Mapping Media Accessibility across the World

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November 3, 2016
Berlin, Germany
Overview

1. Media Accessibility as a research field.

2. Knowledge Management in Media Accessibility.

3. The Media Accessibility Platform.
Media Accessibility is the research field dealing with the “theories, practices, services, technologies and instruments that provide access to media products, services, and environments for people that cannot, or cannot properly, access that content in its original form” (Greco 2016).
Audiovisual Translation is the field where Media Accessibility has developed as a research discipline for its first decade (Orero 2005).
Media Accessibility:

- has expanded beyond persons with disabilities, to include the elderly, children, and multilingual contexts;

- has expanded beyond AVT, reaching new disciplines.
MA has become a **key issue in the worldwide agenda** on social and cultural inclusion policies, practices and research.

- National/international legislation, standards, and guidelines.
- Social organisations: lobbying and raising awareness.
- Industry: new technical solutions.
- Universities: training.
- Scholars: testing access services, reception studies.
MA is a lively and wide landscape that is expanding at a very fast rate.

Results on Google Scholar (search date: October 31, 2016)

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Production of MA Knowledge

- Scholarly publications
- Research projects
- Training
- Conferences and events
- Industry and Organisations

Massive amount of information on MA that is constantly increasing at a fast rate.
Most of this information is fragmented in different repositories and languages.

This may give rise to problems related to a vast and expanding set of unorganised knowledge.
In a scenario where data are massively produced but not organised, there is the risk that useful knowledge is buried under piles of other unrelated knowledge.

“Risk of generating knowledge that is too big to know” (Burdon and Andrejevic 2014).
The dispersion of knowledge and the lack of instruments for facilitating knowledge retrieval and transfer may lead to the “Reinvention of the Wheel” Effect.
“Due to the lack of instruments for the organisation of knowledge [on that specific topic], the process of ‘reinventing the wheel’ by economists becomes inevitable” (Wang 2012).
Over the last year, in the field of Disability Media Studies, papers have been published on the topic of accessible TV.

Papers claiming that “the importance of accessible television is under-theorised” and that discussion about accessible television is peripheral to discussions of accessible digital media.

Ellis and Kent 2015; Ellis 2015; Kent, Ellis and Locke 2016.
Given the current scenario of the lively and expanding landscape of media accessibility, how to reduce the risks of incurring situations such as the Library of Babel Problem and avoiding effects such as the Reinvention of the Wheel?
Some strategies:

• Provide accessibility to information;
• Create a central repository for information, including search functionalities;
• Structure information by indexing, categorizing and clustering;
• Establish supporting tools and supporting functions;
• Knowledge mapping.

(Ekambaram 2008; Ekambaram, Langlo and Johansen 2010; Hoffman and Boyle 2011; Schacht and Mädche 2013; Hoffman and Boyle 2016)
Final aim: to develop a tool or a series of tools that facilitate knowledge retrieval and encourage knowledge reuse and transfer.
“To find knowledge, it helps to have a map”
(Hoffman 2013)
MAP is a tool specifically designed to help to reduce problems of knowledge sharing, reuse and transfer in the field of media accessibility.
MAP is based on Drupal 8.2 as CMS and uses a relational database based on MySQL 5.6.

MAP is the result of a balanced mix of modules from Drupal's own ecosystem, external libraries and custom-built code.
Content is organised into taxonomies.

Taxonomies = open and closed tables of data connected by different types of relationships.

The content can be indexed, categorised and clustered.

It is easily searchable.
Welcome to MAP (beta version)

Welcome to MAP, the Media Accessibility Platform, a unified atlas charting the worldwide landscape of research, policies, training and practices in this field. MAP aims to make media accessible to all, regardless of sensorial and linguistic barriers.

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News

These are the latest news from the area of media accessibility around the world.

**News**: The Media Accessibility Platform at the NEM Summit 2016

The Media Accessibility Platform will be presented at the NEM Summit 2016.

Keywords
Human Rights, Legislation, Media Accessibility, Multilingualism, Standards

Read more

Submitted by gmgreco on Fri, 28/10/2016 - 18:38

**News**: First official presentation of the Media Accessibility Platform

The first official presentation of the beta version of the Media Accessibility Platform will be at the 11th Languages and the Media Conference.
Visuals Into Words

Abstract
Audio description is an intersensory translation in which images are translated into words. This access service allows users to understand and enjoy audiovisual content even when the visuals are not accessible to them. However, the provision of audio description is uneven across countries and research is relatively recent. A deeper understanding of how images are transferred into words is still needed, and especially relevant is the analysis of how audio description is approached by different descriptors in diverging cultural environments and also how end users receive the audio described content. One of the drawbacks often encountered by researchers in the field of audio description is the lack of freely available comparable materials to use in their analysis and experiments, very often due to copyright reasons.

Inspired by Wallace Chafe’s Peer Stories Project, and by its application in audio description within the DVD4ALL project by Pilar Orero (see Mazur and Kruger), Visuals Into Words (VIW) has developed a multimodal and multilingual corpus of audio descriptions departing from a single stimulus, a short film created ad hoc for the project in English, and translated into other languages. The corpus allows studies to be carried out comparing the various audio descriptions produced for one specific language but also contrasting various languages.

The project is built upon two pillars: on the one hand, it has a strong open access component. All materials are freely available to the research community through this website. On the other, it aims to be a scalable and expanding project. Although limited in size in its first steps, it aims to involve external researchers and widen its scope.
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MAP: Modalities

MAP interprets MA in a holistic way, including not only modalities for persons who cannot hear or see the media content but also for persons who cannot access it due to linguistic barriers.
The Accessometer provides an actual map of all the legislation, standards and guidelines on MA at both international and national levels, organised by countries.
MAP: The Accessometer

Specific maps

Blue = at least one legislation or standard or guideline.

Pink = no legislation or no standards or no guidelines.

Grey = no information.

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The platform implements an algorithm that gives different weights to legislation, standards, guidelines and any of their combinations and allows to calculate the **Media Accessibility Index** of each country.
MAP: The Accessometer

General map

Green  = at least one legislation or standard or guideline.

Pink  = no legislation or no standards or no guidelines.

Grey  = no information.
MAP: The Accessometer

General map

Shades of green indicate the Media Accessibility Index of each country.
MAP: Features

- MAP is accessible.

- It has a very powerful customised search engine.

- Information is uploaded, managed and checked via the threefold structure Contributor-Moderator-Editor.

- Current interface in English.
MAP: Future

• Analyse all the data uploaded and produce a **yearly report**;
• Establish **collaborations**. Two are already in place:
  • **BITRA** - the Bibliography of Interpreting and Translation based at the University of Alicante and run by Javier Franco.
  • **NEM** - the New European Media Initiative, one of the European Technology Platforms established under the 7th Framework Programme.
• Higher accessibility.

• Advanced search engine.

• Five languages: English, Spanish, Italian, Polish, German.
“To find knowledge, it’s imperative to have a network”

(Hoffman 2013)
The project will be successful only if there is a network of collaborators.

Join us!
Thank you