

The only thing stable is change

Coping with the challenges in service provision in the information age

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution is entering almost all aspects of our lives. A re-construction process has been started bringing established frameworks, which we took for granted over decades or even longer in discussion and making them fluent. This supports our ideas and concepts of inclusion and an open participation of all in society including those with disabilities, concepts we were fighting for decades. The digital revolution is a key enabler in this inclusive change. On the other hand we all are affected by this societal transformation both in terms of new possibilities but also in terms of seeing what we took for granted is getting fluent. We have to learn and change over our lifetime. And it is said we fear nothing more than changing.

This talk will invite to reflect these challenges for low vision and blind people (LVBP) and the service sector where we moved from special schools to integration using mobile support based in resource centers. From here we saw a switch to inclusion with community based support structures including sometimes reallocating power from public service provision to personal empowering private budgets and personal assistance. And in some areas, in particular when dealing with multiple disabilities, we are moving back to specialized educational situations.

Constant change and change management seems to be what is expected from us demanding for new and not only technical skills. Services go beyond the borders of organizational structures as school, job, training and therapy organization making the whole environment subject to inclusion and empowering people for self-determined and independent living. Who when not you (or we) as experts in the domain can support mainstream and end-users in implementing these expectations in times of constant change.

This keynote will outline where this fundamental power of ICT, in particular for people with disabilities, comes from and how it affects the role of all domains of inclusion and of service provision. We will look into the potential (and risks) of emerging technologies (e.g. Internet of Things, Virtual/Augmented Reality, Eye Tracking, Robotics, Personalized Interfaces) and our changing role in support and service provision related to Assistive Technology (AT) provision, eAccessibility, therapy and training.

This talk should help structuring this important discourse about the wide range of emerging technologies. It will argue and bring into discussion that

- a) emerging technologies, to be beneficial, have to seamlessly integrate and adapt to proven interaction and communication standards,
- b) skills in using AT/ICT as the universal tools for inclusion have to become part of all levels of education, both for learners and teachers and basics in eAccessibility in all domains of society,
- c) elaborated methods, techniques and competences of LVBP in interacting with content must not get lost but adapted and get used for advanced ICT solutions, and
- d) it will be the challenge for us to reach out and facilitate the implementation of accessibility in all domains of society.

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is Head of Institute Integriert Studieren at the University of Linz, Austria. He is responsible for R&D and teaching at the institute, which is part of the School of Computer Science and which runs a service centre for students with disabilities. In 2000 he was guest professor at the Université Claude Bernard, Lyon II and guest lecturer at different universities and teacher training academies. In 2001 he got his professorship (habilitation) in Human-Computer Interaction with a focus on HCI for People with Disabilities. His research and teaching work is related to IT based Assistive Technologies, eAccessibility and Design for All. He has been involved in more than 80 national and international R&D projects in these fields. His work is documented in more than 200 peer-

reviewed publications.

He chairs the working group „Computer Science with/for People with Special Needs“ of the Austrian Computer Society.

He acts as the organising and publishing chair of ICCHP (International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special Needs

He is member of the scientific and professional societies IFIP, working group 13.3 (HCI and People with Special Needs), OCG, AAATE, ACM and FEDORA.

He is the founder and the chair of the international association “International Computer Camps”, organising annual computer training events for young blind and visually handicapped students. More than 1500 blind and visually handicapped students from more than 30 countries took part in these events since 1993.

He is co-founder of the association UNIABILITY, the organisation of professional counsellors for students with disabilities or chronic diseases at universities in Austria.

He acts as the managing director of National Contact Point for EDeAN (European Design for All e-Accessibility Network)

He set up and chairs the Regional Competence Centre IT for People with disabilities (KI-I) for the Regional Government Upper Austria.

He is founder and chair of the association BookAccess responsible for access to schoolbooks for schoolchildren in electronic form in co-operation with authors and publishers and general management.

He was President of the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE) and manages now the secretariat of the association.