



2.9 Italy

Renzo Andrich, Antonio Caracciolo

SIVA, Fondazione Don Carlo Gnocchi IRCCS

via Capecelatro 66

I-20148 Milano

tel +39 02 40308325

fax +39 2 40090157

<http://www.siva.it>

contact email: renzo.andrich@siva.it



2.9.1.4 *Methods of approach in carrying out the inventory*

The inventory was carried out on the basis of the following sources:

- literature search
- searches in SIVA database of assistive technology (AT)
- open interview to experts in the field
- telephone contact with the firms, bodies and institution identified as relevant contact for this research.

The work was carried out over a two-week period in January 1998. As expected since the issue of user involvement is quite recent in Italy, literature search did not reveal any remarkable published paper on this topic; however, some articles (in Italian) found in national magazines of user Organisations were helpful as a first screening of relevant initiatives. The major source of detailed information was SIVA database (CdRom); interviews with knowledgeable people and direct discussion with representatives of the identified Organisations allowed to get an insight of what was meant by them for “user involvement”, exclude Organisations that do not comply with the “user involvement” concept meant by the FORTUNE project, and identify the contact persons that are most appropriate for the purpose of this study.

2.9.2 *Institutions, organisations, actors*

Annex 1 lists the full addresses and contact persons of the Organisations mentioned in paragraph 3 as relevant to the scope of the FORTUNE project. They are divided into:

- Manufacturers/suppliers of AT
- Non-University research and development Centres
- University research and training initiatives
 - Specific training initiatives for AT users



2.9.3 *Methods and experiences*

The Italian experiences of user involvement in Assistive Technology R&D is currently very limited. No formal framework exists at either national or regional level for ensuring participation of end-users in R&D, so the small number of programmes that have been identified within this study are based on independent initiative of the concerned Organisations.

Such programmes covers aspects related to problem definition, analysis/specification and development, and are mainly placed within SMEs (small-medium enterprises) run or staffed by people with disabilities who acquired practical in-the-job experience in the field.

No AT testing programme seems to exist now, either at formal or informal level. Currently there is no commitment to testing or standardisation by the State or the Regions or any organisations of manufacturers or suppliers. For the time being it is expected that the enforcement of EU Directive 93/42 on Medical Devices and the EU Directive 93/68 for the part concerned with "machines" will have some impact on AT testing policy, but probably little impact on user involvement, they being mainly concerned with just safety aspects. For instance, these directives have been kept into account in the latest revision (published 27.9.1999) of the National List ("Nomenclature Tariffario") of prosthetic devices provided through the National Health Service, in that it is stated that certain products (such as prostheses, orthoses, wheelchairs etc...) must bear the "CE" label in order to be eligible for prescription.

No formal training specifically devoted to user participation in R&D was found. However, two general AT educational programmes were identified in which many participants with disability participated, many of them making afterwards use of the acquired competence for advising disabled peers (peer counselling), working in advice centres (professional counselling), or even advising firms, designers and industrial developers (formal or informal consultants) on AT topics.

The survey highlighted that the participation of end-users in R&D can be clustered round four main situations:



- 1) Persons with disabilities who chose to work in the field of AT manufacturing, supplying and service provision:
- 2) Persons with disability who had already an established profession before the disabling event, and developed afterwards a special attention on disability topics so as to become recognised specialists. Most people in this group are technical designers architects, engineers, technicians) involved in universal design or in ergonomics.
- 3) Universities that established specific programmes for students with disabilities including technological research (mainly on hi-tech engineering, software, computer accessibility) and participation of disabled persons in the development of educational policy.
- 4) Associations of people with disabilities and Rehabilitation centres that run focused research programmes or are contacted by manufacturers in order to get opinions on the effectiveness and market viability of new products they wish to promote and market.

Other situations could be identified, e.g. 5) episodic studies for the development of off-devices or adaptations to meet specific needs of limited groups of severely disabled persons, with no following market uptake, where the concerned users had a remarkable role; and 6) the many firms that employ people with disabilities in their promotion, marketing, sale and post sale sector, this aspect falling outside the scope of the FORTUNE study.



2.9.3.1 Industry

The following are AT manufacturing enterprises that have been found as having people with disabilities directly taking part, and having a significant role, in R&D :

a) mainly involved in motor impairments and in mobility AT:

- OffCarr Snc
- La Carrozzineria
- Rehateam Sas
- Ausili
- Comunità di S.Girolamo cooperativa
- Guidosimplex Snc

b) mainly involved in sight impairment and communication AT

- Centro Nazionale Tiflotecnico Unione Italiana Ciechi
- Centro Nazionale Tiflotecnico rl
- Tiflosystem
- Capodarco Elettroinica

To explain the way disabled people are involved, a typical example (OffCarr Snc) is described. This SME (some 20 employed) is one of the major designer and manufacturer of wheelchair (both for daily living and sports) in Italy. The design of new models is directly coordinated by the owner, who is himself paraplegic. Sport models (which are the main focus of R&D) are always field-tested by athletes with disabilities, each of them providing afterwards a test record whose remarks are used to improve the product through a number of prototyping/test iterations.



2.9.3.2 Research

The following are research and development institutes that have been found as carrying out R&D programmes independent from Industry, with the involvement of disabled researchers and representatives of organisations of disabled people:

- ASPHI
- Tecnothon
- IROE
- Auxilia

ASPHI is an association for the education, vocational training and job placement of people with motor and sensory disabilities, with main focus on information technology. R&D addresses software application and tools, and many researchers with disabilities take part in such activity.

Tecnothon is an AT R&D laboratory entirely funded by the Telethon, the awareness and fund-raising campaign launched by the National Muscular Dystrophy Association every year). Its main interest is advanced mobility devices for severe disabilities.

IROE is a department of the National Research Council, that runs several projects in the area of blindness, low vision and telecommunication.

Auxilia took part in the Telematics/Movaid project (robotics), with the involvement of panels of disabled users, explicitly following the USERFIT methodology. Such project is carried out in cooperation with the Robotic Laboratories of Scuola Superiore S.Anna in Pisa.

2.9.3.3 Education

Three University programmes have been found as working for the promotion of social integration of disabled people, with focus on AT:

- I.LI.TECH Università di Roma



- Commissione Disabilità ed Handicap Università degli Studi di Padova
- DiTech Politecnico di Milano

I.LI.TECH is addressed to disabled and non-disabled students who are interested in AT education and wish to undertake (or take part in) research in this field. It publishes a quarterly newsletter titled “Uomo & Tecnologie” (Man and Technologies) which reports on the such research projects and findings.

The “Disability and Handicap Commission” of the Padua University runs a comprehensive programme for equalisation of opportunities for students with disabilities; this also include research about WWW accessibility and enabling software.

The Industrial Design department of the Milano Polytechnic is running postgraduate training courses on universal design and accessibility, with some disabled experts acting as teachers.

Finally, two Organisations have been found as running structured programmes on AT with substantial participation of people with disabilities in the role of both students and teachers:

- SIVA
- Centro Studi Prisma

SIVA is the AT research, information and education department of a large non-profit Foundation working in the field of rehabilitation and social integration. It offers a specific training curriculum (120 hours) on AT mainly addressed at professionals who aim at qualifying as AT counsellors.

Centro Studi Prisma is an Association composed of (and led by) people with disabilities, that every year runs residential courses for education to autonomy and peer counselling with a major focus on AT. Participants and teachers are people with disabilities.

Both SIVA and Centro Studi Prisma took part in the European project TELEMATICS/EUSTAT (<http://www.siva.it/research/eustat>), aimed at developing



educational tools and guidelines for empowerment of disabled people and elderly people through AT.

2.9.4 *Contacts and addresses*

Manufacturers and suppliers in the area of mobility

- 1) **OffCarr Snc.**
Via V. Veneto, 7
35010 Villa Del Conte (Padova)
Tel. +39 049/9390122
Fax. +39 049/9390123
www.offcarr.com
Contact person: Vilnai Ruggero
Main R&D areas: Iso 12.21, 12.24, 12.27, 30.09
- 2) **La Carrozzeria**
Via Barsanti, 6
20143 Milano
Tel. +39 02/58102348
Fax. +39 02/89406449

email lacarroz@like.it
Contact person: Milioto Ignazio
Main R&D areas: Iso 03.33, 03.48, 09.12, 12.21, 12.24, 12.27, 12.36, 18.09
- 3) **Rehateam Sas**
Via Montello - Loc. Bidasio
31040 Nervesa Della Battaglia (Treviso)
Tel. +39 0422/887583
Fax. +39 0422/887584
Contact person: Foppa Mauro
Main R&D areas: Iso 03.33, 12.21, 12.24
- 4) **Comunità di S. Girolamo Cooperativa**
Zona Industriale Fornacette
06020 Padule di Gubbio (Perugia)
Tel. +39 075/9291318
Fax. +39 075/9220654
Contact person: Minelli Sauro
Main R&D areas: Iso 09.12, 12.21, 12.24
- 5) **GuidoSimplex Snc di Venturini G.& C**
Via Del Podere S. Giusto, 29
00166 Roma
Tel. +39 06/6152801
Fax. +39 06/61528036



Contact person: Cicerchia Sergio
Main R&D areas: Iso 12.12

b) Manufacturers/Suppliers with main focus in the *communication* area

- 1) **Centro Nazionale Tiflotecnico Srl**
Via Mozart, 16
20122 Milano
Tel. +39 02/76002882
Fax. +39 02/76009488
Contact person: Censabella Mario
Main R&D areas: Iso 09.51, 21.03/06/09/12/15/24/36/42/48/51
- 3) **Tiflosistem**
Via IV Novembre, 12/B
35017 Piombino Dese (Padova)
Tel. +39 049/9366933
Fax. +39 049/9366950
Contact person: Cervellin Davide
Main R&D areas: Iso 09.51, 21.06, 21.24, 24.12
- 3) **Capodarco Elettronica**
Via Silicella, 57/A
00169 Roma
Tel. +39 06/2677127
Fax. +39 06/2677127
Contact person: D'Angelo Emilio
Main R&D areas: Iso 21.09, 21.15, 24.09



c) Non-University research and development Centres

- 1) **ASPHI**
Associazione Sviluppo Progetti Informatici
Via Arienti, 6
40124 Bologna
Tel. +39 051/277811
Fax. +39 051/224116
Contact person: Vrizz Marina
email staff.asphi@asphi.it
<http://www.asphi.it>
- 2) **Tecnothon**
Fondazione Telethon
Via Dell' Industria, 13
36030 Sarcedo (Vicenza)
Tel. +39 0445/381987
Fax. +39 0445/384035
Contact person: Miotto Francesco
email tecnothon@atnet.it
- 3) **IROE** (Istituto Ricerche sulle Onde Elettromagnetiche)
Centro Nazionale Ricerche
Via Panciatichi, 64
50127 Firenze
Tel. +39 055/4235259
Fax. +39 055/4235286
Contact person: Graziani Paolo
email graziani@iroe.fi.cnr.it
<http://www.iroe.fi.cnr.it>
- 4) **Auxilia/OAMI**
Via Bonaini, 7
57125 Livorno
Tel. +39 0586/898551
Fax. +39 0586/829476
Contact person: Pacetti Andrea
email centaux@mbox.vol.it



d) University Research and Training initiatives

1) **ILLI.TEC.**

Università degli Studi di Roma “La Sapienza”
Facoltà di Ingegneria
Via Eudossiana, 18
00184 Roma
Tel. +39 06/5037744
Fax. +39 06/4817245
Contact persons: Bozzetti Marco - Moruzzi Luigi
<http://w3.ing.uniroma1.it/~ilitech>

2) **Commissione Disabilità e Handicap**

Università degli Studi di Padova
Via VII Febbraio, 2
35122 Padova
Tel. +39 049/82 75111
Contact person: Mancin Roberto
email: cdha@ux1.unipd.it
<http://www.unipd.it/main/serstd.html>

3) **Di. Tec.**

Politecnico di Milano
Dipartimento di Disegno Industriale e di Tecnologia Dell' Architettura
Via Bonardi, 3
20133 Milano
Contact person: Corbetta Sophie
Tel. +39 02/7385938
Fax. +39 02/70000951



e) Specific training initiatives for AT users

- 1) SIVA (Servizio Informazioni Valutazione Ausili)
Fondazione Don Carlo Gnocchi IRCCS
via Capecelatro 66
20148 Milano
Contact person: Renzo Andrich
Tel +39 02 40308325
Fax +39 02 40090157
email siva@siva.it
<http://www.siva.it>

- 2) Centro Studi Prisma
via del Piave 5
32100 Belluno

Contact person: Angelo Paganin
Tel. +39 02 941312

Fax +39 02 941312
email prisma@dolomites.it