Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities Inc.

Information Access – Innovation and Collaboration

Monday, 17 May to Wednesday, 19 May 2021

Virtual Event

2021 Round Table Conference Book of Abstracts

Please note: The book of abstracts is current as of 7 May 2021.

Monday, 17 May 2021

Session 1 – Plenary

1a. Toyota Mobility for All.

10:00am – 10:30am

Keynote Presenter: Alex Lockie, Senior Intelligent Systems Specialist, Advanced Planning, Toyota Motor Corporation Australia.

Abstract

Toyota Motor Corporation Australia is transitioning from a car company to a mobility company, with 'Mobility for all' as its core mission. Delegates will be introduced to the 'Start your impossible' campaign, which showcases the intended social change, improving people's lives and increasing accessibility in our society. Alex will further present the innovative advanced technologies and engineering achievements by Toyota Australia to improve accessibility on our roads and increase safety for all traffic, in particular for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians. In Toyota's Port Melbourne Design Offices innovative work is undertaken on intelligent, connected systems where cars and traffic lights and other existing infrastructures communicate with each other in real-time, through sensors and advanced communication technologies. Nationally testing is already underway. Immediate accessibility benefits will be highlighted as well as the promise of future application in fully autonomous vehicles. The Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games will see the first deployment of some such accessible, electrified autonomous shuttles, purpose-built by Toyota.

Biography

Alex Lockie started his career with Toyota in 2004 as an Engineer in the Body Design team at the Technical Centre in Melbourne. In addition to two overseas assignments in Japan and the United States , Alex has also worked with Toyota in a wide range of countries including Thailand, Indonesia, South Africa, and Argentina.

From 2014, Alex broadened his field of work into future powertrains and energy economics research before transferring into Toyota Australia's Advanced Planning Group in 2017.

Alex is currently engaged in Toyota's Intelligent Transport Systems program focusing on Lexus' technical trials, and development of policy and strategy.

1b. Inclusive publishing in Australia: insights from the trenches.

10:30am – 11:00am

Feature Presenter: Dr Agata Mrva-Montoya, University of Sydney.

Abstract

Despite the developments in digital technologies, people with a print disability have limited access to reading material in accessible formats. This 'global book famine' affects their opportunities for learning, participating in the social and economic life of society, and leading a balanced life. Since 2016 the Australian Inclusive Publishing Initiative (AIPI) has been working to embed accessibility in the centre of the publishing workflow, so that books are designed from the start to be accessible to everyone, no matter how they read them.

This presentation will report on the results of an exploratory survey of Australian publishers and alternative format producers conducted in 2020, developed at the University of Sydney in collaboration with the AIPI, the Australian Publishers Association and the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities.

As well as providing a snapshot of sector-wide progress in the production of accessible publications, this presentation will also give an account on how a small team at Sydney University Press reinvented their publishing workflow, developed the capacity to produce ePub3 files which conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA, and became a signatory of Accessible Book Consortium's Charter for Accessible Publishing. This is a story of collaboration with organisations across various sectors and continents, which demonstrates that even a small press can make accessibility happen.

Biography

Dr Agata Mrva-Montoya is Publishing Manager at Sydney University Press (SUP) and Honorary Associate in the Department of Media and Communications, University of Sydney. Agata has published on the impact of digital technologies and new business models on scholarly communication and the book publishing industry in general. She is also interested in accessibility, design thinking and open access. She has been involved in the Australian Inclusive Publishing Initiative since 2018 and led the implementation of accessible publishing practices at SUP, which resulted in the press becoming a signatory of the Accessible Book Consortium's Charter on Accessible Publishing in January 2020.

Session 2 – Concurrent

2a. UEB Online: Did someone say "help"?

11:30am – 12:00pm

Presenters: Frances Gentle, President, International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment; Josie Howse, Adjunct Research Fellow for the RIDBC Renwick Centre and Craig Cashmore, Development Director, PeppaCode.

Abstract

Australia and New Zealand were among the early adopters of Unified English Braille (UEB) and as a result, developed training and support materials and certification procedures to facilitate a systematic transition to UEB by education departments and schools, braille production centres and libraries, and organisations supporting touch readers. The RIDBC Renwick Centre established a design team in 2013 to develop a series on UEB online training programs as a means of supporting the learning of UEB by educators, braille teachers and families – basically anyone supporting braille learners and consumers. Between 2014 and 2021, RIDBC has released two UEB literary training programs and three UEB mathematics training programs – go to UEB Online: uebonline.org

Subscribers to the UEB Online training programs are situated in every continent. They possess a diverse range of digital literacy skills, and vary in their prior knowledge of braille and access to the internet and technology. A review of the email requests has identified particular patterns of difficulty with navigating the UEB Online website and completing the braille lessons.

In this presentation, the UEB Online design team will explore some of the common challenges and lesson errors, and will introduce a set of practical support videos that address such topics as how to complete a lesson, what to do if things go wrong, keyboard check, and how to use the website accessibility options.

Biographies

Frances Gentle, AO, PhD, is a member of the academic and research staff at the RIDBC Renwick Centre, Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children's Renwick Centre (Australia); and holds conjoint positions with Macquarie University and the University of Newcastle. Frances is also President of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI); Co-President of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI).

Josie Howse, PSM, is an Adjunct Research Fellow for the RIDBC Renwick Centre and former Manager of the Braille & Large Print Services, NSW Department of Education. Josie has had extensive experience in braille code development both in Australia and at an international level. Josie edited the original *UEB Braille Primer: Australian Edition,* 2006 and was co-editor of the *UEB Australian Training Manual,* 2016. Josie has authored the trilogy of UEB Online Mathematics training manuals. She has published in *the British Journal of Vision Impairment*, and has presented in Germany, South Africa, Thailand, Fiji, New Zealand and the USA.

Josie and Frances are recipients of the Round Table Lifetime Achievement Award.

Craig Cashmore holds an Engineering Degree in Telecommunications and has worked in the software development industry for over 30 years, holding senior software design, software architecture and technical management positions in companies including Jtec, Ericsson and LongReach Networks. More recently Craig founded PeppaCode, a web and app development business focused on 'out-of-the-ordinary' strategic web and software development for small business, start-ups and educational institutions. Some of Craig's achievements at PeppaCode include the successful launch of UEB Online for RIDBC and a vehicle tracking and management system for a bus operator. Craig continues to work on new and innovative projects using modern web technologies.

2b. Virtual Music School: access for all through an online approach to braille music.

12:00pm – 12:30pm

Presenter: Dr Wendy Richards, Braille Music Specialist, BLENNZ.

Abstract

Virtual Music School is the new and improved version of BLENNZ music school.

In response to COVID and New Zealand's nationwide lockdown in 2020, a new online format of delivery emerged and continues to play a vital role in the musical life of young learners who are blind and low vision in New Zealand. Following on from the changes made during this period, the music school programme is now presented in a hybrid format with students' on-campus and online at the same time. This has resulted in greater access to music braille teaching and learning across the country.

This presentation will outline the music school programme as it functions today, with reference to some of the challenges when engaging in group music making online, and the positive changes that have been permanently adopted. It will conclude with a view to the future, looking towards new and exciting options for our learners.

Biography

Dr. Wendy Richards teaches music at Blind and Low Vision Education Network New Zealand (BLENNZ) where she specialises in music braille pedagogy. Her recent research explored the pedagogical potential of Music Learning Theory principles and practices for learners who are blind. It resulted in a new approach to teaching and learning music braille.

2c. I Can Do Braille.

12:30pm – 1:00pm

Presenter: Christine Casey, Head of Department, Braille Advisory Service, Statewide Vision Impairment Services.

Abstract

The I Can Do Braille program, commenced in 2021 and delivered as a partnership between the Statewide Vision Impairment Services (SVIS) team, specialist teachers of the vision impaired (TVIs and AVT-VIs) and school-based staff, supports the teaching and learning of braille for students working to attain foundational literacy skills. Using songs, hands-on activities, games, crafts and stories, the program gives students the opportunity to explore and create while developing the ability to read and write braille letters and early contractions. Participating schools are provided with flexible units of work, each based around a given letter or contraction, which include a variety of activities and can be adapted to meet the individual needs of their specific learner.

Copies of selected books from the Ozzie Dots series, along with sample worksheets and audio recordings of songs, guided reading exercises and demonstration activities aligned to the content of each unit are supplied. Schools are responsible for delivering the program, in collaboration with their TVI or AVT-VI, as well as for the collection and production of recommended resources.

Regular contact between all parties supporting the implementation and development of this program is predominantly maintained through email and online meetings, which facilitate opportunity for sharing and collaboration and assist in alleviating feelings of isolation.

This presentation will explore the development and implementation of this program and explore anecdotal evidence of its impact upon the teaching and learning of braille in the Queensland context.

Biography

As Head of the Statewide Braille Advisory Service, **Christine Casey** is responsible for leading initiatives to support the teaching and learning of braille within the Queensland Department of Education. Having directly taught over 80 braille-using students, both within Australia and abroad, Christine believes in playful braille teaching programs, which foster fun and early success. Herself a touch reader, Christine is a passionate advocate for

braille and the independence and opportunities proficiency in the code provides people who are blind or have low vision.

Session 3 – Concurrent

3a. No Accessibility, no buy

11:30am – 12.00pm

Presenter: Greg Alchin, Director, All Equal Title and Manisha Amin, CEO, CFID.

Abstract

Closing the loop on ensuring everyone has equal access to information and services is everybody's responsibility and it has has just got easier. International standards for creating as well as assessing the accessibility of information and services have been in place for well over a decade. The next step is making the decision to only buy content and services that are up to those standards. Just as we would not buy a car that is not built to safety standards, no longer should we purchase anything digital that is not up to accessibility standards. Now, to help make buying accessible content and services easier we have Australian Standard (301 549). In this presentation we will examine:

a)   What is the Australian standard for including accessibility requirements into the procurement process. (301 549).

b)   How using 301 549 builds upon international accessibility standards (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) and supports United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), the Disability Standards for Education (DSE) and the Marrakesh Treaty.

c)   What are the benefits for individuals and organisations in using 301 549?

d)   How to easily use the standard to remove barriers.

e)   Who you can work with to become inclusive shoppers.

Biographies

Greg Alchin is an award-winning inclusive design specialist, author, educator and disability advocate with over 30 years' experience across education, community, commercial and government contexts. Greg's rich and diverse experiences provide him invaluable insights which can be applied from one context into others and is sort by local teachers through to the United Nations. Underpinning Greg's experience is his own visual impairment, industry certification by both Apple and Microsoft and post graduate studies in accessibility. All of this, enables Greg to speak with authenticity and authority on inclusively designed strategies that inspire inclusion through innovation.

Manisha Amin is the CEO of the Centre for Inclusive Design. She has experience across UX, Technology marketing and social inclusion practice.

3b. Impact of Smart Speakers and Voice Assistants –

Case study of Blind Low Vision NZ Alexa Library Skill.

12:00pm – 12:30pm

Presenter: Jarek Beksa, CEO, Sonnar Interactive | Media Design School (Lecturer) and Thomas Bryan, National Technology Advisor, Blind Low Vision NZ.

Abstract

Developments in technology have the potential to improve the independence of people with disabilities. For people who are blind or have low vision who use these forms of adaptive technology, alternative assistive technology is often costly. However, Gill (2017) suggests that voice assistants such as Amazon Alexa are a low-cost solution to meeting their needs.

Blind Low Vision NZ (formerly The Blind Foundation) worked with Sonnar Interactive to create a third-party library skill for the Amazon Alexa voice assistant to provide voice activated audio content access to its members as an alternative to current CDs and mobile application solutions.

Blind Low Vision NZ launched their Alexa Usability Study with 40 participants to investigate:

1)   Whether Amazon Alexa virtual assistant appeals to Blind Low Vision NZ clients.

2)   Whether the Blind Low Vision NZ Library Skill appeals to Blind Low Vision NZ clients as an audio book and magazine delivery service.

3)   Whether the Amazon Alexa and Blind Low Vision NZ Library Skill can increase:

- Connectivity: feeling more connected to family, friends, and the community

- Access to Information: users' ability to access information

- Self-Reliance: more control in the hands of the reader, where they can choose what information they want to consume, where they want to consume it.

This presentation will summarize usability study results and findings and discuss future developments.

Biography

Jarek Beksa has worn many hats in his career: programmer, researcher, academic lecturer, founder, designer, producer and sound engineer. Since 2009 he has designed and developed 35 applications, spanning from apps for visually impaired, through games and stories for kids to B2B applications. Jarek is passionate about sound, user experience,

games and interactive storytelling He is a founder of Sonnar Interactive – New Zealand's leading Voice Application studio and creator of Sonnar Library - global, voice-activated library for people with reading disabilities. He has completed his PhD study about designing accessible interfaces in video games at Auckland University of Technology. In 2020 he became New Zealand's first Alexa Champion.

Thomas Bryan over the last 35 years or so has held a number of positions ranging from Instructor, National Manager, and National Services Manager for Blind Low Vision NZ. He believes that access to accessible information, goods and services are essential in order to live a life without limits. Be it accessing books, websites, home appliances, and or undertaking daily tasks such as accessing public transport, entertainment and getting around our communities. In the last few years, Thomas's focus at work has mainly been in the areas of accessing the library service, smart ticketing for a national integrated ticketing system, and how technology can assist with wayfinding and accessible home appliances.

Outside of work, he hosts a local radio show talking to key contributors who are involved in creating a more accessible society. Thomas is also a trustee for the organisation who produces Audio Description and Captioning for TV. In this rapidly changing world it's even more essential that information, goods and services are accessible for all.

3c. The Vision Australia Online Library, re-imagined.

12:30pm – 1:00pm

Presenters: Sara Bloedorn, Vision Library Manager and Andrew Furlong, Library Technology Support Manager | Vision Australia.

Abstract

This presentation will provide an overview of the Vision Australia Library service and the innovative and collaborative new features that are being introduced. The revamped service meets the needs of more people who will have access to a broader range of accessible material as well as provide convenient new ways to read.

The presentation will provide practical examples of the way people can discover new content and read using the new i-access Library website, apps and other innovations.

Biography

Sarah Bloedorn is the Vision Australia Library Manager. With many years of practical experience working in Libraries, Sarah has a passion for providing quality literacy building programs, especially for young people.

Andrew Furlong is the Library Technology Support Manager. With a technical background and over 25 years' experience in alternative format production, Andrew is focused on leveraging technology to ensure anyone can enjoy reading, and have access to information regardless of their circumstances.

Session 4 – Plenary

4. Climate change: Human rights and empowerment of persons with print disabilities.

1:30pm – 2:00pm

Presenter: Dr Frances Gentle, President International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment.

Abstract

Disability-inclusive human rights approaches to climate change are an important component of the UN Education for Sustainable Development program. Frances will present a brief overview of the current science around climate change, and discuss its implications and challenges for people with print disabilities in Australia. Informed by a review of recent climate change publications by United Nations agencies, researchers and the global disability community, ICEVI has prioritised Climate Change Education for persons with vision impairment and other disabilities. Frances will detail ICEVI's involvement and the potential role for the Round Table in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific region.

Session 5 – Concurrent

5a. 3D printing for accessible graphics: A progress report.

2:00pm – 2:30pm

Presenter: Professor Kim Marriott, Monash University.

Abstract

Through a generous Linkage Grant from the Australian Research Council, researchers from Monash University's Inclusive Technology group have partnered with Round Table, the Department of Education and Training Victoria, the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, Guide Dogs Victoria and the Royal Society for the Blind to investigate the use of 3D printing for access to graphics by people who are blind or have low vision.

Now mid-way through the three-year project, we will share our work done to date and next steps for the future. At last year's Round Table Conference we presented a series of 3D printed maps in a very active workshop. We will summarise the feedback on these maps and the learnings from more formal studies. We have also been exploring the use of 3D printed materials to support tactile literacy in early touch readers. Finally, we will share more general learnings about what works (and what doesn't work) for the design, production and delivery of 3D printed models for accessibility.

Biography

Professor Kim Marriott has extensive experience in participative end-user focused research and the innovative use of IT technologies for accessible graphics provision. He is a Monash University lecturer and internationally renowned researcher with over 200 publications. Kim received his PhD from The University of Melbourne and worked at the IBM TJ Watson Research Center before joining Monash in 1993

5b. Resources developed after researching Braille fluency rates around Australia and New Zealand:

Materials designed for parents and preschool/school staff to learn the UEB Code, while reading to their young one with a vision impairment.

2:30pm – 3:00pm

Presenter: Tricia d'Apice, Lead Consultant: Vision Impairment, NextSense, Connected Services.

Abstract

Some of the oral reading fluency research results that took place in 2017-18, will be highlighted in a PowerPoint Presentation.

Resources that have been specifically produced to try and reduce the fluency gap, will be demonstrated. These will be available for perusing on completion of the presentation.

Biography

Tricia d'Apice, Recipient of the NSW Premier's Teacher's Scholarship in 2016, which enabled the research to take place.

5c.   Canute 360: A nine line revolution in refreshable Braille

2:30pm – 3:00pm

Presenter: Ed Rogers, Managing Director, Bristol Braille Technology CIC.

Abstract

Canute 360 is a 360 cell Braille e-book reader and display. It was developed as a collaboration between Bristol Braille Technology and a new community of Braille readers called the Braillists Foundation to increase increase people's access to Braille whilst dramatically decreasing the cost.

This presentation will explain how the Canute works, how the price was reduced to AU$9 per cell, and the benefits of having nine lines of refreshable Braille at your finger tips. It will

look at the pleasure of reading full paragraphs, dramatically increased accessibility of spreadsheets and other tables, pairing with screen readers and Duxbury DBT, maths, music, graphs and tactile graphics.

Finally the presentation will explain how this development effort was driven by the joint determination of a not-for-profit company and a community charity to expand literacy, education and employment, and explore how Canute is intended to help achieve that.

Biography

Ed Rogers is the Managing Director of Bristol Braille Technology CIC and Trustee of the Braillists Foundation CIO. He is sighted, British and graduated as an animator in 2009 before dedicating himself to the invention of more affordable Braille technology.

In 2011 he founded BBT in Bristol, UK, after several years building prototype single line Braille displays in his own time.

The Canute project began late 2012 when BBT changed its approach; away from the cheaper single line display race, towards the more radical solution of affordable multiline refreshable Braille.

Ed and several blind and sighted friends set up the Braillists community in 2014. The aim was to promote new Braille projects. Since then it has grown to over 800 subscribers from across the world, with upwards of 60 active members attending online events every week. Its motto is, "More Braille!"

Session 6 – Concurrent

6a. How COVID-19 is Impacting Education in the U.S. and Canada:

The Challenges, Successes and Unanswered Questions.

2:00pm – 2:30pm

Presenter: Dr L Penny Rosenblum, AFB Director of Research.

Abstract

In March 2020 with the quick shift from education primarily in brick and mortar buildings to online, students with visual impairments, including those with additional disabilities and deafblindness, found themselves having to access education virtually. The impact on the students, family members, teachers of students with visual impairments, and O&M specialists was the focus of two studies, *Access and Engagement*. In the first data were collected in April-May 2020 and in the second November 2020. During the session the presenter will highlight both the successes and challenges of education during a pandemic and the recommendations that have been put forth.

Biography

Dr. Rosenblum is the Director of Research at the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) in the United States. She is a teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) who spent more than 20 years preparing TVIs. Her areas of research include braille codes, nondriving, guide dog usage, technology in the workplace, and most recently the impact of COVID-19 on those with vision loss. Dr. Rosenblum has published widely and presented throughout the United States. In 2014 she had the privilege of presenting throughout Australia including at the Round Table. She lives in Tucson with her husband Dennis.

6b. Digital accessibility and learning opportunities.

2:30pm – 3:00pm

Presenter: Dr Andrew Arch, Principal Consultant, Digital Accessibility with Intopia.

Abstract

Opportunities to learn about accessibility are increasing. At the same time digital accessibility standards are continuing to evolve and new, complimentary, standards appearing to support procurement and other fascist of accessibility implementation. This presentation will cover opportunities to learn about digital accessibility in addition to looking at the future via standards development.

Biography

Dr Andrew Arch is a Principal Consultant with Intopia and has been working in the field of digital accessibility for over 20 years. During this time, he established the digital access team at Vision Australia, worked on ageing and disability at the W3C in Europe and as the senior accessibility and inclusion expert in the Australian Government, including at the Digital Transformation Agency. Andrew is also a long-term participant in the Education and Outreach Working Group of the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative and Chairs the ICT Accessibility Committee at Standards Australia.

6c. The Place for Easy English for full information access –

VisAbility's Continuing Journey into Easy English

3:00pm – 3:30pm

Presenter: Leone Carroll, Braille Production Officer, VisAbility.

Abstract

We need to ensure that the written information we produce will reach the broad array of abilities that is in our communities – that levels of English-language literacy and tactile literacy are considered when we consider mode of access and format.

Easy English provides access to the meaning of written information for people with a low level of English-language literacy. This includes a wide range of people with disabilities, as well as people from ATSI and CADL backgrounds, and sign-language users. It converts the language and presentation of written materials to a level that can be more easily understood than the complex language often used in our written materials. It draws on the benefits of multi-modal presentation by including the use of directly-related images to support the written information.

This presentation will provide working examples of the different language formats which are available to improve understanding of our written information – comparing complex language, Plain Language, and Easy English. It will include discussion of the relevance of Easy English and its use of images to touch readers, with consideration of the levels of tactile literacy.

Why not enable every member of our community to have their say and to understand what we have to say?

Biography

Leone Carroll is a certified braille transcriber, working in VisAbility's Accessible Information Service for almost 3 years, providing braille transcription, tactile image production and Easy English services. Leone originally trained as a Speech Pathologist and worked in that profession for over 20 years in Victoria, Western Australia, and Malaysia. She worked in hospital settings in adult rehabilitation until moving back to Perth in 2016 and moving into the Disability sector.

Session 7 – Plenary

Round Table's 40th Year Anniversary.

3:30pm – 4:00pm

September 1981 was the month in which Simon & Garfunkel reunited to play a free concert in front of 500,000 people in Central Park, New York; the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women came into effect, but also, in that month, Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities (RT) first met. It was Almost 40 years ago!

We are very fortunate to have some of the early pioneers of RT to help us both reflect on the history of RT and to also tell us about why it was important for an organisation that became known as RT to be created. At the time of writing this Abstract those venerable individuals include John Berryman, Mary Schnackenberg, Jan Smark Nilsson, Jennie Berryman (née Pitt), and Bill Jolley.

We expect that this session will be both entertaining and historically instructive in our quest to unlock the details of RT's creation and its subsequent contribution to access to information of people with print disabilities.

Tuesday, 18 May 2021

Session 8 – Plenary

8a. Inclusive Technology Design to Support Students with Print Disabilities.

9:30am – 10:00am

Keynote Presenter: Troy Waller, Learning Delivery Specialist, Accessibility Lead, Microsoft in Education.

Abstract

The diversity of learning needs demands schools and systems provide inclusive, accessible learning environments that inspire confidence and encourage independence differently for each student. In this session, you will learn how Microsoft tools facilitate personalisation and engaging learning experiences for students with the Inclusive Classroom tools. You will hear how these tools encourage the personalisation of learning, increased independence, and a reduction of stigma for those with various print disabilities. The presenter will share a live demo of Microsoft's Immersive Reader, now available for free across various apps and platforms.

Biography

Troy Waller, M.Jour., M.Ed., is a Learning Delivery Specialist & Accessibility Lead for Microsoft Education Australia. He works directly with teachers and school leaders to better reach learning outcomes and transform classroom time through technology. He helps schools plan and implement long to medium-term professional development strategies around the use of educational technologies. He leads both virtual and face-to-face sessions inspiring teachers towards the digital transformation of education. Troy is passionate about how technology can be used to make classrooms more equitable and inclusive and worked with numerous schools around the country to achieve this. He taught in Asia for over a decade, working for both government and International Schools before returning to Australia

in 2012. His knowledge extends from the Australian Curriculum to the International Baccalaureate.

8b. A snapshot on where we are with audio description and what are the next steps.

10:00am – 10:30am

Presenter: Emma Bennison, Chief Executive Officer, Blind Citizens Australia.

Abstract

In December 2019 the Australian Government announced that it would provide funding for the introduction of Audio Description (AD) on Australia's Public Television Networks. These services were implemented from July 1st 2020.

While the provision of Audio Description by both the ABC and SBS has been welcomed and widely used by those who have access to suitable TV receivers, there is still much to be done to ensure that AD is available across all broadcast media and that it meets the real needs of people who are blind, vision impaired or have other disability.

This presentation will reflect briefly on the 25 year history of advocacy for Audio Description on TV and will focus on the challenges that remain to ensure that Audio Described television meets the needs and expectations of its target audience.

Biography

Emma Bennison is the CEO of Blind Citizens Australia, the national representative voice of Australians who are blind or vision-impaired. To find out more about Blind Citizens Australia's work, visit the BCA website: www.bca.org.au.

A passionate advocate for the rights of people with disability to lead full and productive lives, Emma takes every opportunity to challenge the myths and misconceptions which too often hinder people with disability from reaching their full potential. Prior to joining Blind Citizens Australia, Emma spent five years as CEO of Arts Access Australia, the peak national body for arts and disability.

8c. Access to plots, charts, and graphics using sonification.

10:30am – 11:00am

Feature Presenters: Jeff Cooke and Dr Garry Foran, Swinburne University of Technology.

Abstract

Plots, charts, and graphics are an effective means to convey information and are presented in printed and electronic material ranging from product advertisements, to bank statements, scientific data analysis, and meeting presentations. For those with vision impairments, much of this information is missed or often only the overall concepts are conveyed. For those without vision impairments, much of the material may be also be missed, the data is confusing, more information on the data points is needed, etc. One of our astronomy programs is designed to catch the fastest-evolving explosions in the Universe using over 80 telescopes from all over the world and in space. The program requires very fast data analysis of large amounts of data and pushes technology to the extreme to understand the data quickly to make fast decisions on detected events before they fade away forever. This work has enabled 1D, 2D, 3D, and 4D analysis of data using various methods and one result has been to develop tools to sonify plots, charts, and graphics. Sonification is the conversion of data to sound in a manner that renders the information contained in the data understandable. We are combining our sonification tools with modern plot digitisation techniques to enable the sighted and visually impaired to hear plotted information in real time. As a result, audience members at talks will be able to hear the plots using their laptop trackpads (for instance) as the plots are being presented (or at a later time). In addition, these tools will enable everyone to understand printed and electronic plots, charts, and graphics in everyday life.

Biography

Jeff Cooke is an Associate Professor at the Centre for Astrophysics and Supercomputing at Swinburne University, Melbourne Australia and a Chief Investigator for the Centre of Excellence for Gravitational Wave Discovery (OzGrav).

Cooke leads research programs that study how galaxies form and evolve from the Big Bang until present day and he has discovered the most distant supernova explosions in the Universe (back to the first stars to form after the Big Bang). His DWF program coordinates over 80 telescopes on every continent and in space to search for the fastest bursts in the Universe. The DWF program integrates all areas of astronomy, particle physics, supercomputing, data science, data visualisation, and data sonification to work together toward a common goal. This research is the impetus for the data sonification work presented here that is being extended to other applications.

Dr Garry Foran - after losing his sight to a degenerative retinal condition, Garry retired from his positions as Scientific Manager of the Australian Synchrotron Research Program and Principal Research Scientist at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation. Embarking on a new career path, in 2016 Garry enrolled in a PhD in the Centre for Astrophysics and Supercomputing at Swinburne University, where he studies relationships between the light from distant galaxies and their physical and spatial properties. In addition to his galaxy research, Garry is active in a collaboration that is developing sonification tools that facilitate the management and analysis of astrophysical data using sound.

Session 9 – Conference Supporter Session

Session 10 – Concurrent

10a. BindiMaps – Wayfinding for everyone, everywhere.

12:00pm – 12:30pm

Presenter: Dr Anna Wright, CEO, BindiMaps.

Abstract

BindiMaps is a smart phone application that allows anyone to navigate unfamiliar places (both indoors and outdoors) independently. With input from Guide Dogs, Vision Australia and the Royal Society for the Blind, BindiMaps has also been optimised to be used with voice over so that the solution is truely universally designed. This presentation will showcase BindiMaps, our story and our journey, as well as what BindiMaps can do. We look forward to an interactive discussion with the audience, so that we can identify additional features that can be integrated for those with a print disability.

Biography

Dr Anna Wright is the CEO and cofounder of BindiMaps. Anna has a PhD in finance, and has enjoyed a long career in both industry and academics in the business development and valuation. Following serious issues with her own eye sight (a condition that will leave her blind in time) Anna started working on a way to allow everyone to navigate the insides on unfamiliar buildings, and so BindiMaps was borne.

10b. Access To Education: A consumer perspective.

12:30pm – 1:00pm

Presenter: Jane Britt, Acting General Manager Projects and Engagement, Blind Citizens Australia.

Abstract

This presentation discusses education access from a blindness perspective. In particular, Jane reflects on Blind Citizens Australia's recent policy work in the area of education access. She draws on personal educational experiences, to offer a unique and thought-provoking presentation on what's changed and what remains the same in relation to education access in 2021.

Biography

Jane Britt has a unique blend of personal experience with disability; expertise in the disability sector and a passion for advocacy and human rights. Jane is current Acting General Manager, Projects and Engagement, and National Policy Officer at Blind Citizens Australia, a disability-led organisation, where over 75% of the staff and 100% of the board have lived experience of vision impairment or blindness. She is a graduate of Vision Australia's Graduate Start program in Service Innovation and Design, and has worked with the Disability Leadership Institute as an Engagement Guru and as a freelance writer for the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) and Eureka Street.

Jane is an Non-Executive Director and active member with Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) and member of the Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) Steering Committee for the LEAD project. Jane has also been a member of the Reference Group for Deafblind Australia and is a Founder of Achilles Brisbane, a not-for-profit organisation assisting people with disabilities to lead an active lifestyle.

Jane has recently been awarded a 2020 Vision Australia Award for her commitment to advocacy. The awards acknowledge people and organisations who contribute time and resources to support the work of Vision Australia and the wider blind and low vision community.10c.   Accessible Communications during a Pandemic

1:00pm – 1:30pm

Presenter: Jamie Lowe, General Manager of Communications, Media and Marketing, National Disability Insurance Agency

Abstract

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a world-first, once in a generation reform. It is an insurance-based scheme for people with disability that ensures all Australians with permanent and significant disability can access the supports and services they require to assist them to pursue their goals.

As part of delivering the NDIS, there has been considerable improvements in the ways that the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), the agency that delivers the NDIS, communicates with participants, their families and carers, and the community.

In late 2019 and early 2020, the NDIA commenced a series of campaigns designed to build NDIA staff capability to produce increasingly accessible communication products. This included an internal accessibility campaign, implementation of plain English standards, and aligning participant products to new standards. The presentation will explore some of the campaign successes and challenges.

The presentation will also explore how the capability that was built, combined with the launch of the new website in January 2019, positioned the NDIA to provide accessible, timely and up-to-date information during the COVID-19 pandemic. The NDIA is committed to leading government agencies in demonstrating how government services can be accessible for all.

Biography

Jamie Lowe is the General Manager, Communications and Engagement Division of the National Disability Insurance Agency. Jamie holds a Bachelor of Law degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree and was senior adviser to two Commonwealth Attorneys-General.

Jamie has held various senior executive positions in Commonwealth and ACT Government departments. Within a predominantly law and justice environment, Jamie has led multidisciplinary teams in the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate to deliver major policy reform and program design for government.

As a parent of a child with a disability, Jamie has a strong and personal commitment to the right of all Australians with a significant and permanent disability and their families to participate fully in their communities.

Session 11 – Concurrent

11a. The results of research

in sonification, interfacing, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and astronomy.

12:00pm – 12:30pm

Presenter: Yuma Antoine Decaux, Recipient of the 2019 Holman Prize for Blind Ambition, Co-Founder of OSeyeris.

Abstract

After a year involving podcast recording in various countries across the world, an intense year of research into the content recorded, and a participation at the World Sonification Chat group involving many experts in astrophysics, space and accessibility, Yuma would like to share a graph tool which works in the vertical of astronomy for all. A conjunction of

interface, design and AI that uses science and its requirements as a basis for providing audio interactivity in 3D surround sound.

AstreOS, and its companion site, mailing list and network, shares the same ideals as those who produce a product which does not look at business plans, but passion. The user's passion.

Website: asteros.space and Investor contact: leah@astreos.space

Biography

Yuma Antoine Decaux, one of the recipients of the Holman blind adventurer's prize, will present the results of his journey across the globe with the objective of making astronomy and astrophysics accessible with a new design sense permeating a platform that is initially visually stunning.

11b. Action Audio: Accessible Sports Broadcasting.

12.30pm – 1.00pm

Presenter: Cagatay Goncu, Action Audio, Monash University.

Abstract

Billions of people in the world watch sport media broadcasts to follow their favourite sports, e.g. tennis, soccer, cricket, golf, or Olympic games. They enjoy the actions captured by cameras and microphones on and around the fields. They also socially engage with other fans at home, at a local club, in a stadium and on social media.

However, if you are blind or have low-vision (BLV), your overall experience is limited. While TV is providing the state of the art experience for sighted people, BLV need to tune in to radio broadcasts. Although used widely by BLV, radio can not provide all the actions in real time, in particular the movement of the objects such as the ball, puck, and players, ball kids, referees etc.

Action Audio aims to provide frameworks that will make sport media broadcasting accessible to BLV. It will provide alternative modalities and allow BLV access all the actions on sports broadcasting. It will also create technologies that let people experience the events live in sport venues.

Biography

Cagatay (Chatai) Goncu is a Research Fellow at Monash University, Faculty of IT, Australia. He is also the co-founder of RaisedPixels whose are developing apps that let people read accessible graphics on mobile devices.

Chatai is passionate about developing technologies that let people access information anywhere without any barriers. His interests are in human computer interaction, tangible

interfaces, computer vision and sport analytics. He likes doing research, and enjoys developing software tools and hardware devices.

11c. Discovering Sonification – Experience

1.00pm – 1.30pm

Presenter: Phia Damsma, Creative Director, Sonokids Australia.

Abstract

This presentation aims to give delegates a personal experience with basic sonification, and to create awareness about this technology's great potential for access to information and the importance of the creation of early learning opportunities.

Sonification, the use of non-speech audio to represent information or data, can take many shapes and forms. It can support navigation, orientation, and engagement. Importantly, sonification can provide alternate access to STEM education and scientific research.

Sonokids is the developer of 'Ballyland' apps to support gamified learning of digital and technology skills by students who are blind or vision impaired. 'CosmoBally on Sonoplanet' is a new app under development, which focuses on sonification concepts and skills. The reasoning behind this being that if you are introduced to the concepts of sonification from a young age, you can fully benefit from this emerging technology in your access to STEM education and in a potential future career in STEM.

In this presentation, delegates will be able to experience an interactive discovery of sonification in the context of a 'Spaceflight to Sonoplanet', "where everything and everyone is sonified". The 'chat' function of Zoom will enable you to enter short responses (optional) and wearing a headset (optional) enhances the experience. We will reflect on the result of a recent sonification survey and share news of the Education and Outreach working group of the Sonification World Chat.

Biography

Phia Damsma, MA, is Creative Director of Sonokids Australia, developers of accessible, gamified educational software that supports learning of essential STEM skills. Phia has a track record in presenting at national and international conferences, and giving training workshops on the 'Ballyland' eLearning pathway and accessible teaching of digital skills. Phia is Co-President of South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI Inc.) and Lead of the 'Education and Outreach' Working Group of the Sonification World Chat. In 2020 she was named Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau by the King of The Netherlands.

Session 12 – Plenary

12. The future of digital access: what's nearly here and what's around the corner.

1:30pm – 2:00pm:

Keynote Presenter: Dr Scott Hollier, CEO, Centre For Accessibility Australia.

Abstract

It's fair to say that the year 2020 was like no other. In the rush to pivot our personal and professional lives to an online environment, there were many challenges along the way. However, these challenges also inspired international work to consider what type of support people with a print disability need from current and emerging online technologies. As a result, there's been important international developments including the showcasing of new helpful products, the development of accessibility guidance in immersive environments, new ways to deal with CAPTCHAs and even two new digital access standards on the way. Dr Scott Hollier, W3C co-convenor for the Research Questions Task Force, will explore all these areas and provide important insights around the benefits and challenges associated with current and emerging international work.

Biography

Dr Scott Hollier specialises in the field of digital accessibility and is the author of the book 'Outrunning the Night'. With a Ph.D. in Internet Studies and senior management experience across the not-for-profit, corporate and government sectors, Scott is an internationally-recognised researcher and speaker.

Scott's roles include CEO of the Centre For Accessibility Australia, holds academic positions at Edith Cowan University and the University of South Australia, and is an Invited Expert for the W3C Accessible Platform Architectures Research Questions Task Force. Scott is legally blind and as such has both a professional and personal understanding of the importance of accessibility.

Session 13 – Concurrent

13a. Reach & Match Creative Learning to meet Educational and Therapy Goals (Endorsed by the Australian Government DFAT)

2:30pm – 3:00pm

Presenter: Mandy Lau, Designer and Founder of Reach & Match

Abstract

Reach & Match is a multi-award winning holistic learning program that has been designed through focused research and user testing to support early childhood learning outcomes and the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream Early childhood Education (ECE) services
and preschools.

In 2018-2019, Reach & Match has won an Australian Government DFAT InnovationXchange Award to partner with Save the Children and Plan International to

support over 2400 children who suffered emotional and physical trauma with the Reach & Match Inclusive Learning Program. Baseline and end line evaluations were conducted and found improvements in children's participation, learning outcomes, attendance rates and social and emotional wellbeing. During the presentation, project innovation and outcome, challenges and evaluation will be shared.

Biography

Mandy Lau is a dedicated advocate for diversity and inclusion, and a social entrepreneur and award-winning designer who specialises in social innovation and empowering people through her inclusive designs.

Mandy holds both a Bachelor of Product Engineering (First Class Honours) and a Master of Design (Monash University Vice-Chancellor's Social Inclusion Awardee).

Mandy is a Singularity University Impact Fellow in 2016-2017 (NASA Research Park) and a Unleash SDG Global Talent in 2017. Both programmes selected promising change leaders around the world, Mandy's vision is to amplify inclusion in education through research and development, technology and collaboration

13b. LEGO Braille Bricks –

a new education tool assisting blind and low vision students to learn braille through play.

3:00pm – 3:30pm

Presenters: Tony Wu, DVA and Products Advisor and Patricia Izzard, Early Childhood Specialist Teacher, Vision Australia.

Abstract

LEGO® Braille Bricks (LBB) launched in Australia in February 2021 by Vision Australia, in partnership with the LEGO® Foundation. LBB is an educational tool designed by the LEGO Foundation to support children who are blind or have low vision learn Braille. The raised bumps on each LBB have been modified to correspond to a letter or symbol of the Braille alphabet and each brick also has the printed letter or symbol to allow sighted classmates and educators learn and play alongside the child who is blind or has low vision.

This presentation outlines how the LBB was developed, the pedagogical concepts on why it's a great resource to teach Braille and how a child/school can access a LBB kit.

Biographies

Tony Wu is an Accredited Orthoptist by profession graduating in 2007. Since graduating from Orthoptics in 2007 Tony has worked at various ophthalmology clinics both in the private and public sector around Melbourne and Geelong. Tony has also worked at low vision and blindness agencies/companies, eye research and educational institutions. Tony currently works at Vision Australia as the DVA and Products Advisor, Vision Store.

Patricia Izzard is an Early Childhood Specialist Teacher, working in Vision Australia's Children and Young People team in Melbourne. Patricia is committed to delivering quality early childhood intervention services , providing specialised support to children who are blind or have low vision, their families and community services in order to help them develop the skills they will need to be successful in life's everyday activities. Patricia has worked for over thirty years in the field of early childhood education and family support services and is very excited to have almost completed a Masters of Disability Studies (specialising in Education: Vision Impairment).

Session 14 – Concurrent

14a. UV Printing, the future of Tactile Graphics.

2:30pm – 3:00pm

Presenters: Peter Le, Transcription Team Leader, Vision Australia.

Abstract

What is UV printing and how does it work? UV printing can be printed in full colour on almost any non-absorbent surface, which means more things can be made tactile. We will look at some samples produced from a Roland UV printer to get feedback on the versatility of the products.

Biography

Peter Le has been with Vision Australia for over 20 years and is the current Transcription Team Leader. Peter has a Bachelor of Science majoring in Organic Chemistry, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. He has been involved with past Round Table Guideline workgroups in Accessible Assessment, Clear Print and E-text. Peter has a diverse experience in Graphic design and Braille production. He considers himself to be a mad scientist who works in a state of controlled chaos.

14b. 3D Printing for Inclusive Classrooms

3:00pm – 3:30pm

Presenters: Navkaran Virdi, Project Officer - 3D Print, Braille and Large Print Services, Inclusive Education.

Abstract

This presentation discusses the benefits of 3D printing in the classroom, particularly for students who are blind or have low vision. 3D printing allows tailored and adaptive production of classroom resources that BVI students can use to enhance multi-modal learning, and promote open discussions. Interactive and discussion-based learning benefits all students, but particularly those with vision-based disabilities as 80% of cognitive processing is stimulated by visual cues. Concrete guidance on when to use 3D printed materials, and how teachers and educators can request them will be discussed with plenty of examples presented.

Biography

Navkaran Virdi is a Project Officer with the NSW Department of Education's Braille and Large Print Services. He is conducting practical research into the perceived and concrete benefits of 3D printed resources for students who are blind or have vision impairment. Navkaran has represented the Department's commitment to accessibility research at the International Day of Persons with Disability 2019 presentation, the Global Accessibility Awareness Day 2020 showcase, and the SPEVI 2021 conference. He has several years of experience as an Industrial Designer where he applies design thinking strategies to generate empathic outcomes.

Session 15 – Plenary

15. Introduction to UK Association for Accessible Formats

3:30pm – 4:00pm

Closing Presenter: Roger Firman, Chair, UK Association of Accessible Formats (UKAAF).

Abstract

This presentation will focus upon UKAAF, how it was formed, what it is, what we do, our current activities, strategy, membership and partnerships.

Biography

Roger Firman has been Chair of the UK Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF) since June 2020.

The day-to-day work is running his own business, Golden Chord, established in 2004. Golden Chord transcribes music and music-related materials into braille for blind and partially sighted musicians. For those who wish to read further information: www.golden-chord.com.

Roger joined UKAAF in 2012 serving on its Music Subject Area group and was elected to its Board becoming Vice-Chair in 2019. This in turn has led to close links with ICEB and its Braille Music Committee led by Jordie Howell.

Wednesday, 19 May 2021

Tutorial

3D Printing for Touch Readers: Guidelines and Discussion.

10:00am – 11:30am

Facilitator: Leona Holloway.

Workshop 1

Introducing Round Table's updated Guidelines on Producing Accessible Graphics.

12:00pm – 1:30pm

Facilitator: Annette Sutherland.

Abstract

Presented by the guidelines working group led by Annette Sutherland.

The Guidelines on Producing Accessible Graphics is an update of the Guidelines for Conveying Visual Information last revised in 2005.

It was well and truly time for these Guidelines to be revised to reflect the environment in which we are now producing visual information for touch readers, and the technologies available for both producers and end users.

Some of the updated features of these Guidelines are 3D Models, Logos, Banners, Icons and Emoticons.

Workshop 2

Australian Braille Authority – Braille Music Production

2:00pm – 3:30pm

Facilitator: Jordie Howell.

Abstract:

The ABA workshop will highlight current innovations in music production converting XML files to braille music. We will examine how both manual and automated processes work together to achieve the finished score for use at school or in rehearsal.