

Paris, 10 May 2010

ESIEA's "Praticarte" Project – Winner of the 'Steria Foundation-Institut de France' Grant

The 'Steria Foundation - Institut de France' jury met on 7th May to reveal the winners of the 2010 grant. It chose to back the "Praticarte" project devised by a team of students from the ATIS department of ESIEA, one of France's top computer/software engineering universities. The idea is to offer a new instrument to measure how practicable streets are, and feed a geographical database for people with reduced mobility in order to enable them, like people without reduced mobility, to define the best-adapted route between two points, taking into account the specific restrictions of their disability. This project also has a community aspect as the database will be constantly updated by users via an embedded terminal.

Helping People with Reduced Mobility to Integrate in the City

Although everyone knows how easy it is to follow a route mapped out by a geographic information system on foot or by car, being able to use this technology when one has reduced mobility is far more complicated. Current systems only supply cadastral information, and do not integrate particularly important information such as the slope of the street, the elevation, the quality and type of the road's surfacing or the various obstacles (permanent or temporary) which hinder wheelchair access.

The project will enable a dedicated database to be established, allowing users to receive specific mapping with a "practicability index" so that their journeys are no longer such a struggle.

Technology and the Community

The project proposes to make the most of the increasingly widespread use of smartphones and other tactile terminals, the vast majority of which are equipped with inclinometers, GPS and other devices to pick up images. Furthermore, numerous platforms exist which are designed to support third party developers' applications made available to as many people as possible.

As part of the framework of the grant, the students will give priority to processing data collected by people with reduced mobility.

The project's ultimate goal is for each user to be able to update the database in real time during their journey with new information or changes to existing data (e.g. a new temporary or permanent obstacle):

- The inclinometer will enable users to give information about the gradient of the road
- Images will allow the state of the road surface to be determined
- GPS will geo-localise the information
- The tactile interface will make it easy and ergonomic to provide information

- The use of commercial smartphones will make it easier to distribute the tool

Using the data collected, an algorithm (defined in partnership with communities of people with reduced mobility) will establish a practicability index which could, for example, use the colour codes for ski slopes (green – blue – red – black) set up a few years ago by the 'Mobile en Ville' Association.

The ultimate goal of the project is to be able to integrate this database into one or several existing community GIS. This will also enable people with reduced mobility and those who work with and for them to benefit from new technological tools which will allow them to manage their environment.

For further information, please visit the sites www.fondationsteria.org and www.facebook.com/pages/Bourse-de-la-Fondation-Fondation-Steria-Institut-de-France/199611226059

About the Institut de France (www.institut-de-france.fr)

The Institut de France groups together five Academies: the French Academy, the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, the Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Fine Arts and the Academy of Ethics and Political Science. The Institut de France was founded on 25th October 1795 and its current chancellor is Gabriel de Broglie.

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Press contacts

Groupe Steria Press Dept.

Isabelle Grangé
Tel: + 33 1 34 88 64 44
isabelle.grange@steria.com

Steria – Institut de France Foundation

Dominique Lambert
Tel: + 33 1 34 88 57 76
dominique.lambert@fondationsteria.org

Press Agency: Firefly Communications

Philippe Caillet / Benoîte Lavie
Tel: + 33 1 42 80 16 32
steriagroupteam@fireflycomms.com

Institut de France

Service Communication
Tel: + 33 1 44 41 43 40
com@institut-de-france.fr