



Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies ASBL
building learning abilities

1 rue Defacqz
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel/fax: +32-2 537 70 66

Web site: www.ditt-online.org
E-mail: admin@ditt-online.org
Bank account: 310-158 1288-80

Patron: Her Royal Highness Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein



Newsletter

No 13 · Autumn 2003

Belgian Royals launch Tintin CD-rom



Tintin's gift to young dyslexics: Self-discovery! – tackling difficulties and focusing on talents

D-I-T-T is proud to present *The Mystery of the Lost Letters* – an adventure with Tintin and Snowy on the road to success. This is a unique multi-lingual self-help tool which will help young dyslexics find their own brand of success. The first version is in English, French and German.

The revolutionary multi-media learning tool is being unveiled by HM Queen Fabiola and D-I-T-T Patron, HRH Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein, at a prestigious reception in Brussels on 26 November at the Palais de Bellevue.

Launch edition contents

Facts and figures 2

The project 3

Tintin provides perfect solution 3

Inside Tintin's Hall of Fame 4

Commissioner praises Tintin project 6

The Exploratory Section unveiled 6

The Tintin experience – fun and games 7

The man who built the program 7

Reflections 8

Fantastic artistic dyslexic Stephan Goldrach 8

The 8-point guide to success 9

...and a final reflection 9

Pre-booking form for the CD-rom *The Mystery of the Lost Letters* included with this edition

D-I-T-T volunteers work with leading experts, creating and promoting tools that enable dyslexic learners to succeed in a competitive world



Her Royal Highness Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein:

‘As Patron of Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies, I wish to add my words of encouragement to all who use this CD-rom and the related Web site. They have been devised with the help of young people working with leading experts in dyslexia and technology. They aim to help everyone develop their individual gifts and abilities, so that all may realise their own unique way of contributing to a better society.’

Facts and figures

Nearly 10 percent of the EU population – around 37 million people in 15 Member States alone – risk failure and drop out from school or the workplace because of dyslexia. (European Dyslexia Association)

- Dyslexics have varying degrees of organisational or learning difficulties which can limit the development of such skills as speech, reading, spelling, writing, numeracy, behaviour, memory and organisation.
- With early diagnosis and intervention, these learning difficulties can be effectively overcome with appropriate teaching methods.
- Without this appropriate teaching, dyslexic learners continue to be at risk of school failure, marginalisation, drug abuse and other forms of anti-social behaviour – *research statistics in the UK and US show over half the prison population is dyslexic.*
- Some of society’s most outstanding minds – ones that have helped shape civilisation – have been dyslexic, for instance: Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, Gustave Flaubert, Winston Churchill and Auguste Rodin.

D·I·T·T works with leading experts to create and promote tools that enable dyslexic learners to succeed in a competitive world.

D·I·T·T has created a CD-rom, produced by the BBC for D·I·T·T: *The Mystery of the Lost Letters – an adventure with Tintin and Snowy on the road to success*, to be linked to a Web site to help teachers, parents and learners worldwide.

This first of its kind, multi-lingual, self-help learning tool, is illustrated with Tintin and Snowy graphics thanks to the Hergé Foundation. The first version will be in French, German and English. It is funded by Cable & Wireless and Microsoft, in addition to original backing by Levi Strauss Advised Fund at Charities Aid Foundation.

Details of *Language Shock – Dyslexia Across Cultures*, a multi-media training pack (guide/BBC video/Web site) on what dyslexia is and how to deal with it in an international setting, are available on the D·I·T·T Web site.

Find out more at www.ditt-online.org



Question no longer: With Tintin's aid learners can overcome the confusion of dyslexia

Tintin provides perfect solution

Tintin and Snowy's pledge to help dyslexic learners has come true – thanks to two years of relentless effort combining the input of Europe's leading dyslexia experts, D-I-T-T's team of professional volunteers and the essential ideas of a group of young dyslexics.

It is estimated that well over 12 million children of 13 and under across Europe suffer from dyslexia. Their difficulties with writing, memory and organisation often go unrecognised. Aimed primarily at this age group, when risk of failure with the written word sets in, this unique tri-lingual CD-rom and linked Web site will boost the morale of dyslexic learners and put them in control of their own learning at a stage when they start to see their special abilities being jeopardised.

D-I-T-T Board Member, Susan Calamassi, said: 'At last, frustrated learners and desperate parents and teachers need look no further. Here is a top quality BBC-produced CD-rom which can help these young children tap into their giftedness understand how they learn best – putting them back in control of their lives.'

Users accompany Tintin and Snowy on a quest full of fun to find Professor Calculus, with positive feedback, a new awareness of learning strengths, and a certificate of congratulations as rewards. To be fully effective, *The Mystery of the Lost Letters* must be used with a parent, teacher or assistant alongside the learner. The CD-rom is in English, German and French. Other language versions follow.

The accompanying Web site www.tosuccess.org, developed by D-I-T-T, will connect users with a global on-line community of learners and specialists, and signpost top technologies and resources recommended by and for young dyslexics.

Produced by the BBC, the self-help learning tool has depended on the generous backing of the Levi Strauss Advised Fund at Charities Aid Foundation, the Hergé Foundation, Cable & Wireless, and Microsoft.

D-I-T-T is grateful to CAOBISCO (Association of Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionery Industries for the EU), Tie Rack, the Altran Foundation and the Fondation Roi Baudouin for their on-going support.

Inside Tintin's Hall of Fame

Three dimensional: Interior designer Jan des Bouvrie

The Netherlands most famous designer Jan des Bouvrie is set to be a star guest at the royal launch reception this month.

Jan, whose artistic vision has helped him develop some of the most striking contemporary interiors over the past century, also chats to young dyslexics in *The Mystery of the Lost Letters* 'Hall of Fame' section.

The designer recommends: 'Find your personality – because you have a very strong personality. Just keep yourself straight and change the world, especially for yourself...'



Wordsmith: Poet Benjamin Zephaniah

Inspirational artist, Benjamin Zephaniah, talks of his passion with words and how dyslexia helps creativity.

Billed as a dub poet, an oral poet, a performance poet, a pop poet, a pub poet, a rap poet, a Rasta poet, a reggae poet and even a black poet, the Birmingham born writer has also written novels, plays and tried his hand at television presenting.

He said: 'Having dyslexia has nothing to do with intelligence. In fact some of the most creative people on the planet have been dyslexic. Dyslexic people usually have to work round the problems in much different ways, and that is what being creative is all about...'



Tower of strength: Famous architect Lord Richard Rogers

Lord Richard Rogers, the man behind some of the most awesome new buildings in the western world, has some invaluable advice for young dyslexics browsing through the CD-rom's 'Hall of Fame'.

He urges: 'The most important thing I think for people who are dyslexic is, don't give up! Believe in yourself!'

The Pompidou Centre, Paris, the Millennium Dome and Lloyds Building in London rank among his many achievements.





Thank you for the music: Singer Hugues Aufray

Modern day troubadour Hugues Aufray knows what it is like to struggle with spelling at school.

The French musician, whose songs ‘Celine’ and ‘Santiano’ have been in summer camps and schools for the past 30 years, told D·I·T·T: ‘At school, for essays I would typically get 18 out of 20 for content, but nothing for style because there would always be about 45 spelling mistakes. But in the end, with having to overcome so many difficulties, a dyslexic learner is all the more strengthened and all the more likely to succeed.’



Television heart-throb: Juergen Fliege

German *Talkshow* host Juergen Fliege is a father of two, an Evangelist minister, a film producer, author, TV and radio presenter – and a dyslexic who shares his experience in ‘The Hall of Fame’. His soaring career reached its high point in 1996, when the *Talkshow* was voted the most popular on television and was awarded the prestigious Bambi prize.



Brainwaves: Author Dominic O'Brien

The mind-boggling skills of Dominic O'Brien have won him the honour of World Memory Champion an incredible seven times. Author of the popular book *Quantum Memory Power*, the famous dyslexic chats about his memory skills on the ground-breaking Tintin CD-rom.

- due to be present at the launch and to demonstrate his skills



Long-term supporter:
Education and Culture
Commissioner Viviane
Reding

Commissioner praises Tintin project

Education's first lady in Europe has praised the dedication and creativity of the team behind *The Mystery of the Lost Letters – an adventure with Tintin and Snowy on the road to success*.

European Commissioner for Education and Culture, Viviane Reding, has long been a supporter of the project. She attended the opening session in May 2001, when she addressed an audience that included experts in technology and education.

Now, in a statement of support, the Commissioner Reding said: 'I am delighted to be associated with those who today celebrate the launch of *The Mystery of the Lost Letters – an adventure with Tintin and Snowy on the road to success*.

'This unique and innovative new self-help teaching tool which consists of a tri-lingual CD-rom with linked Web site will help young dyslexic learners in overcoming their difficulties with writing, reading, memory and organisation.

'Thanks to the dedication and the creativity of the educational experts involved, children and young people suffering from dyslexia will gradually gain confidence and will through the use of this original tool be able to acquire autonomy and independence at home, at school, and later in the work place.

'I am very proud to have been invited to attend the opening session of the project in 2001. I am even happier to associate myself to a project whose aim is to advance the use of technology in education, while at the same time offering self-empowerment to young people.

'This goes hand in hand with the work I have been pursuing since I became Commissioner responsible for Education and Culture. The existing European programmes under my responsibility all have the common objective of enhancing the participation at all stages of life of people with particular needs.

'I wish to congratulate the Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies ASBL, and the BBC, which produced the CD-rom, for having realised this project.

'Last but not least, I would like to thank HRH Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein, Patron of D·I·T·T, for her constant support for this project.'

The Exploratory Section unveiled

Parents, teachers and education specialists can meet the distinguished team of D·I·T·T consultants in the Exploratory Section of the *Mystery of the Lost Letters*.

Top experts on dyslexia from around the world, including Professors Dirk Bakker, of Amsterdam, Netherlands, and Ludo Beheydt, of Louvain, Belgium, from D·I·T·T's scientific advisory committee, all share their knowledge of the learning difference. Issues discussed include diagnosis, teaching techniques, learning styles, and the use of technology to support the dyslexic learner. The brain, visual perception, multi-lingualism and dyscalculia are also put under the spotlight.

Contributors to the Exploratory Section include academics and practitioners: Professor John Stein of Oxford University, Dr Bevé Hornsby of the Hornsby International Dyslexia Centre, Dr Lisa Dummer Smoch, Gavin Reid, Kirsten Thogersen, Marianne Klees, Robin Truyen, Judith Stansfield, Anny Cooreman, Keith Holland, and Susan van Alsenoy.

The man who built the program

This is the man who has breathed life back into Tintin for his latest quest – *The Mystery of the Lost Letters*. Interactive designer Jeff Savage has spent the past 18 months submerged in the world of the adolescent comic detective – helping turn D·I·T·T’s dream into reality.

The BBC designer has been responsible for producing the CD-rom’s distinctive style, and then constructing the technical nuts and bolts of the program – all with the aid of a bunch of young people in Brussels who know first hand what dyslexia is all about.



Technical whiz: Interactive designer Jeff Savage

Jeff said: ‘I have built about 90 per cent of the application – designing the look and feel of the product and then mechanically building it.’ He continued: ‘The whole CD-rom is based around five games which analyse the user’s dyslexia: essentially the games hide an analytical tool.’

His main challenge was to transform a series of multiple-choice questions into fun, dyslexic-friendly games. The 37-year-old technical wizard explained: ‘Just ticking boxes would have been boring.’

After some hours of brainstorming, the BBC production team plumped for a format that would involve users bursting balloons, plate smashing or dumping discarded items into the trash – games the users play without realising they are taking part in a sophisticated diagnostic test devised by Gavin Reid of Edinburgh University and Ian Smythe of the World Dyslexia Network Foundation.

A major part of the creative process included Jeff making visits to Brussels, so children from D·I·T·T’s development forum could rigorously test out his work. According to Jeff, it was rewarding stuff: ‘It was good to watch the kids seeing the project evolve – seeing the look on their faces. Each time they would see how the comments they had made on a previous trip had been implemented and the changes we had made – that they really were being heard and their comments acted on.’

Jeff explained how vital it was to find a way to grab the youngster’s interest – whilst at the same time having to cater for the many special requirements of the young dyslexic. Particular attention was paid to details like the size, font and the colour of the text and background, all things that can impact on the dyslexic user’s experience. He added: ‘The interface relies on the kids clicking on things. There are loads of sound effects and lots of objects in the rooms and they are all animated: for instance, click on the piano and it plays a few notes or there’s darts flying into a dartboard’

Every single object seen in *The Mystery of the Lost Letters* has been carefully taken from the artwork in the huge library of original Tintin adventures, thanks to Moulinsart, the commercial wing of the Hergé Foundation. However, working with such an established cartoon hero did put limitations on the creative team. ‘We weren’t allowed to do things that Tintin wouldn’t have done in his books, but we could use

objects from different books as long as they didn't look out of place,' said Jeff.

'Moulinsart are very protective of Tintin and we didn't want to do anything detrimental or harmful in any way. A major thing was we weren't allowed to make Tintin speak.' That aside, he said Moulinsart were always open to their suggestions. 'They really encouraged us to push for what we wanted – we would send our ideas across to them for their approval. There was a really good flow of communication.'

Being tri-lingual added to the design conundrums too – both on an audio and visual level. 'I've never done something like this before and when I first started I had to figure out how to do it. The audio and the video were the biggest headaches – especially parts which had to be dubbed over in different languages. Another problem was that German text is 25% longer than English, so we would have to leave room for the translation even with simple things like door signs.'

A Web and multi-media graduate from the University of Central Lancashire and Preston, Jeff has worked for the BBC for two-and-a-half years. Previous projects have included e-learning CD-ROMs for teenagers and teacher training packages for the Open University.

A recent Tintin convert, he revealed that his favourite adventure is *Explorers on the Moon*, explaining: 'It was always on the top of the pile of books on my desk, so it was the one I would pick up and flick through for inspiration – it's a great story!'

Reflections

Fantastic artistic dyslexic Stephan Goldrach



Robin Truyen writes:

Stephan Goldrach, one of the most brilliant students at the Academie Royale des Beaux Arts, Brussels, won the top award from his college for his design of their Academy's new logo. His prize-winning design was picked from numerous other proposals.

For Stephan dyslexia is an ally in his creative process. He can imagine what his work will look like before he draws it. Most of his creative thinking is formed and created by sensations and stimuli he gets from the things happening around him. He says that sometimes certain events or

situations give him an image, an idea which he can then transform clearly into art.

Like most students Stephan has suffered the usual problems dyslexics students face at school. But for him things are different when it comes to art. For him the artistic world is a 'dyslexia free' zone. Here he can express himself freely, no longer ensnared by the conventions of language. Not that words do not sometimes play a role in his work – several of his drawings contain the written word. But where art is concerned, spelling is not an obstacle because even orthographical mistakes can be turned into art!

Stephan recalls how hard it has been for him to learn other languages. He has always had to work harder than the other students for marks that do not reflect the extra effort he puts in. A word processor and spell-checker are a great help, but still the written word remains an obstacle.

Looking to the future, Stephan would like to become a full-time artist, although he is aware this will not be an easy life. He is considering other options. His twin brother has just started a law degree, but he would now like to take more artistic approach. Together they might one day set up an art gallery.

The 8-point guide to success

From Shane Murphy (forwarded by Gudrun Dziallas)

- focus
- concentrate
- energise
- be consistent
- stay calm
- think like a winner
- keep emotions in check
- think creatively

...and a final reflection

‘The Chinese have an interesting symbol for the word crisis: it indicates both danger and opportunity. They realised that when the stakes are high and the outcome in doubt, purpose can emerge from pain, “like beauty from ashes.” New dreams, new relationships, new attitudes about life can open up to you as a result of your experience.’ (forwarded by Paulina van Rijn)

In the next newsletter –

- The launch report – photos of a glittering occasion!
 - The www.tosuccess.org CD-linked Web site goes live – who are Markku, Ben and Tony behind the scenes?
 - D·I·T·T reveals exciting new plans ahead...
-

Editor: Virginia Haydon, freelance consultant, D·I·T·T press contact
virginia.haydon@btinternet.com



Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies ASBL

building learning abilities

1 rue Defacqz

B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel/fax: +32-2 537 70 66

Web site: www.ditt-online.org

E-mail: admin@ditt-online.org

Bank account: 310-158 1288-80

Patron: Her Royal Highness Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein

Pre-book copies of the CD-rom produced by the BBC for D-I-T-T, shortlisted for the Altran Foundation Innovation Prize at Unesco, Paris, in 2003:

***The Mystery of the Lost Letters –
an adventure with Tintin and Snowy on the road to success***

- motivates learners
- provides positive role models
- explains dyslexia
- signposts learners to the latest technologies, tricks and treats
- enables each one to succeed

– all in the company of the world-famous Belgian reporter Tintin and the trusty Snowy. First edition in English, French and German to be available in January 2004. Reserve your copies now!

To receive an order form for this first edition, please send the following information to D-I-T-T:
(Completion of this information does not commit you to purchase the product.)

Full name _____
Company _____
Address including _____
postal code _____

in association with:

Levi Strauss Advised Fund at Charities Aid Foundation

The Hergé Foundation

Moulinsart

Cable & Wireless

Microsoft Education Europe

D-I-T-T thanks CAOBISCO (Association of Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionery Industries of the EU) for their on-going support and also TIE RACK for their generosity.

This project is recognised by the Fondation Roi Baudouin. Gifts of €30 or more made through the Foundation account number 000-0000004-04 and mentioning L79549 – Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies (D-I-T-T) are tax deductible.