



ATLEC - Assistive Technology Learning Through A Unified Curriculum

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PRESS RELEASE

ATLEC to boost uptake in Assistive Technology by People with Disabilities

Recent studies throughout Europe [e.g. ACCESSIBLE, AEGIS (FP7 projects), and KA3 project ImPaCT in Europe] with over 1000 end-users and Assistive Technologies (AT) specialists, indicate that lack of training is one of the core barriers towards effective usage of Assistive Technology (AT) by people with disabilities. This lack of training is subsequently also recognised as a main barrier for people with disabilities gaining employment in the regular labour market.

Alongside various European initiatives that address training the trainers and professionals who work with people with disabilities, ATLEC, (Assistive Technology Learning Through A Unified Curriculum) a 2 year project partially funded by the European Commission's Lifelong Learning program, aims to fill the current gap concerning the ICT AT training of people with disabilities.

ATLEC will support their learning in order to develop specific skills, particularly tailored to their individual and employability needs, while also creating the job profile of ICT AT trainer, relevant for VET (Vocational Education and Training) Centres.

"The ATLEC project gives us an opportunity to work with colleagues across Europe in establishing and developing assistive technology for young people and for adults with physical and learning disabilities.

In the world of Disability we only move forward by working together. We are all European citizens and it's very important we share our expertise across the European Community. The more we share together, the better."

(David Stewart OBE, Headteacher at Oak Field School & Sports College, Nottingham, UK)

The kick-off meeting of the ATLEC project took place on 16-17/01/2012 in Nottingham, UK. It brought together experts in the field from four different countries. The ATLEC partnership consists of: Oak Field School and Sports College (U.K.) –contractor-, PhoenixKM BVBA (BE) –coordinator-, Disability NOW (GR), AIAS Bologna onlus (IT), Greenhat Interactive Ltd (U.K.), and the University of Athens (GR).

The innovation of this project lies with the individual tailoring of the ATLEC curriculum and training materials to the learners' needs, combined with the implementation of mobile learning applications to support the learning, as well as applying mentoring as an additional supportive aspect of the ATLEC training services. The learner and his/her needs and potential are central in the project, as well as the relationship between the learner and the trainer who is expected to equally benefit from the learning process.

Supporting the end-users' learning in effective usage of ICT-based AT means enables them to gain new skills, including self-directed learning and also allows them to gain self confidence, improve their

adaptability skills and their attitude towards risk taking which is necessary to address the challenges of the employment environment that in many cases is still full of physical, technological and attitudinal barriers.

A mentoring scheme will be set up and run in workplaces in Belgium and Greece, directly linking the knowledge and skills acquired with the practice, while also facing the reality in the working environment.

The applied pedagogical methodologies will use blended learning (face-to-face, online and mobile), and will provide accessible WCAG2.0 compliant learning/training objects/material, which are thus exchangeable with other learning initiatives. All ATLEC learning opportunities objects, learning materials and mobile applications will also be offered through the platform of the ViPi project (KA3-ICT, 511792-LLP-1-2010-1-GR-KA3-KA3NW, www.vipi-project.eu) that aims to launch in 2012, and which is also coordinated by PhoenixKM BVBA.

Finally, the ATLEC consortium is focusing on promoting free access to the resources developed. The mobile application will be freely available via the Android market, while all created material will follow a creative commons license. This approach will ensure that the research, methodology and outcomes of the project will be freely available to everyone.

The 2nd ATLEC project partnership meeting will take place in Belgium (Ypres) and is scheduled for 25-26/6/2012, in combination with a local workshop.

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