

NYSTAGMUS NETWORK (UK) NETLETTER February 2006

Sliced bread and Focus on CD

Our quarterly Focus newsletter is now available to all NN members on CD in either Text or Audio formats. One member who has already switched over to CD from computer disk rang me to say that "the CD was the best thing since sliced bread."

From our point of view, CDs cost NN less and they avoid the problems a few people have experienced with computer disks. Also, once you have changed over to CD, there is no need to return the CD so you can keep each copy as it comes out.

If you would like to talk to me about changing your format of Focus please email me at ac.machin@ntlworld.com and I will be pleased to help.

Andy Machin

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Research News February 2006

In the Genes

Ophthalmologist James Self in Southampton UK is making good progress with his research into the genetic causes of nystagmus, so thank you to everyone who took part in the project.

If you haven't been involved in this research and there are 10 or more members in your family with nystagmus, then James would like to hear from you at J.E.Self@soton.ac.uk

Eye-hand coordination

Watch out for details of a new research project on nystagmus and eye-hand coordination in our Focus newsletter shortly.

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Family Weekend break

The National Blind Children's Society is holding a "Family Weekend" at a hotel in Bognor Regis in March. If you are interested in joining this activity please email Hazel.Russell@nbcs.org.uk

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For those near Stafford

Staffordshire County Council is holding an Information Day for the parents and families of visually-impaired children. You are welcome to drop in to find out more about the services they offer. There will also be discussion groups and displays by ASSIST, R.N.I.B, Toy Libraries, The National Blind Children's Society and Staffordshire Association for the Blind.

Date and time: **Saturday, 1st April 2006, from 10.00 to 3.00**
Address: **The Flash Ley Centre, Hawksyard Road, Stafford**
Telephone for further information: **01785 356830**

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New education magazine from RNIB

RNIB has launched a new magazine full of inspirational and practical information on living and learning for children and young people aged 0-25 with sight problems.

Insight magazine is the essential new bimonthly magazine keeping you up to date on the latest developments in education, health and wellbeing for children and young people with sight problems, including children with complex needs. Insight is the first education magazine from RNIB to combine the interests of all children with sight problems, including children with additional disabilities, and children with complex needs, in one inclusive title.

Annual subscriptions of 6 issues of Insight cost just £21 (UK) and £30 (overseas). Insight is available in clear print, braille, audio CD, disk and email formats. For more information about Insight, or to subscribe contact insightmagazine@rnib.org.uk or call 020 7391 2375. Or visit the magazine homepage at www.rnib.org.uk/insightmagazine

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Nystagmus Network Open Day at Queen Alexandra College, Harborne, Birmingham on Saturday May 6th.

This year's programme will include an in-depth report on the International Nystagmus Workshop (September 2005) and there will be talks about topics of interest to people with nystagmus. There will also be opportunities to get together in guided discussion groups covering a wide range of subjects. The Nystagmus Network AGM will take place after the lunch period. Full details will be published on the website www.nystagmusnet.org and in the March edition of Focus. Please email if you have any queries about the Open Day info@nystagmusnet.org

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10 May 2006 - Seminar on Location-based Services for People with Disabilities

Providing relevant information based on an individual's location is not new, but recent technological developments have significantly changed the potential for the economically viable provision of a large range of services.

There have been many pilot schemes using fixed infrared and radio beacons to assist blind pedestrians. For more general outdoor use, global positioning systems (GPS) based on signals from satellites have been used in conjunction with digital maps to provide blind people with navigational information.

There have been various experiments in using location information from mobile telecommunications infrastructure. However it is the introduction of third generation systems that have made such information more generally available. In some cases these systems are integrated with WiFi or RFID systems to improve the accuracy particularly in indoor environments (eg a shopping centre or railway station). UWB (ultrawideband) potentially offers exciting possibilities.

A further step is to integrate such positioning systems with an intelligent agent that knows the particular requirements of the individual user. For instance, it may know the turning circle of the user's electric wheelchair so that it can plan routes that are accessible to that individual. Also the intelligent agent can provide the information in an appropriate modality for the individual user (eg a visual display if the user is deaf).

The seminar will explore the role of location-based services to help people with disabilities, and hear from a number of projects active in this area.

The seminar is free of charge and early registration is strongly advised. Please respond direct to Dr. John Gill at RNIB if you are interested in attending.

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Contributions

Please send contributions, ideas or links for the NetLetter to Gill Taylor at gill@taylors.uk.com.