The professional profile of the expert in media accessibility for the scenic arts*

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Abstract

Accessibility plays a major role in modern knowledge-based information societies. The potential of acessibility through ICT for inclusion and participation of all citizens is increasingly growing, allowing for a gradual integration in everyday life. The proportion of people depending on accessibility (15% in 2013) increases and EU demography shows the growing tendency to eAccessiblity dependency for its ageing population. National as well as European legislation supporting eAccessibility is in place and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the most powerful, global expression in support of Inclusion and Equality, has a clear focus on eAccessibility and Design for All.

The time has come to establish the new professional profile of media accessibility expert/manager for the scenic arts, and its training. This is the aim of the EU funded ERSMUS+ project ACT. Full participation of all citizens in cultural events – as end users or participants – should become part of their daily life as for people without disabilities, restoring the concept of equal opportunity. The project focuses on empowering all citizens, since it considers language accessi-

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bility, and especially people with disabilities. This article will present the need to define the new professional profile departing from the legal context, followed by the skills and competences required. The second part of the article will present the need for possible training syllabus and a pan European training certification.

Keywords

Accessibility, Scenic arts, Training, Skills, Competences.

1. Introduction

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[1] (CRPD) is the first international legally binding instrument setting minimum standards for rights for people with disabilities, and the first human rights convention to which the EU has become a party. The Council of the European Union (EU) adopted the Decision for the conclusion of the Convention[2] on 26 November 2009. For the EU the CRPD entered into force on 22 January 2011. This means that today all the EU countries have signed the Convention, and only Ireland has not yet ratified it. Out of the 27 EU countries 23 have also signed its Optional Protocol and 21 have ratified it[3]. This is the first time in history the EU has become a party to an international human right. The CRPD aims to ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy their rights on an equal basis with all other citizens, and sets out minimum standards for protecting and safeguarding a full range of civil, political, social, and economic rights. It reflects the EU interest and commitment to building a barrier-free Europe for the estimated 80 million people with disabilities in the EU by 2020, as set out in the European Commission disability strategy[4]. The plan outlines how the EU and national governments can empower people with disabilities so they can enjoy their rights. In the past accessibility was studied from a medical exclusive model –where audio description was only for the blind and subtitling was for the deaf and hard of hearing. Looking at university programmes, accessibility is studied within Disability Studies, and some outlets for media accessibility research are journals such as the *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness* which has published many articles on audio description. Recently there has been a shift from exclusive to the new inclusive "human right" paradigm (Berghs *et al* 2016; Ewart and Snowden 2012). There is a widespread recognition that so-

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1 https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html (last accessed 02/04/2017)

2 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32010D0048&rid=1 (last accessed 02/04/2017)

3 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-4_en.htm (last accessed 23/03/2017)

4 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-10-1505_en.htm?locale=en (last accessed 23/03/2017)

ciety should be inclusive scaling the inclusiveness to all citizens; a good example is language accessibility. All residents in the European Union (EU) are in need of accessibility since we all require translation at one point. Accessibility on the one hand has gone universal and inclusive, side by side the UN-Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) focused on disabilities. On the other hand there should be stated that within the human rights framework there is a serious problem regarding accessibility, what Greco (2016) calls Accessibility as a Human Right Divide Problem (AHRD Problem). The AHRD Problem highlights the issue between accessibility as a human right *per se* versus accessibility as an instrument for the fulfilment of human rights. It is in this latter proactive principle where media access should be framed: access as a necessary requirement for achieving human rights, and the context for this article.

Europe has responded to the obligations derived from the UN Convention to the Right of Persons with Disabilities with two important EU legislations, marking the context for the development of the professional profile of the expert in scenic arts: the EU directive known as AVMSD and the European Accessibility Act. The EU directive[5] 2010/13/EU in Article 46 related to "The right of persons with a disability and of the elderly to participate and be integrated in the social and cultural life of the Union is inextricably linked to the provision of accessible audiovisual media services. The means to achieve accessibility should include, but need not be limited to, sign language, subtitling, audio-description". The European Accessibility ACT[6] aims "to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services by removing barriers created by divergent legislation". Both legislation will facilitate the work of companies and will bring benefits for the inclusive model in the EU.

The potential of accessibility through ICT for social inclusion and participation of all citizens is increasingly growing allowing for a full integration in everyday life. This has been often referred to as eAccessibility. The proportion of people in need of eAccessibility (15% in 2013) is increasing and EU demography shows the growing tendency to dependency for its ageing population. National as well as European legislation (Dir. 2010/13) supporting eAccessibility are in place and the CRPD, the most powerful, global expression in support of Inclusion and Equality, has a clear focus on eAccessibility. The information or content facilitated by eAccessiblity should also be accessible, and for this media accessibility is the answer. In Europe there is a common funding scheme for cultural

5   Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive)
(http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32010L0013) (last accessed 23/03/2017)

6   European Accessibility Act (http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1202) (last accessed 23/03/2017)

content, and the publicly funded cultural goods should be available to all. This has long been a critical issue in the EU culture sectors.

In academia no specific attention has been paid to the accessibility of the scenic arts beyond the introduction of a translation service: surtitling in opera (Mateo 2001, 2002, 2007, Orero 2007, Matamala and Orero 2007, 2013), audio description (Matamala 2005, 2007, Matamala and Orero 2014, Oncins *et al* 2013 and Weaver 2011), or possible solutions (Miquel-Iriarte *et al* 2012, Udo and Fels 2010). Access services are often not offered due to lack of awareness on what is needed in terms of technology, and also how to contract those who produce them. The time has come to establish the new professional profile of accessibility manager, and its training for the specific environment of scenic arts and live events.

Establishing the professional profile across Europe

Most opera houses in Europe offer subtitles or surtitles (Mateo, 2001, 2002 and 2007, Oncins 2015). Other services such as audio description, sign language, or touch tours are offered in some playhouses too (Eardly-Weaver 2013) but provision is uneven according to the funded EU project ADLAB 2014. It is not easy either when going to a performance to find out as end user what accessibility services and when are on offer. This general comment applies to all cultural goods, be in museums, cinemas, play houses and TV – with the exception of IPTV (see below the Netflix case). Within the management structure of a playhouse or opera house we seldom find the department of accessibility, responsible for centralising all services and provisions required, from physical requirements to sensorial services. In the advent of the EAA deployment, with the must carry access requirements, some national governments have started to make provisions starting from a top down approach: an active accessibility policy. This is the case for the Catalan Government of Culture, where the new Catalan Accessibility Code sets some requirements from the Accessibility Decree[7]. Other countries such as Germany, in Baviera, and Sweden have also started working towards setting up accessibility requirements for public funded cultural productions. Looking at one case, the Catalan, clear instructions have been issued to both private and public exhibitors: they must draft an accessibility plan that considers, amongst other requirements, such as Health and Safety regulations, physical accessibility and:

a) Joint territorial planning of access services
b) Minimum percentatge of representations offered with audio description
c) Minimum percentatge of representations offered with subtitles
d) Subtitles and audio description services don't necessarily have to be offered together
e) Clear information to be provided regarding accessible season programme, specifying services
f) The accessibility plan must be revised every four years, to improve the number of accessible sessions.

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7   http://portaldogc.gencat.cat/utilsEADOP/PDF/6742/1379017.pdf (last accessed 02/04/2017)

The Department of Culture is the body responsible for checking these are fulfilled. As part of the plan to implement the Catalan Accessibility Code some actions were prepared. The first was to find out the state of the art regarding accessibility in the 44 public playhouses in Catalonia: big and small. After elaborating and sending a questionnaire, it was clear that accessibility actions if any, were shared by different departments within one institution. There was no person responsible for all accessibility actions, and often one department did not liaise with another. For example, we will find that the person responsible for selling tickets did not know of any accessibility actions such a sign language performance, or sitting arrangements for wheel chairs of that guide dogs couldn't be banned from entry. So, one direct outcome from the study was the need to centralise accessibility in one department, with a person responsible for all issues, even though at this early stage it may seem too complex. This responsible person, the accessibility manager in scenic arts, or even to a broader field of culture management, is not described in any of the official professions in Eurostat[8] but it may exist in other places away from Europe where a more stringent legislation has been in place for years, such as the US and the Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998 (29 U.S.C. § 794 (d)), and the broader context of other related accessibility laws and policy[9] and the Americans Disability Act (ADA). It is through ADA that Netflix for example was forced in 2014[10] to subtitle all their production, and online teaching platforms from Harvard and MIT are also going this way[11].

Looking at other countries for this job profile lead to an Internet search with two keywords "Accessibility" and "Manager". Some hits offer different profiles. The most prominent is the manager in accessibility for the fields of Web or Web Usability development. The interview to Yahoo accessibility manager[12] Victor Tsaran, while falling out of the scope of the professional profile of the scenic arts accessibility manager, it illustrates the situation in most companies.

When I came onboard, I was the first person in the Sunnyvale office who used a screen reading software for his daily tasks. This fact alone created a lot of excitement among developers. Up until then, they were trying to follow best practices as best as possible, but there wasn't any assistive technology users immediately available to them who could answer accessibility-related questions, specifically in the area of user experience. Hence, the first year or so I spent doing a lot of the grass-root level work e.g. organizing screen reader demonstrations and workshops. It is through various internal

8   http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Europe_2020_indicators_-_employment (last accessed 28/05/2017)

9   https://www.section508.gov/content/learn/laws-and-policies (last accessed 29/05/2017)

10 http://dredf.org/captioning/netflix-consent-decree-10-10-12.pdf (last accessed 29/05/2017)

11 https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/13/education/harvard-and-mit-sued-over-failing-to-caption-online-courses.html?mcubz=2&_r=0 (last accessed 29/05/2017)

12 http://evengrounds.com/blog/accessible-experts-victor-tsaran (last accessed 27/05/2017)

workshops and informal training sessions that I became friends with a lot of developers, many of whom still work at the company. Some friendships went beyond accessibility. In some way, people started caring about accessibility because they actually knew someone who benefited from the work that they were doing.

The Internet search also yielded some accessibility management profiles in the field of physical accessibility in urban development[13], transport[14] or public administration[15]. Accessibility management is also mentioned by Quast (2013) who describes it as an attribution for good manager as "Managers who demonstrate high levels of accessibility are more apt to have employees who feel comfortable stopping by for a quick chat to bring difficult issues, situations or ideas to the attention of their manager.". Also interesting is the fact that some accessibility managers are in fact not humans but applications or programmes to "recreate the ability to tab and have content read by screen readers. This is very important as it can possibly help people with disabilities access pixi content.[16]".

The previous search, and the description of the profession in other fields, lead to the need to create this new professional profile in the field of scenic arts, starting by defining its skills and competences. Since EAA and AVMSD are at EU level, and in order to work within the Single Digital Market framework, it was deemed necessary to define the new professional profile beyond Catalonia and across Europe. For this reason, a EU action was started taking advantage of the funding available from the Erasmus+ programme[17]. This programme is designed to support efficiently the potential of Europe's talent and social assets in a lifelong learning perspective, linking support to formal, non-formal and informal learning. Given the existing accessibility legal context and forthcoming obligations, a joint EU project Accessible Culture Training (ACT)[18] was drafted and financed. ACT is transnational, a basic requirement when upscaling at a pan European level. Not only cultures have to be taken into consideration but also the wealth of languages, language situations (bilingual, monolingual, multilingual) and translation traditions (subtitling, dubbing and voice-over), where cultural representations will take place.

13 http://www.bendbulletin.com/news/1481864-151/bend-names-duncan-new-accessibility-manager (last accessed 27/05/2017)

14 https://www.reed.co.uk/jobs/schools-liaison-and-accessibility-manager/32388489 (last accessed 27/05/2017)

15 http://agency.governmentjobs.com/bend/default.cfm?action=viewclassspec&classSpecID =888377&agency=2242&viewOnly=yes (last accessed 27/05/2017)

16 http://pixijs.download/dev/docs/PIXI.accessibility.AccessibilityManager.html (last accessed 27/05/2017)

17 http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources_en (last accessed 02/04/2017)

18   http://pagines.uab.cat/act/ (last accessed 02/04/2017)

In order to design a down to earth and truly useful proposal it was also considered important to count with a bottom-up transectorial collaboration. This meant to gather existing experts, and their knowledge, to draft the profile for the expert in accessibility in buildings and technology, existing and emerging solutions, and possible innovations. This approach was followed not only for the training but for the future deployment of accessibility in cultural events in a rational way, aiming at competitiveness and resilience. ACT gathered as partners trend-setters in the media accessibility field: training institutions, governmental authorities, theatre managers, certification organisation, and end users. Four universities (Autònoma de Barcelona, Antwerp, Queens Belfast, and Vienna), two theatres Transit (Spain) and NTGEnt (Belgium), a EU quality certification agency (ECQA), and two governmental departments: Inter, a technical partner of the Flemish government, and the department of culture from the Catalan government. End users from all countries participated in the project through associations as associate partners.

To secure resilience and to organise tests for the certification of persons beyond university courses ECQA was asked to participate. They are experts at providing training in leading and innovative sectors and industries in Europe and beyond. ECQA supports the development of the knowledge required for professions, represented and defined in "skill sets". In ACT the partner ECQA defines and verifies quality criteria for training to assure the same level of training throughout Europe. Especially challenging is the certification approach towards informal learning proposals, something alien to universities. The ACT concept follows Best Practice of around 30 job roles and professions already certified by ECQA, and aims to provide:

a) recognition of prior learning, non-formally and informally acquired skills and competences;
b) certification of already available skills and competences as well as skills to be acquired through training courses
c) further training for trainers – train-the-trainer modules, following the structure and principles of ECQA and linking the acquired skills into the European Vocational Training ECVET system, and
d) transferability of skills through a European certificate, linking them to ECTS and ECVET as well as to the Skills Passport.

2. The methodological framework towards profiling

The project ACT was designed to follow a bottom-up methodology. For this project it meant to depart from end user information and gather data specified in great detail. From that information skills and competences could then be drafted, always taking into consideration what is needed and feasible. Meeting end user needs and expectations with what really can be delivered was an important aim

of the project, working within the UN CRPD framework where "nothing for us without us" is defined as a departing point for any action.

Partners in the project defined three groups to offer feedback on their accessibility experience and expectations: art venues managers, user associations, and artistic teams. In order to gather feedback the following actions were taken:

1) to draft a survey, pre-pilot and translation into the languages of the countries of the project: Catalan, Dutch, English, and German.
2) data collection: questionnaires were complemented by focus groups, and personal interviews
3) data analysis

How to collect the information was also defined, and it was decided that for venues, a questionnaire will be used, while interviews were the approach for end users and focus groups to artistic teams (Eardly-Weaver *et al.*, forthcoming). The questions asked for the venues were: (1) to what extent are the various access facilities (e.g. audio description, easy-to-read materials, sign language interpreting, audio subtitling) offered in the different arts venues in each partner country and how does this vary?; (2) how are access facilities promoted?; (3) who is responsible for accessibility?; (4) what access quality control measures are in place?; (5) what type of accessibility training is offered if any?; (6) what challenges are faced by venues regarding accessibility?

Results from the three interventions led to some interesting conclusions. When the venue managers replied, they all took into consideration accessibility and they complied to a very high degree with accessibility requirements. This was surprising until it was clarified what accessibility requirements meant for a venue: physical accessibility. Nowadays is almost impossible to get a planning permision to open a public venue unless basic measures are met: accessible toilets, ramps as alternative for steps, lifts for motorised wheelchairs, and attention to health and safety regulations. Venue managers considered they met requirements and this clashed with results from the comments by the end users. They suggested further needs from the basic adapted toilet and ramps. Finally a third group of informants for accessibility needs was artists. They were added hoping to gather some feedback from any artist who had considered accessibility in the production of their art. This proved to be an awareness exercise, since artists considered artistic accessibility as the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the regular performances, or to create special shows exclusively with them.

Raising awareness on media accessibility was again the priority surfacing the study. The need to inform on media access services and possibilities to all three groups was the conclusion from questionaires, and some actions have been put in place. The research group TransMediaCatalonia, leader of the ACT project[19], decid-

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19   http://pagines.uab.cat/act/ (last accessed 02/07/2017)

ed to create some short videos to illustrate issues such as: how to reach the venue[20], and seating distribution[21], reaching the seat through steps, and walking through common areas and their hazards have been collected. The Catalan Department of Culture, also partner in ACT, decided to organise three workshops[22] addressing: the exhibitors, end users, and users of accessible technologies aiming at:

a. Understanding the characteristics and the specific needs of people with disabilities
b. Consider these groups when programming activities
c. Gain experience through practical examples
d. Identify barriers to access and design their corresponding solutions

Videos and recording of the workshops are available online[23], hoping to fulfil basic information when dealing with media accessibility.

3.   PROFILING THE MANAGER SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

From the drafted list of requirements (Eardly-Weaver *et al* forthcoming), the next step was to define the manager profile skills and competences, beginning by its denomination. It was clear that two different but complementary profile roles were required: the Accessibility Manager, and the Accessibility Coordinator. The former works at a venue and takes care of all accessibility needs for successful integration of all people to access culture. Meanwhile the latter, Accessibility Coordinator, is in charge of cultural event management with a focus on accessibility and not necessarily based in any venues, such as a theatre. An accessibility manager may be in charge of coordinating accessibility at various venues within a local district. This work will involve collaborating with accessibility coordinators at individual venues where such a role exists. If there is no accessibility coordinator for any given individual venues (such as in smaller venues), it may be require from the accessibility manager to oversee accessibility across these venues. Both profiles will be experts on accessibility and should be able to decide accessibility policies or adequacy when choosing venues or productions.

The two job roles share many traits in the basic skills definitions such as: understanding accessibility, venue accessibility, accessibility services, accessibility management for live events, and promoting accessibility. The main distinction between the two functions resides in the context the two specialists operate. The

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20   https://youtu.be/-fns2FsJWC8 (last accessed 28/05/2017)

21   https://youtu.be/hgcCpKaX__jo (last accessed 28/05/2017)

22   https://sde.cultura.gencat.cat/cultura/curs-d'accessibilitat-als-espais-escenics-i-musicals__adh__1574.html (last accessed 02/06/2017)

23   https://sde.cultura.gencat.cat/cultura/agendahistoricdetall.php?idact=1574 (last accessed 02/07/2017)

accessibility manager must, in fact, have an additional skill: be flexible and be able to transfer his/her knowledge and competences to different environments. This applies to physical skills (i.e. related to the venue) and to interpersonal skills.

Six units of skills were designed for both job roles, namely understanding accessibility, accessibility services 1, accessibility services 2, accessibility management for live events, and promoting accessibility. Under the six units, 67 skills were acknowledged for the Accessibility Coordinator, whilst 71 skills were identified for the Accessibility Manager, the details of which can be found below.

UNDERSTANDING ACCESSIBILITY

This unit was considered to be fundamental to make sure experts work within the inclusive paradigm of Media Accessiblity (MA). Recently this new field of research has risen to encompass the study of accessibility services joining fields such as AVT, Psychology or Engineering from a Human Right perspective, and away from Disability Studies (Greco 2016). MA is proposed as a set of theories, practices, services, technologies, and instruments providing access to audiovisual media content for all (Szarkowska *et al* 2016). Working within a medical model where end users are classified by their disability, or working in a charitable framework, where end users need to be provided in an altruistic way are now obsolete. The medical model, still very much in use, fails at many levels, but mainly by considering a person with one defining disability: deafness, blindness, physical or cognitive. A wheelchair user may be deaf, and people over 65 have different degrees of hearing and sight loss, still under the clinical model will be considered wheelchair user in the former and old in the latter. Policies empowering end users in an all-inclusive society following Universal Design principles are the context for this new profession. The following six skills were considered basic for this new professional profile under two sections.

       – What is Accessibility?
S/he understands the basic concepts of inclusion and accessibility.
S/he understands the requirements for an accessible event.

       – What is an Accessible Event?
S/he understands the basic types and degrees of disability.
S/he understands the basic concepts of accessibility and its different forms.
S/he understands that there are national and international legislation and other requirements.
S/he demonstrates critical understanding of the concept of accessibility for everyone.

This is the information most people understand when dealing with accessibility. The requirements made by the Universal Design principle were established from an architect dealing with physical approaches. Ronald L. Mace coined the term Universal Design[24] and his research and proposals went a step further from the barrier free movement[25]. The idea of designing from the start with usability for the widest number of users in mind was a proposal which has now extended to other fields. While this concept applies to new construction, it also has been adopted in existing buildings having to go under reforms to adapt to regulations. This unit took into consideration both situations indoor and outdoor performances, and also recorded and live situations, and added other basic services which fall outside physical accessibility but deem indispensable by user requirements. A play house may have accessible toilets and performance, still the end user may not be able to attend because there is a lack of parking for an adapted vehicle, or a guide dog may be refused entrance.

S/he knows the requirements for accessible public transport and parking.
S/he knows the accessibility requirements for toilets, stage and seating.
S/he knows the accessibility requirements for rain/wind/sun shelters.
S/he knows the accessibility requirements for signs/maps/information.
S/he knows the accessibility requirements for service animals.
S/he understands the architectural risks of the venue.
S/he knows the accessibility requirements for lighting, furniture and space.
S/he knows the current accessibility conditions of the venue where s/he works and the areas requiring improvement.

Accessibility services 1

The list of accessible services and technology is very large. For this reason, two separate units were drafted. The first set is related to all services working as alternative or enhancing communication. Alternative ways to provide audio visual content are the objective of these services which go from audio description to translation. All these services offer many possibilities when being created and delivered, as the technical requirements for each situation.

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24 https://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_us/usronmace.htm (last accessed 28/05/2017)

25 https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/findingaids/mc00260/contents (last accessed 28/05/2017)

– Audio Description (AD)

S/he knows what audio description is, types of AD, and the applicable scenarios.

S/he knows the competences and skills of audio description providers.

– Subtitling for the Deaf and the Hard-of-hearing (SDH)

S/he knows what SDH is and the applicable scenarios of SDH.

S/he knows the competences and skills of SDH providers.

– Sign Language Interpreting

S/he knows what sign language interpreting is and its applicable scenarios.

S/he understands the competences and skills of sign language interpreting providers.

– Surtitling

S/he knows what surtitling is and its applicable scenarios.

S/he understands the competences and skills of surtitles providers.

– Audio Subtitling

S/he knows what audio subtitling is and its applicable scenarios.

S/he understands the competences and skills of audio subtitling providers.

– Audio Introduction

S/he knows what audio introduction is and its applicable scenarios.

S/he understands the competences and skills of audio introduction providers.

– Easy Reading

S/he knows what easy reading is and its applicable scenarios.

S/he understands the competences and skills of easy reading providers.

– Interlingual Translation

S/he knows what interlingual translation is and its applicable scenarios.

S/he understands the competences and skills of interlingual translation providers.

Accessibility services 2

The second section of accessibility focuses on services which are usually provided by third parties, sometimes it may need ad hoc apps, and in some cases are part of the venue infrastructure.

– Braille

S/he knows what braille is and its applicable scenarios.

S/he understands the competences and skills of braille providers.

– Touch tour

S/he knows what a touch tour is and its applicable scenarios.

S/he understands the competences and skills of a touch tour guide.

– Hearing (induction) loop

S/he knows what a hearing loop is and its applicable scenarios.

S/he knows the available products on the market.

– Secondary screens

S/he knows what a secondary screen is and its applicable scenarios (smart phones, smart glasses, tablets, VR glasses)

S/he knows the available products on the market.
　　– Vibrating chairs
S/he knows what a vibrating chair is and its applicable scenarios.
S/he knows the available products on the market.
　　– Accessible materials
S/he knows how to prepare large print /easy-to-read accessible materials.
S/he knows how to prepare accessible materials in different languages.
　　– Web accessibility
S/he knows what web accessibility is and its applicable scenarios.
S/he knows how to make websites accessible.
　　– Assistant companion
S/he knows what an assistant/companion from the venue does.
S/he knows how to coordinate with assistants/companions.
　　– Maximize the functions of different accessibility services
S/he knows how different accessibility services can be combined to maximize user experience.
S/he knows the current accessibility services and devices at the venue where s/he works.
S/he knows how to choose accessibility products and service providers based on the current situation of the venue.

Accessibility management for live events

This section deals with a chronological organisation of accessibility interventions and solutions. It was hoped that the list will also be used as a toolkit when for implementing accessiblity in either an separate event or a venue.

　　– Pre-event Planning
S/he is familiar with existing devices, technologies and software that provide accessibility solutions.
S/he is able to identify target audiences with accessibility needs.
S/he knows how to plan and organize accessibility services based on potential demand.
S/he is able to calculate the costs for accessibility services needed.
S/he is able to ensure that accessibility services are ready before the events.
　　– Coordination during Events
S/he is able to coordinate accessibility service providers during the event.
S/he is able to handle common potential accidents and unexpected situations during the event.
　　– Post-event Management
S/he knows how to coordinate the return of equipment and handle payment.
S/he knows how to analyse and summarize feedback for improvement.
S/he is able to facilitate training for staff relating to audience diversity, e.g. autism and dementia awareness.

– Other Managerial Skills

S/he is familiar with the factors that promote good team communication and can implement them.

S/he knows how to work with heterogeneous teams.

S/he is familiar with the factors that may lead to conflict and measures resolve conflict situations.

S/he knows how to motivate and train a team with accessibility issues in minds.

Promoting accessibility

Raising awareness of existing services is a not moot point in media accessibility. More effort should be devoted to advertise the facilities on offer and the inclusiveness policies followed by the event. The following list is drafted hoping to increase dissemination of all the work, preparation and technical deployment made to ensure access for all.

– How to present the needs and benefits for accessibility

S/he is able to argue the importance of accessibility.

S/he knows how to develop and implement an accessibility policy within the venue s/he works.

S/he is aware of the costs implication of accessibility solutions

– How to involve relevant stakeholders

S/he knows how to identify relevant stakeholders.

S/he knows how to involve relevant stakeholders.

– How to collaborate with relevant organisational units

S/he knows the importance of collaborating with relevant departments and other units internally and externally.

S/he knows how to get relevant departments and other units to collaborate.

– How to promote an accessible event

S/he is familiar with the means and channels of communication used by accessibility service users.

S/he knows how to promote the event through traditional media.

S/he knows how to promote the event through online and social media in an accessible way.

4. Implementing training

All the skills and competences, described in the previous section, can be organised to train the experts from a full university masters degree (MA) to thematic vocational courses. The idea of the ACT project was to avoid designing a rigid structure since each institution, and each moment, has different policies, pos-

sibilities, and objectives. The aim was to create versatile structure and materials that could be ensembled to fit most learning situations. At one end the Master in Accessibility Management for the Scenic Arts aims was designed to train professionals. The MA combines in depth knowledge about the requirements for ensuring inclusive access to live events in the scenic arts, with the interpersonal, managerial and practical competences required to implement it. Students finishing the course will be able to assess the accessibility level of both the route to the venue(s) and of the venue(s) at which the event is to take place. They will also be able to efficiently organise pre-performance and post event communication and content-related access as well as in performance accessibility services for all audiences. Students will be able to apply his/her skills in different contexts, transferring the skills learnt in the MA to the quickly changing cultural scene and its many creative outputs. A two-year master was designed with 120 ECTS leading to the title of Accessibility Manager for the Scenic Arts.

A shorter post-graduate programme was also designed: The Postgraduate in Access Coordination for the Scenic Arts, which will allow the holder to assess general access needs, and to organise access with his local team at a specific venue. This compact training will basically cover the same competences as the MA but will not include research skills. In addition, the modules in the MA curriculum have been designed with a view to their integration in existing MA programmes, should these wish to highlight specific access skills, for instance, within an MA in Cultural Studies, Theatre Studies, Translation and Interpreting or similar.

The following table offers an overview of the training planed. Offering all the courses will lead to 120 ECTE MA, but its components can be taught in groups or individually to customise the courses and their aim.

Module Code	Module Name	ECTs
Semester 1		
ACT001	Introduction to Accessibility	10
ACT002	Venue Accessibility	10
ACT003	Media Accessibility I - General A: Interlingual Translation, Accessible Material	10
Semester 2		
ACT004	Media Accessibility I - General B: Web Accessibility, Assistant/Companion	10
ACT005	Media Accessibility II - Audio Access A Subtitling/Surtitling, Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing	10
ACT006	Media Accessibility II - Audio Access B Sign Language Interpreting, Hearing Loop	10

Semester 3		
ACT007	Media Accessibility III - Visual Access A Audio Introduction, Audio Description	10
ACT008	Media Accessibility III - Visual Access B Audio Subtitling, Braille, Touch Tour	10
ACT009	Accessibility Management & Promotion	10
Semester 4		
ACT0010	Internship	10
ACT0011	Master Thesis	20

Conclusion

Creating the professional profile of the expert or coordinator of accessiblity for the scenic arts was considered a need to meet existing and forthcoming EU regulation in the field of media accessibility. Accessibility as a physical requirement to espaces is now a basic requirement in all urban and construction developments. Internet, as a new social meeting space in the Information Society, has also define clear accessiblity rules. Experts in Internet accessiblity and working tools have been desinged. Gaining accessiblity to the content is the new challenge to secure a fully inclusive society where citizens share equal right of access and enjoyment over cultural goods. The EU project ACT has drafted pan European skills and profiles for this new job profile but more work is needed. Once the venues are made accessile with all the available or affordable technology there is an epigonic task: generating content for the accessible services.

How to generate subtitles, audio description, provide Sign Languge Interpretation and in the many languages is a costly endeavour. Looking at different business models is required, and it may be the case that a different model is required for each service in the same play or opera. Also needed is to raise awareness of the need to train creative people to bear in mind accessibility from its production (Udo and Fels 2010, Udo *et al* 2010). Thinking that an opera will have to be audio described, for example, should be in the mind of: a stage designer, costume designer, and choreography director, and of course the director of each opera production. This would perhaps provide already guidelines to the audio description, if not the full audio description, which would be optimum. The many and prioritised messages and intentions would be described by its creator, hence offering a more faithful rendition to the original. Accessibility to scenic arts is a complex and multilayered enterprise. While it may seem utopic, and some reject it outright for its costs, the rapid uptake of accessiblity by some playhouses show that attitude works. Creativity and willingness often compensate for lack of funding,

since full deployment of accessiblity will never compensate finantially. Other benefits beyond monetary, must be used to measure accessibility impact: social inclusion, human right compliance. The argument is that if some playhouses have managed to start drafting short term and long term accessiblity roadmaps all playhouses can. There is no need to go for full accessibility from the start, but progressive and resilient. Attitude towards accessibility is what makes a difference and is hoped that very soon all playhouses in Europe will start improving their inclusive policies towards offering their representations to all.

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