

**NEWS RELEASE
NAS-49-0409
2nd September 2002**

Revolutionary new tool for people with autism launched at International Conference.

Could you name 412 emotions? For people with autism facial expression conveys barely any information making it hard to recognise if someone is happy or sad, let alone slightly indifferent. For the first time, researchers at the Autism Research Centre, University of Cambridge have tailor made educational software for people on autism spectrum who have difficulties in recognizing emotions. The **new DVD entitled "Mind Reading: the Interactive Guide to Emotion"** focuses on 412 distinct emotions that fall into 24 groups and each emotion is given a facial expression, vocalisation and is included in a story for comprehensive explanation.

The DVD includes an emotions library, learning centre and games zone. The games zone includes *Famous Face* with Daniel Radcliffe, where the user can control his face from angry to friendly along a slider – an emotional spectrum of intensities. The DVD will be launched by Professor Simon Baron-Cohen, Co-Director of the Autism Research Centre at the National Autistic Society International Conference on autism, entitled "A World of Difference" at the Novotel London West Hotel, Hammersmith, London, England on **6th and 7th September 2002**

Simon Baron Cohen said: "There are some obvious advantages to studying emotions on computer, for people with autism. First, emotions in the real world happen very fast, and are transient. You can't replay them. However the computer allows you to replay an emotion until you really understand it. Therefore people with autism can learn important emotional information without the added anxiety of real fast moving social interaction"

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The 2 day conference, featuring speakers from Europe and America is part of the 40th anniversary initiative of the National Autistic Society (NAS) in partnership with the Autism Research Centre (ARC), University of Cambridge.

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Notes for Editors:

The Mind Reading DVD is the world's first interactive reference work about human emotions. It is based on research by Cambridge University and is the result of a two year development funded by The Shirley Foundation. The DVD (also available as a set of CD-ROMs) can be played on most Windows and Macintosh computers and includes over 5,000 video and audio performances of emotions. The price is £69.95 with substantial discounts for NAS members. For further information visit <http://www.human-emotions.com> or contact Joan Osbaldeston on 020 7490 1788 during office hours.

Meeting Point Conferences, The Coach House, 21 St John's Road, Richmond, Surrey, W9 2PE Tel: 020 8334 6517, Fax: 020 8332 7690 Email: nas@meeting-point.co.uk

Autism (including Asperger syndrome) is a lifelong developmental disability. It is a spectrum disorder occurring in varying degrees of severity and affects more than an estimated 500,000 people in the UK. It is characterised by a triad of impairments which involve difficulties forming social relationships, problems with verbal and non-verbal communication and problems with imagination.

The National Autistic Society (NAS) is the UK's leading charity for people with autistic spectrum disorders and their families. Spearheading national and international initiatives and providing a strong voice for autism, the Society provides a wide range of services to help people with autism and Asperger syndrome live their lives with as much independence as possible.

NAS Autism Helpline supported by Barclays: 0870 600 8585 Opening Hours 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday.

For media enquiries regarding the conference on autism and the NAS please contact:

NAS PR & Media Team

Tel – 020 7903 3593

Fax – 020 7903 3596

Email – press@nas.org.uk

Outside Office Hours - 07787 124792 / 07881 944514