



Assistive Technology News

Edition 2 – Autumn 2008

Contents

John Bercow Review	p1
Case Study	p2
ISAAC Award	p2
Possum rAACe to Paris	p3
Possum Project Management	p3
Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice	p4
Serol Telephone	p4
Exhibitions 2008	p4
Contact	p4

John Bercow MP Publishes Government Review Report

Since September 2007 Mr John Bercow MP has led an independent review of services for children and young people (0-19 years) with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

As part of the review, a series of consultation groups were staged to collate the views of families receiving services and all professionals working within the field of speech, language and communication. As part of this process Possum were invited by Mr Bercow to join an AAC focus group hosted by disability charity Scope.

Hector Minto, Director of Sales and Marketing at Possum, said "As a local MP to Possum, we were delighted to support Mr Bercow's review. AAC was initially a very small part of the overall process. We are sure that our involvement

with John, allowing him to meet our clients and see AAC in use away from the spotlight, has elevated its importance in the final report."

The final Bercow report published in July 2008 sets out 40 recommendations to improve services for children with SLCN under five themes.

Under the key recommendations, a Communication Council and a Communication Champion will be created to monitor and support implementation of the recommendations. In response to this the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Health, have committed £12 million to lead action to take forward the recommendations up to 2011.



Hector Minto from Possum with John Bercow, MP

Residents at Rosewarne Take Control

Possum, Scope and Highgrove Homes recently collaborated to put control back into the lives of the residents of the newly built Rosewarne House in Cornwall. By installing Possum accessible doors, windows, curtains, and nursecall units at the build stage, Scope are “future-proofing” their new residence, meeting all aspects of the CSCI minimum standards, and making sure that someone with any level of physical disability will be able to move in with them in the future.



David Green (SCOPE), John Brett (Rosewarne), Hector Minto (Possum)

David Green, Head of Service Transformation at Scope said, "At Scope we are committed to supporting disabled people to have choice and control over their lives. Our services must therefore offer as many ways as possible for individuals to be independent, including access to the right technology. The new facilities at Rosewarne were shaped by the needs and wishes of the disabled people who use them and put them in control of their living environment."

Possum-ISAAC Opportunity Award



Possum is delighted to announce the winner of the prestigious ‘Possum-ISAAC Opportunity Award’. The award, created to enable a person who uses Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) to expand their future opportunities, has been presented to Mr John Draper at the ISAAC 2008 Biennial Conference closing ceremony. John is using the US \$7,500 he received for winning the award towards developing his already established Together We Rock! School Leadership Program, created to promote accessible and inclusive communities. John Draper said “It was an honour to be chosen as the first recipient of the Possum-ISAAC Opportunity award. Together, with the help of Possum and ISAAC, we can make my vision a reality.” The award was well received and had attracted applications from AAC users in many countries including the U.K. Italy, South Africa, USA, Singapore and Canada.

Philip Robinson, CEO of Possum, presented the award and commented, “John Draper is an extremely worthy winner of the first Possum-ISAAC opportunity Award and we hope that the continuation of the Award in future will inspire AAC users to achieve their full potential.”

Mr John Bercow, MP and judge on the inaugural Possum-ISAAC Opportunity Award, said in his conference address, “I wholly endorse the values of “Together We Rock” and the importance to young people of real role models. The next few years will hopefully bring John real success and he will influence the lives of all those around him, not least those who use AAC to communicate.”

The award will be available again at ISAAC 2010 in Barcelona, please contact us to stay informed for opening dates for applications.



Possum CEO Philip Robinson presenting award to John Draper

Possum rAACe to Paris



A team from Microsoft and Possum Ltd has completed a momentous bike ride which took them 210 miles from London to Paris.

Not content with the physical challenge of the bike ride itself the 14 team members communicated only through the new Jive! communicator made by Possum which can replace or help with unclear speech.

The Microsoft/Possum team were joined by 50 other cyclists for the gruelling mental and physical test which took three days of eight hours' cycling a day to complete. The grand total raised by all the participants for the Leonard Cheshire disability charity is approaching £50,000. Possum has a three year agreement with Leonard Cheshire Disability to promote the benefits that assistive technologies can provide to their users, allowing disabled people to take control of their living environments through technology. Professor Stephen Hawking, one of Britain's most famous scientists, supported the cycling challenge by meeting with a selection of the cyclists to show how he uses AAC to communicate.



Possum Project Management



Paul Gretton

As the awareness of Electronic Assistive Technology (EAT) grows Possum has been involved in an increasing number of large scale new build and major refurbishment projects. The projects include residential and nursing homes, schools, specialist college halls of residence and hospices. Paul Gretton, Possum's Project Manager, liaises with customers, architects, quantity surveyors, building and electrical contractors to ensure that the new facilities meet the needs of people with physical and learning disabilities in the 21st century. Paul says "Early

involvement in the project is essential to ensure the right facilities are delivered in a timely and cost effective way."



Door Operators



Infrared Socket: switch on lamp



Window Operators



Environmental Control

Possum sponsored Lead Occupational Therapist, Theresa Hopwood, to attend the College of Occupational Therapists annual conference in June. During the conference Theresa presented on Assistive Technology focussing on the development of the ROWAN (Room Operated Without Asking Nurses) Room and the role that Assistive Technology played in providing access to comfort, entertainment and communication. Possum provided the specialist equipment for the room, including environmental control systems, which has made a real difference for the in-patients with progressive neurological conditions in enabling them to regain their independence.



Theresa Hopwood

Philip Robinson, CEO of Possum commented "We were extremely pleased to sponsor Theresa to attend the conference and give a presentation on the achievements in the Hospice. The address was extremely well received and the concept of ROWAN rooms is being adopted throughout the country."

Sero! - The phone for any disability



The Possum Sero! - Packed with features

The new Possum Sero! provides, for the first time, a loud speaking, remote control telephone and answering machine with communication aid functions. The Sero! can be operated via the full range of Possum, GEWA and many other Environmental Controllers and Communication Aids.

- Handsfree
- Remote Control
- Emergency Dialling
- Loud Speaking
- Answering Machine
- Communication Aid Feature

SSI[®] – Another Possum First

- SSI[®] (Secure Spoken Identity)
- Voice announcing caller ID*

Speaks the name of the person calling. Unsolicited calls can be diverted straight to the answer machine.



*Only available with caller ID compatible providers



Exhibitions 2008

Possum will be exhibiting at many events including:



Communication Matters
Road Shows



REHA Care
15-18th Oct,
Messe Dussdorf
Hall 5, Stand No: A15



National Conference
27th Sept Birmingham
Scottish Conference
25th Oct Glasgow



22nd - 23rd Oct,
Metro Arena
Newcastle,
Stand No: 109



International
Symposium,
2nd - 5th Nov,
Birmingham



National Telecare
Conference,
3rd - 5th Nov,
Brighton, Stand No: 27

For further information on the
events listed, please contact us:
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Possum welcomes any comments or
questions you may have with regards
to the content of this newsletter.

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