



# Newsletter

**IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section  
IFLA Best Newsletter 2000 and 2001**

2007/1

The IFLA/LBS Newsletter is issued twice a year.

**Editors:**

Lina Kouzi

Information Coordinator  
National Council for the  
Blind of Ireland  
Whitworth Road  
Drumcondra  
Dublin 9  
Ireland

Tel: +353-1850-33 43 53

Fax: +353-1-830 77 87

E-mail: [lina.kouzi@ncbi.ie](mailto:lina.kouzi@ncbi.ie)

Beatrice Christensen Sköld  
Chair

TPB

122 88 Enskede

Tel: +46-8-39 93 74

Fax: +46-8-659 94 67

E-mail: [bea.christensen@tpb.se](mailto:bea.christensen@tpb.se)

The Newsletter is available in  
Braille and on [www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org)

## Content

Words from the Chair	3
Standing Committee meeting in Hamburg	4
Dates for your diary	4
Best practice in library services for print disabled children	4
A thriving Standing Committee	4
Ulverscroft best practice awards	5
How to find out what's going on	5
Shaping the Vision of the Global Library	5
Register for Preconference and workshop	6
IFLA World Digital Library Working Group on Guidelines for Digital Libraries	6
Funding and governance of library and information services for visually impaired people	6
International Conference on Tsunami Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities in Thailand	7
New National Library Service in UK	8
1.5 Millionth Cassette Book Machine Marks End of an Era in Service to Blind Community	9
Mathematics Now Added to the DAISY Standard	10
Robobraille an Overview	11
TECHSHARE 2007	12
WIPO Study	12

## **Standing Committee Members**

### Chairperson

Beatrice Christensen Sköld  
The Swedish Library of Talking Books  
and Braille (TPB)  
SE-122 88 Enskede  
Sweden  
Tel: +46-8-39 93 74  
Fax: +46-8-659 94 67  
E-mail: bea.christensen@tpb.se

### Secretary

Helen Brazier, Director  
National Library for the Blind  
Far Cromwell Road, Bredbury  
Stockport SK6 25G, United Kingdom  
E-mail: Helen.brazier@nlbuk.org

Marijke van Bodengraven, Dedicon\*  
Lina Kouzi, NCBI Library, Ireland, In-  
formation Coordinator  
Courtney Deines-Jones, ALA, USA  
Elke Dittmer, MEDIBUS, Germany  
Marie-Hélène Dougnac, France  
Galina Elfimova, Moscow, Russia  
Margaret McGrory, CNIB Library,  
Canada  
Luc Maumet, AVH, France  
Misako Nomura, JRDP Japan  
Pete Osborne, RNIB; UK  
Johan Roos, South Africa \*  
Eugenia V. Shepavolova,  
S:t Petersburg, Russia  
Carolyn Sung, NLS, USA  
Elsebeth Tank, DBB, Denmark  
Dick Tucker, FORCE, Netherlands\*  
Päivi Voutilainen, Celia Library,  
Finland  
Keun Hae Yuk, Korean Braille Library,  
South Korea

\*) Elected but not active since they  
changed professional areas

Photographer in this issue:  
P. 3 Annika Sundin

## Words from the Chair:

### The Dream of the Global library

IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section has many challenges. The main focus is on the dream of realizing the accessible global library. We have a three year strategic plan to work after where cooperation with the DAISY Consortium and the World Blind union are important tools to reach our goal.

In the strategic plan for 2003-2006 we state: Today there are 161 million blind and partially sighted people in the world who need access to books and information for all the same reason as sighted people. But 95 percent of books in the world are never made available in accessible formats. The same situation prevails in all countries, from the poorest to the richest. Part of the problem is attributable to the cost of transforming print publications into accessible formats, which despite technological advances is still high.

The highest barrier we encounter is presumably copyright legislation that puts barriers in the way of sharing resources. We have been able to agree on a common standard for accessible material the DAISY/NISO standard but national copyright still is an obstacle for sharing material.

I would like to remind members and other libraries for the blind of the World Intellectual Property Organizations (WIPO) "standard section" with exceptions for the blind and visually impaired, which is recommended to be included in copyright laws that not already have an "exception" for production material for the blind and print disabled. Members are also recommended to work for a national copyright that doesn't build up walls against international cooperation.



This is particularly important when it comes to digital media. All the advantages with the accessible digital media are lost if copyright becomes an obstacle for exchange.

Another issue on of our strategic plan is to encourage training and continuing development of library staff serving print disabled people. We do this by holding annual sessions at the IFLA World Library and Information Congress and every other year a so called Satellite Meeting for experts within our own field. Our work is voluntary and we always have to look for financial support from other sources such as SIDA/IFLA ALP and the FORCE Foundation.

Yet another goal is to establish and support guidelines and best practise for accessible library and information services. There are plenty of interesting documents and guidelines accessible on [www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org).

Cooperation between organisations is one thing, but there are always people behind organisations. The Dream of the global library can only be realised by people. People who cooperate and work together. Richer institutions must be able to help those who have less means. By human meetings new ideas are created. Ideas that can realise the dream of the global library.

*Beatrice Christensen Sköld*  
Chair

## **Section News:**

### **Standing Committee meeting, Hamburg, 27-28 February 2007**

The Libraries for the Blind Section mid year Standing Committee meeting took place in Hamburg this year, thanks to the warm hospitality of Elke Dittmer and Medibus. There was a large and lively gathering of 13 Standing Committee members and 8 guests, many of whom had been nominated as new members of the Standing Committee for the period 2007-2011. We enjoyed meeting in the House of Literature and visiting the talking book library.

The two day meeting touched on many different approaches to developing the global accessible library, including:

- Future programme: planning meetings in South Africa, in Eastern Europe 2008 and even further ahead to 2009
- Reports on current projects: on performance measures; on governance and funding of library and information services for the blind; and on development of DAISY cataloguing standards
- Co-operation with the World Blind Union on developing a lobbying toolkit; and other ways of tackling copyright barriers
- How to deliver the Ulverscroft Foundation/LBS best practice awards 2007-2008
- Review of the Section's strategic plan
- Development of a marketing plan for the Section

For more information, please see the minutes on the yahoo group, as soon as it is live (see below), or contact the Secretary [helen.brazier@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helen.brazier@rnib.org.uk)

### **Dates for your diary**

Libraries for the Blind Section conference, Grahamstown, South Africa, 14-15 August 2007

WLIC, Durban, South Africa, 19-23 August 2007

Standing Committee meetings, Durban, South Africa, 18 and 24 August 2007

### **Best practice in library services for print disabled children**

This year, the Section has teamed up with the IFLA Section for Children and Young Adults to present a programme at WLIC, Durban on best practice in library services for print disabled children. The call for papers brought many interesting proposals and it was hard to choose between them. However, we think we will have an interesting mix on the day, with papers from Croatia, Sweden, India and UK, on tactile books and on developing services in special libraries and in mainstream public libraries. Look out for this session in the conference programme.

### **A thriving Standing Committee**

This August sees some major changes to the Section's Standing Committee. We are sad to say goodbye to several long standing members who have contributed greatly to the work of the Section over many years. They are: Beatrice Christensen Sköld, Chair; Helen Brazier, Secretary; Lina Kouzi, Information Officer; Marijke van Bodengraven; Elke Dittmer; Marie Hélène Dognac; Johan Roos; Carolyn Sung; Elsebeth Tank; Keun Hae Youk and Päivi Voutilainen.

We are very pleased to welcome our new members: Marja-Leena Ahola, TPB, Sweden; Jenny Craven, MMU, UK; Bente Dahl Rathje, DBB, Denmark; Rebecca Harrington, Vision Australia; Francois Hendrikz, Blindlib, South Africa; Thomas Kahlisch, Medibus, Germany; Hiroshi Kawamura, Nippon Light-house, Japan; Koen Krikhaar, Dedicon, Netherlands; Steve Prine, NLS, USA; and Minna von Zansen, Celia, Finland. The following members are continuing in office: Courtney Deines-Jones, Gri-

malkin Group/ALA, USA; Galina Sergeevna Elfimova, Russian State Library for the Blind, Russia; Margaret McGroary, CNIB, Canada; Luc Maumet, AVH, France; Misako Nomura, JSRPD, Japan; Peter Osborne, RNIB, UK; and Eugenia Viktorovna Shepovaalova, St Petersburg State Library for the Blind, Russia.

As you can tell, the Section's officers are all leaving and therefore there will be new officers appointed in Durban. They will introduce themselves to you in the next edition of the newsletter.

## **More Ulverscroft Foundation-IFLA LBS Frederick Thorpe best practice awards**

The Section was thrilled to hear recently that the UK based Ulverscroft Foundation has once again generously agreed to fund the Frederick Thorpe best practice awards in 2007-2008.

In the last few years, this rare award scheme has enabled seven staff of various libraries for the blind to spend between one and four weeks working overseas in a partner library of their choice. All of the staff concerned have found it an immensely valuable experience; a great opportunity for personal and organizational development that has frequently resulted in new and enduring partnerships.

The scheme has also funded two significant projects to create a database of accessible resources in Nigeria and make accessible books for children in Belgorod.

Thanks to the Ulverscroft Foundation, there will be funding available again in 2007-2008 to support more working visits and/or a project. Any staff working in library services for blind or partially sighted people may apply. Further details will be available from August 2007 via Ulverscroft Foundation and LBS websites:

<http://www.foundation.ulverscroft.com>  
<http://www.ifla.org/VII/s31/index.htm>

## **How to find out what's going on**

Until the end of 2006, Section members made active use of a smartgroup e-mail list and file archive. It became a very useful place to share information and ask or answer sometimes quite unusual questions. Since the demise of smartgroups at that time, we have been seeking an accessible alternative and believe we have found the answer with yahoo groups. Steps are being taken to establish a new yahoo group for the Section and we hope it will be up and running shortly. You don't have to be a member of the section or even a member of IFLA to join - it will be open to anyone who is interested. If you would like to join the new yahoo group, please contact Chris Herring at [chris.herring@rnib.org.uk](mailto:chris.herring@rnib.org.uk)

## **Shaping the Vision of the Global Library**

These are the criterias for shaping the vision of the Global Library:

### **Overriding Principles**

- Cooperation
  - Act now
  - Set up clearly defined projects with stated objectives
  - Think about how it works for "people"
- Principles: Summary
- Share content (including lending and borrowing), information and infrastructure with developed bilateral and multi-lateral partnerships, ensuring that duplication of effort is avoided in order to reduce provision costs globally. Work together to develop global library repositories of multi-language DAISY standard content with standardized cataloguing systems
  - Bridge the digital divide with partnerships, communication and cooperation
  - Investigate and utilize Contract Law as well as copyright law, looking at li-

cense rights with or without royalties, and licensing with digital rights clearance

- Promote literacy with the DAISY current and future standard
- Make the DAISY standard mainstream
- Look to mainstream technology for players and reading systems
- Ensure sustainable financial and human resources
- Ensure that DRM does not result in digital books that cannot be accessed by those who are print disabled. DRM must not become a barrier to access
- Deal with copyright issues in a fair and objective way; protect intellectual property and the rights of copyright holders, and protect relationships with publishers
- Develop an effective and sustainable business model that defines participation in the global library
- Value and make use of the content commercial producers can provide
- Partner with publishers, authors, agents and others; understand what their motivations are and work with them

### **Addendum**

WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/4-E

"3) Access to information and knowledge  
25. The sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development is essential in an inclusive Information Society.

26. A rich public domain is an essential element for the growth of the Information Society, creating multiple benefits such as an educated public, new jobs, innovation, business opportunities, and the advancement of sciences. Information in the public domain should be easily accessible to support the Information Society, and protected from misappropriation. Public institutions such as libraries and archives, museums, cultural collections and other community-based access points should be strengthened as to promote the preservation of documentary records and free and equitable access to information."

## **Register for Preconference and workshop**

Time to register for IFLA Libraries for the blind satellite meeting in Grahamstown 14-15 August 2007. You register at [www.blindlib.org.za](http://www.blindlib.org.za). The theme of the Conference is "Library Service for print disabled people: a tool for literacy". In conjunction with the conference there will be a two day workshop on how to make tactile picture books for blind children, 16-17 August.

## **IFLA World Digital Library Working Group on Guidelines for Digital Libraries**

The "IFLA World Digital Library Working Group on Guidelines for Digital Libraries" was initiated and is chaired by Claudia Lux, President Elect of IFLA. Elsebeth Tank, member of the IFLA Libraries for the Blind Standing Committee and President of the DAISY Consortium has been appointed member of this group. Elsebeth Tank's appointment to this working group recognizes the efforts of Libraries for the Blind to shape the Digital Global library for the print disabled.

## **Funding and governance of library and information services for visually impaired people: International case studies**

This study was commissioned and funded by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' Libraries for the Blind Section, the British Library and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, England. It aimed to compare different approaches to the funding and governance of library and information services for visually impaired people, and to determine the impact these factors have on outcomes. It was

prompted by enquiries for comparative evidence from industrialised and developing countries (e.g. UK, Canada and Zambia). The outcomes could inform libraries for visually impaired people and other stakeholders anywhere in the world to support improvements in access to library and information services. The research could also serve as a valuable basis for academic research into service delivery models and funding.

The study, conducted by Rightscom Ltd., UK-based consultants assisted by Dick Tucker, formerly of the FORCE Foundation, was carried out between May 2006 and March 2007 through desk research, e-mail questionnaires and telephone interviews. The study was directed by a Steering Committee comprised of Clive Field, British Library (Chair), Helen Brazier, IFLA LBS/NLB, Chris Friend, World Blind Union Copyright and Right to Read Committee/Sightsavers International, Jill Martin, CILIP, Margaret McGrory, IFLA LBS/CNIB, John Palmer, Share the Vision/Right to Read Alliance/Calibre Audio Library, and Marcus Weisen, MLA.

A questionnaire was e-mailed to countries, chosen by the Steering Group, covering a range of stages of economic development and social, political and cultural variations. They included Australia, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, UK and USA. The study findings will offer insights into organization and method of service delivery, relationship of services to visually impaired and print disabled people, sources and extent of funding, policy and governance, the impact of legislation, copyright and technology, movements towards equality, and barriers. The authors will address key points emerging from the evidence and provide recommendations that will take the form of a toolkit that can be used by international organizations or by national governments, service providers, producers, consumer groups or other stakeholders.

The report is expected to be published April 2007 and will be available on various professional websites such as MLA, IFLANET, and IFLA LBS.

### **News from the Globe:**

## **Report of the International Conference on Tsunami Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities in Thailand**

The International Conference on Tsunami Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities was held on January 11 and 12 in Phuket, Thailand. The conference was co-hosted by the DAISY Consortium, Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD), the Council of Disabled People of Thailand (CDPT), National Electronics and Computer Technology Center, Thailand (NECTEC), Thailand Association of the Blind (TAB Group), DAISY For All Project Thailand (DFA Thailand), Asian Disaster Preparedness Center and Thai Autism Vocational Center.

The purpose of this conference was to establish an international networking group for the promotion of Tsunami preparedness to persons with disabilities. This was done in the context of WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) Action Plan by sharing information on the following:

- Logical understanding of Tsunami, accessible communication channels for warning, and planned/confirmed evacuation routes;
- Best practices for Tsunami preparedness promotion activities that meet the requirements of persons with disabilities;
- On-going Tsunami disaster prevention initiatives at local/international level;
- Initiatives for bridging the digital divide in the area of disaster preparedness of persons with disabilities as mentioned in the WSIS Action Plan.

Nearly 100 international participants

attended the meeting. The participants were interested in digital opportunities in the area of tsunami preparedness for persons with disabilities. They actively participated in the discussion of how they can improve tsunami evacuation plans to meet the special needs of people with disabilities, old people, patients, children, pregnant women, refugees, cultural/linguistic minorities, foreign travelers, etc.

The final session of the conference focused on the adoption of the Phuket Declaration presented by Mr. Monthian Buntan and Mr. Hiroshi Kawamura.

The following is the final text of the Phuket Declaration on Tsunami Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities:

We, participants of the International Conference on Tsunami Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities, assembled on the eleventh and twelfth of January 2007, at Royal Phuket City Hotel, Phuket, Thailand, declare that:

"Tsunami disasters can be prevented through: sharing of knowledge and best practices on Tsunami and other disasters, strong commitment and active participation for contribution of all stakeholders including in particular persons with disabilities to eliminate the loss of lives, local community-based initiatives for disaster preparedness and infrastructure building including Tsunami early warning system at all levels to disseminate timely disaster warning to all people concerned, building of disability friendly infrastructure addressing accessibility issues in all phases of disaster management.

In a knowledge-based society, ICT development, which includes assistive technologies and universal design concept, will contribute to the success of disaster preparedness development that will meet the diverse needs of all people including those of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable people including women, children, old people,

cultural minorities, tourists, etc. in the community.

Such ICT development should be based on internationally-recognized standards that are open, non-proprietary, and have proven track record of accessibility.

In commemoration of the Asian Tsunami 2004 and in support of WSIS action plan, Hyogo Frame Work of Action and Tampere Convention, we recommend that:

- An educational/training center on Tsunami and other disaster preparedness should be established.
- All aspects of such center, including physical infrastructure and training materials, should be inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities.
- All stake holders should follow the principles of WSIS and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to implement effective preparedness for Tsunami and other disasters.
- All people attending the conference make sure that they could do some collaborative work to promote disaster preparedness for persons with disabilities."

I hope more people and related agencies will join this network to work together to address this important issue.  
*Misako Nomura,*  
Deputy Director, Information Center of JSRPD

## **New National Library Service in UK**

Trustees from the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) and the National Library for the Blind (NLB) recently agreed to merge the library services of both charities as of 1 January 2007, creating the new RNIB National Library Service.

Blind and partially sighted people in the UK are frustrated by the totally inadequate provision by publishers and

mainstream libraries of books and other reading materials in formats like braille, large print or audio. Both RNIB and NLB provide a supplementary range of library services and by combining the services of both charities, blind and partially sighted people will enjoy a more comprehensive service with a wider choice of titles and formats. Duplication will be reduced so that more resources can be channelled into direct services for customers.

Lesley-Anne Alexander, RNIB's Chief Executive, said: "An enormous amount of work has been put into achieving this merger. Creating a unified library service will bring about real improvements to the library services available to people with sight problems in the UK. Together we are taking a brave and important step that will have a big impact for our customers, creating one of the world's largest resources of accessible reading formats."

Since January, new teams have been appointed and work has been taking place to merge all library and supporting functions of the two organisations. The Head of the National Library Service will be Helen Brazier, former Chief Executive of NLB, and the new service will be launched to customers in summer 2007.

For more information, please contact  
*Helen Brazier*  
helen.brazier@rnib.org.uk

## **1.5 Millionth Cassette Book Machine Marks End of an Era in Service to Blind Community**

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), Library of Congress, produced its last analog cassette book machine on February 17, 2007, signaling the advent of Digital Talking Books.

During a ceremony held on March 1 in Blue Earth, Minnesota, Telex Com-

munications, Inc. presented NLS with the milestone player—the 1,248,113th manufactured by the company since 1983.

Since 1969, 1.5 million cassette book machines (CBMs) have been manufactured and distributed to more than 25 million NLS patrons. These machines were designed to play audiocassettes recorded at 15/16 inches per second (ips) on 4-track tapes, allowing up to six hours of playback time per cassette.

Though many enhancements have been made to cassette book machines over the years, dramatic advances in technology have prompted NLS to move to a digital system using flash-memory technology to improve services to its patrons.

Analog audiocassette and cassette book machine technology has been the backbone of the NLS system, but it is outdated and nearing the end of its useful life," said NLS director Frank Kurt Cylke. "Our patrons have heightened expectations of service improvements, especially those who are tech savvy. Their expectations along with the impending obsolescence of key elements of analog technology warrant the conversion to a digital system. Digital talking-book machine technology will replace audiocassette technology just as audiocassette technology replaced its predecessor, rigid disc technology."

NLS expects to launch the digital audio system in 2008. The new system will include solid state, flash-memory playback machines that will be about one-third the size of the current machine and will play digital audiobooks provided on flash-memory cartridges. The system will provide better audio quality, be more durable, be more reliable, and consume less power. In addition cartridges will allow longer playing time and practically eliminate the need to change cartridges, as is often required with audiocassettes.

C-1 No. 1248113, the last CBM, is expected to be in service until the digital transition is complete. Indeed 58 percent of CBMs are still in use after ten years.

"Though production of the CBM has ceased, NLS will continue to provide CBMs, from our existing inventory, and cassette audiobooks to our patrons during the transition to digital talking books and players," said NLS chief of Materials and Development Division Michael Katzmann. "The use of CBMs will decline rapidly with the introduction of the digital player, however we expect some patrons to continue using CBMs beyond 2012."

## **Mathematics now added to the DAISY Standard**

March 22, 2007, the DAISY Consortium announced the formal adoption of the specification for the DAISY/NISO Standard Modular Extension for Mathematics. The publication of the Mathematics Modular Extension is crucial to integrating accessible mathematics into DAISY and NIMAS-compliant books. The path to accessible mathematics is now clear.

The current DAISY/NISO Standard does not include an explicit method for including mathematics, however it does define how Modular Extensions can be added. The DAISY MathML Modular Extension working group has developed a solution for including mathematics using a MathML extension, enabling full support for accessible mathematics in the DAISY/NISO Standard.

MathML is a W3C XML application developed with accessibility to mathematics as a primary goal. It is now critical for the publishing, education and accessibility communities to begin supporting this new DAISY/NISO Mathematics Modular Extension, to ensure rapid industry-wide utilization of accessible mathematics.

According to Dr. Neil Soiffer, who chaired the DAISY Working Group on Mathematics, "The group looked at many different alternatives to supporting math and came up with a solution that allows advanced players to provide access to mathematics that can be tailored to the needs of the reader while still providing a fallback mechanism so that basic players lose no functionality compared to today's access. By using W3C's MathML recommendations as the representation for math, content authors and producers can leverage existing tools. This will help to jump start the creation of accessible documents containing math and help foster the day when math content can be read by everyone."

George Kerscher, Secretary General for the DAISY Consortium, remarks that, "Now, with support for mathematics in the DAISY/NISO Standard, educational institutions have a comprehensive specification to adopt. The Consortium will be quickly developing additional documentation to assist content creators, such as usage guidelines and sample content. We expect to see integrated support in production tools very soon as well."

Chuck Hitchcock, Director of the NIMAS Technical Assistance Center at CAST, indicates that the publication of the DAISY Modular Extension for math is a welcome advance toward the universal design of math instructional content. "Now that DAISY has integrated a MathML vocabulary into its specification, publishers creating NIMAS-compliant files as part of federal IDEA requirements will soon be able to support a much greater level of accessibility and educational efficacy for elementary and secondary math textbooks."

"Now that MathML is officially part of the DAISY Standard, we have great hopes for continuing improvements in scientific literacy for people with print disabilities," said Jeff Gardner, CEO of ViewPlus Technologies, Inc. "The avai-

lability of scientific literature and math materials in MathML will greatly benefit the growing numbers of students with disabilities now pursuing careers in the sciences.”

Further commenting on the implications of this development for scientific literacy, Joachim Klaus, Director of the Study Centre for the Visually Impaired Students at the Universitaet Karlsruhe (TH/Germany) remarks, “Internationalization and globalization characterize the Higher Educational teaching, learning and research system. Accessible information and communication technology are vital - we can’t imagine our daily lives without it. Mathematic models and equations are used in all study and research fields. The extension of Digital Talking Books for Mathematics is therefore a milestone forward for the inclusion of all into the scientific community.”

-The work of the MathML-in-DAISY committee is vital to the field of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics for the disabled. Disabled people are among the most under-represented groups in the technical fields, and the improved access that DAISY enables should allow more and more disabled people to enter in to new career opportunities, comments David Schleppenbach, President of GH, LLC, a company that manufactures a MathML-aware DAISY software player.

For more information about the DAISY Modular Extension for Mathematics, see the MathML in DAISY website at <http://www.daisy.org/projects/mathml/> For inquiries, please use the DAISY Contact Us form

## **Robobraille an Overview**

The Robobraille is a Pan-European e-mail agent for Braille and text-to-speech translation. The Robobraille robot can convert printed material to contracted Braille or synthetic speech through an

efficient and high quality email service. The service is owned, operated and maintained by the Danish Centre for Visual Impairment, Children and Youth (Refsnæs).

Users can e-mail documents (e.g HTML, Word, PDF) to the service, and within a matter of a few minutes, the documents are returned in either contracted Braille, or synthetic speech depending on user preferences and language. Users do not have to install any additional technologies to their computers. The system is available from all platforms that are capable of sending and receiving e-mails.

What are the benefits from Robobraille?

The Robobraille Service enables vision impaired individuals to automatically translate electronic print documents to and from contracted Braille and to synthetic speech.

The benefits of Robobraille are:

- Creating Independence for Vision impaired Individuals: The Robobraille will enable individuals to access information in their required format ( Braille/ audio)
- Inexpensive processing of documents: The Robobraille will not incur any added production costs as the service is based on existing email agent technology and Braille translation technology.
- Speed of Braille and audio production of documents: Robobraille translates documents to Braille or audio within minutes thus reducing current production time.

Who are the European Partners?

The Robobraille service will be validated in the following countries: Italy, Greece, Ireland, UK, Cyprus and Portugal. A running prototype of Robobraille has been in operation in Denmark since August 2004. The current service in Denmark is capable of translating Danish text to and from contracted Braille in 6 and 8 -dot Braille.

The Robobrace project will conclude in December 2007.

Contact: *Lars Ballieu Christensen*  
Rådgiver/Adviser, Sensus ApS  
Tel: +45 48 22 10 03 – Mobil: +45 40 32 68 23 - Skype: Ballieu  
lbc@sensus.dk www.sensus.dk

## **TECHSHARE 2007**

**4-5 October, London, UK**  
**[www.rnib.org.uk/techshare](http://www.rnib.org.uk/techshare)**

Technology is making a difference to the lives of people with disabilities.

The Techshare 2007 Conference is an international event for professionals interested in technology and the role it plays in learning, work and society for people with disabilities.

Packed with presentations and workshops, this year the event also includes a large exhibition open to the public.

We are also delighted to announce that the 2007 Daisy International Technical Conference will be held at Techshare. Daisy is the world's leading standard for digital talking books. Venue: Novotel London West (Hammersmith), London, UK

Organised by RNIB and other leading disability organisations, Techshare is a fantastic opportunity to meet with experts and others in your field in a friendly atmosphere.

The Techshare Conference and Exhibition is the place to be to get up-to-date with current and new technologies, share advances in technology and leave the conference with the latest practical knowledge on how technology is being used by people with disabilities.

Important dates:

- Speak at Techshare: Call for papers closes 1 July 2007
- Book your place: Early-bird discount booking opens 1 May 2007
- Pre-Conference Workshops will be held on 3 October 2007
- Exhibitor Enquiries:

To showcase your organisation contact *Claire Clinton* at Headstar.

Email [claire@headstar.com](mailto:claire@headstar.com)  
Telephone +44 (0)1273 231 291  
Conference information  
[www.rnib.org.uk/techshare](http://www.rnib.org.uk/techshare)  
Email [techshare@rnib.org.uk](mailto:techshare@rnib.org.uk)  
Telephone +44 (0)121 665 4240

## **WIPO Study**

WIPO – World Intellectual Property Organization - has recently published its study into exceptions and limitations to copyright around the World for the benefit of visually impaired people. This includes an examination of the international transfer issue.

You can find links to Word and html versions at: [http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc\\_details.jsp?doc\\_id=75696](http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc_details.jsp?doc_id=75696)  
This is a dauntingly long document, and this may be why it seems to take the Word version for ever to download.

The study contains a wealth of information on the situation in a great many countries from all around the world. As well as this factual exercise, it draws a number of conclusions and makes over 20 recommendations. WBU, Daisy and IFLA are also mentioned in the recommendations.

A meeting between WBU and WIPO will take place June 1 in Geneva, where discussions will take place regarding a follow up to this report and to last year's WIPO report into DRM as it affects our interests.

More information can be obtained from.

*David Mann*  
Campaigns Officer, RNIB  
[David.mann@rnib.org.uk](mailto:David.mann@rnib.org.uk)