

ICEVI European Newsletter

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ICEVI-Europe Committee in Dublin, 28-29 April 2006

After the elections in Chemnitz in August 2005 the European Committee has held a second meeting, which took place in Dublin at St Joseph's School for the visually impaired. During the business meeting in Chemnitz, St. Joseph's put themselves forward to be host of the next ICEVI-Europe conference in 2009. A part of the agenda consisted of visiting several venues for the conference and discussing the possibilities for the conference.

Although further appointments have to be made to discuss the conference fee and facilitating the supported places, a positive decision could have been made and with confidence we expect the conference to be excellent.

Another important item which has been discussed is the formal status of ICEVI-Europe. In the first meeting it was decided to transform ICEVI-Europe into an association. In Dublin the articles of association, which are based on the constitution of ICEVI-World, were discussed. This constitution was accepted. Most important items are:

- Composition of the board members of ICEVI-Europe
- Administration of members
- Appointment of the contact persons per country and the approval of the

proposals in the business meeting every four years

- Voting rights
- The general meeting by mail each year for approval of the financial situation
- In order to facilitate ICEVI-Europe, it was decided to ask the corporate members for a higher contribution

The articles of association will be published on the website and will be discussed during the regional meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

It was decided to have the newsletter printed once a year - in 2006 this will be in October / November. Changing the newsletter from printed to digital takes time and also gives the opportunity to actualize the addresses.

The next meeting of ICEVI-Europe will be in November in Athens. The members of the board will give their attention to the future; developments in society and the meaning of this for people with a visual impairment and the education and rehabilitation of people with a visual impairment and of course ICEVI-Europe. Hopefully this will lead to the theme of the conference in 2009.

*Hans Welling
Chairman ICEVI-Europe*

A Review of Switchit Maker 2 By Sally Mair, Scotland

I've been using Switchit Maker 2 in my class of MDVI pupils (Visual impairment with complex additional support needs) for a term now. It is a simple programme which can be used in a variety of ways...we are still experimenting! We've found it easy to use and very straightforward. It comes with plenty of resources: pictures, videos, clipart, sounds, Rebus and PCS symbols as well as easy access to our own resources and to the internet. There is also a built in selection of sample activities which gave a good starting point for developing our own. This bank of ready made resources saved a lot of time and meant we could get straight into using the software. Any activities can be easily adapted and edited into something tailor made for individual class pupils.



I found the programme to be extremely useful for several reasons. In particular, from the point of view of visual impairment:

- It can be used as basic story telling software which is accessed by switch, touch screen or intelliboard as well as the more conventional methods (mouse, keyboard). It does not depend on the user having vision.
- It has clear colours with interchangeable background colours which can be tailor-made for individual pupil needs.
- There is a built in delay which means switching before a page is finished is ignored thus reducing persistent clicking of a switch.
- The built in delay means switching is clear and deliberate.
- There is the option to have page numbers etc turned off which means that there is a clutter free display. Very important for pupils with visual impairment.
- Speech is in a voice known to the pupils, either their own or a member of the class team. Thus avoiding any confusion or distraction caused by having to 'tune in' to either a computer generated voice or one which they do not know.
- It can be used as a simple 'juke box' of a pupil's favourite songs or music.

We have used a variety of different resources with the programme. We have a mini-disk recorder in school which we can take out with us to record sounds when we go on educational outings. When we get back to school, we simply download pictures from our digital

camera, import them to Switchit Maker 2, add the .wav sounds from the minidisk and we have a ready to use activity which can be sent home using the free player included, as well as used in class as a memory aid or diary activity. Having made an activity once, it can then be duplicated and quickly adapted to give individual pupils their own personalised version.

Pages for the activities can be printed out, either into a book which can be laminated, or into title pages which can then be used as a directory for the pupils allowing them to make choices about which they would like to use, these can be adapted into large print with or without text, and accessed by those pupils with useful vision. They can also be adapted tactilely for those using non-sighted methods.

The folders which Switchit Maker uses to store activities can be renamed either for pupils in the class, or with labels for the type of activity stored there. When using activities with a pupil, you can either have one activity set to repeat, or load up 2 or 3 at the same time and they will run one after the other.

I have involved pupils in putting together our programmes, to the extent of choosing what order they would like pages to come in, what sounds they would like with each page and what colours they would like (where that is applicable). A more able group would be able to be much more involved in the production of their own diary or story activity.

Those who are able to do so, enjoy recording their own voice or sounds, and those less able to make their own sounds can still be involved by using switches to play sounds into the microphone via media player.



To summarise, Switch it Maker 2 is a simple to use programme, with a great range of features which allow it to be used in lots of ways. It can be accessed by a variety of methods and can be used to create an activity in a quick half hour between classes if necessary. The appearance is clear and uncluttered and it can be as complex as you need. Very teacher friendly and with its sample activities ready to go!

*Sally Mair
A teacher at the Royal Blind School,
Canaan Lane Campus in Edinburgh,
Scotland*

In-Sight and Tactual Profile for sale! Two instruments now available in English versions

Visio, National Foundation for the Visually Impaired and Blind in the Netherlands, receives many requests from people working in the field all over the world for two instruments:

In-Sight: a diagnostic instrument designed to further the development of visual functioning in partially sighted children (six to twelve years of age) who are developing normally. In-Sight has been structured around twelve categories of visual functioning. These categories have been divided into items increasing in difficulty. The price of this instrument is €1,299.00, excl. 6% VAT and transport costs (incl. VAT €1,377.00).

Tactual Profile: an observation instrument for charting the tactual functioning of severely visually impaired children (from birth to sixteen years old). The instrument has been described in broad terms as constituting a "structured observation". Recently, research was carried out and the instrument was found to be valid. The price of this instrument is €1,794.00, excl. 6% VAT and transport costs (incl. VAT €1,902.00).

Special brochures are available. If you are interested, please e-mail your contact information to:

- <mailto:in-zicht@visio.nu>,
Attn Ms Els Vervaart
- <mailto:in-zicht@visio.nu>,
Attn Ms Anneke Blok

In-Sight and Tactual Profile.

Visio has therefore prepared English versions of

In-Sight and Tactual Profile!



We will contact you within five days following receipt of your message.

*Nicole de Lat
Visio Communications*



ADBN: 6th European Seminar in the Netherlands

Visio, National Foundation for the Visually Impaired and Blind in the Netherlands, is organising the 6th European Seminar of the Acquired Deafblindness Network (ADBN). This seminar takes place from 1-5 November 2006 in the Conference Resort and Hotel Meerwold in Groningen. The theme is: The art of communications - creating solutions on the individual, societal and organisational level in the world of acquired deafblindness. Several plenary lectures will take place and the seminar will have a total of 16 workshops, all related to the theme. Besides the program, the co-ordinating committee is organising other activities, related to acquired deafblindness.

The ADBN is recognised by Deafblind International (DbI) and was established in 1989.

Its aim is to create and support a network of people who are involved in the world of acquired deafblindness. For this reason, a seminar has been held every two years in a different European country since 1994. Visio is a national foundation in The Netherlands and supports visually impaired and blind people (including people with multiple disabilities) in their desire to live, learn and work independently.

More information and registration:

W adbn2006.visio.org,
E <mailto:deafblind@visio.nu>,
T +31 (0)55 580 06 96 and
F +31 (0)55 580 08 90.

*Nicole de Lat
Visio communications*

ProVipTrain

Professionals for Visually Impaired Persons Training Course

Montclair Institute (France) is currently the general co-ordinator in the European project named 'ProVipTrain' (**P**rofessionals for **V**isually **I**mpaired **P**ersons Training Course), with a partnership composed of European specialised institutes for the visually impaired (Germany, Poland, The Netherlands, Denmark and France).

This project is registered under the Leonardo Programme of the European

Commission, within the field of vocational training.

The purpose of this project is to set up a training course in the field of visual impairment for professionals who are working or are about to work, with the visually impaired.

Indeed nowadays a lot of Institutes and Services are appealing to professionals working in various business

sectors (computer, administration, communication, literature and so on) and therefore, due to their specific skills, that population needs a global knowledge in the field of visual impairment.

This training course intends to give to skilled workers, essential basic knowledge in four major topics:

Low Vision:

- To introduce diseases of the eye, the anatomy of the eye, functional vision
- To introduce the optical devices for partially sighted people.

Mobility:

- For blind people : basic knowledge of how to guide a blind person
- For partially sighted people: what are the abilities required to recognize and identify obstacles which will stand in the way of the partially sighted person

Psychosocial aspects:

- To know how to show visually impaired people a way,
- To be able to give them explanations, according to spatial data, so that they can get around safely and independently.
- Implementation of a code of 'how to behave, so as to be able to act close to the visually impaired' = a know-how reference.
- Elementary knowledge relating to acceptance of disability, attitude and reactions of the visually impaired.

Braille and technical devices:

- To introduce the Braille system and the principles of technical devices
- How to use the ICT for partially sighted and blind people

This training course is taking place during two weeks, for 10 days. The follow-up of it has been set up in a logical order to take into account the specific knowledge presented in each module.

Having started on October 2004, the partnership has now carried out the training course in these four modules. A test will be set up in April 2006 with the different countries of the partnership, which is going to give feedback on the methodology and the contents of the course.

In each country, the training course is going to be disseminated according to the circumstances of each partner. In France, the training course will be integrated into the training plan of FISAF (National Federation for the integration of blind and deaf people in France), to communicate and inform the target group as well as possible. The national framework of this federation enables the information to be passed to other partners like professionals in the field of Public Education who need information on visual impairment with regard to the integration of blind and partially sighted children.

You can get more information on www.proviptrain.org.

Info for ICEVI newsletter from Mike McLinden University of Birmingham

1. Programmes of study update. The University of Birmingham is currently developing a new programme in visual impairment for lecturers in colleges of Further Education. The programme is being developed in partnership with the RNIB, with funding from the Department for Education and Science. The planned start date is April 2007. Further details will be available through the School of Education, University of Birmingham website in Autumn 2006.

2. New editors of the British Journal of Visual Impairment - Steve McCall, Graeme Douglas and Mike McLinden are to take on the role, as editors of the BJVI - first edition they will have responsibility will be May 2007. All enquiries re the journal can now be directed to:
<mailto:edu-bjvieditors@adf.bham.ac.uk>.

Steve McCall and Mike McLinden will be attending the ICEVI conference in Kuala Lumpur and can discuss planned arrangements for the journal with colleagues then.

3. Resources - A new video on Moon is now available for general distribution. The title is 'Routes to Literacy Through Moon' - cost is £10 and includes a handbook to accompany the video. Further details from Jennifer Whittaker:
<mailto:j.r.whittaker@bham.ac.uk>.

A new website on Moon literacy was launched in 2006. This site provides useful information on the Moon code, available resources and relevant publications - address is:
www.moonliteracy.org.uk.

New book on visual impairment:
Olga Miller and Adam Ockelford (2005)
Visual Needs (SEN)
Continuum Publishing
ISBN: 0826478387