

Creating smart accessible media using RoboBraille

Austria – Hilfsgemeinschaft (Austrian Association supporting the blind and visually impaired): RoboBraille

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The goal of the project is to explore new smarter and easier methods to prepare and produce educational material in alternate formats (e.g., digital Braille, audio books, e-books, and other accessible documents) using RoboBraille and other relevant free ICT tools. Specifically, it is designed to further educate teachers, parents, and professional alternate media producers who are supporting people with visual and reading impairments on how to use such methods and tools. RoboBraille is a free, award-winning service, capable of automatically converting documents into alternate formats.

QUOTE:

“RoboBraille makes educational material available in alternate formats whenever and wherever it is needed, thereby paving the way for a barrier-free education for all.”

Mr. Klaus Höckner, Leader, IT-Department, Austrian Association supporting the blind and visually impaired

FACTS & FIGURES

- A curriculum to help the visually impaired to use RoboBraille has been implemented in all participating countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, and Romania).
- It is estimated that in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania more than 83,000 persons who are part of the primary target group could be reached with RoboBraille services.
- RoboBraille can be used with nothing more than an Internet connection, and is currently being used by thousands of people throughout the world.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

Visually impaired people often have difficulty accessing print materials, primarily because the development of such materials in a barrier-free format is often difficult, expensive, and time-consuming. Therefore,

people with disabilities are often less informed and lack resources compared to those who are not visually impaired.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

Partners from six European countries have explored how RoboBraille can be exploited as a learning tool in a variety of educational settings, and have published their findings in the *RoboBraille Best Practice Catalogue*. During the project, partners discovered the need to develop a practical hands-on training course aimed at improving the skills of teachers, parents, and alternate media producers so as to support people with visual and reading impairments in a timely and inclusive way. These professionals must learn to use new ICT tools, such as RoboBraille and others – especially as the development of new digital platforms and formats, such as tablet computers, smartphones, and eBooks readers, is moving rapidly forward, creating a host of new reading, writing, and learning opportunities for the visually and reading impaired.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

Partners of the project are special schools, national resource centers, colleges, universities, NGOs, disabled peoples' organizations, assistive technology providers, and private consultants. They represent the various forms and levels of the educational system as well as the ICT, accessibility, and media experts required to ensure sufficient critical mass to create courses and conduct trainings for teachers, parents, and alternate media producers who are supporting the reading and visually impaired. Other partners in new countries with new languages would be appreciated.



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tags: blind and visually impaired, ICT, data, statistics, evaluation