SUITCEYES

1 Jan 2018 - 31 Dec 2020

Smart, User-friendly, Interactive, Tactual, Cognition-Enhancer, that Yields Extended Sensosphere
Appropriating sensor technologies, machine learning, gamification and smart haptic interfaces

[D8.7]

Define the project identity VI

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Dissemination level		
PU	PUBLIC, fully open, e.g. web	X
CO	CONFIDENTIAL, restricted under conditions set out in Model Grant Agreement	
CI	CLASSIFIED, information as referred to in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC.	

Deliverable Type		
R	Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)	
DEM	Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs	
DEC	Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.	X
OTHER	Software, technical diagram, etc.	

Deliverable Details	
Deliverable number	D8.7
Part of WP	8
Lead organisation	LDQR
Lead member	Mauricio Fuentes

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v0.4	2021-02-22	Final draft after PC's comments	Mauricio Fuentes/LDQR
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Glossary	
Abbr./ Acronym	**Meaning**
SUITCEYES	Smart, User-friendly, Interactive, Tactual, Cognition-Enhancer, that Yields Extended Sensosphere Appropriating sensor technologies, machine learning, gamification and smart haptic interfaces
LDQR	Les Doigts Qui Rêvent
HARPO	Harpo Sp. Z o. o.
HB	Högskolan i Borås / University of Borås
HSO	Hochschule Offenburg / Offenburg University of Applied Sciences
HIPI	Haptic Intelligent Personal Interface
PAB	Project Advisory Board
Dx.y	Deliverable number y from work package x
GA	Grant Agreement
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
MUM	Mobile and Ubiquitous Multimedia
DbI	Deafblind International

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1. Executive Summary

The set of deliverables titled *Define the project identity (I to VI),* report on the use and implementation of project's identity in new dissemination materials and the updates of the visual identity package, which contains different materials to raise projects awareness and dissemination of project's results.

This report presents recent dissemination material in new formats (Leaflet, Newsletter and videos) that aim to extend our project identity to a larger community, considering the communication challenges that people with deafblindness encounter. Recent adjustments in the project's website and activity in social media is also reported on. Detailed information on the planning of the project's final event is presented, and lastly, the updated version of the *Visual Identity Package* is shared.

This deliverable is closely related to prior deliverable *Define the project identity* versions (D8.2 - D8.5) and the *Detailed dissemination plan* (D8.9), where dissemination methods were discussed according to the specific target audiences.

2. Introduction

Aiming to keep the project's templates and publicity materials updated, in the Grant Agreement (GA) a series of deliverables titled *Define the project identity (I to VI)* is to be presented every 6 months. In previous versions of this deliverable *(Define the project identity I – V),* different aspects of the project identity were presented: the project logo (visual and tactile version), document templates, catch phrases, publicity materials, Braille versions of project documents, guidelines concerning the use of the project's visual identity and the accessibility features for dissemination of project information.

This deliverable, D8.7 *Define the project identity VI*, aims to report on new publicity materials (a leaflet sharing policy analysis results, prototype demonstration videos and the latest newsletter) which disseminate project progress and results adapted to the different target audiences of SUITCEYES (potential users of our Haptic Intelligent Personal Interface (HIPI), academic and industrial communities). This deliverable also reports on other dissemination efforts such as the planning of the project's final event and an update on the visual identity package available to all project partners.

The activities and new materials reported in this deliverable, result of the project's adaptation to the conditions imposed by the new reality in pandemic times. New or enhanced communication strategies are being used to keep in touch with our target audiences, always trying to assess the accessibility challenges of dissemination activities in these particular times.

3. New publicity materials

3.1 Leaflet for potential users about European policy analysis

In 2020, project policy studies were concluded, assessing policy issues in 5 European countries regarding deafblindness, new technologies and access to devices amongst others. From the extensive documents that resulted from this initiative, a synthesis of the main results was made to communicate (in non-technical language) key information to potential HIPI users.

Considering pandemic restrictions, and to minimally enable have face-to-face encounters with potential target audiences and particularly with HIPI potential users, a leaflet was designed in a format (A4 pdf) that could be easily shared through e-mail, web and social media. The leaflet was structured in three (3) sections: context about the project and HIPI, context and results from policy analysis, and contact and general information about the project. Figure 1 shows a preview of the leaflet (to see the leaflet in real size please see the annexe at the end of the document).

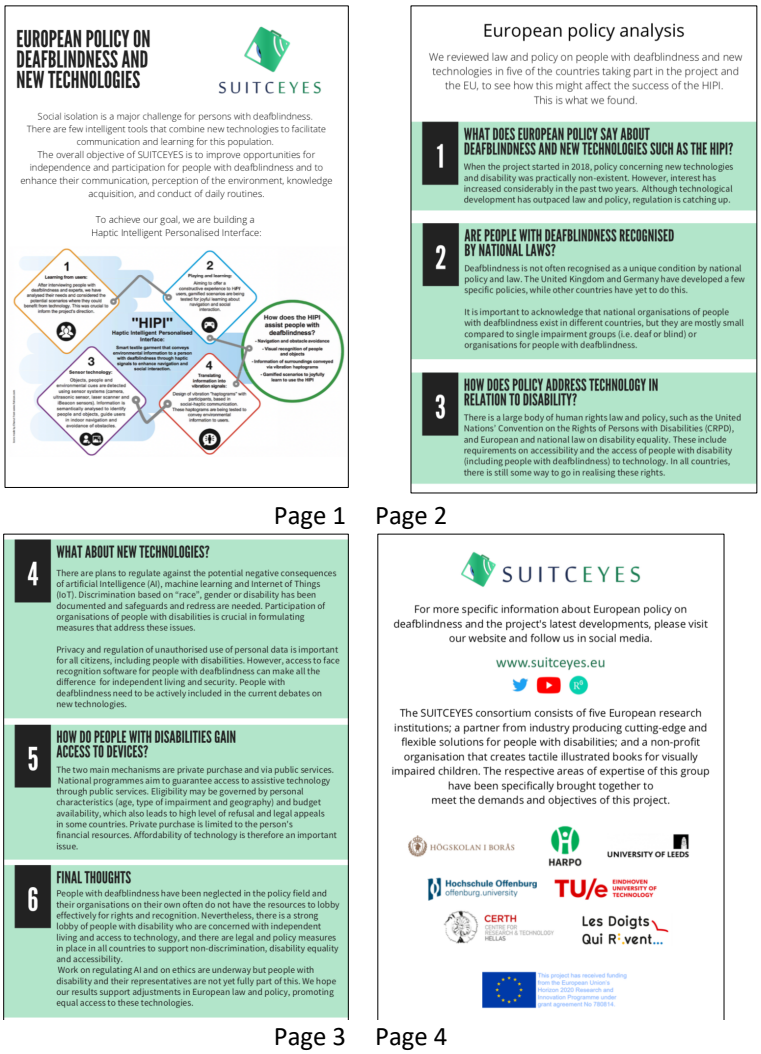

Figure 1 *Preview of the leaflet "European Policy Analysis of Deafblindness and New Technologies". The original format (printing format) of the leaflet is A4 (see annexe at the end of this document)*

Following earlier recommendations concerning the Comparative Analysis Report (Deliverable 2.4) which gathers the policy analysis results, some of the contents of that report will partially change and a final version of the leaflet will subsequently be submitted towards the end of the project. Although the leaflet presented here was ready for publication, the consortium decided to wait for the final approval of deliverable 2.4 for potential adjustments to its contents before publication on the project's website. The leaflet will be published in PDF format accessible for screen-reader software as all the project's publicity materials.

3.2 Newsletter

The third version of the project newsletter was issued in December 2020, including the project's achievements from January to December 2020. The newsletter is available on the SUITCEYES website (https://suitceyes.eu/newsletter/) and was sent via email to subscribers (currently 74 subscribers) according to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The newsletter is also accessed by all website visitors, whose numbers have increased during the project duration. Details of website visits will be delivered in D8.13 Dissemination Activities Report III expected for May 2021, as reported in previous versions of that same deliverable.

Although activities and achievements are usually reported through Work Packages, for this third version of the newsletter information was organised in different thematic sections to make it easy to find specific information and better inform our readers. The initial sections include: Introduction; Meetings, work and information; and Policy analysis on deafblindness and new technologies. The following sections reported on different aspects of our technical solution: Latest developments of our Haptic Intelligent Personalised Interface (HIPI); Haptogram design; Visual Analysis; Perception and Navigation; Psychophysics; Gamification; and Dissemination. The final sections reported on: Dissemination activities at a glance (2020); Recent Scholarly Publications (2020); and Future Directions. In Figure 2, examples from some sections are provided.

This dissemination method contributes to project awareness. Continuing the design from previous versions, the newsletter was conceived in a press-type language, aiming to keep the project stakeholders informed about the latest achievements of the project. This material also concerns the general public that follows the project and visitors of our website (project's main dissemination method).

Season's Greetings from SUITCEYES!

As we put 2020 behind us and head towards a new year, we wish to offer you our warmest wishes for the festive season! We would also like to take a moment to reflect on the achievements in SUITCEYES in this, rather different, year. The pandemic naturally affected our activities as well, and the progress made in the project this year. For one, it forced our consortium's partners to work without constant access to labs and equipment; furthermore, a series of user-centred sessions for ideation and testing out prototypes have had to be cancelled on grounds of public health. Electronic equipment has also been hard to come by due to occasional disruptions in the global supply chain. Therefore, as has happened with the vast majority of H2020 projects, **SUITCEYES has been extended** by the European Commission with a **new finishing date of June 2021.**

Nevertheless, work in the project is progressing on nearly all fronts. In 2020 we have accomplished to:

- improve computer vision algorithms for better recognition of scenes, objects and faces in lower lighting; with a covid added extra of detecting and recognising faces with masks on
- hold online co-constructive workshops for design of haptograms
- create multiple new prototypes to facilitate experimentation (chairable prototype) and use and functionality (e.g., the gaming vest)
- develop one-to-many haptic communication from distance
- develop a tactile board that can be used for communication with the HIPI system and with people
- conduct psychophysical experiments toward haptogram designs
- develop and extend gaming scenarios one of which - keep your distance - is particularly useful in current times
- produce scholarly publications and engage in other dissemination activities.

As we head towards the last six months of the project we look forward to bringing all the different elements of the project together for a successful conclusion to the project. For those interested in the final outcomes, among others, we will present our latest results in an exciting

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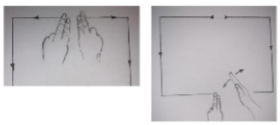

Image 4: Based on the recordings, field notes and sketches were developed.

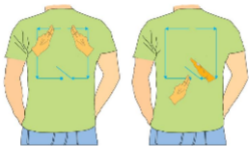

Image 5: Formalised sketches were then drawn.

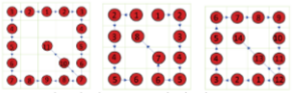

Image 6: Haptograms that closely represent the hand movements were developed. Alternative designs are experimented with to ensure perceptibility. Numbers indicate the sequence of vibrotactile actuators activated.

VISUAL ANALYSIS

In terms of computer vision, with the inclusion of a camera in the vest it is possible to detect and recognise objects of varying size as well as people, which are in the camera's field of view. Additionally, the scene location is recognised, granting the ability to understand at which type of indoors environment the user is at whether it is an office or an elevator. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, an additional module has been developed, with the assistance of the face detection module, which shows if a face mask is worn properly.

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The aforementioned modules that comprise the primary Visual Analysis tool are deployed on a remote server which receives the camera feed and executes the powerful and computationally heavy algorithms. However, since a scenario where the communication between the camera and the server is not possible due to the absence of an internet connection is not far-fetched, an alternative architecture as a backup solution has been developed. In this backup solution, the modules for object and scene detection, which are more lightweight in this version, are executed locally, without relying on the communication with the server.

Every single module was developed with the notion that it will help the user understand her surroundings better. With this in mind, the user can ask specific questions regarding objects and scenes of interest such as the location of an object, the recognised objects or the current location, scene-wise, of the user. Additionally, information about the proximity of an object or another person is also provided. Hence, in a situation that the user needs to find her cell phone, it will be possible to know if it is in her field of view and how far it is.

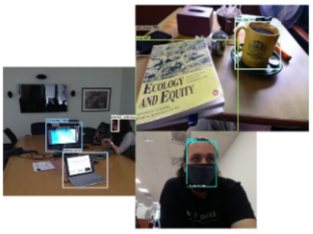

Image 7: Examples of object recognition

PERCEPTION & NAVIGATION

Work on WP4 encountered setbacks due to the departure of one of its main researchers. Work went on nevertheless, and despite the pandemic since February, we have:

- Produced prototype circuit boards for the sensors and actuators
- Tested embroidered circuits from HB for sensors and actuators and

Begun designing connection methods for sensors and actuators

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Image 9: Partner TU/E participates in online EuroHaptics conference

GAMIFICATION

In February 2020 we conducted a hands-on workshop during which we brainstormed and planned iterations for the second version of our Keep Your Distance gaming vest. The improved wearable took into consideration the feedback received from users that tried the navigation game using the Keep Your Distance 1.0 vest.

Image 10: One of the prototype vests developed by our consortium

Based on the findings of our co-design workshop, we introduced the Tactile Board: a communication device that supports individuals with deafblindness in communicating with other persons by using haptic messages that are then translated into speech or text. The device allows individuals with deafblindness to initiate social interactions without the direct need of an interpreter. The Tactile Board will be presented during the upcoming 19th

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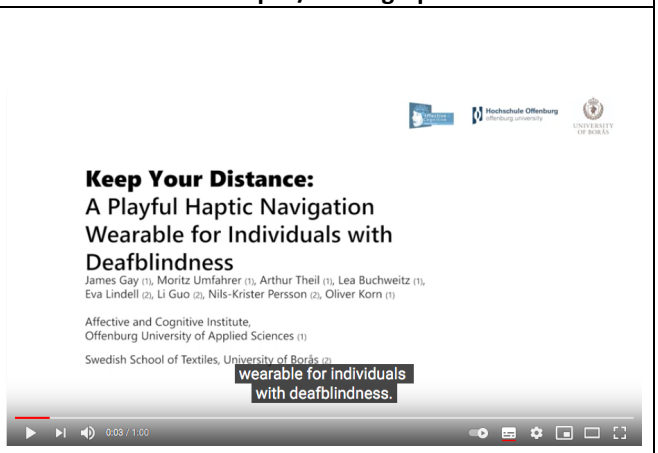
Figure 2. *Pictures of the newsletter disseminated through the project's website and sent to subscribers.*

3.3 Project videos

Project videos have been an important resource for sharing the results and latest achievements. In past months of 2020, two new videos were published on the SUITCEYES website and YouTube channel. The first video (details in Table 1) was conceived for the 22nd International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility held on October 2020. This video, "Keep Your Distance: A Playful Haptic Navigation Wearable for Individuals with Deafblindness", presented results concerning gamification of the HIPIs navigation solutions. It was the most liked presentation at #ASSETS2020, winning the "People's Choice Award". The video is available in the project's YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwPG-lzKVoc) and in the video section on the SUITCEYES website (https://suitceyes.eu/multimedia/).

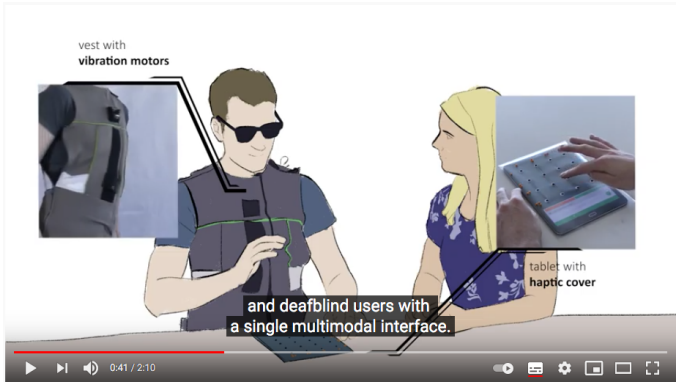
***Table 1** Keep your distance video*

Feature	Description / explanation	Example / Photograph
Title	Keep Your Distance: A Playful Haptic Navigation Wearable for Individuals with Deafblindness	
Length	1 minute	
Accessibility features	English subtitles (white text over black rectangle)	
Publication	The video was published on the 10th of December 2020 in the project's YouTube channel and website	
Reference	James Gay, Moritz Umfahrer, Arthur Theil, Lea Buchweitz, Eva Lindell, Li Guo, Nils-Krister Persson, and Oliver Korn. 2020. Keep Your Distance: A Playful Haptic Navigation Wearable for Individuals with Deafblindness. The 22nd International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 93, 1–4. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1145/3373625.3418048	

The second video (details in Table 2), "Tactile Board: A Multimodal AAC Device for Individuals with Deafblindness", was presented in the 19th International Conference on Mobile and Ubiquitous Multimedia (MUM) in November 2020. This video features a tactile communication interface ("Tactile Board") which allows two-way interaction between people with and without deafblindness. This result is very important as it led the way to a two-way communication between users and the HIPI. The video is available in the project's YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36bj-6xvPmU&t=41s) and in the video section on the SUITCEYES website (https://suitceyes.eu/multimedia/).

A third video, promoted by SUITCEYES, is the film "Empowering Persons with Deafblindness with Intelligent Gamified Wearables: SUITCEYES Documentary". This was a student project from the Media Faculty of Offenburg University and Oliver Korn (project partner, HSO) was part of the advisory team. In the words of the authors, "this film shows how the life of persons with deafblindness can be dramatically improved", while presenting the SUITCEYES project through original footage and interviews with project members. This video is available on the project's website since the 19th of January 2021 (https://suitceyes.eu/multimedia/).

Table 2 *Tactile Board video*

Feature	Description / explanation	Example / Photograph
Title	Tactile Board: A Multimodal Augmentative and Alternative Communication Device for Individuals with Deafblindness	
Length	2 minutes 10 seconds	
Accessibility features	English subtitles (white text over black rectangle)	
Publication	The video was published on the 10th of December 2020 in the project's YouTube channel and website	
Reference	Arthur Theil, Lea Buchweitz, James Gay, Eva Lindell, Li Guo, Nils-Krister Persson, and Oliver Korn. 2020. Tactile Board: A Multimodal Augmentative and Alternative Communication Device for Individuals with Deafblindness. In 19th International Conference on Mobile and Ubiquitous Multimedia (MUM 2020). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 223–228. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1145/3428361.3428465	

4. Dissemination of results

4.1 Recent changes in our project's website

The SUITCEYES website is the project's most important dissemination platform. Social media (Twitter, YouTube, ResearchGate and LinkedIn), the newsletter and other outreach information are available on the website, unifying different dissemination channels addressed to our target audiences (potential HIPI users, academic and industry stakeholders).

Due to its importance, the website is constantly updated and assessed for necessary changes in its contents or structure. These revisions usually take place within the WP8 monthly meetings, where project members from different WPs actively participate in discussions concerning dissemination activities and contents, including the website related topics.

One of the latest changes was the definition of the "Outreach" section (https://suitceyes.eu/category/publicity/), which gathers important dissemination materials in 5 subsections: Publications, Public deliverables, Publicity materials, Videos and Press (Figure 3). The first subsection shows an updated list of academic open access publications; the second contains all the approved project deliverables; publicity materials in different accessible formats are available for downloading in the third subsection; videos and press articles can be accessed in the fourth and fifth subsection.

Figure 3. *Pictures of the new structure of the "Outreach" section on the SUITCEYES website.*

4.2 Activity on Twitter

The SUITCEYES Twitter account has been active since the beginning of the project, initially orientated to building an audience (project awareness) and most lately to share project's results and related information. Since September 2020, the Twitter activity has been centred in disseminating the projects final event (save the date and other details), report on latest project results and activities, and finally to share with our audience relevant information issued by other stakeholders concerning deafblindness.

The 3rd of December, SUITCEYES participated in the European Day of Persons with Disability (#EDPD2020) in coordination with Better Internet for EU (@BetterNet4EU). During this day, 4 publications concerning project's latest results were released, resulting in the greatest daily "Impressions"[1] (more than 800) since September 2020. Figure 4 shows some examples of Twitter publications from last 3 months.

Since the launch of the channel, there has been more than 1500 views. The most viewed video is a presentation from Linda Eriksson about haptic communication which took place in one of our consortium meetings in Borås (2019).

Finally, concerning the ResearchGate page (https://www.researchgate.net/project/SUITCEYES-Empowering-Deaf-Blind-Persons), we have more than 150 new reads since the last report in September 2020 (Deliverable 8.5), where 410 reads were registered. These reads do not include interactions of authors or project collaborators[2]. Another dissemination channel is the project's LinkedIn profile (https://www.linkedin.com/company/suitceyes-project-h2020/) where project videos and news are also shared.

[1] "Impressions" are defined as the number of times users saw each Tweet on Twitter.
[2] For more information on the "reads" measurement in ResearchGte, please visit: https://explore.researchgate.net/display/support/Reads

Figure 4. Examples of recent SUITCEYES Twitter publications.

5. Planning of final event

The public health situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the project as has been reported in different deliverables and project documents. Our plans for the final event were also affected. The event date, initially stabilised for December 2020, was changed to the 17 -19 of May 2021, closer to the end of the project (June 2021). Concordantly with COVID-19 situation and the uncertainty of sanitary regulations in different countries, it was also decided to develop the event in an online format.

The feasibility of developing the event in this format, considering the diversity of our target audiences (including potential HIPI users, academic and industry communities, and decision makers) was assessed by exploring similar events in which persons with disability participated and also discussing with our Project Advisory Board (PAB) about their recent experiences in similar events. During this exploration, consortium members participated in a webinar organised by Deafblind International (DbI) in June 2020 with the title "Living with Deafblindness in a New Reality". The organisation of this event, where people with deafblindness from many countries participated presenting and attending the webinar, included important accessibility features which allowed us to consider the possibility of having an inclusive event using this format, and learning key elements to enhance accessibility. After this event, we have strengthened our relationship with DbI, who has provided in-detail information about their experience in the organisation of events concerning people with deafblindness. In every step of the way, our PAB has been consulted to assure that the organisation of the SUITCEYES final event is moving in the right direction concerning its contents and accessibility features.

The event titled "Symposium: Living through Touch – Smart Haptic Communication for Inclusion, Accessibility and Participation", is now in its promotion stage. Latest information and registration form are available on the SUITCEYES website (https://suitceyes.eu/final-event/). The objective of this three-day event (17-19 May 2021) is to mark the conclusion of our SUITCEYES project, promote deafblindness awareness, present SUITCEYES results and continue our conversations and actions with different stakeholders concerning the project life beyond its ending date.

The first day of the event will be concentrated on sharing the project's results through presentations and demonstrations of prototypes. On the second day, we aim to expand our dialogue with a broader community, sharing views with special guests about the different aspects of the project, such as people with deafblindness, researchers and industry. Finally, on the third day we aim to continue our discussion with project collaborators, advisers and decision makers about the path beyond the project. This will be the opportunity to present European policy analysis concerning deafblindness and new technologies, and the platform approach of SUITCEYES to favour future developments, dissemination and exploitation of results.

For the moment, we have more than 160 participant registrations mainly from different European countries and from other countries such as Brazil, the United States of America and Canada. The promotion of the event has been centred in our social media (Twitter and ResearchGate), the latest newsletter and by e-mail to the project's closest network.

We are working to respond to our participants' needs in terms of accessibility and assuring a high-quality performance of the technical aspects of the event. Zoom[3] was chosen as the symposium's main platform, as it includes an intuitive interface and easy to use features such as the chat and a question and answer (Q&A) dialog box. The daily sessions will take place from 12:00 to 18:00 CET, which will give access to participants in different time zones, but also thinking in the convenience of participants, as full-day sessions are tiring. The half-day sessions will be divided into one-hour blocks, which include 30-minute presentations followed by 15 minutes for Q&A, and finally a 15-minute pause for interpreters. For the moment, international sign language interpretation will be offered for all sessions (presentations and Q&A). Presentations will also be pre-recorded, which will minimise technical issues of live presentations, it will guarantee time keeping, and it will allow subtitling to enhance accessibility. Additionally, the event will be live streamed through the SUITCEYES YouTube channel. This live stream will be recorded, and the contents of the symposium will be available for future dissemination purposes. Fund seeking efforts are also under way to further enhance event accessibility features, such as sign language interpretation in multiple languages. Other features are in exploration, such as having alternative virtual "coffee" rooms for favouring informal interactions between participants before and after the sessions, and real time captioning in different languages for the live interventions, such as Q&A sessions[4].

[3] https://zoom.us/

[4] For examples of these features, please visit https://spatial.chat, https://webcaptioner.com/ and https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/207279736-Closed-captioning-and-live-transcription.

6. Updated Visual Identity Package

The visual identity package (see Table 3) has been updated with the latest publicity materials and it is available to all partners for dissemination purposes.

Table 3. *Visual identity package and updates*

Element	Description	Format	Date of last update (DD/MM/YY)
Leaflet	Leaflet in A4 format with results from the European policy analysis orientated for potential HIPI users	.pdf	30/01/2021
Documentary about the project	Documentary film "Empowering Persons with Deafblindness with Intelligent Gamified Wearables: SUITCEYES Documentary". Student project from the Media Faculty of Offenburg University	Website	21/01/2021
Prototype demonstration video	Video (2 minutes and 10 seconds). Title: Tactile Board: A Multimodal Augmentative and Alternative Communication Device for Individuals with Deafblindness	.mp4	10/12/2020
Prototype demonstration video	Video (1 minute). Title: Keep Your Distance: A Playful Haptic Navigation Wearable for Individuals with Deafblindness	.mp4	10/12/2020
First prototype demonstration video	Video (2 minutes and 49 seconds long), featuring the first prototype demonstration during project's symposium at Borås (August 20-23, 2019)	.mp4	15/09/2019
Bookmark with Braille title	Full colour bookmark (9 x 15 cm) with project information and featuring the projects name in Braille	Paper	22/08/2019
Postcard with tactile logo	50 full colour printed postcards (17 x 17 cm), including a tactile image of the project's logo.	Paper	22/08/2019
Tactile poster	One full colour printed poster (60 x 80 cm), including a large size tactile image of the project's logo.	Paper	22/08/2019
Leaflet (German version)	Full colour, digital and ready-to-print leaflet in A4 format (21.0 x 29.7 cm). Language: German. Accessible format tested for screen-reader software.	.pdf	20/06/2019
Flyer	Full colour, digital and ready-to-print flyer in A5 format (21.0 x 14.9 cm). Accessible format tested for screen-reader software.	.pdf	15/02/2019
Leaflet	Full colour, digital and ready-to-print leaflet in A4 format (21.0 x 29.7 cm). Accessible format tested for screen-reader software.	.pdf	15/02/2019
Poster A3	Full colour, digital and ready-to-print poster in A3 format (29.7 x 42.0 cm). Accessible format tested for screen-reader software.	.pdf	15/02/2019
Poster A1	Full colour, digital and ready-to-print poster in A1 format (59.4 x 89.1 cm). Accessible format tested for screen-reader software.	.pdf	15/02/2019
User manual of visual identity	Deliverable D8.3 Project identity II which includes the user's manual and other recommendations	.pdf	29/09/2018
Deliverable template	Full colour template including front page, title styles and typography	.docx	21/09/2018

Presentation template	Full colour template including title slide, contents slide, final slide, title styles and typography	.pptx	06/08/2018
Letter sheet template	Full colour template including headed page, title styles and typography	.docx	02/08/2018
Logo (Horizontal format)	Full colour logo in horizontal format	.png .pdf	01/2018
Logo (Standing format)	Full colour logo in standing format	.png .pdf	01/2018

7. Conclusions

Throughout the project, significant effort has been undertaken to communicate SUITCEYES activities, achievements and results. Project identity has co-evolved with these activities, as our project community has grown and as we have held more direct communication with our target audiences. The project's stance on disability and on what it means to conduct research *with* people with deafblindness shaped the dissemination strategies and implementation of the project's visual identity. These strategies were also adapted to the different phases of the project, the changing realities in which we live, and the needs that these changes imposed to our target audiences.

Lessons learned during the project will contribute to the final stages of the project and future dissemination and exploitation efforts that will last beyond project finalisation.

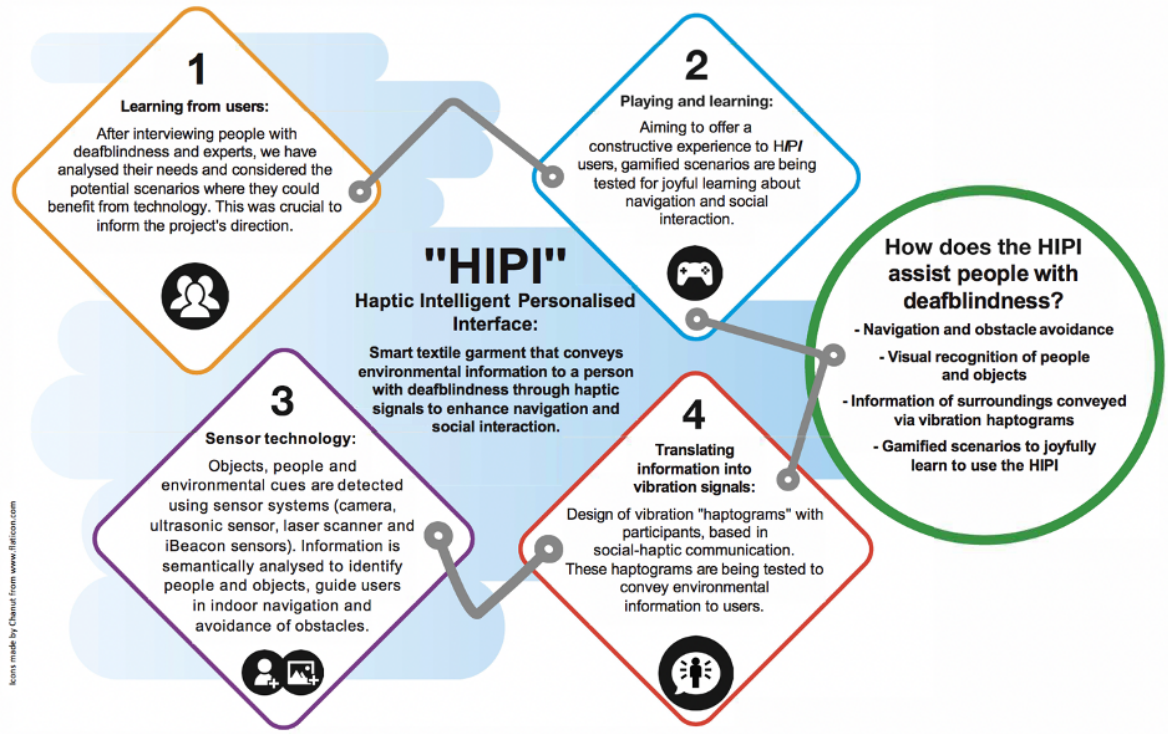
8. Annex - Leaflet for potential users about European policy analysis

EUROPEAN POLICY ON DEAFBLINDNESS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

SUITCEYES

Social isolation is a major challenge for persons with deafblindness. There are few intelligent tools that combine new technologies to facilitate communication and learning for this population.
The overall objective of SUITCEYES is to improve opportunities for independence and participation for people with deafblindness and to enhance their communication, perception of the environment, knowledge acquisition, and conduct of daily routines.

To achieve our goal, we are building a Haptic Intelligent Personalised Interface:



European policy analysis

We reviewed law and policy on people with deafblindness and new technologies in five of the countries taking part in the project and the EU, to see how this might affect the success of the HIPI. This is what we found.

1 WHAT DOES EUROPEAN POLICY SAY ABOUT DEAFBLINDNESS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS THE HIPI?

When the project started in 2018, policy concerning new technologies and disability was practically non-existent. However, interest has increased considerably in the past two years. Although technological development has outpaced law and policy, regulation is catching up.

2 ARE PEOPLE WITH DEAFBLINDNESS RECOGNISED BY NATIONAL LAWS?

Deafblindness is not often recognised as a unique condition by national policy and law. The United Kingdom and Germany have developed a few specific policies, while other countries have yet to do this.

It is important to acknowledge that national organisations of people with deafblindness exist in different countries, but they are mostly small compared to single impairment groups (i.e. deaf or blind) or organisations for people with deafblindness.

3 HOW DOES POLICY ADDRESS TECHNOLOGY IN RELATION TO DISABILITY?

There is a large body of human rights law and policy, such as the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and European and national law on disability equality. These include requirements on accessibility and the access of people with disability (including people with deafblindness) to technology. In all countries, there is still some way to go in realising these rights.

4 WHAT ABOUT NEW TECHNOLOGIES?

There are plans to regulate against the potential negative consequences of artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning and Internet of Things (IoT). Discrimination based on "race", gender or disability has been documented and safeguards and redress are needed. Participation of organisations of people with disabilities is crucial in formulating measures that address these issues.

Privacy and regulation of unauthorised use of personal data is important for all citizens, including people with disabilities. However, access to face recognition software for people with deafblindness can make all the difference for independent living and security. People with deafblindness need to be actively included in the current debates on new technologies.

5 HOW DO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES GAIN ACCESS TO DEVICES?

The two main mechanisms are private purchase and via public services. National programmes aim to guarantee access to assistive technology through public services. Eligibility may be governed by personal characteristics (age, type of impairment and geography) and budget availability, which also leads to high level of refusal and legal appeals in some countries. Private purchase is limited to the person's financial resources. Affordability of technology is therefore an important issue.

6 FINAL THOUGHTS

People with deafblindness have been neglected in the policy field and their organisations on their own often do not have the resources to lobby effectively for rights and recognition. Nevertheless, there is a strong lobby of people with disability who are concerned with independent living and access to technology, and there are legal and policy measures in place in all countries to support non-discrimination, disability equality and accessibility.

Work on regulating AI and on ethics are underway but people with disability and their representatives are not yet fully part of this. We hope our results support adjustments in European law and policy, promoting equal access to these technologies.

SUITCEYES

For more specific information about European policy on deafblindness and the project's latest developments, please visit our website and follow us in social media.

www.suitceyes.eu

The SUITCEYES consortium consists of five European research institutions; a partner from industry producing cutting-edge and flexible solutions for people with disabilities; and a non-profit organisation that creates tactile illustrated books for visually impaired children. The respective areas of expertise of this group have been specifically brought together to meet the demands and objectives of this project.

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