

## EUROPEAN YEAR OF DISABLED PEOPLE

**2003 is the European Year of People with Disabilities (EYPD). The Year's objective is to drive progress towards achieving equal rights for people with disabilities. The Year is being enthusiastically supported by ITCH Network.**

At its launch at the end of last year, Anna Diamantopoulou, the European

Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs said: "People with disabilities should be at the centre of the European Year, which is about raising awareness of the rights of disabled people to full equality and participation in all areas. It is about tackling barriers that people with disabilities face, wherever they occur.

"The European Year is also about raising awareness that disability is an issue of concern to all of us. I am confident that the Year will provide a strong impetus to set up these long term goals and the development of new initiatives through Europe. I want to encourage everyone to 'get on board' this campaign."

### Special bus

Thousands of activities and events will happen in 2003 at national and local level. They will be linked through a People's March. Starting in January 2003 a specially

designed European Year bus will travel through cities, towns and villages in the 15 EU Member States.

At national level, the European year will be run by National Co-

ordinating Bodies, which are composed of disability experts from ministries and non-governmental organisations. Activities to promote the European Year will be decided and organised by the disability community in each country.

### Excluded

The European Year is organised by the European Commission in collaboration with the European Disability Forum (EDF). The EDF is a European umbrella organisation representing more than 37

million disabled people in Europe.

### Survey

A recent European survey shows there is a serious lack of understanding of what disability means and how many people it affects. Disabled people should be treated as equal citizens who have the power to speak for themselves, not as objects of pity or charity. Disabled people are often excluded from society through poor education and unemployment, leading to poverty.

According to Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the EDF, "The European Year of people with Disabilities will be a great opportunity to promote a better understanding of disability and to achieve tangible outcomes through new legislation for people with disabilities."

*Continued on page 2 ►*



**"The EYPD campaign is a people's campaign and the EYPD logo is a people's logo.**

**The logo symbolises the goals, objectives, policies, messages and strategies of the EYPD."**

### In this issue:

**Page 1 European Year of Disabled People**

**Page 2 Robert Bates Top Tips**

**Page 3 Yahoo!**

**Page 4 Now You're Talking**

Continued from page 1

## EYDP – “The people’s Campaign”

### Extra cash

In the UK, Maria Eagle, the Minister for Disabled People, announced in December an extra £1 million to fund additional projects under the European Year of Disabled People Project Grant Scheme. She said: “The number of applications exceeded our expectations – and selecting projects from over 1,100 applications was extremely difficult.

“In fact, the calibre of project ideas has been so high that I am delighted to be able to announce an extra £1 million to fund additional projects across the UK – taking the total to £2.3 million.”

The Minister originally approved 93 projects for funding. With the additional money, she has approved an extra 78 projects recommended by the National Co-ordinating Committee. These further projects take the total number of successful bids to 171.

The extra money being provided by the UK government is over and above the overall EU budget for EYPD of €12 million.

## TOP TIPS

**More time savers to help you get the most out of a computer and its software**

### Calculating folder size

How many times have you looked at a group of folders in Windows Explorer and wondered how much hard disk space the files in those folders use? Of course you could open each folder, check the amount of space used, and then use Calculator to add up the total. Fortunately, you don’t have to resort to such manual tactics.

All you need to do is select the folders you’re curious about by holding down [Ctrl] as you click

each folder. Once you’ve selected the folders, simply right-click on any one folder and select Properties. When you do, you’ll see a generic Properties dialog box. You’ll see Windows counting the number of files and folders at the top of the dialog box and adding up total disk space in the Size row.

### Drag documents to the Run dialog box

Have you ever been curious as to the root of a document you placed on your desktop ages ago? With

one swift movement, you can have Windows inform you as to its path, and then open the document as well.

All you need to do is open the Run dialog box by clicking the Start button and choosing Run. Then, on your desktop, click on the document you want to identify and drag and drop it to the Run dialog box. The path to the file’s root will appear in the Open text box, and by pressing Enter, the document will open immediately.

Continued on page 3 ►



## TO FIND OUT MORE...

Go to:

<http://www.eypd2003.org/eypd/index.jsp>

and:

<http://www.disability.gov.uk/euro/euro.html>

## ROBERT BATES

**WE ARE SORRY** to say goodbye to Robert Bates, who has resigned from the Management Group and ITCH Network Executive Committee due to pressure of work.

Over the past three years Robert has been responsible for (amongst many things) the appointment and vetting of all our Volunteers, and has monitored and aided Volunteers working without the cover of either an AO or CC.

His valuable contribution the efficient running of ITCH Network will be sorely missed.

Management Group member Bob Twitchin replaces Robert on the Executive Committee.



Bob Twitchin



## YAHOO! ITCH NETWORK E-MAIL GROUP LAUNCHED

**A**s we reported in the November issue of *ITCH Network News*, the National Volunteer Meeting in October discussed the low use of the current Bulletin Board. Many attendees considered that an email system should be more widely used.

In response Management Group member John Steadman has set up

the Yahoo! e-mail group, which was launched earlier this month.

"You can use it, for example, to ask for help or advice or to make suggestions about the working of ITCH – simply send an email to the group," says John.

"If you have a solution or a comment on a posted message then simply reply to it. Please note that you can be set up to have either single emails or a daily digest sent to your chosen email account or just to receive special notices from the moderator. The default is single email."

### Get an ID

If you have a Yahoo! ID you can also view messages on the group website in which case you can opt for this method solely. However, John points out that you may miss out on messages unless you remember to access the site regularly, so he recommends going for one of the email options.

"You can unsubscribe at any time," he says, "but obviously the success of the venture depends on most people being subscribed."

"If you want to make changes to your setup or if you wish me to remove you from the group please email me at [jsteadman@itcanhelp.org.uk](mailto:jsteadman@itcanhelp.org.uk).


"Please ensure that you maintain the CONFIDENTIALITY of the client at all times (e.g. do not divulge client name, address, telephone number, email address, etc.)"

"A final point – please, if possible, use PLAIN TEXT format for email messages as they are far more efficient for everyone."

### Positive response

The Yahoo! e-mail group is already proving to be a much greater success than the old bulletin board, and is generating a far greater volume of traffic than the bulletin board ever managed to achieve.

Requests for help with solving technical problems are getting a good response from news group members', who in the main have been able to come up with the required solutions.

This e-mail group is the best way in which to communicate with volunteers quickly and efficiently. 

Continued from page 2

## TOP TIPS

### Quickly closing applications

When you want to close an application, you don't always have to click its Close button. If you're working with multiple applications and dialog boxes simultaneously, the Close button may be obscured. Luckily, there's an easy way to quickly exit an open application.

If the right-hand side of the application window is off-screen or obscured, you can double-click the icon located at the far left of the title bar to close the application. In addition, you can achieve the same effect by pressing [Alt][F4].

### Embed your favourite font

Did you know the TrueType fonts that come with Windows can be embedded into a docu-

ment? In this way, if you have to share your document with someone who doesn't have a particular TrueType font, it'll appear the same on your screen as well as their screen.

To embed the font, check the application's online help. Each application is different. For example, in Word 2000 choose File | Save As and then choose Tools | General Options. Select the Embed TrueType Fonts check box and click OK.

Then save the file as usual. In PowerPoint 2000, choose File | Save As, and then in the Save As dialog box, choose Tools | Embed TrueType Fonts.

Keep in mind, however, that embedding the fonts can increase the file size dramatically.

You can, of course, also choose to embed only the font characters

actually being used in the document. This helps to keep the file size to a minimum.


### Save text on the desktop

Here's a neat alternative to using copy or cut and paste in Word 2000

First, highlight and then drag and drop the block of text you want to move onto the desktop.

Then double click on the icon created. This opens a blank document and pastes the text into it.

### System Restore

If your version of Windows supports this feature, you can use it to recover System files deleted by mistake. This is especially useful if an important file has been deleted as a result of one of the increasingly frequent virus hoaxes. Simply restore a version of the System before the file was deleted, and everything is back where it was before. 

# PowerPoint. Now You're Talking

Steve Lee, our Local Contact in Devon, has developed a potentially valuable program that is designed to help presenters who have difficulty speaking, and audiences that include those with visual impairments.

"It's a small program called PowerTalk that automatically narrates PowerPoint presentations," says Steve, "and I created it in response to a letter published in *Ability* magazine."

According to *Ability* magazine which reviewed PowerTalk last November, it needs a fairly powerful PC or laptop to run it. It requires PowerPoint 2000/2002 and Windows 98SE, ME, Windows 2000 or Windows XP. Earlier versions of Windows do not provide the necessary support for events required by PowerTalk. Unfortunately the freely re-distributable PowerPoint viewer is 'stuck' at PowerPoint 97 so it cannot be used, either. When you first run the software you should open PowerTalk.ppt. This is a sample presentation that describes the project, demonstrates the narration capabilities and allows the user to try out presentations with ease.

## Does it work?


So, does PowerTalk really work? Here's what *Ability* magazine thinks of it.

"So to the software itself. Every now and again one finds a piece of software that actually does what it says on the packet. PowerTalk is a prime example. To hear PowerTalk reading a presentation, waiting for animations to arrive before it continues and reading the 'alt text' behind a graphic, was astonishing. It even waits for you to advance the slideshow, before continuing its reading. When the next slide appears, the narration continues – automatically, without any

further user intervention at all. If you have included any animation effects (e.g. flying bullet points), PowerTalk waits until each animation effect is complete before continuing."

PowerTalk is Open Source Software and free. More details and the download are available at <http://www.meru.org.uk/speechmakers/powertalk.html>

## MERU

Steve Lee also happens to be a volunteer programmer with MERU (Medical Resource Engineering Unit), on whose website the PowerTalk can be found and for whom he has developed the program. MERU is a unique English charity using engineering skills to assist and enhance the lives of children with disabilities. MERU concentrates on designing and manufacturing a variety of bespoke equipment and devices to meet the individual needs of disabled children, when there is no commercially available alternative. 



**If you would like to read the full *Ability* article it is available on the MERU web site at:**  
<http://www.meru.org.uk/speechmakers/download/docs/Ability.pdf>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The first three web sites offer free newsletters, which are delivered by e-mail. 