



Hello! We are the [FIRST Project](#). As you probably know, we're developing Open Book – a new tool to convert text and documents into a form that is more accessible for people with autism. You are probably receiving this newsletter because you expressed an interest in our project. We have plenty of news for you about autism and technology and we hope you'll join us on the journey towards making text and documents a bit easier for people with autism to understand through the use of technology! (and if you don't want to stick around, here's how you can [unsubscribe](#) from future mailings).

Sincerely,

The FIRST Project Team

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OUR PROGRESS

Open Book will be completed in **late 2014**. That's a long time to wait, but you can see how close we're getting:

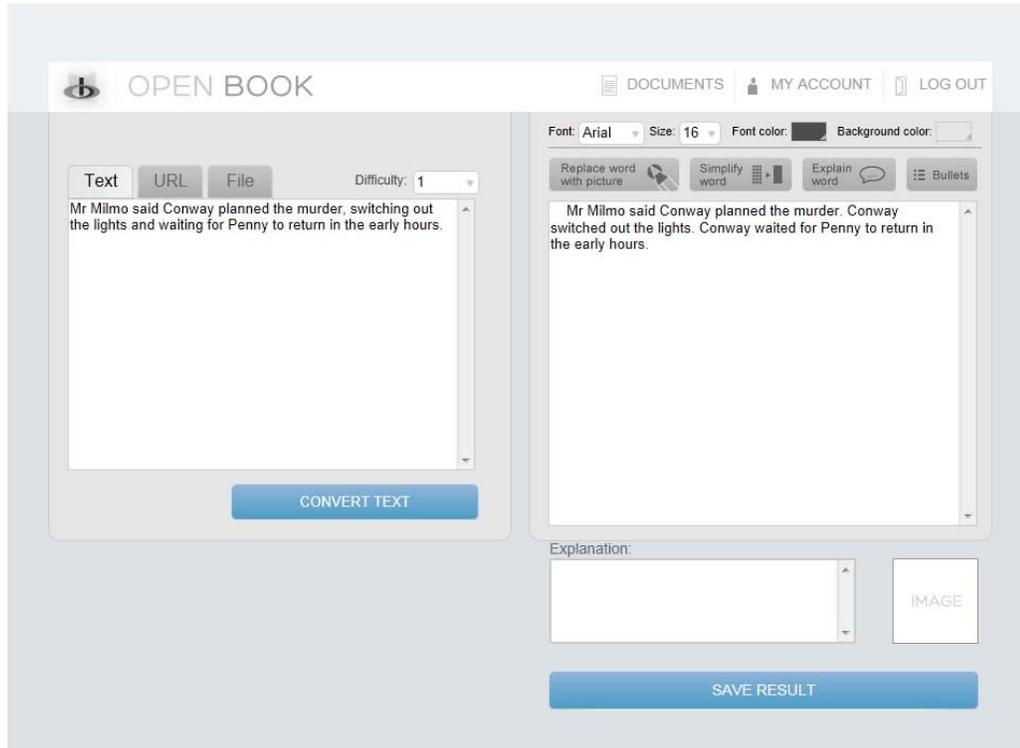
2011	2012	2013	2014
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Website launched for the FIRST project

Our website is now full of information about what we're doing on the FIRST project. Check it out:
www.first-asd.eu

Open Book prototype 0 is up and running!

The draft prototype for the Open Book text simplification tool has been created. While it's not available for public use, it's an important milestone we've been working towards for many months now. The work-in-progress version of the tool now has a simple user interface and can convert a limited range of texts into a more accessible form.



The project partners have met several times in Brussels, the United Kingdom and Spain, to work through some of the complexities that arise when developing a tool that aims to process a wide range of texts in three very different languages. Can we incorporate existing dictionaries that are designed for people who have autism into the tool? How will we develop benchmarks to determine whether the tool is effective? Would it help people with autism to understand some complex sentences better if they were presented in a diagram format?

We will soon have the results of the research on the users requirements, as well as the functional specifications for the tool. Then, the project will undergo its first year review by the European Commission. Stay tuned to find out more...

NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR AUTISM

iSpectrum software for adults with autism to learn skills for employment – FREE ACCESS

iSpectrum enables adults with autism to participate in virtual job interviews and work environments in the fields of retail, administration and gardening. This 'serious game' has been developed with advice from professionals, employers and people with autism.

It is available free of charge for a limited time.

[More information](#) on iSpectrum & [free access to the software](#) (English, German, Italian & Bulgarian)

EVENTS

First conference on autism and technology held in Europe

The first ever conference on autism and technology was held in Spain in July this year. The conference, called 'Technology and Autism: Tools, Trends and Testimonials' was held in Valencia, and featured the latest research in the field of autism and technology, including the FIRST project.



The conference also provided an opportunity for parents and people with autism to come together with researchers and software developers and network, give feedback and participate in a forum to discuss the future of technology for autism.

[More information](#) (English & Spanish)

Conference - IMFAR conference, San Sebastian, Spain, May 2-4, 2013

This annual conference of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR) will next year be held for the first time in Spain. The FIRST project will be presented at this major event for the international autism research community.

If you're interested in presenting, note that abstracts are due by October 10, 2012 (an earlier deadline than previous years).

[More information](#)

OTHER NEWS

Vodafone Foundation Smart Accessibility Awards, 2012

Vodafone Foundation will hold its Smart Accessibility Awards again in 2012. The competition will award the best smartphone applications designed to increase the social inclusion of people with disabilities and older people. There are awards in four categories: social participation, independent living, mobility and wellbeing. Entrants will be competing for a share of the €200,000 prize fund. Hurry! Entries close on October 15, 2012.

[More information](#) (English only)

'Friends like YOU Friends like ME' initiative to promote social inclusion of children with autism

A new initiative in the United States is helping children with autism to make friends by educating their peers about how to understand and include them.

The difficulties that people with autism experience in forming and maintaining friendships can be very painful for both children and parents. The 'Friends like YOU Friends like ME' initiative provides very practical, interactive and child-friendly approaches to educating children about autism and social inclusion.

The program provides learning materials for teaching children, including videos, classroom activities, teaching tips, program guides and other useful materials.

The initiative is run by the Children's Specialized Hospital in New Jersey, supported by Kohl's Cares.

[More information and downloadable materials](#) (English only)

OUR SISTER PROJECT

ASC-Inclusion interactive emotion games for children with autism

The ASC-Inclusion project is creating interactive games to assist children with autism to understand and express emotions through facial expressions, tone-of-voice and body gestures. It will be ready in late 2014, but meanwhile you can check it out here: www.asc-inclusion.eu/

The FIRST Project is 'clustered' together with the ASC-Inclusion project because this project is also creating an innovative new technology for social inclusion of people who have autism (and also funded by the European Union).



Like what we're doing? Then 'like' Autism-Europe on Facebook to receive updates and don't be shy about sharing with your friends! www.facebook.com/autismeurope.AE

Want to know more? Go to www.first-asd.eu or contact us [contact\(at\)first-asd.eu](mailto:contact(at)first-asd.eu)

Got something to tell us? If there's something you think people who are interested in autism and technology should know, please tell us by emailing: nikki.sullings@autismeurope.org

Don't want to hear from us anymore? Aw, that's a shame ☹ Well, just send us an email with **unsubscribe FIRST** in the subject line and we'll take you off the mailing list: nikki.sullings@autismeurope.org



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