

# MADA Assistive Technology Portal

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## David Banes

Mada – Qatar Assistive Technology Center, Doha, Qatar

## Background

The need for a source of independent information on all aspects of assistive technology for Arabic Speakers and within the Middle East was identified by Mada in 2013. It became apparent that most potential users of such technologies were discovering their information through web searches and word of mouth which led directly to vendor websites which often did not provide comparative information, or link to sources of training and support. Mada had already begun a process of creating information artifacts, including video and factsheets and wished to draw these artifacts together into a single location to assist potential users of AT to make informed decisions

## Activity Report

The Mada Assistive Technology Portal offers people with disabilities, parents and professionals a wide range of information about Assistive Technology, in both Arabic and English. The website was developed by the Mada Qatar Assistive Technology Center, and is the first of its kind in the Arab world.

The Mada AT Portal contains up to date information on a wide range of AT products including a detailed list of Arabic language technologies, supplier details and approximate costs, Factsheets and Guides about disability and AT products, AT Training Materials for professionals, in both Arabic and English, blogs and opinion pieces on topics related to Assistive Technology and a glossary of AT related terms in Arabic and English.

Key design principles were built into the portal, these included



- Designed to AA Accessibility standards
- Bilingual in English and Arabic
- Glossary of terms for Arabic included to help in understanding new concepts
- Resources in Video format as well as text

The portal welcomed the inclusion of opinion pieces as well as information resources. This is an area for further development in the future as the portal is revised and redesigned to meet the needs of more diverse audiences such as policymakers, educators or employers.

## Conclusions

The need for independent information resources is increasingly important within the Middle East as the market for technologies grows. In the past information resources have been limited, either being only available in English, or only provided by vendors. Both had value but lacked either cultural nuance or critical edge. The development of the AT portal provided a location where both issues could be addressed and which could build upon the status as a trusted intermediary across stakeholders.

Maintaining and growing the portal has proven challenging and Mada will be seeking to expand the content available within the portal, and the audiences who will access the content in the future.

The use of creative commons licensing for the knowledge artifacts, remains a valuable tool allowing the core knowledge to be repurposed by others to increase awareness and understanding of AT and its implementation.

## References

Mada AT Portal

<http://madaportal.org/>

ITU review of portal

<http://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/stocktaking/projects/Project/Details?projectId=1385619756>

ictQatar – Toolkits for people with disabilities

<http://www.ictqatar.qa/en/ditoolkit/ditoolkit-for-people-with-disabilities>

## Contact details

David Banes – Mada – [dbanes@mada.org.qa](mailto:dbanes@mada.org.qa)