

APPENDIX L
E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH DEAFBLIND CLIMBER

Date: Tue, 14 Aug 2001
To:
From: Joe
Subject: DBI conference 2001 - climbing walls

Hello

My name is Joseph Gibson and I met you during the DBI conference in The Netherlands last month. I was fascinated by the machine you had with your laptop, which enabled you to take part in the workshops. If there is anything I can do with my messages to make them compatible with your system please let me know.

I spoke to you during my workshop about 'climbing walls' and was very interested to hear about your experiences. I think you said you did not have a feeling of being high, but felt like you were on your hands and feet... I would be curious to try and understand more of what your experience of climbing was like, as the people who I work with have only very limited communication.

I hope you enjoyed the conference and maybe have the opportunity to go climbing again soon.

Best wishes
Joseph

Date: Wed, 19 Sep 2001
To: Joe
From:
Subject: Climbing walls

Hallo Joseph,

It was very nice to meet you at the congress, en also te receive an email from you.

I recognized a lot about wath you told in the lecture about the two auditifvisuelhandicapt people. Who under your guidance the sport of wallclimbing practised? I liked to tell you a lot more about my experience, but it is to long ago I was climbing.

For me the most important is that I now me can imagine how it is to climb on a mountain. Before I had climbed the wall, I had no idea what climbing was. I understand that climbing in a climbinghall totaly differant is than climbing in

the mountains. Nevertheless I have from climbing in a hall I have made an imagination of climbing outside.

But now I will come to your question about what I feel when I am climbing. I feel it like walking at the ground but at the same time also like I am walking on the stairs, because I have to hold fast. At the moment I let go of my hand I was a moment panic. When I am climbing I have only the little place where I am busy, and no idea how far I am, but at the same time I realise myself that I am going on. I do not know when I am close to the end. The end of the wall always comes suddenly as a surprise.. The routes at the wall were in colour, so that I was not able to go in a straight line, beginning with the easy way. I was drifting about all the routes together, but that gave no problems to me and the other climbers.

It is a pity that we live so far away, because I like to climb one time with you in a climbinghall!

If you have other questions, you can ask them..

friendly greetings,

Date: Thu, 13 Dec 2001
To:
From: Joe
Subject: Climbing walls

Hello

Thank you very much for your reply, it has given me a lot to think about. It is a pity we live so far away as it would be great to climb with you and also to talk with you more about your experiences of climbing. Maybe it would be possible for us to continue a conversation using the e-mail.

I would like very much to be able to use our conversation as a part of my research, if you agree. In my research I am trying to understand the experiences of the deafblind people I work with as they participate in outdoor activities, particularly climbing. If you liked I could use a different name for you. However if you are happy for me to include our conversation in my research I would have to ask you if your deafblindness was acquired or congenital. If you did not want me to use our conversation in my research I would understand completely, but would still very much like to continue our correspondence.

In your reply three things in particular interest me. The first is the fact you said the most important thing for you is that you can imagine what it is like to have climbed outside on a mountain. This is interesting to me as the two men who I work with at the climbing wall, both climbed outside first while on holiday. It was not quite in the mountains but on an outcrop of rock on some moorland. We now use the climbing wall, as it is so close to where we live. I

would like to go back to climbing outside again and maybe even progress to the mountains.

I wondered if there was a special reason for you wanting to imagine what it was like climbing in the mountains.

The second thing I am interested in is your perception of the risk. When you said, "At the moment I let go of my hand I was a moment panic." Can you remember what the cause of your panic was? Did you feel scared at any other time while you were climbing?

The third issue in your reply that interested me was 'spatial awareness'. You said whilst climbing you did not realise where you were and the end came as a surprise. This interests me as one of the men I climb with often stops before the end of the wall at different times. I climb with this man and he puts my hands on his helmet strap when he wants to finish. This made me wonder, did someone climb with you or were you completely alone in your own space?

I apologise if there are not too many questions.
I hope you have a good Christmas and New Year.

Best wishes,
Joe