

MidTECH Matters

News from NHS Innovations West Midlands

Licence deal takes children to Languageland

MidTECH has assisted North Staffordshire Primary Care Trust in concluding a licence agreement for the distribution of an innovative speech and language therapy training package.



'Let's Go to Languageland' was developed by Angela Wright, Senior Specialist Speech and Language Therapist at the PCT. It is aimed

at establishing collaborative working between Speech and Language Therapists and schools.

The package originated from the need to provide support to children in mainstream education. The PCT decided to focus their efforts on supporting class teachers in adjusting existing practice to accommodate children with a speech and language delay.

The pack is set around an imaginary journey on a magic carpet to 'Languageland', where the child learns how to improve their listening and talking skills. Used to train teachers and enhance their knowledge, it comprises lesson plans, activities and games for children with speech and language difficulties. In addition, it helps schools to achieve National Curriculum targets.

Angela first met MidTECH in 2005, when she was a finalist in our regional NHS innovation awards. At this stage the kit was paper-based, but MidTECH saw the potential to make a digital version of Languageland and engaged a designer to convert it into pdf format to present to potential publishers. Black Sheep Press, a specialist publisher of resource material for speech and language therapists and schools, licensed the package from the PCT in February this year. The pack will be available to order on CD Rom via their website, www.blacksheepress.co.uk. The target date for publication is September 2007.

Alan Henson from Black Sheep Press said: *"Black Sheep Press are very pleased to be publishing this innovative, tried and tested pack. We feel sure that children throughout the country will benefit from the work done in North Staffordshire. We were impressed by MidTECH's initiative in involving a designer at an early stage, this made our decision to become involved a very easy one!"*

As well as gaining satisfaction from seeing the product on sale for the benefit of children across the country, both the PCT and Angela Wright stand to benefit financially from the licence deal, which was negotiated by MidTECH on the PCT's behalf.



Angela Wright receives her certificate at MidTECH's 2005 Innovation Awards

Angela said:

"I am delighted that Languageland is to be published. I had not previously considered publishing this piece of work, however after being short-listed in their Innovation Competition, MidTECH provided this marvellous opportunity."

For more information contact gillian@blacksheepress.co.uk

If you have a similar innovation that you think could be commercialised, contact us at MidTECH on 0121 455 0346



David Gleaves

a message from our Chief Executive

As an NHS Innovation Hub, MidTECH's main function is to identify, protect and commercialise innovative ideas from within the NHS.

Progressing innovations to the point where they are ready to be licensed and finding appropriate commercial partners to take them forward can take many months, in some cases years.

In the last financial year, MidTECH concluded a number of licence agreements on behalf of our client Trusts, several of which you can read about in this newsletter. These agreements are a testament not only to the MidTECH team, but also to the dedication and enthusiasm of the NHS innovators involved.

As our project portfolio matures and grows, I look forward to an increasing number of deals coming through, for the benefit of the region's Trusts and innovators, the NHS and its patients.

Licences on the way for 2006 Award Winners

Two of the winning entrants from our 2006 West Midlands NHS innovation competition are close to finalising contracts with companies to commercialise their innovations. The 'dressing loop' from Catherine Sykes at University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust is a tool to help occupational therapists rapidly assess a patient's ability to carry out basic tasks. MidTECH has been in negotiations on the Trust's behalf to license the idea to a

rehabilitation supplies company. We are also in discussions with a specialist publisher who is interested in licensing the palliative care resource booklet for care homes from Warwickshire PCT. The booklet was devised by MacMillan Nurse Christine Reddall.

This year's awards have attracted a wide range of entries from more than 30 NHS Trusts and PCTs across the region. Winners and runners-up will be announced at our awards ceremony in June.

MidTECH secures two licences for Sandwell PCT



Fabric Safety Bed Rails



The 'K-Stick'

Sandwell PCT has recently signed licence deals with two West Midlands companies, for products which will improve the lives of patients within the community.

The 'K-Stick', is a walking stick handle with three distinct holding positions. It provides the user with a choice of grips, depending on terrain and the user's requirements. A horizontal handle provides support over level terrain, a forward handle provides a resting position and the top grip aids climbing up and down steps and slopes and getting in and out of chairs. The stick is intended for use by the elderly and disabled, but also has potential in the walking and hiking markets. The licensee, West Bromwich based company TC Keight, has established a spin-out, K-Stick Ltd, to commercialise the product.

The 'second agreement has been struck with Polymorit Ltd, a Coventry company specialising in mobility aids for the elderly and disabled. They will be manufacturing and distributing new fabric safety bed rails devised by the PCT. The idea for this product came after research conducted by the PCT into equipment provided for home based care. This identified fundamental safety and design flaws in many of the products currently available. The majority of problems

relate to poor fitting and difficulties in assembly. In some extreme cases injury and even death have occurred as a result of patients becoming trapped in the equipment. In response to this a new design was developed, which includes a unique fixing system that can be adjusted to fit any size of divan. The patient is prevented from falling out by a fabric covered frame positioned on the side of the bed. The fabric cover also provides additional comfort and reduces the risk of entrapment and injury.

Both products came about through Sandwell PCT's AHEaD project (Agency for Health Enterprise and Development) and were designed by Rob Chesters, their Inclusive Design Manager. Licence negotiations were conducted by MidTECH on the PCT's behalf, ensuring that the PCT retains ownership of the intellectual property and receives a share of any revenue generated through product sales.

John Middleton, Director of Public Health at the PCT said:

"I am delighted that we have been able to steer these health service ideas for new products all the way to commercial manufacture, helping to create jobs in the West Midlands and providing better aids to help people with disability and illness. We hope to develop our relationship with local designers and manufacturers to bring better health care equipment into the marketplace."

A team for the future

You may have noticed that there have been several changes recently to the core team of Innovation Managers at MidTECH. Catherine Brady and Patrick Moore have both left after more than three years with the hub; Catherine has joined Celentix, a spin-out company from the University of Birmingham and Patrick recently started in a new post within University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust. Michael Smith returned from a six month sabbatical in New Zealand in March and is already progressing a number of exciting innovation projects. MidTECH is currently in the process of recruiting an additional Innovation Manager and a Business Development Director to strengthen its innovation management team. Chief Executive David Gleaves said:

"With the expansion and increasing complexity of our workload the return of Michael Smith, and recruitment of two new staff members to manage and develop our projects, will ensure we have a team with the expertise and experience to continue to build on our success in progressing innovations through to commercialisation"



Michael Smith enjoys his sabbatical in New Zealand

West Midlands IT innovations showcased at Healthcare Computing 2007

MidTECH recently showcased four IT-based innovation projects from the West Midlands as part of the NHS Innovations stand at the Healthcare Computing 2007 exhibition in Harrogate. This annual event, the largest healthcare technology event in the UK this year, was attended by over 1000 visitors, including NHS staff and IT companies.

The innovative NHS products exhibited included an anaesthetic risk assessment tool, a leg ulcer telemedicine system, a diabetes DVD and performance management software. MidTECH attracted interest from several potential commercial partners and is currently following up these leads.



"How can I increase my general daily activity?"

- Choose stairs, not lifts
- Park the car further away from your destination
- Get off the bus one stop earlier
- Walk the dog more often!

member news

In each newsletter we aim to bring you news of exciting developments happening at our member Trusts. In this issue we focus on Wolverhampton and also bring news from North Staffordshire.

RWH and CHID®

The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust (RWH) is one of MidTECH's founding members. Its Research & Development Directorate hosts the Centre for Healthcare Innovation and Development (CHID®). CHID® is one of MidTECH's regional partners in the Advantage West Midlands sponsored Medical Technologies Cluster Programme, under which it has been working with local companies to enable the development of novel ideas for the benefit of patients and the wider healthcare sector.

The CHID® team based within New Cross Hospital offer a seamless service to local companies, providing support across innovation and research activities and enabling ideas to flourish whilst also assisting the production of modern, innovative, cost effective, forward-thinking health care products.

CHID® also encourages local companies to utilise their existing skills to assist in the production of healthcare products for the future, helping to safeguard and create jobs.

New Products

Since it was established three years ago, the centre has launched a number of products and has worked with more than 450 companies to give guidance on healthcare products, providing advice on over 300 ideas.



Vaas™



Moule Tec™ Cushion



QOL™

Current projects include the **Vaas™**, a stylish, modern flat pack vase that comes in a variety of bright and fun colours. In just three easy steps it can be prepared as a vase for water and flowers. The original idea came from Birmingham based company N Fold Ltd and is a light-hearted way of brightening up wards and office areas.

Quality Operations Live™ is a state-of-the-art software system designed by iWeb Technologies, aimed at helping managers improve their decision making and general management of budgets, with up-to-the-minute tracking of expenses and income. QOL™ is currently being used within the R&D Department of the Trust, but can be adapted for use in many other business areas. Ultimately QOL™ will allow informed decision-making and better financial control and will flag up any overspend so that the correct measures can be taken.

The MouleTec™ cushion is the brainchild of Wolverhampton osteopath Terry Moule, working with SDD (Seating Design & Development Ltd). The cushion boosts circulation to reduce restlessness and conditions such as DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis). Already the cushions are being used on planes, trains and in cars but following assessment, review and research through CHID®, attention has turned to the NHS. Cushions are now being specifically designed for people with mobility problems.

New additions to the R&D team

To raise the profile of these products as they approach manufacture and product launch, Anna Sykes has joined CHID® as their Public Relations and Marketing Consultant. The 27 year old has a degree in journalism, five years' PR experience within the NHS and is a radio presenter at the weekends! Part of Anna's role is to enable the staff within the hospital to actively engage with the R&D team in market research and inspiring new ideas.

Through regular media liaison and internal hospital communications Anna has been able to support local companies in pushing the initial marketing and commercialisation of several products.



Anna Sykes

Funding boost for UHNS spin out

The Mercia Technology Seed Fund, which was launched in March this year, has completed its first investment directing funds into Intelligent Orthopaedics, a medical engineering company that spun out from University Hospital of North Staffordshire, Keele University and Staffordshire University.

Nearly a quarter of a million pounds of syndicate funding from the Mercia Technology Seed Fund, Spinner Matched Investment Fund and private investors was invested into Intelligent Orthopaedics to fund new products. The company received this second stage funding after the initial worldwide success of their unique medical device, the 'Staffordshire Orthopaedic Reduction Machine' (STORM).

The Mercia Technology Seed Fund is a £12.8m early stage technology fund investing in start ups and early stage technology-based ventures located in the West Midlands. The fund is managed by Birmingham-based WM Enterprise, a leading provider of specialist venture capital finance and economic development and regeneration consultancy services.

Intelligent Health programme aims to improve home and community based healthcare



The Intelligent Health (I-health) Programme has been set up by Medilink West Midlands in partnership with other regional organisations, with funding from Advantage West Midlands, the regional development agency. Its aim is to provide an opportunity for regional industry to work collaboratively with the NHS, Social Care and Housing providers in the development of home and community based healthcare. The programme has two main focus areas:



I-Housing: This part of the project aims to pave the way to developing a 'Innovative Design Standard' for housing, supporting the development of homes which are flexible to the changing health needs of residents. The development cell / demonstrator will be sited

in two existing houses owned by regional Housing Associations. The properties will be refurbished and installed with various levels of monitoring and smart assistive technologies. The chosen properties will be refurbished internally and provide additional space for training, conferencing and installation of monitoring systems.

I-diagnostics: This project component will demonstrate the innovative use of diagnostic technologies in the home and community. This will largely involve developing field trials with new technology in partnership with industry and Primary Care Trusts. The trials will examine the impact of emerging technology on long term conditions, including dementia, coronary heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and diabetes. The project will provide community nurses and health visitors

with equipment for monitoring the health status of patients in the community, with the objective of assessing whether better monitoring reduces the incidence of patients developing acute conditions and needing hospital admission.

Medilink West Midlands CEO Tony Davis said:

"The I-Health programme will provide industry with opportunities to develop and trial technology in partnership with the NHS and Social care providers using live settings. It will showcase good practice and innovative technology and seek to identify mainstream and cost effective solutions to support smarter, community based healthcare. "

For more information visit www.medilink.co.uk/ihealth

Multi-million pound Health Design and Technology Institute for Coventry University

Coventry University has been given the go-ahead to build a multi-million pound Health Design and Technology Institute (HDTI). From this summer the Institute will support the development of assistive technology, the promotion of health and wellbeing and self-management of health and chronic illness. Its purpose-built home on the University's Technology Park site will open in 2008.

The initial outlay for the building is being funded by a £4.5 million grant from regional development agency Advantage West Midlands. Operation of the Institute is being supported by a £3.6 million grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), to be followed by a further £10 million over the next 10 years.

The Institute's core activity will be to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in designing products and services to



improve community healthcare and manage health at home, aided by the latest diagnostic tools, monitoring devices and assistive technology. It has also launched nine courses aimed at equipping students,

SMEs, community-based health and social care professionals, carers and consumers with the skills to design better products and services for the healthcare sector and make full use of assistive technology.

HDTI director Simon Fielden said the Institute would support the Department of Health's objective to transfer care from hospital to the home. "Our areas of activity will include building and vehicle adaptations, walking aids and wheelchairs, consumer health products, and eHealth developments such as remote monitoring," he said.

The new three-story building will include pre-incubator space for SMEs, a demonstration area where companies and users can trial their products and services, and offices for applied research. "The European medical device sector is worth €55.2 billion but the UK has so far failed to capitalise on the economic potential," Mr Fielden said. "The HDTI represents a tremendous opportunity for partnership with business enterprises, health and social services and, most importantly, patients."

MidTECH is one of 20 partners who have teamed up with the HDTI and has agreed to second resource to the Institute. Other partners include Procter & Gamble, GE Healthcare, Age Concern Enterprises, Lloyds Pharmacy and Medilink West Midlands.

Frequently Asked Questions

In each issue of MidTECH Matters we answer questions on a specific area of intellectual property. This time we focus on **design rights**.

What is the difference between a patent and design protection?

Design protection deals with the outward appearance of a product – its shape, texture, contours etc. A patent covers how the product works – what it does and how it does it, amongst other things.

How do I protect my design?

Designs are automatically protected by un-registered design rights, which are free and last for up to 15 years. However, to protect a design's individual character, you need to apply for a registered design. This has an associated cost, but lasts for up to 25 years and affords you greater protection than an un-registered design.

What does design protection allow me to do?

As with all intellectual property, designs can be treated like normal property. You can sell, loan and license designs to third parties and the law protects you from their theft.

If you have any queries about protecting your designs or are unsure about what kind of protection you need for your innovation, contact us and we can advise you.

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