International Workshop

Service Delivery Systems for Assistive Technology in Europe

Copenhagen, Bella Centre, May 21-22, 2012

Organized in collaboration with
AAATE (Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe)
EASTIN (European Assistive Technology Information Network)
Health and Rehab Scandinavia 2012

First Announcement

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities – among many other things – commits the signing States to enforce appropriate measures to facilitate access to assistive technologies (AT) for those who need them to improve independence in daily life and to participate in society on an equal basis with others.

In many European Countries public AT service delivery systems have been in place for many years, as part of their national or regional welfare systems. The various systems differ significantly from each other, in relation to each Country’s disability policy, socio-economic context and history. A system may be considered more or less advanced than others; however, no system recognizes itself as “perfect”.

The experience of service delivery practice suggest that room for improvement exists in each Country, especially in relation to the new challenges brought on by today’s rapidly changing society. Within today’s political climate of budget containment and accountability calling for evidence based practice, there is an increasing demand for evidence of the cost-effectiveness of any public support system to personal users’ needs. Policy makers and financing agencies need such information to properly allocate resources, control how efficiently they are used, stimulate the market, identify priority areas for research, understand possible wider implications at an overall societal level; professionals working in health care and social services need to know whether their AT choices have proved effective within the intervention program, useful for the client, and efficient in using resources; users and user organizations require to be fully involved in decision making processes and bring their expertise in this discussion.

It is probably impossible to design a “perfect” AT service delivery system that is applicable in every country in the EU. However, the experience of each systems existing in Europe brings lessons from which any other country could learn. Sharing such experiences and views will greatly help understand to which extent “good practices” could be exported from one country to another, what are the key
principles of a today’s “ideal” AT service delivery systems, and what roadmaps could be envisaged for a better future.

Thus the workshop aims at gathering and discussing the most important experiences in order to identify recommendations for good practices concerning an “ideal” delivery system.

The workshop is mainly addressed to policy makers (representatives of the Health or Welfare Ministries of the EU Countries, representatives of EU user organizations and service providers in the disability area), scientists and experts (researchers/academics, professionals in health, social services and education), industrialists (AT manufacturers and suppliers). The workshop includes invited speakers, round table and discussion sessions. It is intended to give the opportunity to all participants to learn from each other’s experience, to investigate how the various service delivery systems could evolve to best meet the user’s need and to be at the same time sustainable on the long run, and discuss possible roadmaps for all actors involved to promote advancement on this topic.

The Workshop is organized by the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, in collaboration with the AAATE (Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe - the interdisciplinary pan-European association devoted to all aspects of assistive technology, such as use, research, development, manufacture, supply, provision and policy), the EASTIN Association (the European Information Network on Assistive Technology) and Health and Rehab Scandinavia (the biggest exhibition of assistive products in Northern Europe, taking place on May 22-24).

It will be held in Copenhagen at the Bella Center, in the same premises where the exhibition Health and Rehab Scandinavia will take place. Participation is free for the invited speakers, for the Ministry officers and for the members of the AAATE and the EASTIN.

The workshop is officially included in the calendar of events of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2012.

**Preliminary agenda – Monday May 21st**

**12.00  Registration and lunch**

**13.00  Opening Session**
- Opening address by a representative of the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs
- Opening address by an EU representative

**13.30  Session 1: National Case Studies**

This session will look at some examples of how the public service delivery systems works in different Countries. Tentatively, this brief survey will include a system mainly based on a “health” model, a system mainly based on a “social” model and a system mainly based on a “consumer” model. Although a well-defined boundary among the three models is only theoretical - most systems usually combine the three models in various ways, depending on the type of assistive technology or on the users’ profile – the session will help discuss the pros and cons of the various approaches and the challenges they face in today's rapidly changing society. Each presentation will include a brief overview of how the system is organized, some case studies that help understand how it works in practice, figures on the economics, and possible expected developments for the near future. The session will also include a presentation of the findings of a recent study that provides a thematic analysis based on the AT provision system in 6 Countries.

**15.00  Session 2: Experimental/innovative models**

This session will include selected papers reporting findings from research projects, pilot studies and experimental trials where innovative models and tools have been developed and tried out to
improve the effectiveness of AT service delivery systems. Anybody is free to make a submission, according to the instructions provided below. Due to the time constraints, a maximum of four papers will be selected by the Workshop Scientific Panel.

17.00 Closure of the working day

Preliminary agenda – Tuesday May 22nd

9.00 Session 3: Service delivery systems analyzed by different perspectives
This session will look at key issues and challenges that are common to any AT service delivery system, analyzed by different perspectives. The session will include presentations by EU experts, by scientists of organizations who have carried out European studies on the structure and the impact of service delivery systems, by experts from users organizations and service providers. It will also discuss how the provision of information should be organized in order to promote users empowerment and system effectiveness.

11.00 Session 4: Vision 2015 on AT service delivery
In this session all participants will have the opportunity to bring their views by working in three Parallel Working groups on 3 different subjects:
- **WG 1: Organizational models** (research questions: how the ideal system should be designed so as to promote innovation, AT market and to meet the citizens’ needs?)
- **WG 2: Expertise** (research questions: how to ensure the user influence in selecting AT? What are the appropriate professional roles within an ideal system? What should be the appropriate educational standards?)
- **WG 3: System effectiveness** (research questions: what are the appropriate outcome indicators for an ideal system? What are the appropriate cost indicators? How should cost-control/containment methods be appropriately implemented, such as public procurement procedures, recycling processes, etc.)

Each working group will be led by a facilitator, while a rapporteur will take care of collecting and summarizing the findings of the discussion. The team-work will be preceded by a brief keynote concerning the issues to be discussed.

14.00 Session 5: Roadmaps for improvement and sustainability (Round Table)
This session will be introduced by the Working Groups rapporteurs who will provide a concise report of the outcomes of each group. In the round table, representatives of national authorities and policy makers will comment and bring their views on all issues arisen in the workshop. The aim of the session is to envisage possible roadmaps for quality improvement of AT service delivery systems while considering at the same time the sustainability issues.

15.00 Conclusion
Concluding speech by the Danish Minister of Social Affairs and Integration

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Call for papers

The workshop will include presentations from invited speakers, and presentations selected from the participant’s proposals. Those who are interested in submitting a presentation should e-mail an abstract (1500-2000 characters, spaces included) within March 31, 2012 and provide the following information:

- Author(s) (Surname, First Name);
- Authors’ affiliation (name of the Institution or Company each author represents);
- Name of the author who will deliver the presentation in the Workshop;
- His/her e-mail address for contact;
- What keyword best describes the perspective offered in your presentation (indicate just one of the following: research/academy; policy; market/industry; social/health services; end users experience)
- In what session (1 or 2 or 3) your presentation would best fit.

Registration

Participation is open to anybody interested, however on-line registration is required in advance. The registration system will be available tentatively in March (at that time check the AAATE website www.aaate.net for further details on how to proceed).

Participation is free for the invited speakers, for the Ministry officers and for the members of the AAATE and the EASTIN. Other people who want to participate may wish to register as AAATE member (the membership application form can be found on the AAATE website www.aaate.net) or register for the Danish Assistive Technology Conference (at that time check the "Health Rehab Scandinavia" website www.health-rehab-scandinavia.com for further details on how to proceed.

Venue

Bella Center, Copenhagen, Denmark
www.bellacenter.dk