Editorial

The AEGIS Consortium is pleased to announce the fifth issue of the AEGIS Newsletter. The special focus of this issue is on the findings of the project’s first pilot testing phase, as well as the findings of the 1st AEGIS International Conference that took place in combination with the 2nd Pan-European Workshop / User Forum. The AEGIS accomplishments and prototypes are highlighted. However, AEGIS is not only about technology, but also about people and how their needs can be met. This is why a major topic of this issue is their opinion about what we do, expressed through interviews with some of our users who have already tried out the AEGIS developments. Finally, the 2nd international AEGIS Conference and User Forum is announced.

Please feel free to contact us for any further details, comments, or just to share your experiences in the above fields of interest.

The AEGIS consortium

AEGIS (Open Accessibility Everywhere: Groundwork, Infrastructure, Standards) is a research project funded by the European Commission, working in the area of accessibility and independent living. AEGIS develops an Open Accessibility Framework (OAF) consisting of open source accessible interfaces and accessibility toolkits for developers, alongside accessible applications and open source assistive technologies for users. AEGIS will produce this framework through user research and prototype development with current and next generation ICT. This should deeply embed accessibility into future ICT for the open desktop, rich Internet applications, and mobile devices. AEGIS results will be referred to standards organisations where appropriate, and made available under open source licenses to the greatest extent possible.
Findings of the AEGIS Pilot Testing Phase I

The 1st Pilot Phase of AEGIS took place from April-May 2010 until the end of July 2010. 10 prototypes were tested in total with 185 users having various types of impairments, 7 RIA developers and 56 experts of all clusters (i.e. production centre representatives, accessibility evaluators, tutors, carers, etc.). The tests were carried out in the 4 test sites of the project namely: in Belgium by EPR and KUL, in Spain by FONCE, in Sweden by SU-DART and in the United Kingdom by ACE and RNIB).

The 1st Pilot Phase of AEGIS encompassed also a technical validation of the 5 most mature prototypes.

6 out of the 10 prototypes tested have been fully developed in the context of AEGIS, namely the “Accessible Contact Manager and Phone Dialer” by FVE/UPM; the “Concept Coding Framework OOo Symbols” by SU-DART and FPD (CCF Symbol Support plugin for OpenOffice.org Writer), the “DAISY Production” by KUL, the “GNOME Shell Magnifier” by ATRC/IDRC, the “Haptic RIA maps” by CERTH/ITI and the “AEGIS RIA Developer tool” by CTU and Oracle.

The other prototypes have been developed beyond AEGIS and were selected for testing, either because they are considered as a basis for future relevant AEGIS implementation or because their testing practically constitutes the first step of further development. These consisted of the “Open Speech Access to the GNOME Desktop environment” by Oracle and RNIB, the “AIM Real-Time Instant Messenger” by AOL, the “Oratio for Blackberry” by RIM and finally some T(Ext)T(o)S(peech) sample files prepared by SILO for language evaluation.

The testing was conducted on the basis of an in-depth iterative evaluation framework and analytical experimental plans per prototype. The evaluation approach followed in AEGIS encompasses all types of users that are interfering directly or indirectly with its solutions. This is the reason for applying several different processes, such as observation methods combined with performance testing, focus groups, etc.

The detailed experimental plans were formulated for each test site and for each prototype. Training courses, supported by training manuals were provided (online and offline) in each test site, before the initialisation of the testing.

AEGIS has tried to gather both subjective and objective measurements even from this testing phase; not aiming to evaluate the users’ performance, but on the contrary, evaluating the systems’ performance through users’ interaction with them.
Therefore, specific tasks were defined for the interaction of the users with the prototypes during the first evaluation phase, during which the tests supervisors, through service diaries, monitored the users' interaction and kept notes on pre-defined measures but also free notes. On the other hand, the developers themselves, in the context of the technical validation, also measured (to the extent enabled by the maturity of the prototypes) their systems' performance, and their results have been compared and consolidated with the user trials' results.

The testing activities in AEGIS are in compliance with its Ethics Policy. Instantiated consent forms and processes for each type of impairment were developed and provided to the Local Ethics Committees, which were responsible to monitor the ethics aspects during the tests and reported back to the AEGIS Ethics Advisory Board.

Overall, the tests revealed a considerable interest from the users in the demonstrated and tested solutions of AEGIS. Users also appreciated that most of them constitute low-cost/free alternatives to commercial products, which, in many cases, they cannot afford.

Most of the prototypes got good ratings and comments, whereas room for optimization was made evident in all of them. The most significant results of the prototypes developed in AEGIS and of the TTS sample files that were provided in order to gather feedback for the respective development work of the project that would follow this first assessment of the current status, are summarised below:

**Accessible Contact Manager and Phone Dialer:** This prototype got positive feedback by users and unanimous overall appreciation by Focus groups experts. However, a lot of technical problems have been noticed, and sometimes difficulties with controlling the phone. Interoperability with communication aids was raised during the tests. Optimisation has been recommended mainly for the following: the scroll function should have a border on the side and be improved in general, an alphabet list should be added, it should be possible to adjust and customise settings, the most frequently used contacts should appear on top of the list, touch screen response should be improved, small, unclear and hard to manage screen.
buttons and also icons and texts on some displays should be improved and feedback messages should be better synchronised. The contact manager has been considered useful mainly for people with mobility impairments (MS, degenerative muscle disease) because the pictures are easy to touch as well as for elderly people, because it works with pictures instead of small characters (they do not need an “elderly phone”) and finally for persons with mild cognitive disabilities. However, there are still some navigation problems making it hard for people with manual dexterity problems.

**Concept Coding Framework Ooo Symbols:** Bliss-users and in general users familiar with the use of symbols seemed to have appreciated the most this solution. Major modifications proposed are the following: placement of the text under symbols, possibility to show symbols alone without text, possibility to present different options (multiple alternative symbols) and store user’s preferences, whereas word prediction and phrases administration would be interesting. In addition, a symbol-to-text functionality would be interesting together with the incorporation of other sets of symbols (such as Sclera, but also users’ own symbols library). Focus groups experts expressed much positive interest and reactions to having this kind of functionality available in a standard office environment such as OpenOffice.org Writer; their comments were much similar to users’ ones, while, they in addition requested for smooth interaction with TTS synthesis reading support.

*Illustration: Spanish end user testing the AEGIS prototype of the Accessible Contact Manager and Phone Dialer*
DAISY Production: This solution was unanimously seen as a good, free way to generate DAISY material through OpenOffice.org. But, it was made evident that the quality of the DAISY output is totally dependent on the quality, structure and tagging of the input document. Users were unable to find options in the prototype to select different audio compression settings. Lexicon files incorporated into the prototype would allow the user to correct errors in the audio such as pronunciation. Proposals for improvement included: improvement of set of “voices”, easier installation on networks, more graded example documents in ODT and DAISY forms, easier selection and retrieval of location of output DAISY files, provision of continuous feedback about the current stage in the execution of tasks, possibility to choose pitch and speed, etc. Focus groups experts appreciated that this is available for free and commented that support for document structure would be appreciated. Also, Odt2DAISY should enable the user to choose the voice so as not to consume resources if the user already has a TTS installed and does not want to install a different one.

GNOME Shell Magnifier: The majority of the users and experts agreed that the magnifier is a simple tool that provides ample opportunities to meet different user needs, since it allows the user to choose the most suitable configuration according to the specific preferences. The “movable lens” and the “screen edges” features were found to be very intuitive and useful. Relevant improvements proposed concern the following: keyboard commands are needed for scrolling the screen and changing the magnification level, the screen movement should be improved (should be more stable and avoid flickering), size should be customizable, a small window should be provided to let the user get an overview of the full screen, colors and contrast should be improved together with visibility options for mouse and cursor and quality of characters in large magnifications.

Haptic RIA maps: Some test sites (RNIB & EPR) did not manage to test this, due to compatibility issues with most hardware and installation problems. However, there has been a high level of interest in the idea. Recommendations given by the users encompass language support, awareness of the cardinal points they are heading to, improvement of the performance of the device to further refine the pointer and convey more sensations, availability of users’ feedback like vibration for street intersections or different kind of feedback for special points of interest. Finally, it would be very useful to the users if the application provided information about directions or near places.

AEGIS RIA Developer tool: According to the developers that tested this solution, the position of the different elements and application areas is simple and intuitive. However the description of the controls is not fully clear, at least for developers unfamiliar with these development environments. Focus groups highlighted the risk with throwing too much warnings and information at the user. Recommendations for improvement included, among other, direct editing of the styles of the components. Also, it was noticed that the application could be very useful if the description of features, functionalities and errors for the various elements are improved.
TTS sample files provided for evaluation: It is worth mentioning that most people hadn't heard of eSpeak before. In general the sample files that they had to evaluate did not convince them; they were found in their vast majority to be unintelligible, voices were often not appropriate (especially for users with cognitive, speech and language disorders). There is plenty of room for improvement of the voices, which sound artificial, somewhat robotic, and unnatural, of the content intelligibility and the speed.

The results emerging from the processing of the standard scales completed by the users (user acceptance scale, accessibility evaluation scale, etc.) and the values corresponding performance testing measures (time of task execution, number of prompts required to complete a task, etc.) are in quite absolute compliance with the above qualitative results.

In addition to the above results, users’ feedback on the process itself was that they would appreciate a simpler and shorter process, especially regarding the length of the interaction tasks they had to undergo and the subjective measuring tools they had to complete before and after the tests as well as the consent forms.

Also, the partial lack of local language adaptation of prototypes has been challenging in many cases (need for multilingual support was a typical requirement for all solutions tested). It was therefore much appreciated that the users did make a considerable effort to provide useful feedback to the test conductors/supervisors.

Some of the prototypes were still in an early stage of development with reduced functionalities that resulted in a limited evaluation of all the features expected. This was something that the AEGIS Consortium was aware of from the beginning, but it was a unanimous decision to involve end-users and experts from the beginning of implementation.
AEGIS is committed to build user-based and technical validation into all stages of the development lifecycle, from the very first prototypes until the pre-release stage.

After each phase, the evaluation outcomes will provide feedback to various design and development teams of the project, whereas the experience to be gained by a number of spread evaluation groups will be consolidated and documented appropriately in order to serve as reliable, yet raw input to standards and exploitation plans.

Finally, it should be noted, that from the early beginning of AEGIS, it has been decided to engage to the greatest possible extent the same users across all evaluation rounds and studies. It has been quite encouraging that the majority of users participating in the 1st evaluation phase were pre-committed to participate in the upcoming testing phases of the project, which is, most probably, the most positive result of the tests.

Also interested to participate in the piloting?

AEGIS organizes pilots in Belgium, Spain, Sweden, and the UK in 2011. If you are interested to participate, please contact us via info@eagis-project.eu, and we will contact you back with the necessary details.
The AEGIS 1st International Conference and Associated Events

The 132 delegates from 19 counties (5 of these countries being outside Europe) at the AEGIS Conference in Seville addressed the major economic barriers to e-Inclusion. The big AEGIS innovation discussed was the comprehensive and holistic approach to accessibility.

The conference and associated events involved end users and key industrial partners in and outside the consortium. The developing infrastructure, developer’s tools, and assistive technology prototypes being developed under an open source software license were demonstrated and examined. All three areas of the AEGIS prototypes, the computer desktop, rich internet applications and mobile solutions were addressed.

In addition to the Conference itself, there were six other related activities and meetings organised at the same event.

Exhibitions (including Poster Exhibitions): Commercial and non-profit exhibitors demonstrated a wide variety of products, projects and research.

The GNOME Accessibility Hackfest gave module maintainers and developers the opportunity to work face-to-face to further improve the accessibility of GNOME 2.32.

The User Forum provided an opportunity for the end-users of the project, people with disabilities and their representatives, as well as other stakeholders and experts, to give their technical and practical feedback about prototypes of the project solutions.

A 2nd Pan-European Workshop brought together end-users and experts in the field of assistive technologies to focus on the accessibility of desktop, web and mobile applications.

Training session on accessible authoring, DAISY and Braille introduced attendees to accessible authoring with OpenOffice.org Writer and to the extensions for creating DAISY books and Braille.

eSpeak Text-to-Speech Tuning Sessions on improving the quality of speech output produced by the open source eSpeak Text-To-Speech (TTS) engine for different languages.
The Conference

A dedicated conference website (http://www.aegis-conference.eu), linked to the main project website, was also established for the Conference, incorporating the associated events. The conference website featured the agendas, proceedings and minutes of all the events. Online and onsite registration was possible for all events. For both the User Forum and the Workshop, the agendas were provided in English and Spanish, but the official working language of the User Forum was Spanish.

At the start of the conference delegates, were greeted in the Sala de Grados of Seville University by Dr. Evangelos Bekiaris, Research Director of the Hellenic Institute of Transport of the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH/HIT) in Greece.

Papers, Keynotes and Invited Speakers

There were 18 invited papers / keynote speeches given by members of the consortium and by external experts in the field and 33 other papers were presented in two parallel sessions over the two days of the conference itself. Keynote and/or invited papers were given by:

- Jon Azpiroz: Accessibility expert in the innovation area of Vodafone Spain Foundation
- Miguel González-Sancho: Deputy Head of ICT for Inclusion Unit in the European Commission
- Peter Korn: Oracle’s Accessibility Principal - senior individual contributor on accessibility.
- Blanca Alcanda: Managing Director Technosite, focusing on technology, belongs to Fundacion Once’s Fundosa Group
- Karel Van Isacker: Consultant in the field of eInclusion
- Dr Carlos A Velasco: Manager Web Compliance Center of Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Information Technology (FIT)
- Dr. Gregg Vanderheiden: Director of the Trace R&D Center and Professor in the Industrial & Systems and Biomedical Engineering Departments at University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Jutta Treviranus: Director of Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC) and professor at OCAD University in Toronto
After the opening keynote, introductory and invited papers a round-table impromptu discussion hosted by Karel Van Isacker took place. Representatives of Industrialist, Researchers, The Specialist Press and End-Users gave off-the-cuff answers to a number of searching questions on subjects related to the main theme of the conference.

The conference then continued in parallel session for the remainder of the two days, starting and ending each day with a plenary of keynote and invited papers. The sessions were “Access on my desktop” / “Can I too?” (user/industry focus); “Rich RIA” / “Going mobile”; “Coordinating research” / “Standardisation and valorisation”.

The full proceedings of the conference can be accessed on the conference web site www.aegis-conference.eu (section 2010) with a link to the slide presentations on the SlideShare.

Prizes (an award and a Blackberry phone) were awarded for best presentation (Andrea Gaal, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, “The Open Source Screen Reader SUE - Access for the Blind by means of Training Materials”), best project in the spirit of AEGIS (Alejandro Piñeiro Iglesias, Igalia, “Making the GNOME 3.0 desktop accessible: building accessibility into GNOME Shell and its UI libraries”) and the best paper (Dionysia Kontotasiou, CERH-ITI, “Applying WAI-ARIA to open-source CMS widgets - practical application and results”).

The 2nd Pan-European Workshop

The AEGIS 2nd Pan-European Workshop took place on 6th October 2010 in the 140 seats theatre style room Sala de Grados of the University of Seville. For accessibility purposes, a dedicated space for wheelchair users was reserved close to the screens. All efforts were made to assist disabled attendees: an audio system to access the presentations for visually impaired people and sign interpreters were available to enable hearing impaired participants.

The language of the workshop was English with Spanish translation provided to facilitate the understanding and communication of those Spanish attendants that were not fluent in English.
Right after the participants’ registration and welcome coffee, the 2nd Pan-European workshop kicked off with a welcome speech by Dr. Evangelos Bekiaris. Peter Korn (Oracle), also welcomed the participants and presented in short an overview of the AEGIS technical solutions. The Open Accessibility Framework (OAF) was also presented and a summary of the prototypes that have been implemented.

Christophe Strobbe (KUL) introduced odt2daisy and odt2braille. Odt2daisy is an extension for OpenOffice.org Writer to produce DAISY books, whereas odt2braille is being used for generating Braille from OpenOffice.org.

The round table discussion, moderated by Dr. E. Bekiaris followed. At the beginning of the round table discussion, a short presentation of the concept and functions of the Open Accessibility Everywhere Group (OAEG) was given by both Dr. E. Bekiaris (CERTH/HIT) and P. Korn (Oracle).

Discussion items raised included:

“Development”: The challenges faced by developers developing accessible applications and the authors in authoring accessible documents. Funding and time restrictions seem to be the most important challenges.

“Compatibility”: Any application should suit the needs of any screen reader in the market and should be even cheaper. There is also the need to bring the developers closer to the real end-user problems.

“OAEG”: Participants to comment if, in their opinion, OAEG, being a one stop shop/federation, would work or if they are more fond of distributed portals.

“Use” concerned the challenges being faced or addressed when deploying accessibility on platforms and, also, which are the main end-user challenges around accessibility for desktop, mobile and web. It was noted that it takes too long to put things to the market. AEGIS and similar initiatives, working with open source, can speed up the process.

“Expertise”: this needs to follow technological progress: Can it have the same expertise if the solution is built in? All dealers’ training should be constantly updated.

“Testing”: In order to enable testing, good documented rules to test upon are needed.

“Commercial viability”: This is a significant challenge; architecture and design for accessibility should be in our minds and we must be able to standardise.

“Community”: How do we engage with all the communities? The common response of the audience was that we need to look for short term gains; cases that would be useful for the consumer/developer in the short term.

“Standards”: The discussion closed with some last statements about “standards”.

Feedback: The workshop was well received by the participants with high scores (≥ 4 / 5) for organisation, interest, relevance with clear presentations and there was a good reception for the developer and user tools. The lowest score 3.5 / 5 suggest that there should be more supporting materials available at future events.
The AEGIS User Forum

The 2nd User Forum proceedings of Seville can be downloaded from http://www.aegis-project.eu/images/docs/ID5.3.2_User_forum_v4.pdf.

On 6th of October, the AEGIS project organised in the University of Seville (Spain) the 2nd Pan-European User Forum, ahead of the 2nd Pan-European Workshop and 1st International Conference. The User Forum was attended by a total of 103 individuals registered, 86 of which were external to the project, and represented end-users (developers/designers) and beneficiaries (people with mobility, vision and hearing impairments), students, experts, stakeholders, researchers and industry representatives.

The User Forum kicked off with the introductory presentation by David Zanoletty from ONCE Foundation, welcoming and presenting the objectives of the User Forum, as well as thanking all the attendees for participating in the event.

After this welcome, the general presentation followed by Dr. Evangelos Bekiaris from CERTH-HIT (Project Coordinator), providing an overview of the AEGIS project. This presentation also emphasized that the project has planned four pilots (Belgium, Spain, Sweden and the UK) as well as the interest of the project in attracting additional users from these and also other countries where possible and feasible.

After these presentations, all attendees were invited to participate in one of the two parallel sessions organized to present the AEGIS solutions. The parallel sessions presented AEGIS solutions to specific user groups to get feedback from them in terms of usability, accessibility and functionality of the prototypes. Participants could thus discuss and evaluate those prototypes that related to their own disabilities.

Illustration: Presentation of the project to the User Forum attendees
In the parallel session I, Iván Carmona, from Technosite – ONCE Foundation, presented some AEGIS prototype solutions aimed at visually-impaired users and motor impaired users: GNOME Shell Magnifier, BlackBerry Platform Accessibility with a screen reader for mobiles (Oratio) and Opengazer, Head tracker-Dasher and Gesture switch. In the parallel session II, Jon Azpiroz, from Vodafone Spain Foundation, showed some AEGIS prototype solutions addressed to hearing impaired users, speech impaired users and cognitive impaired users: Real Time Text on the Desktop, Accessible Contact Manager, BlackBerry Platform Accessibility with a screen reader for mobiles (Oratio) and CCF Graphic Symbol Support in OpenOffice.org.

The event was able to convey that the user-centred design approach is a fundamental part of the AEGIS project and all its work. Additionally, the feedback received showed that the project's aims and objectives meet those expected by people in the disability field. The disability Partner organizations in the AEGIS project (ACE, EPR, SU-DART, ONCE Foundation and RNIB) are deeply involved in ensuring this end-user participation throughout the project duration. All the comments and suggestions from participants are being taken into account in order to try to respond to the users’ needs and preferences.

To summarise, below are some core findings and clarifications of the discussions that took place:

- The project will develop the contrast options in the GNOME Shell Magnifier in the next versions of the prototype. GNOME Shell Magnifier will not be available for those who do not install GNOME Shell;
- The project will actively participate in the Open Source Community;
- Oratio for Blackberry is not an AEGIS development but other open source Text-To-Speech solutions are being developed within the project.
- Dasher and OpenGazer are free and already can be downloaded by users from [www.inference.phy.cam.ac.uk/dasher/](http://www.inference.phy.cam.ac.uk/dasher/) and [www.inference.phy.cam.ac.uk/opengazer/](http://www.inference.phy.cam.ac.uk/opengazer/).
- The accessible contact manager is also going to be developed for the Java ME platform. To ensure good navigation with touch-screen devices, the targeted mobile devices should have capacitive touch-screen displays. That way, users will be able to interact with the touch screen directly with their fingers, without needing a stylus that is not error-tolerant.
- The CCF Graphic Symbol Support in OpenOffice.org will try to include support to complete phrases translations, instead of only working with word to symbol translation. The plug-in for Spanish will be developed in future versions of this solution.
Captured Conference/User Forum moments
AEGIS delivers ...

**Tekla**

In the context of AEGIS, the Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC) has just released a new Alpha version of the Tekla onscreen keyboard software for Android (0.3 alpha). The new version incorporates a full-screen switch mode and self-scanning feature that may be used to access the Android OS without much dexterity. When combined with the Tekla Shield (Bluetooth connector), the self-scanning feature will allow for external single-switch access.

You can download ([https://market.android.com/details?id=ca.idi.tekla](https://market.android.com/details?id=ca.idi.tekla)) and install the Tekla App today, and send your feedback so we can keep improving access. Remember that Tekla is an on-screen keyboard for everyone, so you can try it out even if you don't need any of the alternative access features.

**Gnome Shell Magnifier**

The Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC) has been working to add colour enhancement options to the prototype of Gnome Shell Magnifier. This magnifier is built directly into GNOME Shell, so there is no need to download and install different software.

The new prototype incorporates an “Invert Brightness” feature, as well as brightness and contrast control for red, green and blue, individually. The colour enhancement features are in addition to the magnification and crosshair features already implemented. Also, as before, Orca users can enable magnification to follow focus.
For the upcoming release of Gnome 3, the free desktop for Linux, the magnification and cross-hair features of the magnifier will be built-in, with colour enhancement available as a patch. We hope the colour enhancement features will advance from prototype to production in the subsequent release of Gnome.

**Fluid Infusion**

A new version of Fluid Infusion (1.3.1) has just been released with the participation of the Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC). The new version builds on the accessibility advancements in v.1.3 with improvements to the Uploader, Pager and Layout Reorderer components. Fluid Infusion is an application framework, built on top of jQuery, for building usable and accessible user interfaces with JavaScript. More information and demos are available on the Fluid Infusion project website [http://fluidproject.org/products/infusion/](http://fluidproject.org/products/infusion/).


**eSpeak: Improved Open Source Text-To-Speech Synthesis**

SingularLogic S.A. is working together with volunteer native speakers of several European languages to improve the performance of the free open source Text-To-Speech (TTS) Synthesizer engine eSpeak ([http://espeak.sourceforge.net/download.html](http://espeak.sourceforge.net/download.html)). Several improvements have already been made to a number of languages supported by eSpeak including English, Dutch, Spanish, Swedish and Greek, while we expect to target more improvements in the above languages as well as more languages in the months to come including German, Italian, Czech and others. Improvements mainly consist in correcting the pronunciation and intonation of words following consultation sessions with native speakers. The improved version of eSpeak, including improvements for the above languages, will be downloadable around mid-May from the AEGIS download section at [http://www.aegis-project.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=33](http://www.aegis-project.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=33), as well as from [http://espeak.sourceforge.net/download.html](http://espeak.sourceforge.net/download.html).

eSpeak is a compact open source TTS engine for a number of languages, for Linux and Windows. It uses a “formant synthesis” method. This allows many languages to be provided in a small size. The speech is clear and can be used at high speeds, but is not as natural or smooth as larger synthesizers that are based on human speech recordings.

Several languages are included in the current release of eSpeak, at varying stages of progress and performance, while there is potential for creating more languages with a relatively small amount of effort.

Help from native speakers for the above or other languages is welcome. If you would like to contribute, please address your offers to aegis@singularlogic.eu.
Haptic RIA Maps

“Haptic RIA Maps” is an open-source web application that enables haptic exploration of any map area supported by the OpenStreetMap service. All 3D map data are automatically generated by the application. Moreover all audio messages (about road names, crossroads, POIs, etc.) are automatically generated on-the-fly, taking into account cursor’s current position. During haptic exploration, the visually impaired user is informed about his/her current position via audio messages (if cursor is on a road, user can be informed about the current road name / if cursor is on a POI, user can hear the POI’s description). The user may also be informed about the distance between current position and the next crossroad (the application takes into account user’s moving direction) as well as the road names of the intersected roads. A sonification mechanism (5 different sounds with different pitch) provides a quick and easy way for realizing the distance between current position and the next crossroad. Additionally, the user can be informed via audio messages about the distance between current position and all the POIs of the map area as well as the position of each POI relative with the user’s current position (north, south, west, east, north-west, north-east, south-west, south-east). You can find this web application at: http://160.40.50.89/HapticRIAMaps/ (it has been available for evaluation since 25/1/2011).

AEGIS RIA Developer Tool

The RIA toolkits introduce new complex UI components and dynamically changing content. This brings problems especially in the area of keyboard navigation, which is essential for the overall web application accessibility. The question is how serious these accessibility problems are, what the assistive tools can manage and to what extent, and how we can efficiently fix these problems by means of implementation of the WAI-ARIA recommendations. These recommendations are actually metadata (attributes and values) which are incorporated in the HTML code of UI components. Metadata are adding important semantic information in the code of RIA application and can be used by the screen reader to present information in a proper form and offer an efficient navigation.
The AEGIS RIA developer tool will support the creation of the accessible RIA application. Accessibility support (ARIA markup) has to be incorporated in two places of the code. Firstly, it is important to use a web toolkit with accessible UI components. Secondly, it is necessary to add some additional information in the code to ensure accessibility of the whole application. It is also important to provide information about possible accessibility issues and suggest some ways how these issues can be solved.

Two prototypes of this tool have been prepared to test the concepts in user pilots. Currently, a new version of the tool is being developed that will address the issues that were raised during the usability testing. The final version will be implemented on the NetBeans platform.

**Alternate text entry system for mobile devices for users with motor disabilities**

**Dasher v2.2 for the Google Android platform:** Cambridge University and the AEGIS project are pleased to announce the release of Dasher v2.2 for the Google Android platform. Dasher is a text entry method based on advanced language modelling techniques, suitable for users including those with motor impairments and/or limited dexterity. This release allows efficient text entry with pointing or finger gestures, requiring less accuracy than onscreen or reduced-size keyboards; via tilt or accelerometer control, requiring no screen contact; or using any number from 1 to 9 buttons (physical, onscreen, or external bluetooth), including information conveyed by the timing of button pushes for users capable of such.

Standard installations allow writing in Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Swedish; support for other languages is easily achieved by downloading language definition files from the Dasher website. Dasher for Android is immediately available and may be freely downloaded from the [Android Market](http://www.AEGIS-project.eu/) or from the [Dasher website](http://www.AEGIS-project.eu/).
Otd2DAISY & Odt2Braille

Odt2braille is a Braille extension to OpenOffice.org Writer and will enable authors to print documents to a Braille embosser and to export documents as Braille files. The Braille output is well-formatted and highly customizable. More information on the Odt2braille website - http://odt2braille.sourceforge.net/.

Odt2braille is now also available on the OpenOffice.org extensions site - http://extensions.services.openoffice.org/en/project/odt2braille.

Odt2daisy is an OpenOffice.org Writer extension, enabling to export in DAISY 3 format, including support of Mathematical content conforming to the MathML standard. DAISY is an NISO Z39.86 standard for blind, visual impaired, print-disabled, and learning-disabled people. The odt2daisy extension is a direct outcome of the AEGIS project. More information on the Odt2DAISY website - http://odt2daisy.sourceforge.net/.

Odt2daisy is now also available on the OpenOffice.org extensions site - http://extensions.services.openoffice.org/en/project/odt2daisy.

Both AEGIS project outcomes odt2daisy and odt2braille have been included in Create&Convert, a package of open-source programs that can quickly translate electronic documents into an accessible alternative format. Create&Convert is devised by the JISC Regional Support Centre Scotland North & East. It helps educational institutions comply with the Equality Act 2010, which came into force on 1 October of this year.

The Create&Convert website includes a few videos that illustrate the process of creating an accessible document, exporting to DAISY and exporting to Braille. The OpenOffice.org version of Create&Convert (see "OpenWriter version") can be downloaded for free and can be run from a USB pendrive.

Odt2Braille has also been made SourceForge Project of the Month, April 2011. A complete blog was dedicated to this on http://sourceforge.net/blog/potm-201104/.
You said…

Interviews with AEGIS users

Interview with Ms. Anna Evangelinou – Greece
by Karel Van Isacker, EPR

Ms. Evangelinou has an academic background in the field of Marketing & Communications at the Athens University of Economics and Business and has been active with the Disability NOW team since 2003. Since 2005 she has been involved as a disability consultant and project manager in various EU projects concerning people with disabilities and is currently the chief editor of the Disability NOW magazine. She also maintains the electronic library of [www.disabled.gr](http://www.disabled.gr) as web administrator.

She is a personal assistance user since 2002, as she has tetraplegia (SCI: C4-C5 complete).

Disability NOW (DN) is a Greek supportive organisation (NGO) with an established European profile, mostly managed by people with disabilities. Through its own portal ([www.disabled.gr](http://www.disabled.gr)) with over 150,000 visitors per month, the organisation has established an informational gateway for people with disabilities. Among its innovative initiatives are: the printed magazine “Disability NOW”, distributed free of charge to more than 14,000 subscribers; the Disability News portal ([news.disabled.gr](http://news.disabled.gr)); the annual exhibition Autonomia EXPO ([www.autonomiaexpo.org](http://www.autonomiaexpo.org)) held every May in Athens; the Disability Business portal ([www.disabled.gr/biz](http://www.disabled.gr/biz)) with Specialized Peer Counseling Services for employment, entrepreneurship.

**Can you explain what the importance of assistive technology is for you on a daily basis to perform your daily tasks in the office of DN?**

Disability NOW is a peer-support group already using advanced information communication technologies and tools of assistive technologies (ICT/AT) for enabling digital communication and web-based working procedures. Assistive equipment supports me in every single task at work - while being at the office or working from home. Assistive technologies act as the perfect “equalizer” for workers with disabilities; everyone is able to be productive by the use of adjusted software and hardware.
What are the main difficulties you face with current assistive technologies?
Usually they do not work efficiently for demanding users/writers with physical disabilities and reduced mobility of upper limbs. Software & hardware designers still make experiments regarding the accessibility of AT equipment.

What are the main barriers you have noticed with current solutions? Are all AT readily available? Are they affordable?
When it comes to AT for people/students/professionals with disabilities, the compatibility for later browsing/software versions is always an issue. Less compatible means more typing, more effort. The cost of AT is also an important matter. In most cases users with disabilities end up purchasing AT products that do not meet their needs and at the end of the day are useless to them. For a strange reason, accessibility is considered to be expensive; however, it’s common sense that barriers always cost more.

Do you notice quality/reliability issue with some of them?
Quality issues, yes, mainly with those that are experimental versions. Moreover, technicians often do not have a solution regarding individualized accessibility problems.

How do you think AEGIS could have an impact on the current AT availability and affordability?
AEGIS is supporting open source desktop & Internet applications which are more likely to provide users with the choice of adjusting the software in an individualized way, trying out different versions and experimenting on the ways the applications can support him/her in their daily routine.

What do you think of OpenSource vs Proprietary solutions?
An employee/internet user with physical disability usually seeks for individualized solutions. There are many requirements that need to be met in order for a professional with a disability to be productive in work. In most times, the user needs to assess and identify the appropriate assistive devices for them and feel comfortable while using it. Still, proprietary products usually lack of support services; so the solution rests on the costumer’s own interest and inventiveness.

Describe a day at work and point out the devices/AT you use.
In Disability NOW’s offices we have adjusted the assistive devices in a way that we use them to their full potential. We have equipped our workstations with a large selection of state-of-the-art computing devices, screens of various sizes, different kinds of keyboards, trackballs & touch-pads for desktops and laptops, special software applications (e.g. voice recognition systems), wireless internet networks, wireless printing devices, computer-based fax machines and mass sms (text-message) services for the direct communication with our magazine’s subscribers. All of our organisation’s activities are supported by adjusted assistive technologies, as most of us have severe mobility disabilities and use electric wheelchairs throughout the day. Even our printed bi-monthly magazine “Disability NOW” is being prepared online, using a software framework centered on online real-time collaborative editing. In addition, we work closely with engineers that can modify equipment or create custom-made tools for us (e.g. special hand-straps, splints, sticks, etc) that help us in assessing the various devices.
Describe a day out and how you use a laptop, mobile, etc. with what AT etc.
AT promotes greater independence by enabling professionals with disabilities to communicate and work wherever, whenever, like anyone else. I -personally- use a light laptop for my day-to-day work tasks, with a voice recognition system and a web-camera that allows me to communicate with my colleagues while working from my home in Athens or need to contact our headquarters that are based in Thessaloniki. When I have to write an email using my keyboard or a text-message on my mobile, I use a custom-made hand-strap according to my upper limbs functional abilities. Additionally, I use the speed dial keys on my mobile and I always use alternative environmental control systems (e.g. hands-free telephone devices, air-conditioning & lights control system) while working from home.

More information on Disability Now and its various activities can be found at www.disabled.gr.

Illustration: Disability Now Logo

Interview with Luis Miguel Bascones - Spain
by Iván Carmona, ONCE Foundation

What is the profile of your disability?
Physical disability, quadriplegia, affecting the lower limbs and also the mobility of the hands. I use a motorized wheelchair.

What is your experience in the use of computers, mobile phones and the Internet?
The computer, with the support of a voice recognition software converts my orders and into commands and text, it is fundamental and marvelous as tool that helped me, since my discharge from hospital (1996), complete my university studies and work. Access to digital content and services over the Internet, combined with the computer, has represented a leap in the way of working, consultation and access to information, read, enjoy leisure, participate in discussions and interact with others. However, I only use the mobile phone for special situations, such as travelling. Above all, because I do not find them very accessible or easy to use. It would be better for me it if I could activate it using my voice, or using the computer.

Can you explain how important are support technologies in their day to day?
Give me a lever and I will move the world (Archimedes). My physical mobility is very limiting. But I enjoy an active and wide margin of personal autonomy in many tasks thanks to technology. With the voice and support of a track-ball mouse computer I can use the computer well consult, read and write.
In the field of ICT, most recently, the emergence of the electronic book with touch screen has greatly facilitated my reading. Even before this converting text to speech for me to listen to, by appropriating the technology of blind friends. The digitization of documents and books has opened up this opportunity: it offers greater versatility than earlier formats. The technology can be adapted to your personal needs, it has this potential. Then there are other more conventional support, such as a hydraulic lifter to transfer or the best, the wheelchair, my powerful Clavileño. And of course, the support of personal assistance for me to live independently.

**What are the main difficulties faced by an assistive technology user?**

The standard software (e.g. some of the desktop computer or Internet browser programs, etc.) do not follow universal design criteria or are not consistent with the voice recognition software I use. So I cannot handle them. These enabling technologies can be expensive. In some cases, assistive technologies can be complicated and break down, and then make extra work rather than simplifying your life.

**What are the main barriers that you have observed in the current solutions? Are all assistive technologies available? Are they affordable?**

There are many factors, one cannot speak in homogeneous terms of assistive technologies. One barrier is lack of knowledge. Also, in the most sophisticated technologies, a core issue is the price. We also need to choose wisely, and to have the opportunity to try them out.

**Can you comment on the quality / reliability of any of the assistive technologies you know?**

The assistive technology I use every day and find most useful is the program Dragon NaturallySpeaking voice recognition software. It’s very powerful to use, reliable and fast. Today, moreover, many devices incorporate voice recognition by default, such as operating systems or new phones.

**How do you think AEGIS could have an impact on the availability and affordability of current assistive technologies?**

When working with open source products, there can be a collective benefit when innovation and creativity are achieved as well as impact on the price of AT. In this regard, AEGIS could bring AT closer to users, facilitating social inclusion and competitiveness. The challenge is to deliver useful solutions powerful, good quality, focused on the real needs of people.

**What do you think of open source solutions versus private solutions (proprietary software)?**

I think open source innovation is preferable and has many advantages. Among them, the transparency of the code for different researchers, who can advance the work, by not increasing the cost of licensing applications, and in this sense lead greater efficiency in administration, business and users. However, sometimes the open source has not had sufficient standardization solutions and compatibility with other products.

**Specifically, what do you think of how AEGIS prototypes are being developed?**

AEGIS is developing prototypes aimed at addressing different user profiles. There is a momentum. They seem to be promising for the future, but are still immature. We need to convert them into well-tested tools.
Do you think the AEGIS project is forgetting anything important? What else would you ask AEGIS to do?

They are making a major effort to develop useful applications in the three settings for different profiles, which are also useful for many people without disabilities. I would like to ask you to pay particular attention to voice recognition, which is very much needed.

Please describe a day in their work and identifying the support mechanisms you use.

I will focus on ICT support devices. Beginning the day, my personal assistant takes care of my toilet, dressing and other tasks as “maintenance.” As this takes some time, I dedicate it quietly to prepare for the day, to think, or listen to the radio. Sometimes it’s the most creative moment of the day. Some days I go to the office, others I am home-based and telework. In both cases, I use the computer and its various applications to do tasks: email, word processor (fundamental) to write, spreadsheets, etc. Internet is central to my work, access to sources, documents, etc. Instead of a keyboard, my input device is a good microphone, a speech program. We also conduct remote instant communications messaging and videoconferencing.

I use the phone, usually fixed, a large keypad device, which I can push using my limited mobility. Lately I’ve incorporated the ebook to my work, of course, to read.

Please describe a day of your life out of work and indicate if you use your computer, mobile phone, etc. and how product support.

Out of work, my leisure time, I use virtually the same assistive technologies and products, for different purpose and content: planning trips, going to movies, dinner, watch more TV and rest, write, read, hang out with friends, do consultations and Internet purchases, phone calls.

Illustration 1: Luis Miguel Bascones at the computer (Source: EL PAÍS, S.L)
Interview with Mr. Joachim Pipping — Sweden
by Mats Lundälv, SU-DART

Joachim is a young man of 26. I meet him in his flat in a supported group home in Mölndal, a neighbouring city of Göteborg at the west coast of Sweden. Since finishing his upper secondary school. He is working in a supported employment group for the local community. Joachim has a speech and mobility impairment, and his dexterity is reduced. In spite of this, he is a very active person in many areas. He communicates effectively with a combination of body language, some manual signing and words, and with his Blissymbol chart in particular, complemented by some spelling. Joachim replies to my questions - in Swedish - by pointing to his Blissymbol chart and with occasional spelling. The replies have then been reformulated in Swedish and negotiated with Joachim, and then translated into English by the interviewer.

Can you tell us a bit about your work?
Most of my work is outdoors with gardening and such. I also spend some time writing for a newsletter that we produce.

And what are your main private interests?
Riding and sailing are the main interests. I am a member of both a riding club and a sailing association. I go riding once a week, and also to a gym training group to keep fit. Sailing is mostly in the summer together with my grandfather. In my free time I use the computer quite a lot, mostly for email and web browsing. I communicate with family and friends, and also with professionals who can help me with technical aids, rehabilitation services and so on, including you and others at DART.
This brings us into the assistive technology that you need and use: Could you please tell me what you use at work and here at home?

Both at work and home I use the software Symbol for Windows Document Maker with which I can write with Blissymbols and text. I also have a tool called ViTal with which I can read all kinds of text on the system with a good synthetic voice (from Acapela).

At home, where I use the computer a lot more, I also have a very good expanded keyboard with a joystick mouse (... a personally tailored version of "Musimax" from Olinder & Westerberg).

Do you use any additional assistive technology software?

I sometimes use SAW (Special Access to Windows open source software) with Blissymbols to write email, and I also have the talking WWAAC web browser, but it does not work that well any longer on my new Windows 7 system.

Can you describe more in detail how you use your system?

I start ViTal to have the speech, and then I open my standard mail program and read the text with the help of the text-to-speech. I can then reply or send new mail, either by starting SAW with a Bliss chart. With that I can select Blissymbols which send whole words to the mail message. More and more I also type text directly from the keyboard - with the speech to support my writing, letter-by-letter, word-by-word, and sentence-by-sentence.

When using the web, I read the text by pointing to the text with my mouse. This works OK for most pages I visit frequently, like the website of my riding club and sailing association, and news and TV pages etc.
I also use Symbol for Windows (SfW) Document Maker to sometimes write Blissymbol (and text) letters or other documents. I also have the SfW Paper Chart Maker with which I and my Speech and Language Therapist maintain and print my Blissymbol communication charts.

So you have some good AT tools. But what do you still find difficult?

It is laborious and sometimes difficult to navigate around over the text on internet pages with the joystick mouse to read it correctly. I miss the WWAAC browser with which I could step through and read the text with a cursor by just clicking on one button. That was much more convenient.

It is also difficult sometimes to get everything to work well together, especially when you need to update your system and so on.

You have both AT software that you've got prescribed and bought by the public rehab and technical aids services, and also some free software - what do you think about that?

It is good that I can get help from the rehabilitation and technical aids service with those programs that are also quite expensive - BUT you often have to wait for a long time for decisions and help - too long! It is good with free software that I can get more quickly and start using immediately. Anyway, it is a problem when they get old and are not updated to work on the latest systems. And I would like it all to work better together.

You are taking part as a pilot tester in the AEGIS project - do you think it could help with this in some way?

I don't know, I hope so. You would almost want it all to be started and built from zero again, with people working together with us users, so everything would work fine together. It would be great if AEGIS could help with this! But you would perhaps need some more years of working time? But it will probably be better with a new project that continues the work.

Are there any concrete things that you would like to see - within or outside of AEGIS?

I look forward to the Blissymbol support in OpenOffice.org that I have been testing the first version of.

I would really like to see something like a new "WWAAC Browser" that works on current systems and on more web pages - that would be a really important thing!
Interview with Gavin Griffiths—UK by Steve Griffiths on 10 March 2011 at RNIB/Action's Birmingham office.

What's your level of computer knowledge?
I'm an intermediate to expert user who builds his own computers. I like to play with hardware - the other week I bought a hard drive and a case, put them together, formatted it and set it up as an external drive.

But with software, it's just: can I use it, and off I go. When I was a kid I played around with the BBC computer, and when I took computer science at GCSE I was happy to do some coding. But now I just like to know the programmes inside out so I can get the best quality out of them. I play some games which are open source, where you can add your own missions to the game - but I'm happy to download other people's and play them. I haven't got the time, to be honest.

I'm definitely a Windows user, and I prefer Windows XP to Windows 7. I haven't played a lot with the other options such as Linux or Mac. Linux works to an extent, but the voices are not my cup of tea.

Orca is fine but the voices are a big step backwards to the 80's - we could put up with them, because we had no option, but not now everyone is so used to the better voices that are available.

What do you like to do on the computer?
I twitter - lots! And I surf the internet incessantly for information, games, shopping and music.

Lots of the games are web-based, for instance All inPlay and RS Games. With All inPlay you can play alongside sighted people; RS Games do a Linux-based system which runs alongside, behind or on top of Windows, and again the voices are a step backwards.

Are these games you download, or do you play them in a browser?
A bit of both.

And do you know if this is open source software?
I don't know or care if it's open-source. I want the games to be downloadable and playable.

What do you think about the AEGIS project - is it worthwhile, is it realistic?
I think it's got to be, for the large proportion of the blind population who are out of work and can't afford these JAWS or Window-Eyes packages. Yes, they're fantastic, but most of us can't afford them. So if it's free and open software, I think it's fantastic. It's got to be the way forward.

When I'm helping friends, I'm always trying to find them cheaper options. Most of them can't afford the big players. If someone's getting it for free, they may not be so choosy about the voices.
If they did make the voices better, could you see yourself moving to an open-source system?

I'd certainly run it alongside Windows. I'd play with it and see what I can do with it. It's a bit like, for example, Firefox and Internet Explorer - one does some things better than the other. So I'd run it alongside or beneath Windows. I'd always give things like that a try.

Anything else you think should be worked on in Orca?

I remember there were things which didn't work during our testing. I'd like to know if the things I pointed out on that day were worked on and improved in the next release, or if they still need more work. I'd like to see it again in phase two.

I use Rockbox, which is an open source programme for MP3 players. I use it on an iRiver. Through the years, it has come along in leaps and bounds, and I'd say it's a good example of someone working on a piece of software and making it accessible.

Don't forget to follow AEGIS’ progress via our dedicated Twitter page at http://twitter.com/aegisproj.
Mark your Calendar!

“Accessibility Reaching Everywhere”

The AEGIS project holds its final workshop and international conference in Brussels, Belgium

28-30 November 2011

The AEGIS project organises its final Workshop and 2nd International Conference entitled “Accessibility Reaching Everywhere” on 28-30 November December 2011 in Brussels, bringing together both end-users (people with disabilities) as well as platform and application accessibility developers, representative organisations, the Assistive Technology industry, and policy makers. Since 2008, the AEGIS consortium (comprising companies such as Vodafone Foundation, Research in Motion, Oracle, and research groups from Cambridge University and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, etc.) has been developing an Open Accessibility Framework - comprising open accessibility interfaces, user interface components, developer tools, end-user applications and prototype accessibility solutions for desktops, rich Internet applications and mobile devices.

The workshop on 28 November will focus on the realisations of the AEGIS (Open Accessibility Everywhere: Groundwork, Infrastructure, Standards) project and provide attendees the opportunity to try out all outcomes of the project. The demonstrated products offer barrier-free access to desktop, mobile and web applications, are open source based and will be freely available.

AEGIS - FP7-224348: find more info at http://www.AEGIS-project.eu/
The **conference on 29-30 November** will gather a wide array of experts and users in the area of Assistive Technology to discuss scientific and policy developments in accessible technology; showcase relevant projects and initiatives in the area of assistive technology.

Access to both events will be free, but places will be limited.

This event comes ahead of the European Day of People with Disabilities that is marked by the European Commission via a policy conference on 1-2 December, in close cooperation with the European Disability Forum (EDF).

Invitations for registration, scientific papers and exhibitors have already been sent out, and have also been published on [www.aegis-conference.eu](http://www.aegis-conference.eu).

Both AEGIS events take place at the Diamant Conference and Business Centre, Boulevard A. Reyerslaan 80, 1030 Brussels. More information is available under [www.aegis-project.eu](http://www.aegis-project.eu), or via contact with Ms. Julie Buttier at julie.buttier@epr.eu.

**Call for papers (see also conference website)**

We kindly invite you and your colleagues to submit papers in the following categories:

- Scientific papers
- Technical papers

**Conference topics (non-exhaustive list):**

- Accessible desktop applications (AT, developer tools and accessible applications)
- Accessible mobile applications (AT, developer tools and accessible applications)
- Accessible Rich Internet Applications (AT, developer tools and accessible applications)
- Accessibility and Standardisation (e.g. ISO, eInclusion, Policies, Legislation)
- Accessibility and Usability (e.g. Design for All)
• Accessibility research (e.g. Assistive technology usage by end-users and their satisfaction, innovative AT training via accessible e-learning)

Important dates:
• Abstract submission deadline: 30th April 2011
• Notification of acceptance abstract submission: 31st of May 2011
• Paper submission deadline: 30th June 2011
• Notification of acceptance and outcome of review process: 15th September 2011
• Final camera ready papers: 31 October 2011
• Registration by 31st October 2011

Abstracts submission:
Abstracts submitted in the context of one of the above topics should not exceed 500 words. The title, authors and their contact and affiliation details (authors’ email address, telephone and fax number and affiliation name and address) as well as keywords (up to five) should be included.

Under the title of your abstract, please quote the relevant conference topic. We would strongly recommend you to propose more than one conference topics, if applicable, quoting them in priority order.

Authors who are unable to provide an electronic version or have other circumstances that prevent such submission must contact us (info@aegis-project.eu) prior to submission to discuss alternative options.

Abstracts should be submitted to info@aegis-project.eu by 30th April 2011.

Submission declaration:
Submission of a manuscript implies that the work described has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture or academic thesis), that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is
approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, without the written consent of the copyright-holder.

Any manuscript not complying with the above requirements will not be accepted.

Publications:
Abstracts and camera-ready papers as well as exhibition applications will be reviewed by the AEGIS Scientific Committee. The final versions of the accepted camera-ready papers will be published and will be made available during the conference. The authors of each accepted submission are required to give a presentation at the conference and must register by 31 October 2011.

In addition, the authors of the accepted technical papers will be invited to publish their software (where relevant) in the Open Source Community.

Guidelines for Final Paper:

Exhibitors
We are delighted to offer you an opportunity to have a trade stand or poster stand at the 2nd International AEGIS Conference (29-30 November 2011). Full details on this are available at http://www.epr.eu/aegis/?page_id=16.

Full details on the conference, including the online accessible registration form is available at www.aegis-conference.eu.
AEGIS in Accessibility Act Advisory Councils
The new "Accessibility Act" in the US (21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010) has been signed into law. This Act will necessitate substantial change relative to the availability of accessible telecommunications products and services in the US.

In support of the new Accessibility Act, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has announced this week the creation of 2 new Advisory Councils that will make recommendations to the FCC regarding new provisions and policies for ICT accessibility:

- Video Programming and Emergency Access Advisory Council (VPEAAC)
- Emergency Access Advisory Council (EAAC)

An AEGIS representative (Greg Fields from RIM) has been appointed to both the VPEAAC and EAAC, and can, as such, facilitate the sharing of information between AEGIS and these councils.

AEGIS session at CSUN
2 sessions took place at CSUN 2011 event in San Diego on March 16-17, 2011:

- Annika Brännström and Bengt Farre talked about their work on an AAC enhanced web, mobile and open source editor using Concept Coding Framework on Wednesday March 16th.
- Jon Azpiroz and Greg Fields gave a presentation titled “AEGIS Project: Studying Real Time-Text Communications for Deaf and Hard of Hearing” on Thursday March 17th.

AEGIS at ICCHP2010
AEGIS at BSI/JISC CETIS Accessibility Standards Workshop
AEGIS attended this informal workshop, jointly organised in collaboration with BSI (British Standards Institution) and JISC CETIS. It takes advantage of the presence in the UK of a number of international standards developers and strategists to foster discussion and exchange between communities around recent and ongoing international and UK work in Accessibility Standards.

This workshop was held on Monday 28th February, 2011 in London and included presentations from both the UK and international accessibility communities.

This was a unique opportunity with speakers from the following organisations: Axelrod Access For All, BBC, BSI, Information Technology Industry Council, Microsoft, UKOLN, and the University of Saskatchewan.

Further information is available here (http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/Accessibility_SIG_Meeting_28th_February_2011).

AEGIS at FOSDEM 2011
AEGIS partners submitted three talks to FOSDEM 2011 (Free and Open source Software Developers’ European Meeting) which took place on 5-6 February 2011. FOSDEM is a two-day event organized by volunteers to promote the widespread use of Free and Open Source software:

- Opengazer, dasher and ticker: hands-free error tolerant communication (Accessibility devroom) - University of Cambridge
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