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Allowing the blind to read

COMPUTER equipment giving blind and partially-sighted people access to library information will today be presented at the University of Cyprus.

The display will see experts explaining how the specially created computers work and how the techniques have been applied overseas.

Named ACCELERATE (ACCESS to the modern Library sERvices for the blind and pArtially sightEd,) the program involves the setting up of specialised computer work stations.

The work stations are made up of a Pentium III computer linked to the Internet and with programs that provide acoustic instructions to the user and provide for passages to be read out in various languages including Greek.

An electronic board depicts whatever is on the computer screen in Braille, while a book scanner gives users the op-

portunity to transfer printed matter into a form they are better able to read.

A Braille printer also is linked up to the computer as well as a provision for the writing on the screen to be magnified to help partially sighted people make out even minute detail.

Besides the University, a work station is also to be set up at the Cyprus Library in Nicosia.

The program has been introduced within the framework of the Leonardo Da Vinci project, a European effort which aims at improving educational and cultural facilities.

Beginning at 10.30am at the University of Cyprus' Latsia branch, the approximately three-hour presentation will also feature speeches on how the technique has been applied at universities and libraries overseas.