



Dear ISAAC 2014 Conference Participants:

On behalf of ISAAC, I would like to thank you so much for taking part in this, our 16<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference. Lisbon has been such an amazing city to work with and to hold our conference in. I extend to the City of Lisbon, and the people and government of Portugal, our thanks for being such fine hosts and, to all of you, our attendees, sponsors, exhibitors, and guests, the best wishes from ISAAC for a very successful conference. In addition, I know you will all join me in congratulating Professor Stephen Hawking in being named the first-ever recipient of the ISAAC Lifetime Achievement Award.

An international conference of this magnitude does not happen overnight or by itself. First and foremost, it takes dedicated individuals such as people who use AAC, AAC family members, researchers, professionals in the field, and a myriad host of others to want to come together like this in the first place. It then takes more dedicated individuals, such as our Conference Co-Chairs, to turn the "dream" into "reality." I would like to thank Luis Azevedo, Margarida Nunes da Ponte, Pedro Encarnação, and Isabel Amaral for their tireless efforts in taking on the strategic leadership role associated with Conference 2014. I would also like to extend a hearty thank you for the team at SCITEvents here in Lisbon, our conference organizing company.

This conference marks an important departure for ISAAC, and a very important one. As an organization, we have now developed the in-house capacity to manage our own conferences. For prior conferences, each leadership team effectively had to "re-invent" the systems and procedures for the core conference tasks related to paper submission and review, registration, communications, sponsorship, etc. Now, the ISAAC International office has developed the internal processes and tools we need to manage this ourselves. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking our Conference 2014 staff team of Heather Stonehouse, Teraiz El-Deir, Judy Shapiro, and Tony Needer for a job well done!

Finally, I would like to also express my sincere thanks to the ISAAC 2012-14 Executive Board (EB) for their support, ideas, patience, and understanding these past two years as we organized this conference. In particular, I would like to extend my personal appreciation to President Jeff Riley, for his unflagging support and good humour!

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in person during the conference.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Franklin Smith', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Franklin Smith, MBA, CMC  
Executive Director