

THE DANISH COMPUTER PROGRAM TEGNBANK / KC FOR THE MACINTOSH

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The purpose of the Centre of Total Communication in Denmark is primarily to promote deaf people's communication possibilities in our society. In this context, sign language teaching and research on Danish Sign Language are central activities.

During the past 20 years sign language teaching in Denmark has radically improved. Thanks to research we now understand the grammar of DSL much better, which enables us to teach more efficiently.

However, within the same span of years DSL dictionaries have not improved to the same extent. A few years ago, the total number of dictionary entries was still quite small and each entry typically gave only rudimentary information (nowhere it was possible to find grammatical information about signs at all). Furthermore, only Danish-DSL dictionaries existed (not DSL-Danish dictionaries).

Analysing the problem a bit further The Centre of Total Communication found that to improve this two steps should be taken : in addition to involving language or dictionary specialists, a computer program should be developed to facilitate the process of compiling and publishing information.

We have now released a Danish Computer program for the Macintosh called Tegnbank/KC Redaktor (Signbank/KC Editor). Key features of this program are:

- Signs can be written with a special notation system (se example below)
- Base forms and modified forms can be stored alike
- Grammatical classification of the signs and translations e.g. into Danish can be written
- Comments about the idiomatic use of signs can be written
- Editorial comments e.g. reference to videotapes where the signs are used can be written
- Signs can be looked up in various ways. It is possible to enter a Danish word or phrase like "chokolade" and get one or more sign translations.

It is also possible to specify e.g. that one is looking for a one-handed sign with a fist circling around the nose, and find one or more signs fitting that description.

- A variety of printouts can be made. The entire sign bank can be printed e.g. ordered alphabetically according to the Danish translations or ordered according to sign properties like handshape etc. Selected items from the sign bank can be printed in any order. Written signs can be copied from the sign bank to other Macintosh programs and printed.

The illustration shows the program on the screen. (Text and illustrations of course look better on printouts than on the screen, because of the low resolution of most screens.) For convenience the program is shown with English translations in the menu bar, but it should be stressed that only a Danish version of the program is available at present.

The Center of Total Communication is currently trying to estimate the demand for an English version of the program. For further information, please contact us at the address above.

