



Innovative approaches to autism spectrum disorders highlighted

A visiting research scholar recently presented a workshop focusing on new and innovative approaches to dealing with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

Robert Accordino, a PhD student from Oxford University in England, received a Fulbright Scholarship to allow him to further develop his research on individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

Currently based in the School of Psychology, Mr Accordino presented his research on auditory processing of those with autism in the domains of music and language and moderated a panel of representatives from local agencies and organisations who work with people with ASD.

“The incidence of autism in the community is much higher than we ever thought with around 1 in 100 people affected by this condition. The workshop aimed to help create mutually beneficial links between professionals, service providers, clinicians, parents, and researchers. By keeping it small, our goal was to allow individuals to build one-on-one connections to better service those with autism with whom they work.

“We brought together representatives from various local agencies that work directly with children and adults with autism, including Autism Queensland, Asperger’s Syndrome Support Network Queensland, Josie Santomauro’s Book Company and researchers from UQ.”

Mr Accordino, who has been in Brisbane since June, says his time here has been a wonderful learning experience as he’s been able to broaden his understanding of how autism affects people throughout the lifespan. “My research prior to my time in Australia primarily focused on 10-16 year olds, but since being here I have been involved in undertaking research with very young children and adults on the autism spectrum.

“The workshop was an invaluable opportunity to develop new linkages and one-on-one connections between like minded participants and presenters in Queensland. We want to aid these wonderful organisations that work with those in the state with autism in publicly conveying their purpose and presence. Nothing else of this scale has brought these groups of people together before and it will be very exciting to see how this workshop could potentially benefit the lives of those with autism in the community.”

Event organisers, the Australian Psychological Society, were overwhelmed by the response to the workshop, and pleased to note that some prominent Members of Parliament, as well as the Shadow Minister for Education were in attendance.

Experts tackle intellectual property rights

Copyright on the internet to monopolised sports events are some of the discussion topics for an international intellectual property rights conference at UQ next week.

From December 14-17, academics from Belgium to the Philippines will share their insights at the conference, *Intellectual Property Rights, Communication and the Public Domain in the Asia-Pacific Region*.

Conference organiser and Head of the School of Journalism and Communication, Professor Jan Servaes, said discussion would revolve around two angles, legal rights and ownership but also on access to free information. He said this right to freely access information was under threat worldwide, which was the theme for the four-day conference.

Speakers will talk on intellectual property rights affecting music, books to cultural identity and artworks to digital censorship, pirating and new digital copyright rules for the future.

Professor Servaes said this was UQ’s first conference on intellectual property rights which he hoped to make an annual series. For more information visit www.sjc.uq.edu.au/ipr/.