



# Newsletter

IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section

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**The IFLA/LBS Newsletter is issued twice a year: Spring and Autumn.**

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The Newsletter is available in Braille and diskette, the smart-Group and IFLANet,

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## **Report of the Standing Committee meeting Copenhagen, 8-9 March 2006**

Thanks to the hospitality of Elsebeth Tank and her colleagues, the Standing Committee's midyear meeting 2006 took place at the Danish Library for the Blind (DBB) in Copenhagen. The temperatures outside the building were well below freezing but inside members received a very warm welcome. In addition to our meeting, we enjoyed a fascinating full day tour of the library which has thoroughly and imaginatively embraced digitisation in all respects.

The Standing Committee meeting itself was chaired very efficiently by the newly appointed chair, Johan Roos. There were twelve members in attendance and one observer, Benedikte Nes, from the Norwegian Library for the Blind.

Much of the business focused on plans for the future programme, chiefly the Section's contribution to the WLIC conference in Seoul in August 2006. The Section's programme, to be held on Tuesday 22 August, is entitled "How to make your website accessible: issues and experiences". There will be speakers from Korea, Japan, Sweden, Finland and UK discussing best practice and showing examples of websites and useful tools. At our joint request, this session has been scheduled to follow the session of the Libraries Serving Disadvantaged People Section on library services for people with dyslexia.

Keun Hae Youk also distributed the programme for an unofficial satellite meeting organised by the Korean Braille Library for libraries for the blind, which will be held in Seoul prior to WLIC. There were preliminary discussions about the Section's conference in Grahamstown in 2007.

Members were pleased that the Ulverscroft Foundation had awarded the Section a further GBP20,000 for a third round of best practice awards in 2006. Applications were due by the end of March and the award winners will be announced in April.

It was reported that the Section's IDLS guidelines had been published by IFLA as professional report no. 90. Progress reports were also given on other IFLA funded projects, namely Project START, led by FNB, that is investigating performance measures; also a new project to examine case studies of governance and funding of libraries for the blind worldwide. This latter project had also obtained significant funding from the British Library and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, England. The Section will also participate in a collaborative divisional project on library services for babies and toddlers.

Johan Roos reported that IFLA's 2004 and 2005 resolutions on accessibility had had two outcomes so far. One was that the World Blind Union had been asked for advice on the accessibility of presentations. Secondly, IFLA is working to make its website more accessible, a

development that was welcomed by everyone.

The Section is also campaigning with the World Blind Union to extend the use of copyright exceptions and to permit inter-library loans. WBU activity in this area is expected to step up later in 2006.

There was a lively debate about cataloguing standards and the need to work with and influence mainstream systems and standards. There were also useful reports from EUAIN, WSIS, the DAISY Consortium and WBU's Copyright Committee. Joint projects with the DAISY Consortium were moving rather slowly due to lack of resources but everyone agreed that the "federated search" would be a valuable building block to further progress.

On the administrative side, the Section had submitted its self- evaluation as part of IFLA's strategic review and awaits news of the outcome. Administrative funds available this year to cover Section expenses are very small, a mere 325 Euros.

Membership of the Section remains at 79 members. Since the last election, there have been two resignations from the Standing Committee, leaving 18 members. One vacant post was filled by co-option of Benedikte Nes, who was cordially welcomed. Dick Tucker had retired from the Force Foundation and was thanked for his past contribution to the Section, both as a member and as Secretary. Further information can be found in the draft minutes of the meeting which are available on the Section's

smartgroup. To join the smartgroup or make any other enquiries, please contact Helen Brazier, Secretary, [helen.brazier@nlbuk.org](mailto:helen.brazier@nlbuk.org) or Lina Kouzi, Information Officer, [lina.kouzi@ncbi.ie](mailto:lina.kouzi@ncbi.ie)

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## **Dates for your diary**

17-18 August 2006: Korea Braille Library workshop, Seoul

19-25 August 2006: WLIC 2006, Seoul

19 August 2006: Libraries for the Blind Section Standing Committee meeting I, WLIC, Seoul

22 August 2006: Libraries Serving Disadvantaged People Section's programme on library services to dyslexic patrons and Libraries for the Blind Section's programme on how to make your website accessible

25 August 2006: Libraries for the Blind Section Standing Committee meeting II, WLIC, Seoul

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## **DAISY -- Reading the Future**

The DAISY Consortium celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. There will be several celebrations, but the Swedish library of Talking Books, where it all started, also arranged the first jubilee conference on 30-31 march, in Stockholm, Sweden.

George Kerscher, Secretary-General of the Consortium, said in his introductory speech that it was important to maintain a culture of collaboration, to make it possible that the technological process, the development of software, and in the future also talking books via a Global Library, can be shared by all.

With 13 members, more than 40 associate members and 15 friends, there is much development work to share, and hopefully in the future there will be even more members, Kerscher said. He noted two important new developments in this regard, namely that the membership fee for developing countries will be lowered and that a new category of friends -- publishers, educators etc -- has been established.

The programme was structured in terms of five subject areas. This account follows that structure.

### **Exchange -- both of knowledge and talking books**

Lynn Leith, of the CNIB Library, urged the audience to use the DAISY Knowledge network, (DKN). She said that if everyone contributed by providing information regarding projects and development, unnecessary duplication of work can be avoided. New member organisations and colleagues can use the DKN to look up basic instructions.

George Kerscher also shared his vision of the Global Library, referring to the concepts of federated search, interlibrary loans and also the sale of DAISY books. Copyright seems

currently to be the greatest obstacle to this ideal, as different countries have different copyright laws. In order to cope with this problem, the DAISY Consortium is cooperating with the WBU and IFLA, in order to contribute to the creation of public opinion against National copyright laws creating barriers between countries.

Representatives of the five Northern European talking book libraries gave presentations concerning current DAISY-related developments in those countries, as well as their experiences of the transition from analogue to DAISY recordings, the automation of production processes, and resulting changes to their lending practices.

### **Streaming DAISY and downloading**

Daniel Ainasoja, from Finland, gave a presentation of an interesting project he is managing. Library clients can download digital newspapers automatically in their homes to a "box". The system is called Pratsam and the box functions like a small and very easily manageable computer. By creating an individual profile, a user can read his or her favourite newspaper as soon as the "box" is opened each day. Besides the newspaper with which the reader is automatically presented, there are however additional newspapers to which access is also possible.

Tatsu Nishizawa from Plextor, demonstrated Net-Plextalk, a network based player for streaming

DAISY. In Japan there is a net-library where one can log in and select the book to which one would like to listen. This service is nowadays the most popular way of receiving talking books in Japan, and it is used more frequently now than cassettes or CD's.

Jari Mäkinen from Nokia described the advantages of using the compression format AMR-WB+ for reading streamed content and for the downloading of books to mobile phones that don't have much storage capacity.

### **The future talking book player**

Both Blake Erickson, Telex Communications, and Ivan Lagcé, HumanWare, agreed that the next generation of talking book players would use flash memory that would replace CD's. As all borrowers are not computer literate, there is a need for simple players that can be automatically and wirelessly connected to a server from which readers can download the books they want. Such a player is being developed by HumanWare and it is envisaged as the next generation talking book player that will be used in the USA. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically handicapped (NLS) of the United States Library of Congress will start to replace the present 4 track cassette players with such devices in 2008.

Stephan Knecht, from a company called Bones in Switzerland, demonstrated a player with a memory card and built-in speaker. It is no larger than a credit card, weighs 50 grams, is 4 centimetres high and can

be loaded with 10 hours of narration. The user can insert bookmarks, and the player also has a Sleep function. One can jump between several books and newspapers. A player of this kind, with basic DAISY functionality, will cost 289 Euros and it will cost 349 Euros for a model with advanced functions, permitting, for example, the recording of notes.

Another product that was demonstrated to the audience was a reading programme, *Lexilaeser*, for persons with learning disabilities, developed in Sweden by Dolphin/Labyrinten. With the help of this software it is possible to create a DAISY book with synthetic speech from a Word document.

### **DAISY as basis for publishing**

Markus Gylling, from TPB Sweden, analysed the evolution of the digital library at three developmental levels. At the highest level, XML-structured documents are used for all kinds of production, braille, audio, electronic text, large print. The user can then choose which media he or she wants to read.

This structuring can then also be used for the whole book production chain. It is neither cost efficient nor time saving that publishing firms first print the ink-print books that later on must be narrated/recorded, scanned to braille and large print, which are all separate production processes, involving separate marketing costs and sales methods. Gylling emphasised the need for a single original in XML format that can be used in order to create different

output options on-demand where no storage space is needed. Being structured according to the DAISY standard, the original will be even more useful to publishers than it is at present.

Cooperation with publishers has started in several countries. Stephen King from the RNIB, UK, told the audience about the efforts of his organisation to make it possible to receive "the same book, at the same price at the same time". The very first book in respect of which this was achieved in the UK, was *Harry Potter and the half Blood Prince*, which was published on 1 July 2005 in print, large print and braille and which was launched on CD in a DAISY version as soon as during August. For once the accessible formats were not one step or six months behind, as is usually the case.

The next step will be to publish *the DAISY book for all*. The very first one is to be launched in May this year. The printed book *Blindness and the visionary* by John Coles will consist of one disc containing files for large print, DAISY with synthetic speech, electronic text, a common sound format and a DAISY human narration.

Maarten Verboom informed the audience that FNB in the Netherlands received files from publishers, which are converted into XML and later on when there is a request from users, are printed out in Braille, supplied as DAISY with synthetic speech, or as electronic text. In the future the role of FNB will be to advise publishers as to how they can make their editing accessible to print disabled persons.

FNB also is a partner in the EU network for accessible information, (EUAIN).

TPB Sweden, likewise, receives files from the publishers of textbooks, that are used for the production of study materials for university and college students. Joel Håkansson, a software developer at TPB, has created a program which converts the text into XML from the format of the layout programme used by the publishers.

### **Recording with synthetic speech**

Per Sennel, of the Norwegian Huseby Kompetensesenter, which produces textbooks that are accessible to print disabled school pupils, stressed that XML most certainly is the one standard that also will be compatible with future standards. The same basic content can be presented in many different ways by using different style sheets. A speech synthesizer can not understand the difference between, on the one hand, a textbox containing "important" information, and, on the other, ordinary text, but if a style sheet is properly used, the textbox can be marked up for precisely such identification purposes.

Arne Kykjebo, from the Norwegian Library of Talking books and Braille (NLB), described how newspapers and magazines can be made accessible as DAISY publications using Synthetic speech. A Newspaper that would take 9 hours to narrate, now requires 1,5 hours of total production time, of which 5

minutes is required for manual work. Being able to read the whole newspaper, and not only a selection of articles, is of greater importance to the users than a human narration. However, Jesper Klein, who is in charge of a project at TPB which endeavours to produce study materials both in English and Swedish by using Synthetic speech in combination with DAISY, said that an evaluation showed that a long book read with speech synthesis, can be very boring.

### **DAISY an established standard**

The different conference presentations demonstrated that DAISY is now the established standard for accessible media for use by people with print disabilities in Scandinavia and in several countries in Western Europe. In 2008, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically handicapped of the United States Library of Congress will add to this trend. We hope that the transition to DAISY will eventually also extend to developing countries.

Beatrice Christensen Sköld

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### **DAISY Award to Ingar Beckman Hirschfeldt**

The DAISY Consortium Board of Directors has awarded the [2006 DAISY Culture of Sharing Award](#) to Ingar Beckman Hirschfeldt, Director of The Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille.

The award is the highest honour the Consortium can confer upon an individual or organization. The recipient must exemplify outstanding qualities of leadership, the meaning of sharing and the ethics of service, social awareness and collaboration. In addition, the recipient's activities and contribution must have helped to move DAISY into the mainstream, that is, to the world. (Source: [www.daisy.org](http://www.daisy.org))

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### **The Frederick Thorpe Awards**

In 2002 the Ulverscroft Foundation agreed to a request from the IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section to sponsor a best practice development programme. The Foundation decided to make up to 20,000 GB Pounds available in 2003 in memory of its founder Frederick Thorpe. Up to 15,000 GB Pounds were allocated for an Organisation Award and up to 5,000 GB Pounds for Individual Awards. Awards were made to two individuals and one organisation in 2003 and to three individuals in 2005.

The Foundation agreed to make a further 20,000 GB Pounds available for awards in 2006 and the successful applicants are:

#### **Individual Awards**

Sindiswa Gule of the South African Library for the Blind to spend one month at the National Library for the Blind and RNIB, United Kingdom to study inter-library loans procedures.

Elena Kozlova, newly appointed Director of the Belgorod State Special Library for the Blind, Russia to undertake a study tour of the National Library for the Blind and RNIB.

### **Organisation Award**

The “life creation – creation life” project at the Belgorod State Special Library for the Blind, Russia. The project will create a sound recording studio for their child members building upon the success of their new computer room for visually impaired children funded by the FORCE Foundation.

The Chairman of the Ulverscroft Foundation, Allan Leach, states:

“It is extremely pleasing that for a third time we have been able to provide funding for such worthwhile projects which will further help the development of library services for visually impaired people across the world.”

For further details please contact:

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## **DAISY Consortium Knowledge Network**

### **Sharing our Collective Knowledge**

The DAISY Consortium has developed a completely accessible "neural network" learning system which

provides information and support that is effective in a classroom setting, for presentations, or as an independent study and reference tool.

This Knowledge Network, the (DKN) provides comprehensive access to the on-line information and support systems of the DAISY Consortium. It is an information resource designed to assist in and support the implementation of DAISY standards and information sharing worldwide.

### **Information Needs**

Information needs vary widely, and this system is being developed to be both flexible and adaptable. A successful information source must be current. The DAISY KN has therefore been designed to be easy to refresh and 'feed' with new content. It is possible to add or modify modules and will be possible to prepare and develop a variety of courses or presentations from any location.

### **The DKN Main Page**

There is a link in the top navigation bar of the DAISY Web site to the [DAISY-KN](#). A brief introduction and "getting started" instructions are provided. The side navigation bar includes the following options:

- Modules By Topic
- Modules Sorted Alpha
- New and Updated Modules
- Modules in Other Languages



- Logon
- Google Search

## Knowledge Sharing Through the DKN

The DAISY Knowledge Network is being designed to facilitate and support the sharing and dissemination of information and knowledge. There are two modules, [How to Prepare a DAISY KN Module in xhtml](#) and [How to Prepare a DAISY KN Module in WORD](#) which provide detailed instructions for preparing content modules for the DKN.

## End Note

There is a German saying, "shared pain is pain halved". I'm sure there must be a saying in at least one language that means "knowledge shared is knowledge multiplied many times". The DAISY Consortium has shared information and knowledge amongst its Members and Friends through email lists almost since it was formed. The fact that our Members and Friends are located all over the world has meant that we have had to provide support from a distance. The DAISY Knowledge Network allows us to share more widely, within the DC, and around the world.

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## Louis Braille – touch of a genius; National Braille Press, 2006

The National Braille Press, Boston, Ma, USA, recently published a new book about Louis Braille by C. Michael

Mellor. The title of the book is *Louis Braille, touch of a genius..*

In the early weeks of 1809, three baby boys were born who changed the course of history: Abraham Lincoln, Charles Darwin, and Louis Braille. Unlike Lincoln and Darwin, Braille's genius is little known outside his native land, except among those who have been touched by his gift of literacy.

Louis Braille was born sighted and accidentally blinded himself at the age of three. He was fortunate to be sent to Paris to board at one of the world's first schools for blind children. There, at the age of 12, he began to work tirelessly on a revolutionary system of reading and writing by touch.

Unearthed from a curator's private archives in France, this extraordinary collection of documents, photographs and artistic works enhances the bibliographic narrative of the phases of Braille's life as a student, young inventor, musician, and teacher in post-Revolutionary France. All of the images are professionally described in the braille edition.

Drawing on primary sources, *Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius* is the first ever full-colour biography to include 31 of his extant letters by his own hand, and translated into English for the first time.

C. Michael Mellor embarked on a biography of Louis Braille when he first saw the letters of Louis Braille on display at l'Institut National de Jeunes Aveugles, the school in Paris

where Louis was a student, teacher, and creator of an embossed code that carries his name.

As editor of the *Matilda Ziegler Magazine for the Blind* for eighteen years, Mike has long held a fascination for braille. His published paper, "Making a Point: The Crusade for a Universal Embossed Code in the United States," was delivered at the International Conference on "The Blind in History and the History of the Blind," in Paris, France, where he came upon Louis's extant letters and decided to translate them for publication.

Mellor holds an MA in the History of Science from the University of Leeds in England, where he was born. During National Service with the Royal Air Force, he maintained electronic equipment on jet fighters. He lives in Brooklyn, New York, where he enjoys being an urban farmer.

More information about the book can be obtained at [www.nbp.org](http://www.nbp.org)

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## **2006 Seoul workshop- DAISY & Integrated Digital Library**

### **Invitation**

The Korean Braille Library will be holding a workshop on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2006 in advance of the 2006 World Library and Information Congress. The workshop will be held in the morning and the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup>, and a reception will be prepared for participants. On the following day, a visit to the Korean Braille Library, the National Museum of Korea and other vocational

rehabilitation organization for the visually impaired is being scheduled.

### **Workshop Theme- Daisy & the Integrated Digital Library**

The current age is a time when knowledge and information are rapidly progressing. Information is spread quickly through the internet creating more choice and quantity. The boom in information grants various opportunities for individuals with vision impairment. Nowadays, vision impaired individuals can take advantage of accessing the information they want anywhere and anytime through a digital voice recorded file and a text reader.

Braille Libraries should look at developing and progressing with the times.

The emphasized alternative is Daisy and the Integrated Digital Library. We expect that the workshop will attract many interested organizations in Asia, Europe and America.

### **Venue & Accommodations**

Seoul Olympic parktel  
<http://www.parktel.co.kr/>

\* If you directly contact the hotel, please note that you are a participant of the workshop.

### **Registration**

You can register on the website <http://www.kbll.or.kr/workshop/>. Registration fee is free for the participants, all meals and the visit program on 18<sup>th</sup> are included. The deadline is the end of June, and your cancellation is available in July.

If you have any question, refer to <http://www.kbll.or.kr/workshop/> or please e-mail to [kbl2006@kbll.or.kr](mailto:kbl2006@kbll.or.kr).

## **Johan Roos Steps down as Chair of LBS**

Johan Roos leaves his post as Director of the South Africa Library for the Blind on Wednesday 31 May and also steps down as Chair of LBS. The Libraries for the Blind Section would like to thank Johan for his significant contribution as Chair and wishing him good luck in his new role. Beatrice Christensen Skold has kindly agreed to step in as acting Chair until August.

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## **Reminder**

### **International Directory of Libraries for the Blind**

Please update your library information via internet.  
<http://ifla.jsrpd.jp/>

If you have not registered, you can register your library/institution at the above internet address.

For more information contact:  
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