economic public agencies, private firms which are licensees of public services, regional municipal companies, public assistance and rehabilitation agencies, transport and telecommunication companies, in which the State has a prevalent shareholding, and ICT services contractors".

In brief, the new law states that all such entities are committed to ensure full accessibility and compatibility with assistive technologies, and to include accessibility in the procurement procedures ("... are obliged, in the event that they are adjudicating bidders which all have submitted similar offers, to give preference to the bidder which offers the best compliance with the accessibility requirements..."). The accessibility requirement also applies to educational and didactic materials produced for all schools and at every level.

Implementation rules, technical regulations and infringement procedures are in preparation stage and will be issued by the Minister of Innovation and Technology within 4 months from the publication of the Law. A full English translation of the Law is available at www.pubbliaccesso.it/biblioteca/normative/law_20040 109_n4.htm, on the website of the National Centre on Informatics in Public Administration.

Details on the new legislation

Pier Luigi Emiliani *p.l.emiliani@ifac.cnr.it*

The law states the general principle that the Italian Republic acknowledges the right of disabled citizens to access all public services and information sources, in compliance with Article 3 of the Italian Constitution. In practice, such law includes:

– the definition of accessibility and assistive technology;

– the application domain, with a list of public institutions and private subjects providing public services;

– the application modalities: in any public contract of procurement or purchasing related to ICT services, the accessibility requirement has the highest priority with respect to any other requirements. In particular, all contracts for the creation or the modification of public web sites are cancelled if they do not provide accessibility;

– the statement that goods are services provided or purchased by private subjects with a public contribution, if devoted to disabled workers or to citizens, must be accessible;

– the statement that the law applies also to all educational materials used in schools of all education levels;

– the definition of the modalities for verification of accessibility to be undertaken upon request by the Italian Governmental Departments to private web sites and application software, in order to issue an accessibility label;

– the definition of the application modalities of the law relating to monitoring central and local public administrations, delivering of assistive technology to disabled citizens, research and development activities on accessibility and assistive technology fields;

– the statement that all public administrations must include the accessibility them in all training programs for their employees;

– the definition of the responsibilities of public employees concerning respect of the law;

– the definition of the technical aspects of the regulation: a technical committee is supposed to develop standards and application criteria, according to European recommendations and to the international state-of-the-art in the field of accessibility of the information technology, with periodical updating of such a regulation.

In order to address the topics related to this general matter, an interdepartmental committee was set up (Permanent Inter-Ministerial Commission for the Use of Information and Telecommunication Technology for the Disabled and Disadvantaged People): Pierluigi Ridolfi (president), Daniela Battisti (Innovation and Technologies), Luisa Corazza (Equal Opportunities), Armanda Bianchi Conti (EU policies), Giovanni Daverio (Welfare), Walter Bergamaschi (Health), Mariolina Moioli (Education and Research), and Gianluca Petrillo (Communications).

To be put in action the law must be completed by two documents: a document with general regulations (for example what are the features to be controlled to assess conformance with law, the type of tests to carried out, who must carry out the tests and so on); a second document including the technical rules (for example the WAI guidelines for Web sites), which is supposed to be periodically revised. These documents are now in preparation.

Finland
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Quality for Assistive Technology Services by Recommendation

Finnish legislation provides good overall prerequisites for the production of assistive technology services. However, according to a national study on the availability of assistive technologies, there was a great deal of variation in policies concerning the provision of technical aids at public health centres and central hospitals.

The national quality recommendation for assistive technology services has been prepared by the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, STAKES, after gathering the opinions of a wide range of professionals and technical-aid users and an expert group. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities launched the recommendation in the summer of 2003.

The aim of the recommendation is to promote equality among technical-aid users and to guide and develop assistive technology services so as to ensure that they are user-oriented. The recommendation is targeted at decision-makers in the municipalities and hospital districts who are working in the field of social welfare and health care, although it can also be useful to persons working in the field of assistive technology or users of assistive technology. The recommendation is relevant to strategic planning, development work, and in the assessing and monitoring of operations.

The recommendation deals with four key themes: (1) assistive technology services are flexible and seamless, (2) practices are client-oriented, (3) the professional skills and knowledge of the staff guarantee the high quality of services and (4) municipal inhabitants must be able to obtain sufficient information about assistive technology services.

STAKES has disseminated the recommendation by giving many lectures in different parts of the country

and writing many articles for a number of journals in the social welfare and health sector. Thirteen out of 21 hospital districts have already begun major development projects involving assistive technology services that incorporate the quality recommendation, whilst the remaining hospitals are in the planning stages of similar projects. The feedback on the recommendation has been positive and constructive.

For further information contact: www.stakes.fi/apudata (recommendations in Finnish and in Swedish), outi.toytari@stakes.fi.

Spain
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Law of Equality, Non-Discrimination and Universal Accessibility for People with Disabilities

In December 2003, there was published in Spain the Law of Equality, Non-discrimination and Universal Accessibility for People with Disabilities. This document is intended to update the legal reference of national scope regarding equality for people with disabilities, regulated up to now by the Law for the Social Integration of People with Disabilities, already 20 years old.

Within the Law, there is the explicit compromise of developing the basic legislation and technical standards for equality through two different kinds of measures: promotional and protective measures, specifically in the following sectors:

a) Information and Communication Society
b) Built environment
c) Transport
d) Goods and services available for the public
e) Relations with the public administration

In particular, we want to underline some actions aimed at supporting the advancement of Assistive Technology:

a) Measures for the innovation and development of technical standards. Article 14 of the Law establishes the support of the public administration to the research in disabilities matters through the R&D&I National Plans, and to the development and revision of standards

b) Elaboration and development of plans and projects for the promotion of accessibility and no discrimination, as established in Article 16. In this sense, the Spanish Council of Ministers has already approved the National Plan of Accessibility, 2004–

2012: a strategic framework of actions to ensure that new built environments, products and services are accessible for all, and those already existing will be properly adapted. (See AAATE Newsletter, autumn 2003)

Apart from the main articles explaining the content of the law, the document states explicit mandates, rules and timing for the actions to be taken in the future. Among them, those regarding the National Plan of Accessibility (4th Final Provision) and the basic conditions of accessibility and non-discrimination for the access to technologies, products and services related with the information society and social media (7 Final Provision).

The Netherlands
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Equal Treatment on the Grounds of Disability or Chronic Illness Act

In the Netherlands, it is prohibited to discriminate against someone because of a disability or chronic illness. This is stipulated in the Equal Treatment on the Grounds of Disability or Chronic Illness Act. This law came into force on 1 December 2003. The right to equal treatment applies first of all at work and in vocational and professional education. In due time, the law will also apply to public transport.

Every person in the Netherlands is entitled to equal treatment. This is a right laid down in the Constitution. Discrimination, on any grounds whatsoever, is prohibited. But the reality is sometimes different. People with a disability or chronic illness often receive unequal treatment. Particularly at work, at school, and on public transport they encounter obstacles. The government wants people with a disability or chronic illness to be able to participate fully in society. That is why the Equal Treatment on the Grounds of Disability or Chronic Illness Act was introduced.

All physical, mental and psychological limitations are covered by the law. Specific disabilities and illnesses are not mentioned on purpose. The law is also intended for people who are discriminated against because someone thinks they have a disability or chronic illness. For more information: www.minvws.nl/images/VWS_Brochure_Wgb_Eng _tcm11-45326.pdf

Promotion on AT outcome assessment

On the 24th of March Roelof Wessels defended his PhD thesis, titled "Ask the user; User perspective in the assessment of assistive technology". The thesis describes the background, development and application of two generic instruments for the assessment of outcome of assistive technology. The first instrument is IPPA (Individually Prioritised Problem Assessment), aiming at measuring effectiveness of AT use from a user's perspective. The second instrument is D-QUEST the Dutch version of QUEST (Quebec User Evaluation of Satisfaction with Assistive Technology) aiming to measure user satisfaction with an assistive device. The development of a validated Dutch translation proved to be an important contribution to the development of the original Canadian instrument.

Both instruments are capable of assessing effects for any type of assistive technology and were developed in an international context, adding to their generic nature.

In the thesis, besides the instruments, the background against which the instrument development should be regarded is described. Also a discussion is provided concerning what the position of these instruments is among available alternatives. A substantial part of the thesis deals with application of both instruments and the evaluation of validity and reliability on the basis of the applications.

The PhD title will be granted by Maastricht University, promoter is Prof Dr W.J.A. van den Heuvel.

For more information please contact the author: roelof.wessels@irv.nl

MEMBERS' NEWS

The EASTIN Project
Renzo Andrich *renzo.andrich@siva.it*

In the autumn 2003 issue of this newsletter, the establishment of the International Alliance of Assistive Technology Information Providers was announced. Now the first "child" of such Alliance came to the light. A proposal submission of the European partners of the Alliance was successful within the eTEN initiative of the European Commission (see www.europa.eu.int/eten) and started on March 1, 2004.

The project is titled EASTIN (European Assistive Technology Information Network). It refers to the creation of an Internet-based trans-European information network on assistive technologies. Building up such a network will result from the joint effort of the major information providers in this field across Europe – each of them already running an information system with national coverage in their own country – in order to achieve a trans-European dimension that capitalises on each other experience and makes the entire repository of information available and usable by any citizen from any European Country.

The EASTIN project is concerned with the market validation stage of such a network (in relation to aspects such as contents relevance, effectiveness, usability, accessibility, interoperability, multilingualism, trans-cultural validity), as the network requires rigorous testing and refinement prior to its launch as a trans-European public service.

The ultimate aim of the network is to provide detailed and comprehensive information on existing AT products, on their availability on the European market, on regulations for public provision and financing, as well as guidance for their appropriate choice and application to solve people's individual needs.

The information services currently participating in the network are:

– SIVA www.siva.it, run by Fondazione Don Carlo Gnocchi Onlus (leader of the EASTIN project) in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Welfare
– DLF Data www.dlf.org.uk, run by the Disabled Living Foundation (Great Britain)
– HMI-Basen www.hmi-basen.dk, run by the Dansk Hjaelpemiddelinstitut (Denmark)
– REHADAT www.rehadat.de, run by the Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft Koeln (Germany)
– Hulpmiddelen Wijzer www.hulpmiddelenwijzer.nl, run by IRV(The Netherlands)
– Catalogo de Ayudas Técnicas www.catalogo-ceapat.org, run by CEAPAT (Spain)

The project will last 18 months and the EASTIN network will be launched in September 2005.

FNB launches nationwide daisy services in The Netherlands

Maarten Verboom *MVerboom@fnb.nl*

On the 1st of January 2004, FNB launched a full scale Daisy Book service in the Netherlands. The service includes leisure books, periodicals, educational materials and talking music scores. By this remarkable feat FNB becomes the first talking book provider in the world to shift all talking services to Daisy.

Serving a total of around 25,000 costumers, FNB uses an on-demand lending service. All CDs are personalised by name and address of the customer. A bar code uniquely identifies title and reader and through a scanning process of the returned books the system is prompted to "burn" and deliver a new title to the customer. A wish list with customers' demands is kept in the central distribution server.

Updates of title lists and direct title requests from customers are handled through our customer services located at 5 call centres throughout the Netherlands.

Newspaper and magazines are sent out according to subscriptions. Four hundred different talking periodicals are delivered to around 17,000 costumers

Around 20,000 customers are now in possession of a Daisy book player. Through social and health services, the cost for the player is refundable. A national network of volunteers helps people to get acquainted with the player. Many requests for this at-home service are being met.

Last year, in less than 8 months, around 30.000 titles were successfully converted to Daisy 2.02 format. During the first half of 2004, a remaining 22,000 titles will be transferred to an MP3 digital archive. These are on the whole older titles that are less in demand. Driven by customer demands, a system will be created to convert requested titles from the MP3 archive to the daisy book distribution server. In this way several thousands of titles will be added to the already existing collection of 30,000.

Newly created Daisy titles are being made every day in more then 40 studios throughout the country. There is capacity to create annually 1,800 new leisure books and 1,200 educational titles. Also 400 newspapers and magazines are produced in Daisy each year, amounting to 9,045 unique editions with an average playtime of 80 minutes.

In the first 3 weeks around 80,000 CDs have been sent out. When the service is complete and fully running, a daily capacity of 7,000 CDs will be reached. We estimate to send out 1.2 million CDs a year. All this is accomplished through the use of 6 CD burning stations, each with 8 burners and one printer. There is no manual intervention required to move the CD from the burning shelf to the print shelf. Six robotic arms take care of the entire process. The whole operation takes place in a small sized room of around 30 square meters.

After many years of preparing and working diligently together with the Daisy Consortium, FNB is proud to be able to present the Daisy service on such a wide scale to so many people. For more information: Daisy Consortium site: www.daisy.org

ASSOCIATION MATTERS

The new AAATE Website is online!
Renzo Andrich *renzo.andrich@siva.it*

Following to agreements with ICS FORTH in Heraklion, Greece, the new AAATE website is now online.

This is an important achievement, that marks a step forwards in the association life! Our website www.aaate.net includes a public section, freely accessible by anybody, and a password-protected section composed of various virtual communities such as all members (communication to and among all registered AAATE members), special interest groups (only for members interested on specific topics), and Board (with tools needed for the work of the Board).

In the public section, information can be found on the mission, the structure, and the governance of our association. The public section also contains news, a repository of documents intended for external dissemination (e.g., position papers), announcements of key events, and facilities for on-line registration either as AAATE members or for the restricted section of the website.

All members are strongly recommended to register in the website, as the bulk of AAATE communication will be increasingly "paperless". To do so, just connect to www.aaate.net and click on "Join us!" for instructions.

The restricted section contains several powerful networking features (chat, message board, email, etc.) that make the original AAATE discussion list (aaate@siva.it) no longer required. The old list, therefore, will be closed at the end of March. We are grateful to Fondazione Don Gnocchi Onlus for having offered this facility at no cost – that has shown to be so useful so many times – for seven years.

As chair of the Publication Committee, I would like to remind again that AAATE is our Association; thus feel the website as your website, as you have your Journal, your Newsletter, your Conferences, your activities; any contribution by Members, including constructive criticism, will be highly welcome and appreciated.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

In this section, members are invited to submit announcements concerning meetings and events in the AT field. In addition, FAST UK (www.fastuk.org) provides a comprehensive, annotated, and long-range listing of

forthcoming national and international events relating to AT and allied fields.

VDR Rehabilitation Science Conference
March 8–10 2004, www.vdr.de

International Seminar Development of Human Resources in Europe Leading to an Inclusive Society
29th–30th of April, 2004

The aim of this Seminar (organized by ICTA Europe Rehab International and Access Centre, Technical University of Košice, KI&BME, Mechanical Engineering Faculty, Technical University of Košice) is to enhance exchange of information to raise chances for further participation in transnational projects relating to e-inclusion and the general inclusion of citizens of varying abilities in the use of ICT – communication, computing and software technologies. In addition, the seminar will satisfy the IST priority of the 6th Framework programme as it will promote and enhance networking and joint actions of national and European initiatives in research and innovation.

The project will also be relevant to the objectives of the IST priority as it will encourage applied IST research addressing e-inclusion and e-learning,

The seminar is closely related to the Socrates Grundtvig project ATTTRAIN – Assistive Technology Consultant/Advisor Training Development and Delivery.

Conference areas:

– Life-long education for professionals working with people with disabilities
– Information and communication for disadvantaged people
– Assistive technologies for handicapped people
– Access centres, sheltered workshops, social advisory offices

Languages: English, Slovak, Czech
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