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Thanks to the support of the Steria – Institut de France Foundation, the GIAA Web site has tripled its number of hits

Improving the everyday lives of the visually impaired by offering them suitable services: this is the mission that the Blind or Amblyopic Intellectuals Group (GIAA) has set itself. Measures that enable the visually impaired to read are a major issue in this respect.

In November 2005, the Steria – Institut de France Foundation, which supports IT projects for disadvantaged people, selected the GIAA's OKO project.

OKO aimed to redesign the organisation's Web site to improve accessibility for the visually impaired and provide them with a catalogue of audio books in the international DAISY format.

The new services on the GIAA Web site are now on-line and are enjoying great success. The number of visits per month increased from 2,000 in April to over 6,000 in November, showing regular and constant growth.

Redesign of the Web site and improved accessibility

Support from the Steria Foundation for the overhaul of the GIAA's Web site was precious for the association, which wanted to improve its resources for exchanging information and access to its services.

The OKO project enabled the GIAA to make its site more user-friendly and to simplify the content update programs using SPIP/PHP technology. This was a critical objective for the association, which is now able to enhance or update the content of its pages without having to use a service provider. *"I really appreciate how easy it is to navigate and the wealth of information proposed by the new version of the GIAA Web site"*, indicated Laetitia Pegaz, a regular user, who underlined the rapid and fast access to practical information concerning the organisation of the association, disability news, and sections on the regional chapters of the GIAA.



Online catalogue of works available in Braille, large print or on CD

By printing in Braille or by making audio recordings on demand of all sorts of works, the GIAA helps the visually impaired study, carry out professional activities or simply intellectual ones. This work is based on the commitment of thousands of volunteers.

In this context, the provision of an online catalogue of works in Braille, large print or CD was a key issue for the GIAA. One of the major evolutions contributed by the catalogue being placed online: audio books can be accessed in DAISY, an international format for the visually impaired, which rebuilds the navigation structure of a “normal” book and replaces the traditional audio cassettes.

With the support of the Steria Foundation, the software to manage the audio library (PMB software) and a thesaurus adapted to the needs of the association were implemented. Four volunteers for the library were also trained in classification and cataloguing. Over a thousand works are now available for reading.

“The GIAA’s DAISY library is really practical and user-friendly. It enables me to choose a book at my own pace, using the theme-based sections, and to order it over the Internet”, explained Lætitia Pegaz.

Other projects are currently underway to increase the capacities of the site and the catalogue:

- Adaptation of the software to management of works and more globally the library activities
- Training of volunteers on how to use the software
- Duplication of works already in the catalogue
- Integration of works to be scanned in the catalogue and their reading
- The option for users to reserve the works they intend to borrow

Support from the Steria Foundation: Financial support and volunteering

The support from the Steria Foundation includes a subsidy €15,000 for the implementation of the software developments.

The success of the OKO project is due in particular to sponsorship by Thierry, a volunteer Director at Steria France, who supported the association by providing the expertise needed to successfully complete the project. He participated in finalising the specifications and selecting the service providers in charge of the application developments, and provided advice for validation of the technical choices.



For more information, please visit www.fondationsteria.org

About the Blind or Amblyopic Intellectuals Group (<http://www.giaa.org>)

The GIAA, which was founded in 1949, is a state-approved association that is today supported by an extensive and active community of volunteers. The GIAA works to support the intellectual and cultural life of the blind and visually-impaired by improving their access to information, education, employment and leisure activities. It is represented by nine delegations working throughout France.

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

The Institut de France groups together five academies: the Académie Française, the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, the Académie des Sciences, the Académie des Beaux-Arts and the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. It was founded on 25 October 1795 and is currently chaired by Gabriel de Broglie.

About Steria: www.steria.com

The leading end-to-end IT services provider in Europe for companies which consider new technologies a vital part of their business strategy, Steria focuses on setting up strategic partnerships with its customers in each of its key markets: the public sector, finance, telecommunications, utilities, and transport. Steria offers customers integrated services including consulting in core business processes as well as the development and operation of information systems. In October 2007, Steria acquired the British firm Xansa.

The new group includes over 18,000 employees in 16 countries. On December 31, 2006, Steria pro forma sales totalled €1.8 billion. The Group, headquartered in Paris, is listed on Euronext Paris, Eurolist.

Press Contacts

Press Department Steria Group

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

Institut de France

Nathalie Darzac
Tel: +33 1 44 41 43 40
e-mail: com@institut-de-france.fr

TBWA\Corporate

Armelle Amilhat
Tel: +33 1 49 09 26 47
e-mail: armelle.amilhat@tbwa-corporate.com

Sophie Lemaire
Tel: +33 1 49 09 26 51
e-mail: sophie.lemaire@tbwa-corporate.com