



Information Communications Technology Newsletter

29th February 2008

Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility
Improving the quality of life of disabled persons through ICT.

Contents

Welcome to the 50th issue of the FITA newsletter. We welcome your contributions. Email us on stanley.debono@gov.mt or michael.micallef@gov.mt.

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Software of the month

++ Cute PDF Writer

Portable Document Format (PDF) is the de facto standard for the secure and reliable distribution and exchange of electronic documents and forms around the world.

CutePDF Writer (formerly CutePDF Printer) is the free version of commercial PDF creation software. CutePDF Writer installs itself as a "printer subsystem".

This enables virtually any Windows applications (must be able to print) to create professional quality PDF documents

Read more at:
<http://www.acrosoft.com/Products/CutePDF/writer.asp>

Contributed by: Mr. Michael Micallef

Website of the month

++ Chain of Thought

The Internet being such a vast source of information, sometimes it is hard to trace what you need, and very often one ends up investigating something completely different from what they where looking for in the first place.

One such seriously cool concept to ensure you really deviate from linear research paths is the Chain of Thought website.

Through this website you type in a subject you would like to research and this generates a list (you choose its length) of related keywords and topics.

The Internet related relevance is reflected in the font size of the related keywords shown.

You can visit a Wikipedia page at any time or continue navigating through the related keywords until you find

what you want. It is a reliable way of diversifying a research effort.

Interested in the topic of 'disability'? Type it in at the chainof thoughts website and see what the Internet connected world thinks about it, including the relative importance of current streams of thought on the topic.

<http://wiki.chainofthoughts.com/dt/en/>

Contributed by: Mr. James Caruana

Articles

++ FITA ICT Training

FITA has started three new ICT courses for persons with intellectual and communication difficulties at the MCAST ICT Institute in Paola.

These courses are being made available thanks to the support of The Education Division Adult and Evening Courses, MCAST, and ST Microelectronics.

The Maltese Literacy through ICT pilot project is due to be concluded in March. This is being held at PHRF in Corradino. Applications for the ensuing course are now open.

Applications for MyWeb training to be held at ACCESS in Cospicua are open as well.

++ SmartStart – Refurbished PCs

A new initiative by the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), is making available for distribution reconditioned Pentium III and Pentium IV computers at a cost of €130 and €180 (VAT inclusive) respectively.

Disabled persons, persons on relief pension and non-profit organisations (NGOs) can apply under this initiative.

Individuals can apply for one computer, whilst NGOs can apply for two computers.

Those applicants who will be selected to purchase a refurbished PC must pay Government by means of a standing order the amount of €5.42 monthly for 24 months for PC Category A (equivalent to Pentium III) or €7.50 monthly for 24 months for PC Category B (equivalent to Pentium IV).

Applications are available from all Maltapost branches in Malta and Gozo. These include the contractual details and more information about the application process.

Applications must be submitted by 28th March 2008.

For further information call MIIT on telephone number 25573111

++ New collaboration agreement

On Saturday 23rd February, the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), the National Commission Disabled Persons (KNPD) and FITA on have signed a formal agreement consolidating collaboration towards the targets set out in the National ICT Strategy where matters of ICT accessibility are involved.

Joint initiatives, defined through the National ICT Strategy published by the National Information Society Council (NISCO) will underpin the holistic approach required to ensure the necessary measures are in place to maximise accessibility in ICT for Maltese disabled persons.

Through this agreement, government bound itself to implement all necessary legislative and regulatory changes required to ensure conformance with mandatory international standards safeguarding accessibility.

Minister Austin Gatt also expressed government's intention to use the Community Training and Learning Centres (CTLCS) it set up around Malta to act as a showcase of the importance of ICT as an enabling tool, particularly in the areas of education and employment.

This agreement also covers the provision of fiscal incentives for organisations implementing tangible measures to ensure ICT accessibility.

Other important initiative outlined in the agreement is the promotion of accessible ICT training for disabled persons working towards a career in the ICT sector.

Source: www.miti.gov.mt

Question Box

++ What free resources exist to create image based communication tools?

The MS Office packages distributed by FITA in the past years includes the MS Powerpoint presentation software.

This software is not free, but if you already obtained it commercially or through FITA, you can use it to create highly educational material and communication tools. The only limit to what you can do, is your proficiency in using the software.

An alternative software like Open Office can be found at www.openoffice.org

If you are looking for a quick solution, you may prefer to look into the Picture Grid Editor.

This is a tool for creating drag and drop learning objects like the example to be found at <http://www.tower.ac.uk/curweb/ILT/resourcesdetail.asp?DocID=2148>

Note: the above link takes you to Tower Hamlets site - log in as guest.

Credits

FITA's services are made possible thanks to the support of the following funding partners.

- Malta Information Technology and Training Services Ltd.
- National Commission Persons with Disability
- Gasan Group of Companies
- Computime Ltd.
- Philip Toledo Ltd
- Megabyte Ltd
- The Computer Society of Malta
- SMS Group of Companies

- Crimsonwing (Malta)
- 6PM Consultancy Group
- Engineering Centre

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