

## Sign of video learning

February 27, 2007

[Next](#)

HAND-HELD computers will be used to provide education and training videos to people with learning, language or hearing challenges, in an upgrade to an Australian-developed system.

The technology was initially developed to train people to work in the hospitality sector. Developers are now improving the original system, which uses personal digital assistants and 2.5 generation mobile phones to run videos. They, for example, show how to make a cappuccino, by adding captions under the video and a window featuring someone signing instructions in Auslan.

Melbourne company i-Learn has teamed with a group from Ballarat University and the North Melbourne Institute of TAFE to develop the system.

i-Learn partner Joe Pavlekovic has been using the earlier version to train people up to Level III certification in hospitality through his registered training company.

He says that he found about 10 per cent of trainees "need help with literacy or numeracy", which makes the video-based training more valuable than textbooks.

The latest version of the system will extend its application by incorporating signing and captioning, and will also include audio of any text-based elements of the training package.

According to Gary Kerridge, regional disability liaison officer for Victoria's Western region based at the University of Ballarat, a \$26,000 grant has been awarded by the Department of Education Science and Training to develop educational media accessible to people with disabilities that can be downloaded onto a PDA or phone.

"There is an acute shortage of Auslan interpreters in Australia," he says. "These sorts of resources that can be placed online as well as downloading to a computer lessen demand on interpreters.

"Likewise . . . captioning can be done using basic film-editing software. It can be done in-house and, like with interpreters, archived and used again, lessening ongoing costs."

Mr Kerridge says that for some people with disabilities, mobility can also be an issue. "Preparing media for use online or through hand-held devices lessens the need for travel," he says.

Mr Pavlekovic says that once the system is developed, individual training videos will be hosted on i-Learn's web server. When users of the PDAs dock their machines and connect using a password and login to the website, the latest content will be downloaded to their secure digital memory card. This ability to update the training program centrally is important, he says, for changes in compliance modules to be made available immediately to trainees.

The first version of the system without captions or Auslan signing has been in use for the past two

years, and, according to Mr Pavlekovic, allows trainees to attain Certificate III accreditation without having to read 1000 pages of long training manuals.

Mr Pavlekovic has used the devices with students for the past two years, while the Wonthaggi Workmen's Club and the Phillip Island RSL have had i-Learn develop customised content that makes all the clubs' policies and procedures accessible to staff via a PDA.

Rod Bye, general manager of Wonthaggi Workmen's Club, says that the club has been using three of the PDAs and finds staff like the convenience of the device and also that the information is in a visual form.

He says the visual nature of the training is helpful, particularly for older workers who have experience, but not necessarily formal training.

While such experienced staff might not know formal terms for procedures, once they see the video they understand exactly what is being referred to.

"We have 40 staff and have trained people between (the ages of) 22 and 58," says Mr Bye, adding that the tool has been well accepted by all age groups.

He says new staff are trained in the club's policies and procedures using the device, and existing staff put through refresher courses using the system as required.

[Subscribe to The Age and WIN an African adventure with Peregrine, valued at \\$15,000](#)

## **More Technology**

Copyright © 2007. The Age Company Ltd