

## **Remote provision of Assistive Technology**

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The Artemis project<sup>1</sup> is sponsored by the European Commission to develop remote provision of Assistive Technology for accessing Information Technology. It is a 39 month project and is due to finish in September 2006. The provision involves three elements, the service, the system and the AT devices. This presentation will concentrate on the technology, i.e. the requirements for the system and AT devices.

There are many on-going attempts to use videoconferencing and data exchange for AT provision purposes (at Central Remedial Clinic, Dublin, Ace Centre, Oxford, and Fortec, Vienna to name a few), with positive benefits. The ACE Centre unexpectedly found a desire by remote service requesting professionals (i.e. non-AT-experts) to use the AT provision expertise to educate themselves more about AT and its provision. In general obvious improvements include : increasing the opportunity for accessing the necessary provision expertise from a larger geographic catchment; less time spent on journeys to and from clients; and the possibility of more frequent contact with and/or more rapid troubleshooting for, clients. These improvements benefit service not just financially but in quality too – if what AT is provided is not significantly different from face-to-face services. So can technology deliver remote provision?

In attempting remote provision (i.e. assessment, prescription and follow-up) there are many differences and changes to be considered from current face-to-face based services. These differences impact significantly on the specification of the technology required. In turn whether the specification can be met or not impacts on what is actually achievable remotely. The presentation will include remote system and AT device specification features, for each feature why they are desirable, and, any available solutions or whether further development is necessary.

Taking the technology into context of existing services it remains to be seen from the evaluations commencing shortly whether there are any negative consequences, e.g. greater restrictions in choice of AT for the client, unacceptable or unachievable changes in roles of professional stakeholders, negative view of remote delivery by service users.

The initial evaluations will be base in a newly formed satellite centre before any attempt at home based evaluations will be attempted. This is because in general there are clear implications for the capabilities of the people with the client who will have to facilitate equipment set-up. However there is the intention within the project to develop strategies and materials for training people to be effective facilitators.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.artemis-service.net](http://www.artemis-service.net)