

E-Guide Dog to Help the Blind See the World

TKU will develop a system of “e-Guide Dog” and organize a “non-obstruction mobile digital classroom” team to supply information services for the blind in islandwide rural areas. These two projects, which aim to facilitate the blind to link to the current world, are supported by Special Education Unit, Ministry of Education, granted by Hewlett-Packard Company, and technically assisted by Chunghwa Telecom Laboratories.

These two projects will be open to the public at a press conference, “Digital Vision—Practical Information and Mobile Digital Classroom for the Blind” , on August 12, at Taipei Campus. In the conference, Mr. Gary Fazzino, Vice-President of the Global Office and Public Affairs of Hewlett-Packard Company, will officially donate 5,000,000 NT for the equipments and expense of the projects. TKU President, Dr. Flora Chang will present an acknowledgement plate in return. Mr. Joseph Fong, Manager of the Asia Office of Hewlett-Packard Company, Ms. Wei-ling Ho, President of Taiwan Office of HP Co., Mr. Chao-hui Lai, Manager of Taiwan Office of HP Co., Ming-ta Huang, Director of Information Processing Center, TKU, and Dr. Huan-chao Keh Dean of Academic Affairs will attend the forum.

The “e-Guide Dog” is developed by Information Processing Center and Center of Resources for the Blind. Such a system, which encloses PDA, GPS, and computer for the blind, utilizes vocal-orientated control to assist the blind to walk more safely by locating the user’ s position and identifying the name of road and building. This project is the only one in Taiwan supported by the “Global Action Plan” of HP Co. The equipment will be completed and demonstrated in the American Headquarter of HP Co.

According to Center of Resources for the Blind, in order to popularize digital information in rural areas around the island the office present the “Non-Obstruction Mobile Digital Classroom” project and also win the support. Such a project will improve the blind’ s learning environment by modifying the hardwares, updating the softwares, integrate the computer system. On the other hand, through the mobile classroom taught by professional teaching team, the computer for the blind as well as digitalized information will be popularized. To envision the future three years, by opening computer courses in the cities and countries, it is estimated to have 3,000 blind citizens benefited by such a project.

According to statistics, among the total 50,000 blind populace there are only 800 blind people who access to the internet—less than 2%. Compared with the national internet accessibility, the ration is one to thirty. This inequality is caused by the limitation of the blind’ s mobility and the rarity of computer for the blind. The TKU Center of Resources for the Blind has opened computer courses at Kaohsiung, Yunlin, and Tainan areas since two years ago, and is widely welcomed. Presently, Ministry of Education has supported this project. Therefore, the project can be practiced more extensively. In the future, the following courses will be provided: “Practicing Window Office,” “Editing WebPages and Utilizing Multimedia for the Visual-disadvantaged,” “Advanced Digital Commerce.” With these two projects, it is expected to teach the blind to acquaint with computer, solve the problem of the disadvantage and scarcity of Braille reading resources, and to assist them to read and write and even assess to the internet without obstacle.

2010/09/27