

Newsletter September 2014

Better communication enhances social inclusion

The Mollvis European project (Mobile Language Learning for Visually Impaired Students), aims at developing a practical course of German language for Visually Impaired persons, using Windows, Apple and Android applications. The project draws benefit from the outcomes of the European projects ALLVIP, ELLVIS and VET4VIP which created IT based language courses for visually impaired students. Mollvis has been funded within the European program Lifelong Learning Program Centralized LANGUAGES (KEY ACTIVITY 2) – KA2 Action Multilateral Projects that started on the 1st January 2014 and will end on the 31st December 2015. The project involves an expert team including representatives of users' associations, individuals with visual impairment, as well as experts from established language schools, universities and agencies that support people with visual impairment.

After an investigation on the users' needs and expectations, designed within the first course meeting in Edinburgh (27-28 February 2014) the first phase ended (Brasov 11-12 June 2014). The team has selected the most accessible and usable HW / SW which be used in the first testing phase and then for the real course which will be free. The selected equipment is detailed as follows:

- I-phone 5s
- I-pad4
- Acer Iconia
- Nokia Lumia 520
- Samsung Galaxy 4 (Android 4.1)
- Google Nexus 7

There will be three phases:

Phase 1: This phase will allow a 'rough and ready beta' app to be tested on a limited number of devices (see testing regime below) to demonstrate and to show proof of concept. This is an important phase as it will help to take the ideas from the developers into a small but real testing phase. It will provide the developers with the opportunity to identify potential technical and logistical issues that might delay or interfere with the success of the language learning app. This phase will also provide an opportunity for the testers and the participants involved in the testing to give internal feedback about the app and thus it will reduce any unnecessary risk and exposure by keeping this to a small and internal group within the MOLLVIS partnership. In this phase we will not expose the programme and app to external participants willing to test it.

Also within this phase we need to determine the adaptive access for each app to ensure that the app itself meets the needs of VI users.

Within this phase we should be aiming to match each of the operating systems against these criteria.

- Clarify users' understanding of the app
- Verify the adequacy of specifications for the operating system
- Validate the usefulness of the retention assignments within the file structure
- Verify the system response times over the different operating systems
- Obtain user acceptance of procedures
- Recompute resource requirements on all operating systems
- Test all interfaces across (not in between) groups
- Determine the different effectiveness of the language learning programs
- Verify that system is technically stable
- Verify the base design
- Verify the functionality of software
- Verify the accessibility of the app

- Identify and address obstacles for the full scale implementation
- Produce samples of all outputs

Phase 2: Building upon the output of phase 1 the developers will take all feedback and incorporate this into the next development phase of the language learning app. When ready this phase should incorporate known participants within the organisation responsible for testing the various operating systems and devices. The app should not be given to a wide sample base as the product will not be fully ready for release. Within this phase there should be a significant focus on developing the full accessibility of the app whilst also making this app attractive to both the sighted user and visually impaired/blind user. Within this testing phase we should base our developing and testing on the following criteria:

- Define and document all key applications
- Perform detailed records analysis of the testing procedure
- Review existing retention schedules and amend, as appropriate
- Develop requirements from required outputs and from source materials
- Consider security concerns and access permissions/restrictions
- Finalize system design
- Complete conversion specifications and procedures
- Complete preliminary user documentation
- Test everything
- Focus heavily on accessibility
- Determine stability of software on the different operating systems.

Phase 3: This is the final phase of testing where we see the broad dissemination and exploitation of the MOLLVIS language learning app. This phase will allow individuals perhaps unknown to the 'testers' organisation to do some sustain period of testing on the app. Again the focus of this testing period will be divided into two main themes

- a) Accessibility
- b) User Experience

Feedback from the testing participants will be used to generate the final release if the following criteria have been met.

- Full specifications for the Mollvis app (including system and software) have been detailed and recommendations for further customization and use have been determined.
- Recommendations for areas to be dealt with before full-scale implementation have been developed
- System management procedures
- Additional ideas for system development have been identified
- Updated resource requirements with new systems software versions
- Problem resolution system in place
- Marketing and Dissemination Plan have been developed.