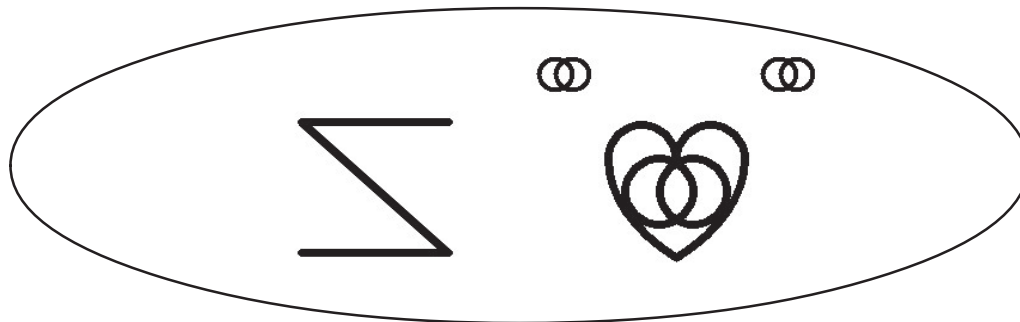


Bliss Connection



Blissymbolics Communication International

Registered Charity in Canada 11881 1587 RR0001

A New Beginning Ahead

The news contained in this issue of *Bliss Connection* will be the last you will receive in this format. As you read further you will understand why. The Think Tank in July at the University of Dundee and the Panel Meeting that followed provided a wonderful opportunity to evaluate BCI's accomplishments, challenges and opportunities! The announcement contained in pages 2-4 will explain what resulted from our deliberations.

We are all very excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. With the participation of many Bliss supporters around the world and an infrastructure guided by Dr. Annalu Waller, University of Dundee, we will have a new way of communicating with each other and of sharing Blissymbolics' achievements and resources world wide.

In Ontario, we will be announcing the new infrastructure through an electronic presentation by Annalu Waller on November 8, 2007. This will be the first time we will have an 'electronic' international guest speaker at our annual Friends of Bliss and Bliss Users' Conference in Toronto. The very successful electronic international participation at our Dundee Think Tank by persons from North America will be reversed at our Toronto meeting. We all look forward to Dr. Waller's update on the progress of her team in Dundee. We will add to the Scottish flavour of the event with a haggis dinner (piped in), a Scottish recorder medley and a good Scottish sing song in the tradition of the ceilidh - to remind those of us who attended the Think Tank of our enjoyable Saturday night ceilidh in Dundee.

BCI Board of Directors

(* Executive Committee)

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Bliss Connection
Published by BCI in Canada
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Exciting News!

Announcing the Restructuring of BCI

An international Think-Tank was held in Dundee, Scotland, in July 2007, to provide a forum at which specialists in related fields, through presentations followed by discussion with Blissymbolics experts, could help those in the Blissymbolics community plan for the future. My personal thanks go out to everybody who contributed to both the Think Tank and the Blissymbol Panel which followed. (You can learn more at <http://blissmeeting2007.computing.dundee.ac.uk/index.htm>)

There was a consensus during the meetings that Blissymbolics has an important place within the AAC field and every effort should be made to maintain its unique capabilities for those with complex communication needs. The importance of further developing the Blissymbolics vocabulary and making it readily available was acknowledged. The need for greater transparency and improved communication between the various national Blissymbol groups was emphasized as key if BCI is to continue to support Blissymbolics worldwide.

As a result of the Think Tank, a proposal for a new infrastructure that would facilitate a more interconnected community to support Blissymbolics use worldwide was adopted by the BCI Board in September 2007.

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed organization restructure and represents the formation of standing committees (called hubs) which oversee different aspects of the work of BCI. For example, BCI already has a Blissymbolics Development Secretariat to coordinate the development of new vocabulary, but there is no effective structure for the wide

dissemination of new vocabulary; technology provides potential to ‘write’ Bliss words using a font, but BCI requires this to be coordinated – hence the existence of the language and technology hubs. Innovative teaching materials and instructor training have been developed in many countries, but these accomplishments are not readily accessible to other regions – hence the instructor training and teaching and learning materials hubs. In order to maintain communication between hubs, Board of Directors and Executive Committee, all chairs of the hubs form the coordinating committee, which interacts with Executive. In addition, all hub chairs are automatically members of the Board of Directors.

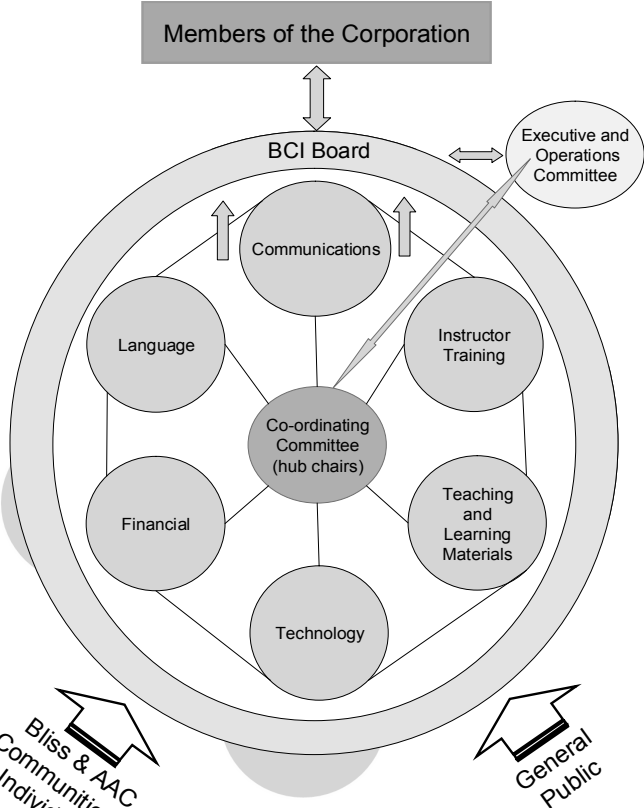


Figure 1

Progress to Date

The BCI board has appointed the following people to chair the different hubs:

- LANGUAGE - Margareta Jennische (Sweden)
responsible for vocabulary development
- INSTRUCTOR TRAINING - Shirley McNaughton (Canada)
responsible for sharing existing resources and developing new resources for Bliss instructors
- TEACHING & LEARNING MATERIALS - vacant -
responsible for sharing existing teaching and learning resources & developing new resources
- COMMUNICATIONS - Peter Lindsay (Canada)
responsible for public relations and publications
- FINANCIAL - Gillian Hazell (England)
responsible for coordinating funding proposals to support the work of BCI
- TECHNOLOGY - Annalu Waller (Scotland)
responsible for coordinating the development of technological resources and standards to support the work of hubs, the use of Bliss and the communication infrastructure of the worldwide Bliss community.

The chairs of the hubs are currently recruiting volunteers to form the core of each hub (members of hubs do not have to be Board members). The chairs have been asked to formulate a remit and initial workplan for their hubs. The different hubs are intended to communicate with each other and to this end some hub members may be designated to participate in another hub. For example, the Language hub is responsible for the maintenance and development of the Bliss vocabulary and will be looking to the Technology hub to support the work of the Blissymbol Panel and ways in which the vocabulary can be presented and shared. It thus makes sense to have a member of the Technology hub participate in the Language hub to ensure that the Technology hub understands the needs of the Language hub.

In order to coordinate the work of all the hubs and to have an overview of the hub projects, each hub chair will meet under the auspices of the COORDINATING COMMITTEE, which is currently chaired by Annalu Waller. The chair of the coordinating committee is a member of the BCI Executive. This ensures that there is direct communication with the Executive and the Board. The BCI Executive is responsible to the main board of directors and has responsibility for: Legal, Business and Charity Matters; ensuring that Board policies and procedures are practised, and that work of Hubs reflects the Mandate and Vision of BCI; conducting of Board Meetings according to Bylaws; calling the AGM to report to the Board of Directors and Corporate Members.

Maintaining Communication

The challenge of maintaining communication between hubs is being addressed by the development of a web-based infrastructure which supports the interconnectivity of the Blissymbolics community. This task has been delegated to the Technology hub. Figure 2 illustrates the functionality which a web site structure will need to support both the internal and external

Structure for Access to Information

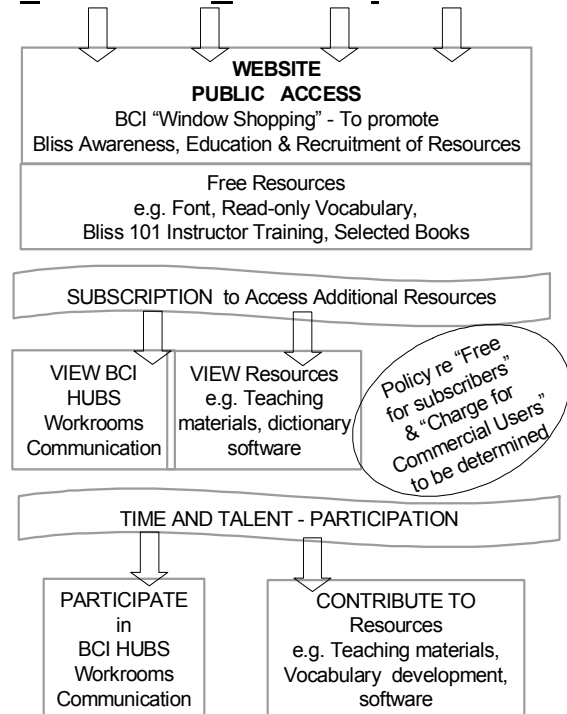


Figure 2

New Way to Access Information

Access to information will begin with the website (see top of illustration) where anyone can access general information regarding BCI and through which several free resources have been recommended to be made available.

It is proposed that the next level of information access will be through subscription. A modest fee is to be decided by the Board of Directors. With subscription, subscribers will gain access to information and resources provided by the HUBS. Policies regarding what resources will be free to subscribers and what resources will have a charge to commercial users is to be determined. (continued page 4)

Continuing 'New Way to Access Information'

communication.

The third level of access will be participation either as a viewer or as an active member of the activities of one or more hubs. It is the area in which volunteers are welcome to contribute their time and talent and to take responsibility for furthering the work of BCI.

An early prototype of a system which will provide the functionality shown in Figure 2 has been developed by a project volunteer group of computing students and it is hoped that a working prototype will be open to evaluation by hubs before December 2007.

Call for Volunteers

Although the hub chairs will be recruiting volunteers, we hope that anybody willing to be involved in the revitalising of Bliss will make contact with the relevant hub chair (see below). The success of BCI depends on volunteers – so please get involved.

What Next?

The early work of the hubs will focus on identifying workplans and may see the beginnings of hub projects. One of these projects is the development of a new web site. Once the website is working well, BCI will launch the 'new look' BCI to the world.

Please share this information

We are attempting to contact as many people as we can to be involved in the development and use of Bliss in the 21st. century. If you know anyone who is using Bliss, or has used Bliss in the past, please give them a copy of this information and ask them to contact Dr. Annalu Waller (awaller@computing.dundee.ac.uk).

Hub Chair Contact information

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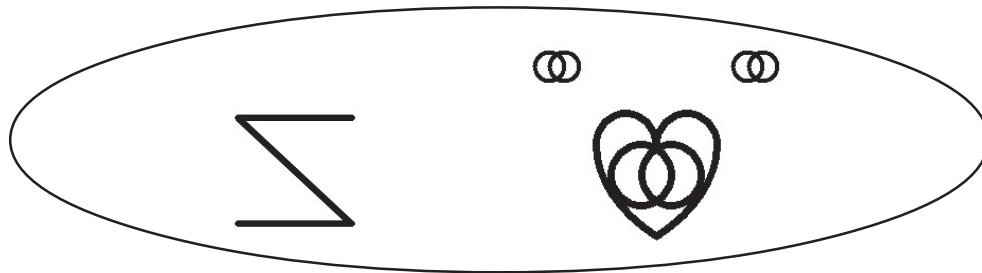
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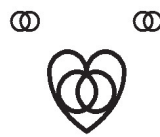
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Dr. Annalu Waller,
School of Computing, University of Dundee
Chair of the BCI Coordinating Committee
On behalf of the BCI Executive Committee



Blissymbolics:
world + writing tool -
writing for the world



connection:
feeling + combination -
joining together as one,
through shared feeling