



# **The Report of Examination of the Procedures of Transforming Persian Talking Books Into Daisy Software**

A Project Accepted by Ulverscroft Foundation and Winner of the IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section Fredrick Thorpe IFLA Best Practice Awards

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Thank heavens for making me able to prepare the project, examination of possibility of transferring Daisy books technology to Iran, and to give me an occasion to visit the Swedish library of talking books (TPB) with the support of Ulverscroft foundation and spiritual help of Dr. Said Rezāi – Sharifābādi, although there were some difficulties and pressures in the my own way. I hope the authorities in my country who are responsible to the blinds affairs also modeling the pattern will be explained later as an example of their new activities in the area of library products.

My primary familiarization with the new hardware and software Daisy was between 2003 -2005 by Mrs. Shirin Taāvoni, one of the veteran librarians of National Library of Iran. However, what, at first, I was really learned about those was only an imperfect mental background. It couldn't reflect them to the authorities well and justify financially enough, until Mrs. Taāvoni acquainted me with pre- conference IFLA 2005 and with the material and spiritual contribution of Mrs. Beatrice Christensen Skold, the honorable secretary of the conference I participated in IFLA biennial conference that was held in 2005, Guttenberg, Swede, while I was accompanied by Mrs. Taāvoni.

The expansion of Daisy consortium activities was one of the subjects offered in the conference. Regarding the importance of the subject I notified Hiroshi Kawamura, the member and representative of the consortium in the meeting of existing difficulties in Iran as well as failing to access to Daisy technology. However, at the time, except of familiarization with some producers of the program who gave me bit information I could not reach to considerable progress and I left the conference almost disappointedly.

Thereafter, I knew Mrs. Taāvoni had continued her conferring to take the software.

I also transferred what I had seen and what I had heard in the pre-conference 2005 to the authorities of Iranian blind libraries, although they felt that the consortium's membership as well as producing resources for the blind was complicated and inaccessible works.

Sometime later, I talked to Dr. Rezāi - Sharifābādi, one of the members of Librarianship Department faculty of al- Zahra University (Tehran) and one of National Library of Iran's authorities at the time. He advised me of some technical library guidance. I again reviewed the subject with Mr. Hiroshi in Pre- IFLA 2007, South Africa. He proposed participating in workshops he would hold in China and India, but he failed to mention Iran's membership in the consortium. Mrs. Beatrice introduced me to Marja-Leena, the librarian of Swedish library of talking books (TPB), who has done several attempts in creating Daisy books in Persian. She made me feel hopeful that the library has been successful in producing several Persian books in the form of Daisy program and to offering them to Iranian users

of the library who live in Swede. Thereafter, my doubts about producing a Persian software began to reduce; announcing my interest to visit and consultation them.

In return, I sent the research project under Fredrick Thorpe Awards which had appeared in the end of manual of Pre – IFLA 's Biennial Conference, to Ulverscroft Foundation, with approval and contributions of Dr. Rezāi – Sharifābādi and the TPB announcing acceptance of cooperation. After the project accepted by above - mentioned institution, in June 4, as it will come completely next, I met Mr. Hanson K. Jell, the president of Swedish Library of Talking Books (TPB) and his colleagues in Stockholm and on Friday, June 6, I visited a company located in the port of Guttenberg city and receiving commission from the TPB. In the end, it is necessary to mention that the present report contains two parts: 1. daily activities, 2. some suggestions on improving the prospect of Iran's blind libraries.

### *Daily Activities*

On Saturday, the 11<sup>th</sup> Khordad 1378 (Sat. the 31st May 2008), at 2:30am, I arrived at Stockholm airport. After dwelling in a hotel I went sightseeing to visit public places and access some information about facilities to rehabilitate blinds presence in society.

On Sunday, I was walking alongshore, while studying Persian and English public newspapers and magazines.

On Monday, to acquaint myself with the activities of the Lions's organization in Sweden, I went to its office in Stockholm (it is necessary to mention that this NGO doesn't have any branches in Iran) but unfortunately I couldn't find proposed information, nor could the organization provide what I expected to obtain from visiting divers places in the city. As a result, I myself provided tickets to go sightseeing and do necessary tasks in the city.

On Tuesday, I went to the public library of Stockholm municipality to visit its blind section and prepare a report. After entering the library, the information desk staff, when they knew that I was from Iran, informed quickly one of their colleagues, Reza sharifzāde, to lead me. He managed to allow me to meet Mr. Larry, the president of the library. The library president talked me in detail about general situation of the library and its special services done for Iranian library users in Stockholm and the Persian books archive. Next, Mr. Sharifzāde and I went to the blind services section of the library where was located separately but it was close to the central library. While I was visiting different places of the library, I was made familiar with the way information services were done.

As a result, first, I found out that the special services of blind section of the library was very lively and dynamic. They offer services to the handicapped only through Daisy system. The library is possessed of Daisy program completely. According to

information I obtained from the expert of the blind section of that library, they reflect all the demands of their section to the Swedish Library of Talking Books (TPB) and that organization also deliver resources with Daisy system to this library as soon as possible. Second, because of the 8 year Iraq – Iran war and other reasons, many Iranians, Afghans, and Kurds whose language is Persian took refuge in Sweden. Therefore, regarding these people raising age and / or the spreading of ophthalmic diseases amongst them, they reflect their needs to the Persian language section of the Stockholm public library and the library inform the TPB of their needs.

After spending several hours sightseeing and talking to the library authorities I left there to go to visit Stockholm University Library; at the same time, I donated the Quran to the library.

There, after becoming acquainted with the library's general condition I obtained some information on the blind section as with the public library. Although, I couldn't find useful information about the Iranian library users and its Iranian students, I found out the high quality of Daisy from two visits.

Then, hoping for acquaintance with monarchical library of Stockholm, I went there but during my visit I found out the library lacked a blind services section.

### *Doing the Task*

Wednesday morning, after being welcomed by Marja-Leena I was introduced to the group and began to work with her Iranian colleague, Mrs. Giti Nabavi of Iranian descent.

She gave me useful information about the Daisy software and after two hours discussion and examination the procedure of Daisy programming and transforming it she left me.

During having lunch among them, my friend and travel mate in Pre-IFLA 2007 in South Africa, Mr. Jasper came to meet me. In discussion, he informed me of the membership of Alexandra Library (Egypt) in Daisy consortium which made me glad and more hopeful about the future.

After lunch, I continued the session with Marja-Leena. In the session I considered the library TPB has begun to make Daisy Persian with cooperation of an organization in Yotoboury. They had produced a few books, for example *the Memoirs of Farah- e Pahlavi*. A lot of discussion happened between me and the library president regarding the fortes and drawbacks of the software in Persian. They brought an engineer called Mr. Pablo whose task was inserting resources in Daisy. I tried talking to him about the points I needed to be explained. His information made me feel sure that Persian Daisy was producible, but it would

need to be dealt with resources linguistically. However, as a new thing it had acceptable and admirable quality.

At the end of session I could arrive at an implicit agreement with the library authority to transfer our standard Persian talking books and its studio text to the TPB, as well as transforming several recorded books in Iran into Daisy software by the end of current year.

This one day visit which took 8 hours had effective implications and if the library was justifying the software well enough, I could explain the subject much better. But they arranged the program anyway and I couldn't raise the time of visiting there.

At the end of program I was introduced to the production group in city Guttenberg and the next day, at 11am, I went there by train.

At 4pm I arrived in city Guttenberg and I resided in the Robinson Hotel. The following two Iranians, Mrs. Parvin Mohammad –niya and Mr. Fasili, an engineer, who worked with Daisy production center located in Guttenberg followed me and we together went to the Iranian producer of Daisy and there I met their colleagues, Mrs. Shelma and Mr. Sharām - e Iradji and after passing several minutes we enter into operational work.

At first, their studio, which was appropriate and excelent, was visited. They explained to me how to work and how to cooperate with TPB. They said 4 books have already been transformed into Daisy program under the supervising the TPB. I also asked them whether they had ever examined their products with Daisy special hardware. They replied they didn't do this directly, but they showed me an Iranian interview with a journal that implied their success. Since this organization was lacking in the Daisy main hardware, I asked them about going to the library in Guttenberg which had everything together, and checking the produced books by the special device that was there. After returning to Tehran they informed me that transforming the standard Persian books into Daisy system had been done successfully.

## *Conclusion*

At the end I indicate that although my travel was difficult and problematic, its achievements were sweet. I could realize my dream of accessing to the Persian software in the travel. I hope we will use it in Iran through the achievements I offered here, as we could do in the case of talking books (audio). At the same time I hope we can make the Persian language countries members of Daisy consortium with cooperation of Ulverscroft and the TPB will be asked for producing more instances in order to introduce the work to the aforementioned countries.

It is considerable to add regarding the potential that I see in standardizing audio books produced in Iran, we could offer this new software to the Iranian blind society with reciprocal library cooperation, while will meet its drawbacks.

### *Future Cooperation Fields/Suggestions*

1. Immediate effort for transferring the Daisy technology and membership in its consortium with cooperation of Roudaki blind library (Tehran) and National Library of Iran; (Dr. Rezāi-sharifābadi is informed about and fairly soon the subject will be pursued.)
2. Keeping in contact with the Alexandra library in Egypt for examining the ways Arabic books have been transforming into Daisy (regarding nearly shared alphabets of Arabic and Persian languages);
3. Reflecting the TPB activities to talking books libraries of Iran;
4. Making blinds familiar with public libraries as well as initiating public libraries with blind talking library center to meet needs of blind users of libraries;
5. Pilot cooperation with the Swedish library of talking books (TPB) in order to transforming Persian talking books produced in Iran into Daisy;
6. Developing cooperation between Persian language libraries;
7. Demanding establishment of Persian and Arabic sections in Daisy consortium to hold regional learning courses;
8. Consulting companies which produce blind hard wares and soft wares about necessary cooperation with blind centers in Iran.