

SIGACCESS Member Profile

Blaise W. Liffick

Department of Computer Science, Millersville University

URL: <http://cs.millersville.edu/~liffick>

E-mail: blaiseliffick@millersville.edu

Member of SIGACCESS since: 1981

Member of ACM since: 1981

Also member of: SIGCSE, SIGCHI

1. How many years have you been working in this area?

Most of my 25 years as a faculty member.

2. What motivates or inspires you to work in this area?

I am motivated by my belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every human being, and a desire to help promote equal opportunities for all, particularly the least advantaged. I am routinely inspired by clients who exhibit a level of perseverance that I can only aspire to.

3. Please describe your current research project(s):

Our current project is the Portable Personal Profiler, a program that runs automatically from a USB drive that allows the user to easily copy their user profile to the drive. When the drive is later plugged into another computer, the system allows the user to duplicate the copied profile to the new machine. This allows users with disabilities to modify any computer they use to fit their accessibility needs – such as monitor, keyboard, and mouse settings – with essentially a single keystroke. This system currently runs on Windows XP and 2000 systems. It is particularly useful for users with disabilities in educational or work settings where they may be expected to use a variety of computers over time.

4. What is your professional background?

I have a BS in computer science from Purdue University, an MS in CS from the University of Pittsburgh, and a Ph.D. in Computer and Information Science from Temple University. Prior to becoming a faculty member at Millersville University, I was a systems analyst at IBM and Eastman Kodak, and Senior Editor at BYTE Magazine.

5. Please describe any past projects on which you have worked:

The “Integrating Assistive Technology into an Undergraduate Computer Science Curriculum from an HCI Approach” project received National Science Foundation funding to develop computer science curriculum on assistive technology and a model laboratory. The result has been a senior-level course “Assistive Technology” at Millersville University, which discusses AT from an HCI perspective.

The Single-Switch Performance Tool (SSPT) is software that allows clinicians to evaluate the performance of users with disabilities to help select appropriate switch types and body positioning of the switch. This program is being distributed free by the AAC Institute (<http://www.aac institute.org>).

MAACKeys is a Mac version of the AACKeys program that accepts input from an AAC device and interprets that input as either commands to the computer or input to the currently running program. This allows AAC device users to control standard computers using their devices rather than a standard keyboard and mouse, using the General Input Device Emulating Interface (GIDEI) serial protocol. This program is being distributed free by the AAC Institute (<http://www.aac institute.org>).

6. *What technology or product would you really like to see developed? Why?*

The development of a universal interface language. This would allow the development of portable, personalized interfaces to interact with any computerized device. Individuals would carry their own specialized interface with them, rather than having to rely on every device to provide accessibility.

7. *Have you participated in any SIGACCESS-sponsored event?*

Presented a poster paper “An Adaptive Technologies Course in a CS Curriculum” at the 2005 ASSETS conference.

8. *What else would you like to see SIGACCESS do?*

Become active in curriculum development.