

ACCESSIBLE EUROPE 2019 – CONTRIBUTION

University of Southampton



Higher Education

ACTIVITY COVERAGE

- Regional cooperation and stakeholder engagement: the activity strengthens and supports regional cooperation and the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, in line with the European Accessibility act, in the development and implementation of ICT accessibility policies and solutions in the European region.
- ☐ ICT accessibility policies: raising awareness and/or promoting relevant guidelines on public policies, including exchanging knowledge and sharing best practices on ICT accessibility. This may include the development of standards.
- ☐ Public procurement with accessibility features: promoting regional and in-country deliver of public procurement as a tool to improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities and specific needs.
- ☑ Web Accessibility: developing regional and in country capacity through web accessibility features and/or training to ensure that websites and related services are available and accessible to all citizens.
- ☑ Media Services Accessibility: raising awareness about accessibility possibilities of TV and video streaming on digital platforms, and promoting the implementation of appropriate solutions.
- Innovation and Accessibility: promoting the development of regional and in-country capacity building on programming for all, including persons with disabilities and specific needs. This may include embedding "accessible by design" in the product's innovation/development process.









































































DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT/RECENT ACTIVITIES

We are involved with the delivery of face to face modules on Digital Accessibility, Usability and Inclusive Design as well as the use of Assistive Technologies, ethics, the standards and laws governing accessibility. In addition we have collaborated on EU funded projects such as a series of MOOCs about Digital Accessibility and Inclusive Teaching and Learning Environments (https://moocap.gpii.eu/) and the development of an accessible collaborative presentation tool called SlideWiki (https://slidewiki.org/) Other projects include the development of accessible technologies such as Synote for annotation, transcription and captioning of media for lecture capture and video streaming (http://synote.com/), a browser based accessibility toolbar offering additional support for those surfing the web (https://www.atbar.org/) and a website accessibility evaluation reporting system (https://web2access.org.uk/). LexDis (https://www.lexdis.org.uk/) is a service that provides student's with a chance to submit their assistive technology strategies for elearning and we offer advice about making documents, presentations and web services accessible and compliant with the EU Web accessibility directive with links to sample accessibility statements. Working with international organisations such as UNICEF on innovations and inclusion for those with complex communication needs and the W3C WCAG coga task force on support for those with cognitive impairments has also allowed us to focus on issues that often fall outside more frequently debated accessibility issues. This has happened alongside our links with the European Disability Forum and the European Dyslexia Association and several other national organisations working in this area. It has also included research around the use of Artificial Intelligence and web accessibility as a result of an Alan Turing Institute Project (https://www.turing.ac.uk/research/researchprojects/ai-and-inclusion). Obstacles that have been encountered tend to be related to the maintenance of projects that no longer receive funding, but are still being accessed by many users.

Activity running in:

\boxtimes 2016 or before	⊠ 2017	⊠ 2018	⊠ 2019	□ 2020	□ 2021	□ 2022	□ 2023

CALL FOR COLLABORATION/COMMITMENT TO FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Through the Alan Turing Institute Project (https://www.turing.ac.uk/research/research-projects/aiand-inclusion) we have been exploring ethics and fairness across protected characteristics, but in particular acknowledging the heterogeneity of disability that can also involve multicultural and multilingual situations. Barriers to access may range from the lack of free or low cost speech recognition, screen reading and text to speech in minority languages such as Serbian, Croatian and Montenegrin to no standardisation for symbols used for augmentative and alternative techniques in both natural language processing and image recognition could help to ameliorate some of the issues arising. New methods for speeding the building of corpora for voice synthesis with the availability of higher quality open source voice engines would help many users of this type of assistive technology. Improved classification and concept mapping of AAC symbols linked with minority languages (not just those in more frequent use), would enable easier interoperability with access to free text to speech for those with complex communication needs. When considering change in the European ICT accessibility landscape; there needs to be more pressure on law makers



































































to ensure all digital products and services are designed and delivered with accessibility in mind, not just those that come under the heading of "public sector bodies".

ORGANISATION INFORMATION

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