



to support EU eInclusion and eAccessibility

CONFERENCE

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Assistive Technology From Virtuality to Reality
8th European Conference For the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe



Information Society
Technologies

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2. Background

The Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE) is organising its 8th every 2 years a conference. This biannual conference is an opportunity for people to discuss and exchange new developments, trends and research in the field of assistive technology. Following successful conferences held in Ireland, Slovenia, Germany, Greece, Portugal, Sweden and Netherlands, over 200 papers were selected and published at the last AAATE conference in 2003. This opportunity to exchange expertise are essential for those working in the AT field.

AAATE's membership has grown significantly since its formation. At the moment AAATE has about 250 members from almost all European countries and countries throughout the world. Its sister organisations are RESNA (North America), ARATA (Australia) and RESJA (Japan). With these sister organisations an agreement is signed to co-operate and stimulate international activities in the field of AT. This agreement known as the Tokoshima agreement is the basis for future international co-operation in this fields.

For many years an important stimulating role is operated by the European commission. Special the e-inclusion unit is the major point of action. This stimulation of R&D and developments of the sector is an important issue to discuss and present within the AAATE community. Therefore the tradition of organising a special session for presenting EU developments relevant for the sector is an important activity of the CVWST project within the AAATE conference.

3. The AAATE conference 2005

Host

The AAATE conference 2005 was organized by IFRATH, a group of academic laboratories, user associations and companies which have decided to pool their expertise and create synergy for promoting technological and methodological research related to various disabilities.

The variety of assistive technology implies a multi-disciplinary approach which requires dialogue with other research domains: medicine, psychology, ergonomics, sociology, economics, etc. IFRATH is a network which enables its members to be in touch as many people as possible in all the relevant fields. There are strong links between research and industrial players so that technologies can be matched to users with special needs.

Venue

The Henri Warembourg Faculty of Medicine, University of Lille 2

At the heart of the Paris-London-Brussels triangle and thanks to the TGV high speed train network, the motorway network and the Channel Tunnel, Lille is located less than 350km from 6 European capitals. As a cosmopolitan, eclectic, cross-border European megalopolis, the Lille metropolitan area is home to more than one million inhabitants. Resolutely turned towards the future, Lille (a city with a tumultuous and eventful history) has nevertheless proudly kept its traditions, its roots and its identity. As well as being a city of art and history, a conference venue, a university city and a major economic, financial and administrative centre, Lille is no less a tourist destination offering its visitors and inhabitants a range of entertainment activities and an intense cultural life. The city invites you to discover its many museums, monuments and historic buildings as well as numerous sports and leisure facilities.

Lille's ever-growing student population and educational demands have necessitated the construction of a new university building - the Henri Warembourg Faculty of Medicine. This elegant, modern edifice, located on the southern edge of Lille's vast university hospital campus, bears out the Lille Faculty of Medicine's dual determination to maintain continuity whilst introducing change. The new complex is fully equipped for welcoming people with special needs.

Themes

The subtitle of the conference is "from Virtuality to Reality". It focuses on the bridge which leads from the perceived user need to the actual end use of the assistive device.

New Technologies

New technologies emerge daily. How can they be applied in the Assistive Technology field?

Technology Transfer

With all these technologies and developments available, why do many never reach the market?

Socio-Economic Aspects

Within a free-trade Europe, assistive technology products experience differing degrees of success. What about policies in the different European countries? Is it convergence or divergence?

Human-Centred Considerations

How can we consider user needs, how can we evaluate them and what is the role of the user in the development of an assistive device?

Areas

Access to the Information Society
Assistive Technology for Children
Assistive Technology for Mobility

Assistive Technology for Older Adults
Assistive Technology for Restoration and Enhancement of Function
Assistive Technology for the Activity of Daily Living
Assistive Technology in Education & Training
Assistive Technology in the Work Environment
Assistive Technology in the Workplace
Augmentative and Alternative Communication
Changes in Social Systems and Service Delivery
Community Networks
Design for All / Universal Design
Development of Assistive Technology for Independent Living
Education and training in Assistive Technology
European Infrastructure in the field of Assistive Technology
Improving Quality of Assistive Technology
Industrial Competitiveness and Technology Transfer
Issues of Human/Machine Interaction
Socio-economic Evaluation
User Empowerment

4. The CWST support of the AAATE conference 2005 in Lille

For AAATE as partner in the CWST project it is of major importance that the bi-annual conference is of good quality and within optimal participation of all members and related target groups in Europe. In the preparation phase of the conference the CWST project decided to support the AAATE conference 2005. The following objectives were formulated for this activity:

- Support the AAATE conference and the participation of the relevant target audience.
- Support International cooperation between AAATE, RESNA, RESJA, ARATA
- Create awareness among young researchers of the AT field and the AAATE
- Exchange information and knowledge about European developments in R&D funding

In the following part of this report a description is given about the activities of the CWST project during the AAATE conference in Lille 2005 related to the objectives formulated in the beginning of this chapter.

Support the AAATE conference and the participation of the relevant target audience.

The activities that support this objectives are located in the CWST project under management activities. CWST supported the conference in more general issues by:

- Providing mailing lists from RESNA, Resja , ARATA to local organiser for sending out announcements.
- Discussing the outline of the program
- Selecting keynote speakers
- Visiting the venue and discussing the accessibility of the venue, presentations and documents
- Sending out announcements and communication by the AAATE office in Denmark

For these activities it is difficult to judge the outcome and effect of this intervention through CWST project budget. It is clear that the budget is used for travel and stay of AAATE officials to support the development of the conference. In CWST terms it is part of the management budget for the conference activities.

Support International cooperation between AAATE, RESNA, RESJA, ARATA

To meet this objective an round table meeting/workshop was organised during the conference. The participants in this event were: AAATE board, AAATE pat presidents, Representatives from RESJA, Resna, ARATA.

Each of the representative gave a brief overview about the developments in the field of AT in their particular country and the developments within the organisations.

The result of this round table can be defined as:

- Update of the Tokoshima agreement with:
- Exchange of policy documents (position papers, constitutions and organisation plans)
- Exchange of international developments in field of AT and more specific about R&D

The CWST project support this activity by providing budget for meeting rooms, copy of documents and catering services

Create awareness among young researches of the AT field and the AAATE

The board of AAATE discussed how to interest young researcher in the field of AT and The AAATE. The board decided to organise a special meeting for new participants at the conference. We called it New comers reception. At this event a presentation was given by the board of AAATE about the association and a presentation about major developments in the AT market. At this event 76 newcomers participated. From this group 15 persons immediately send in an application for AAATE membership.

The CWST project support this activity by providing budget for meeting rooms, copy of documents and catering services.

Exchange information and knowledge about European developments in R&D funding

During the AAATE conference the CWST project organised a special sessions about:

- Access to the information society on assistive technology
 - Ima Placencia : Accessibility requirements for public procurement of products and services in the ICT domain
 - Per Blixt : Policy developments on eAccessibility and eInclusion

More than 150 persons joint this sessions. It was very well appreciated that an update of EU developments in our field is presented and a discussion could be held about this.

The CWST project support this activity by providing budget for Conference fees for EU officials meeting rooms, copy of documents and catering services.

Conclusion:

The CWST project organised activities to support the conference, the AAATE and EU to achieve some special results at the conference 2005 in Lille. These results can be summarized as:

- Update of the Tokoshima agreement with:
 - Exchange of policy documents
 - Exchange of international developments in fiels of AT and more specific about R&D
- Awareness of the existence of AAATE among young researchers presenting their work in Lille. (15 new members)
- Announcement of developments in Europe:
 - Update of information about 6th framework
 - 7th framework programme
 - Call for proposals
 - Tenders relevant for the sector

Without the interventions of CWST these events would not have had the results, outcome and performance as describe above.

Not only these results were acieve but also follow up will be given to these activities in near future:

- Meeting of AAATE with sister organisations at RESNA conference 2006
- New member to the Tokoshima agreement from Singapore
- Development of young researchers award at AAATE 2007 in San Sebastian
- Meeting with einclusion unit to stimulate input from the AAATE sector

5. Budget overview

In the table below an overview is presented how the CWST budget was used in relation to the activities at the AAATE conference in 2005.

Activity	CWST Budget allocation
General preparation by package	€ 350
International meeting	
<i>Meeting room</i>	€ 500
<i>Administration</i>	€ 100
<i>Catering (25 participants)</i>	€ 1250
New comers meeting	
<i>Meeting room</i>	€ 500
<i>Administration</i>	€ 150
<i>Catering (75 participants)</i>	€ 1750
EU session	
<i>Conference fee 3 persons</i>	€ 1800
<i>Meeting room</i>	€ 1000
<i>Administration</i>	€ 100
Total	€ 7500

6. Lessons learned

In the process of organising the conference 2005 in Lille some mistakes were made. These mistakes had direct influence on the number of participants (192) that participated in the conference. Also the political situation had influence on the number of participants from the US and Canada.

For future conferences we have to pay more attention to the following aspects:

- Split responsibilities within AAATE for the conference and the CWST project(In Lille it was in one hand)
- Communicate more efficient about conference language
- Organise national events in cooperation with the conference. (to get more local people at the conference)
- Use the exhibition more as showcase than as resource of money
- CWST project has to make written agreements with the organiser of the conference about activities to be organised and the responsibilities for this.