

**NV
Access**

**NV Access
Annual Report
2008-2009**

President's Report

The 2008-2009 year has been a rather successful one for NV Access. We have managed to continue our primary task of supporting the NVDA Screen Reader project, through financial and developer resources, promotion and administration. This has allowed NVDA to gain significant improvements in its features including support for braille, UI Automation and Windows 7, Windows Logon, and completely new support for Internet Explorer and Adobe Reader, just to name a few things.

As NV Access is based in Australia, we are always striving to get NVDA recognized as a useful free tool for blind and vision impaired people within this country. For this reason, this year we have started participating in a few Vision Australia events and also started some dialog with them to work out how both of our organisations may be able to work with each other in to the future.

In July 2008 I was asked to speak about and show NVDA to the Victorian Adaptive Technology Consultants and trainers of Vision Australia, as they were apparently recommending NVDA to some of their clients and therefore wanted to get a more detailed overview of its workings and of the project as a whole. It was a small group of people, and therefore the presentation was quite informal, however it went quite well. There were many questions and comments, and I felt that all there were wanting to see NVDA further itself in to the future.

In August 2008 Jamie talked about and demonstrated NVDA at Info Vision 2008. Info Vision was several days of technology related sessions held in conjunction with the World Blind Union 2008 general assembly. Although Jamie made this presentation via Skype, there were plenty of questions at the end, and even a bit of networking. This presentation was quite significant for us as it was really the first lengthy presentation, made to an audience made up of people from many places in the world.

As the main developers of NVDA, Jamie and myself try to hold face-to-face developer meetings several times a year. This allows us to plan for up coming releases, or to think about and design needed but rather large and complex features in NVDA. In November 2008, Jamie flew to Melbourne, and for about 5 days we debated, coded, and of course ate. This time rather than designing a lot of new things, we found the time most useful to fix up / implement a lot of tedious and boring things in NVDA, that had needed to be done for quite a while. This included making the NVDA package officially Windows Vista compatible by providing a manifest and storing data in the user's profile.

While Jamie was in Melbourne, Jamie, Mathew Mirabella and myself attended a Vision Australia in house adaptive technology expo. This expo was to allow Vision Australia staff from both Melbourne and Sydney to get a hands-on look at the adaptive technologies currently available today. The expo had a good turn out of people and plenty of staff visited our table to ask us questions, collect information, and even to just say how their clients make use of NVDA.

A major part of the work that NV Access does is to source funding that can support both the NVDA project and of course NV Access itself. Ever since early 2008 we had been in discussions with Microsoft in regards to receiving a grant that would allow NV Access to improve the support of Internet Explorer in NVDA. Finally in December 2008 all the planning and paperwork was done, and NV Access received funding to not only improve support of Internet Explorer in NVDA, but also to implement support for the UI Automation accessibility API, and Windows 7, in NVDA.

As this was a rather large task, with a pretty tight timeframe, NV Access employed me full-time to work on these tasks. This now means that currently NV Access is providing two full-time employees to develop NVDA, as long as finances allow.

As of July 2009, the implementation of UI Automation plus Windows 7 support in NVDA is now complete, and so far we've had pretty good feedback from both Microsoft and NVDA users. The support for Internet Explorer is three quarters complete, which is already showing massive speedups in rendering, and improved navigation of documents; All that is left now is to work on some stability issues and improve on the support of web 2.0 content via such things as WAI-ARIA.

In late January 2009, I attended the OZEWAI web accessibility conference, that was held at La Trobe university in Victoria. A part from attending one of the conference days and being able to listen to some really great presentations, I also made a presentation, on the topic of how Screen readers really get access to the web (I.e. via a web browser, not via the HTML source directly). I of course used NVDA as the main example, and covered many different areas such as accessibility APIs, how each browser is different, and I explained the various interaction models that screen readers provide to the user. People told me that they really enjoyed the presentation, though I felt it may have been a little too technical for many there. However, people got to learn about NVDA, and got to understand a bit more about the fact that web accessibility doesn't just stop with the web developer, there are many players in the web accessibility game. I also participated in a panel discussion afterwards which focused on the roles of the web developer, the web browser manufacturer, and the assistive technology, in providing the best experience for the disabled user.

March 2009 was again time for Jamie and I to head off to the CSUN conference, The international conference on Technology and persons with disability. This was again held in LA, California. Both Microsoft and Mozilla Foundation must be thanked, as their financial support made it possible for Jamie and myself to attend.

This year's conference was a lot more busy for Jamie and myself. As usual we spent some time advertising Firefox's accessibility features at the Mozilla booth, though we also had one or two private meetings with interested stake holders of NVDA, and also attended a few other face-to-face meetings for various committees we are members of.

As far as presentations went, we participated in three over all. The first was a presentation by Microsoft, where they covered their new accessibility platform built on top of Windows 7. I spoke at length about the work that NV Access had been

doing to make NVDA compatible with Windows 7 (including our findings about how usable UI Automation was as an accessibility API for screen readers).

Jamie participated in a presentation called Dueling Scripting, which was a presentation that got together representatives of major screen readers (including NVDA, Window Eyes and Hal) to demonstrate the scripting abilities of the various products.

Finally, Jamie and myself made our own presentation all about NVDA. This is the first presentation we've done on our own at CSUN, so this was rather a fun experience.

We covered the history of the project, and different things we had learnt along the way. We also talked about NVDA's major features. We also asked Marco Zehe from the Mozilla Corporation to talk about the relationship between NV Access and Mozilla.

The presentation seemed to be very popular with people, and it was also a nice chance to meet quite a few people in person who had been talking to us via email in the past.

A part from a few small technical difficulties, such as my laptop running out of battery, which meant no more overhead slides 3-quarters of the way through, we covered what we wanted to cover, and we came away feeling that the presentation was definitely worth it.

In April 2009 NV Access was lucky enough to receive a Making a Difference award from Vision Australia. Vision Australia presented this award to us as part of its 2009 Making A Difference Campaign. For the past four years Vision Australia has been presenting Making A Difference awards to individuals, community groups and organisations who have shown outstanding support for people who are blind or have low vision in their community. We thank Vision Australia very much for this award, and I think it certainly reminds us that our work is being noticed in Australia.

NV Access wishes to thank Microsoft for the substantial grant provided to us, which has enabled my employment for the last half of this financial year in NV Access. Also Mozilla Foundation must be thanked for their ongoing support, which has enabled the employment of Jamie since early 2008.

However, as the financial year came to a close, we were very excited to see some interest from both Adobe and Yahoo, in regards to possible grants that would allow us to further our work in particular areas (specifically web content, and Flash/PDF support). Hopefully these new connections will help both NV Access and NVDA stay healthy, and grow further in to the future.

The future certainly looks promising for NV Access. Our respect in the accessibility industry seems to be always growing, and the popularity of NVDA, by blind users, and also web/application developers, is also doing the same. The grants we have received so far have done well to secure employment for both Jamie and myself in the short term. The grants we get are mostly tied to specific work, and provide

financial support needed for the length of the work. For NV Access to move ahead, we will need to find sources of ongoing funding, that could also be used in areas such as administration and grant seeking etc. We may also want to diversify our work a little, perhaps by offering our coding skills and knowledge to other organizations wishing to make their products more accessible to a blind audience.

Finally I would like to thank the entire NV Access committee for its work over the past year. I look forward to the following year and hope that we can achieve more for NV access and NVDA.

Michael Curran
President

Finance Report

Treasurer's Report

I am very please to present the finance report for 2008-2009. For this financial year we have been able to employ both Michael and James on a full-time basis and have enough in surplus to last us until nearly the end of the financial year for 2009-2010. A brief summary of our income and expenses are as follows (for more details, please see the next page for the full report):

- Total income=\$85,717.92
- Total expenses=\$104,058.19
- Total surplus=\$62,972.27

We also have some more exciting grants that we are currently working on. The next financial year is looking very promising for us.

Amy Curran
Treasurer

A summary of our finances for the 08-09 financial year is as follows:

Income	Amount
Donations	\$1,178.78
Grants	\$81,577.02
Bank Interest	\$2,961.49
Total Income	\$85,717.29

Expenses	Amount
Salaries and Wages	\$98,237.86
Fees and Taxes	\$879.17
Bank Charges	\$76.06
Service Charges	\$511.99
Flights	\$1,893
Accommodation	\$1,277.59
Taxi Charges	\$387.69
Postage Costs	\$58.20
Stationary	\$198.85
Miscellaneous Purchases	\$537.78
Total Expenses	\$104,058.19

Surplus	Amount
Surplus from 2007-2008	\$81,313.17
Surplus for 2008-2009	\$62,972.27