

# BENTECH BULLETIN

Eighth Edition July 2016

*“New technologies – New Abilities”*



*“NEW TECHNOLOGIES—NEW ABILITIES”*

## Making Progress

Yes, it has been a long time between newsletters, but a lot has been happening between December 2015 and now. The Bentech Board has been meeting on an almost monthly basis to deal with the decisions that have to be made.

The fund raising we conducted earlier in the year was successful and has allowed us to continue with our work and more importantly start on our first trial house.

## Presentation

In May Derek Milton and Tony Brown made a presentation to a symposium entitled 'Improving Outcomes Through Equipment and Technology'. The symposium was organised by the Aged & Community Services WA and the Independent Living Centre of WA.

The presentation consisted of a short description of Bentech and the Ben's House Project. This was followed by a real time demonstration of the system in operation.

The whole demonstration went over very well and was followed by a healthy number of questions. A number of symposium participants made very positive comments on our work.

Sincere thanks to Derek for ensuring that the real time demonstration worked like clockwork.

*“Artificial intelligence usually beats real stupidity.”*



**Richard Allen interviewing Rob Barr**

## Bentech Board

The Bentech Board, which meets monthly, has taken on two new members to make it more representative. Tom Armington has joined the board and brings with him first hand experience of disability and his knowledge from being on the Minister for Disability's Advisory Panel. Nicola Hunter is the other new member of the Board. Nicola is a

Senior Occupational Therapist at Fiona Stanley Hospital working with spinal injury clients. Previously she has worked in Queensland where she was very involved with emerging technologies for people with a disability.

The Board now consists of eight members:

Tony Brown- Chairman

Derek Milton- Vice Chairman

Gabi Brown - Secretary

Tony Lalor– Treasurer

Richard Allen– Project Manager

Jenny Lalor

Nic Hunter

Tom Armington

If you would like to attend a Board Meeting for a specific purpose we would welcome your attendance. Please contact us so we can arrange the visit with you.

## Website

Recently we made changes to our website. Apart from updating some important information we also

*“To err is human – and to blame it on a computer is even more so.”*

added a donation page so that those wishing to donate can do it quickly and easily without incurring any additional costs. There are three methods of donating to the organisation now available. People can donate by direct bank transfer, PayPal and by credit card. If a donation is received through the website we are notified and we will send a receipt for tax purposes.



**Mini PC used as control hub**

We are working on a major overhaul of the website. Some of the material on the site needs updating and the site needs additional pictures to brighten it up. To have this done commercially is an expensive exercise. What we are looking for is a volunteer with graphics and software skills who is willing to make the changes needed and then make minor changes on an ongoing basis.

If you or somebody you know has these skills and is willing

to give us some of their time could you please let us know.

## The Technology We Use

We have selected the technology we use in the Bentech system with specific criteria. The key criteria are that:

- It is inexpensive due to the low cost of software and components and the low cost of installation
- It can be easily configured or simply modified to suit the specific needs or the changing requirements of the user
- Its operation is simple, intuitive and easy to learn
- It is readily available off the shelf
- It complies with Australian standards

The software we have developed is web-based which means it can be accessed from anywhere in the world (that has internet access). It can also be used by any device that can receive a web-page. Therefore, it can be used by any operating system, be it Windows, Android, Apple, or other system.

## Fund Raising

The Crowd Funding program showed us

there is considerable community support for our goals. In addition to the money raised from the campaign a number of direct donations were made contributing to a total of close to \$15,000. It is not only the generosity of the donors that buoys us, but also the many encouraging comments that come with the donations.

Our fundraising has provided sufficient funds to do our first trial in a house and hopefully another smaller installation.

We are continuing to fund raise, but are looking seriously at other funding sources. Some development work is still required to develop communications as part of the system and this requires serious funds.

## Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM will be held on Thursday September 9 at 5.30 pm. The meeting will be held at the Mosman Park Men's Shed, McCabe Street Mosman Park.

We would like as many as possible to attend and we would particularly like to see some of our new financial donors who are not necessarily members, but are keen to support our cause.

## Voluntary Support

At this point all of the productive effort of our organization is conducted voluntarily. Still more volun-

tary assistance is required, particularly in the technical area. If you or anyone you know has skills in the programming or mechatronics areas please contact us and register your interest. The effort required is not great and can be tailored to any particular needs.

## Next steps for Bentech

The most significant activity will be the installation and testing of the first trial house which is in progress. Following this, Curtin University will conduct a research to gather and analyse information to justify the installation of our systems. To this end, Curtin has assigned a post graduate student who is with their Occupational Therapy Department who has built her major project around the research.

## Sincere thanks to our donors

As a result of our funding campaign we now have a large number of private funders who have generously donated money to Bentech so that we may continue our efforts. To all of those who have generously given money and contributed precious time to our cause we thank you: it is your encouragement that keeps us going.

*"The real problem is not whether machines think but whether men do."*

## Our Web Site and YouTube

[www.bentech.org.au](http://www.bentech.org.au) Is our website address, which also contains an archive of our previous newsletters.

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCs9bfgYMtFJ1WgXF888MwVUg](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCs9bfgYMtFJ1WgXF888MwVUg)

is our YouTube channel which contains demonstration videos



(Please feel free to forward this newsletter on.)