LLP-ERASMUS
Intensive Program

Internet advanced promotional tools application for increasing awareness of social exclusions movement

Electronic social exclusion
in
FRANCE

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Introduction

Presenting a definition of the Electronic Social Exclusion is a much complex task than it seems. It is rooted from many phenomenon and dimensions that we have to consider in order to understand the notion of e-Exclusion.

We often see the Internet and all social networks as tools to communication, a way to create links between people regardless of their geographical location, language and origins. It is also seen as a way to share and have fast access to information, to experience and feel extraordinary emotions.

Although the idea of seeing the Internet and its social tools as a cause of exclusion comes when we are, ourselves, facing difficulties reaching our everyday internet routine. Checking mails, following the e-news, sending documents, buying at discount prices etc..."Staying in Tuned" can be a dramatic source of exclusion.

Indeed, we all faced the situation when, one day, we had to have access to the Internet for professional or even personal reasons. It came as a real challenge because of a dysfunctional material or a lack of connectivity network. Here starts irritation, anger, stress and aggressiveness. Electronic Social exclusion can also be a source of deep frustration when you simply do not have the capability to access these tools. Nowadays, 10 years after the deafening arrival of the Internet, this technology is not giving the access to many disabled people. The barriers between the users and the non-users are dangerously increasing and keep on growing with the continuous improvement of technologies.

We are now giving a definition of the Electronic Social Exclusion so that readers understand the context and the notions included in our study.

"Social exclusion refers to the multi-dimensional and dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from economic, social and cultural electronic systems that determine the social integration of a person in the society"

It has been inspired from the definition of Social Exclusion edited by Barnes in 2005 and we added the electronic aspect to it.

Social exclusion was first popularized in France by René Lenoir in 1974, Secretary of the State for Social Action at that time. Social cohesion is a central topic in the French culture and politic illustrated by the revolutionary demand of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity". By the eighties, we shifted from the notion of "poverty" to "exclusion".

However, the exploration of social exclusion via the Internet is a very nascent concept. Indeed, Tim Berners-Lee, the Internet creator himself introduced the concept of accessibility of the World Wide Web. He said that "We have to put the Web at everyone's disposal, whatever the electronic devices or software they are using, their network infrastructure, their mother-tongue language, their culture, their geographical location and their physical or mental aptitudes".

The web accessibility has been internationally defined in 1996 by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) that set up the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) with the help of Consortium DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System). The W3C dictates recommendations and standards, first in the WCAG.1.0 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) with 14 directives which became WCAG.2.0 on the 11th December 2008.

In Europe, the Euro Accessibily (initiated by BrailleNet) gather the main actor in Europe (Once in Spain, RNIB in England, BATIMEUS in The Netherlands) in order to share knowledge, experiences, improvements and elaborate common methods to encourage e-inclusion. The UWEM is a European application of the WCAG which the equivalent in France is ATAG.20.

In France the association Braillenet was created in 1997, it gathers companies and research institutes in order to strongly encourage web accessibility. The Baillenet delivers labels thanks to its member AccessiWeb that certify that websites respect the W3C/WAI standards. A third organism that is highly active in the e-inclusion movement is the IAN (Institut de l'Accessibilité Numérique), they evaluated the number of e-excluded in France around 80 million people.

After the enlargement of the European Union, France clearly announced that the accessibility of the public Web is a legal obligation. The Article 47 of the February 11th 2005 for disabled rights and equality mention that in order to give the same chance and participation to civic rights, the online public communication services of the government and local authorities, have to be accessible for everyone.
In the same context, France edited in October 2009 the "Référentiel Général d'Accéssibilité pour les Administration" (RGAA). This reference document includes control modalities to verify the W3C conformity of a product or service.

1. Level and structure of electronic social exclusion

The concept of e-accessibility refers to initiatives aimed at ensuring access of all citizens to the services of the information society. It is about removing technical, legal and others barriers that people can encounter when they use ICT services. It is also to promote to people the use of ICT and the Internet, and to raise awareness of the opportunities they can offer.

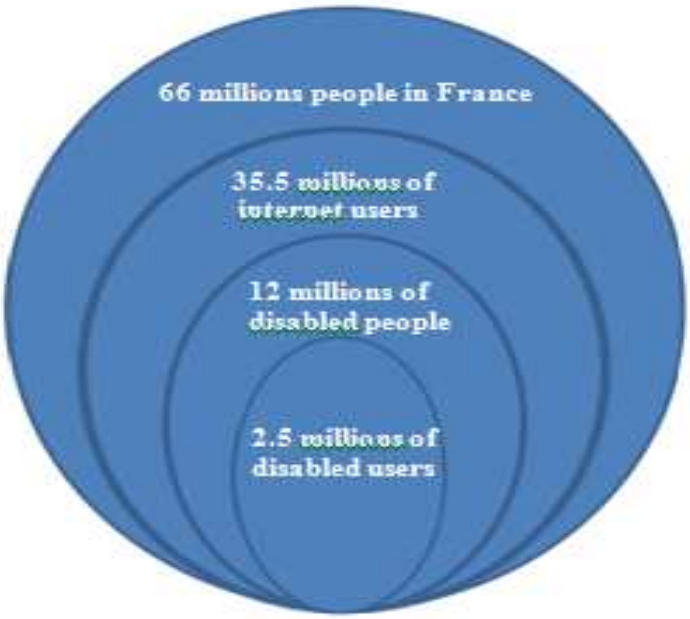
20 years has passed between the creation of the Internet and the obligation of French public websites to comply with international WC3 norms.
We can notice that among numerous initiatives driven by the country and Europe, many French website do not respect the W3C standards and norms yet. The country sensitization shows its limits, the different actor's motivation is not sufficient and don't improve fast enough.
Indeed, even though the country is 98% broadband covered, the "Agence pour le Développement de l'Administration Electronique" (ADAE) found that 5 500 French websites needs to respect the W3C standards and only 5% of the total websites available respect the standards.

More specifically, the barriers to ICT accessibility concern :
- The lack of a standard at European level (example: there are seven systems TTY device for the deaf and misunderstandings, but they are incompatible with each other);
- The lack of adequate services, including the lack of websites that can be easily read and traveled by the visually impaired;
- The absence of products and services for certain groups of people (example: telephone communication for sign language users);
- The lack of interoperable solutions for accessible ICT;
- The lack of accessible content;
- Many software is not compatible with assistive devices (example: screen narrators reading for the blind);

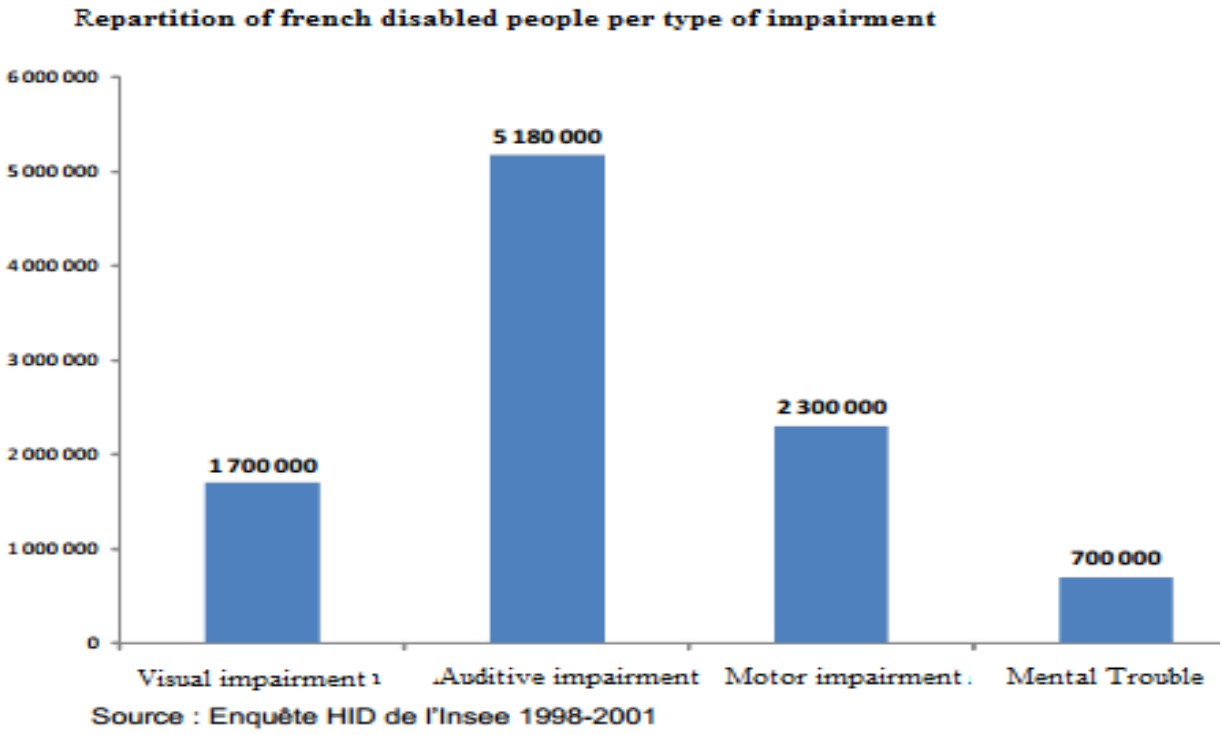
Many of these obstacles could be overcome. However, this requires cooperation, coordination and determination at a European level.

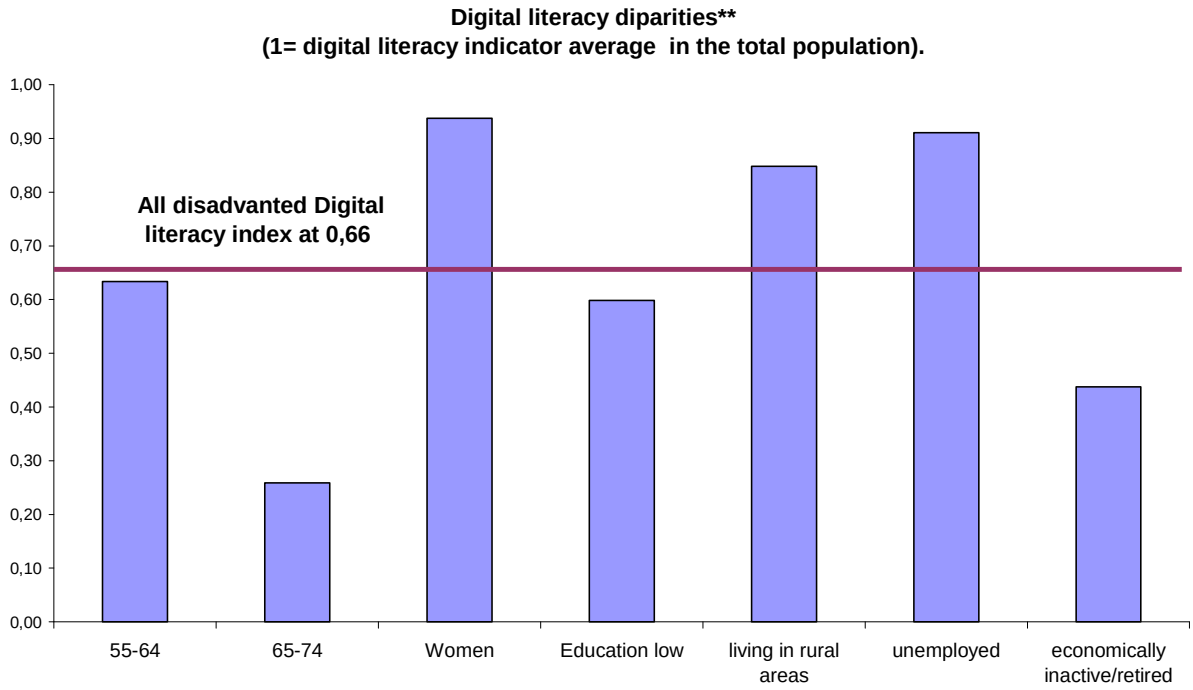
The INSEE published its figures about e-accessibility and e-excluded :
Out of 66 millions of inhabitants in France, 35.5 millions are using the internet.

In total European population, 15% is facing disabilitie.. Out of 12 millions inhabitants with disabilities, only 2.5 millions are using the internet (8% of total French internet users).



Repartition of French Internet users





The main population in Europe that are facing digital literacy are the women, the unemployed and people living in rural areas.

We can imagine an increasing number of e-excluded thanks to the number of ageing population. According to the INSEE, 1 french out of 3 will be e-excluded within 2050.

2. Causes and consequences of electronic social exclusion

Internet website developers and designers have to face many challenges and take into account indefinite parameters that cause the exclusion.

a. Physical causes

Blurred Vision

The first category of people suffering from blurred vision is the visually impaired. They can be characterized by:

- Weak vision acuteness, that is to say myopia, presbyopia and astigmatism. These troubles can be adjusted with corrective measures (image enlargement, a specific lightning…)
- Vision degeneration linked to the age, that is to say trouble distinguishing colors, shapes and contrasts and tiredness resulting from it. It mostly occurs to people from 65 years old.
- Perception troubles occurring from specific vision pathologies, that is to say, color blindness, albinism or when half of the vision is imputed. The visually impaired will have trouble and feel discomfort perceiving certain information when the color is faintly contrasted, too far or too close. These pathologies can hardly be corrected.

The second category of people suffering from blurred vision is the visually handicapped that is to say complete blindness. Information on the screen are not accessible (in visual form at least).

Motor function Trouble

It exists many physical handicaps that can affect muscle members and provoke unwilling movements, shakings, lack of coordination, lack of member's sensitivity, paralysis. The use of a keyboard or mouse (double clicks, clicking on a narrow surface, maintaining a button pushed in) become indeed problematic and can results to deep discomfort.

The users who do not have the ability to use a keyboard or a mouse have to call on substitution devices that detect other member's movement (eye blinking, head shaking, mouth movements, breathing movements…).

Audition Trouble

It can go from light audition trouble to partial or total deafness. These troubles can be adjusted by audio amplifiers. As far as the e-exclusion is concerned, deafness can prevent from hearing low signals, warning and all the cultural audios available on the Internet.

Website developers and designers can easily solve the problem with additional written information like subtitles but they have to write in a clear and concise way to make the information more accessible.

Cognitive Trouble

Cognitive handicaps include pathologies like dyslexia, dyscalculia, concentration and memory deficiency, epilepsy etc…

With the expansion of the Internet, we notice that many users have a low knowledge of the resourcefulness of its contents. Website developers often forget that navigation intuition may not be the same for all the users that is why nowadays, internet actors are concentrating their efforts trying to make ergonomic and easy to use website.

b. Knowledge and material causes

Devices requirements

The price of the equipment and the Internet can be a cause of e-exclusion even though it decreased and keep on decreasing.

Necessary knowledge and motivation

The lack of training and support regarding the use of the material and the Internet is a common cause within the older population.

Moreover, the cost/benefit ratio too high can discourage people from usgin the Internet. Even if some benefit or interest in using the internet is assumed, it may be judged that the benefit is too small to justify what may be a high-value investment in computer equipment. Again, more affordable pricing schemes and flexible technologies may change this.

54% of French households do not have access to the Internet (all causes included).

c. Economic consequences

E-exclusion can prevent a part of the population from the online offers and its promotions and discounts. This exclusion really narrows their consumption power because they can't have access to international markets, compare prices, deepen their research into the goods/services characteristics and benefit from time and transactions savings.

For the companies and organizations it is obviously a loss of customers because they cannot reach the e-excluded attention and interest. In France, out of 12 million of disabled people, only 2,5 million are using the Internet.

For the government, it increases the service delivery cost. In order to make available certain information, the government will have to adapt its communication, its interacting means to the internet non-users.

d. Social consequences

Social consequences can be frustrating and dramatic for people exposed to e-exclusion. Indeed social networks and more generally the Internet enable friends, families, society and the whole world to interact with each other and create social links.

A real community has been created around the Internet use and other more specific communities around certain social and professional networks (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, LinkedIn…).

In 2011, France counts 30 millions social networks users. Social Medias enable the users to express themselves, share and confront ideas thanks to multiple blogs, wiki, and comments on news publication etc...This opens user's mind, because they are exposed to different and changing environments and they can also become actors of the real but also of the virtual society. Not having the access to online communities enhances discrimination and social gabs between the users and disabled people and seniors.

We can see that social e-exclusion not only impact on individual lives but on families, communities, increasingly on political process, democracy, public services and the economic and social health of the nation as a whole.

3. Government role in preventing electronic social exclusion

a. International standards

The best way to be inclusive is to follow common recommendations:

The **World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)**, the organization responsible for the standardization of the Web has established international standards (WCAG.1.0, WCAG.2.0) for the production of content production tools for content and tools to browse web pages. The WCAG 1.0 counts 14 recommendations that can be checked in 65 "checkpoints". It distinguishes 3 level of conformity priorities corresponding to 3 level of recommendations conformities ;

1. Priority 1 : criteria that websites needs to respect
2. Priority 2 : recommended criteria to reduce obstacles in the website access
3. Priority 3 : criteria to improve utilization comfort

1. Conformity level A : when the website is respecting Priority 1
2. Conformity level AA : when website is respecting Priorities 1 and 2
3. Conformity level AAA : when website is respecting all the Priorities

Europe and many member states consider that the minimum level for the web accessibility is level AA.

The DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) in turn normalizes the production of digital books.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) focuses on man-machine interfaces.

b. Europe

The Ministerial Declaration signed in Riga on 11 June 2006[i] by 34 European countries. The Declaration defined "e-Inclusion" as "both inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the use of ICT to achieve wider inclusion objective and policies aiming at both reducing gaps in ICT usage and promoting the use of ICT to overcome exclusion". It recognised that ICTs are a powerful driver of growth and employment and that they contribute to improving the quality of everyday life and social participation of Europeans.

In January, the European Union has ratified **the UN Convention**, which aims to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise their rights on an equal footing with all other citizens. 27 Member States have signed and 16 have ratified them. This agreement commits the parties to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully exercise their rights. Countries that have ratified it must take action in the following areas: access to education, employment, transport, infrastructure and buildings open to the public, granting the right to vote, improving political participation and enjoyment of full legal capacity by all persons with disabilities.

c. France

The accessibility of public services online communication is a legal requirement in France, because of section 47 of the Act of 11 February 2005 "for equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of people with disabilities."

Article 47 stipulates that "public communication, online government, local authorities and public institutions services must be accessible to persons with disabilities". Regardless the means of access, contents and method of consultation. International guidelines for the accessibility of the Internet must be applied for public communication services online.

The 2009-546 decree of the State Council determines the rules relating to accessibility and accurately by reference to the recommendations established by the Agency for the development of e-government. To implement compliances and adapt them to existing websites may not exceed three years. The decree also sets procedures for personnel training. Organizations can be under penalties for not respecting the decree.

On digital books, the Law of 1 August 2006 on copyright and related rights in the information society has established an exception to the authors' right to oppose the reproduction and representation of their works the benefit of persons with disabilities. This representation covers the possibility of distributing books in a digital format suitable.

In addition, the decree of 19 December 2008 allows organizations to request that the transcribers digital files used to edit these works are submitted by publishers from the National Library of France, which provides them in a secure.

4. Institutions and their actions

a. IAN

The IAN (Institute of Digital Accessibility) is a French institute With the mission to create a center of expertise and promote the best e-inclusion practices.

In this sense, the IAN emphasizes the need to:

- Consider eAccessibility for all disabilities
- Address the issue of accessibility in upstream, including it in the general training of technical staff and by taking into account the early stages of design
- Recognize the work of international bodies such as the W3C Web Accessibility, or Daisy Consortium for accessibility of documents and apply their standards
- Disseminate good practices and culture of digital accessibility at all levels of society.

The Institute of Digital Accessibility (IAN) aims to coordinate the efforts and skills mobilized to ensure equal access to all information.

This equality with digital content, regardless of their form (web, digital books, office documents, video, etc.) is the condition of social and professional integration of disabled people.

IAN missions are concentrated in four main areas:

- Research and Development
- Lessons
- Certification of compliance with international standards
- Permanent watch on best practices

The institute pursues a non-profit work in the general interest.

IAN has now established a list of topics they wishes to bring out the research:

- Tools for creating accessible content
- Referential accessibility
- Assessment tools for accessibility
- Creation and distribution of digital books available
- Experimenting with new uses adaptive reading
- Studies on the benefits of digital accessibility and obstacles to its development

b. BrailleNet Association

BrailleNet is a French ssociation and a member of the Institute of e-Accessibility and the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) and participates in the implementation of its recommendations to Web accessibility, including through practical tools and AccessiWeb guides that facilitate the design of accessible web pages.

Their actions

- Access to education:

BrailleNet encourages technological development while promoting school integration of visually impaired children in mainstream schools. BrailleNet is working with the publishing world to develop new technical drawings and legal distribution of course materials.

- Access to employment:

The association is is interested in technological applications that promote professional integration of the visually impaired people. They created a partnership with Alcatel-Lucent France with the aim of facilitating access to technical and professional material for the visually impaired.

- Access to culture:

BrailleNet has set up a web server, “Helene Library” available on the BNFA library. It offers more than 8.400 digitalized books (classics, fiction, essays, biographies, children literature...) accessible

to visually imparaired people. It is supplied in partnership with publishers and specialized centers that perform adaptations in Braille and large print. BrailleNet opened a digital library of ready for visually impaired readers, the library Hélène.

BrailleNet exploring new formats of books accessible to blind and visually impaired, including formats of digital audio books, by participating in international projects such as EUAIN.

BrailleNet label

The association created a European label called Euracert that ensures compliance with the recommendations of a site W3C/WAI (Web Accessibility Initiative) that now became a ISO 40500 standard. They coordinated the European project **Support-EAM** for the creation of a European quality label called CEN certifying the accessibility of websites.

In order to obtain these labels, websites owner have to first put their website under an inspection from an independent third party (ISO 17050), then obtain the ISO 1720 certification and make a conformity declaration over the accessibility of the website.

c. The EBU (European Blind Union) is a NGO founded in 1984. The NGO represents the interests of the blind and the partially sighted people in Europe. Its objects and powers are set out in Article II of its Constitution. EBU currently has 45 members' countries and the central office is located in Paris, France. each represented by a national delegation and held an assembly every 4 years.

Their actions

- Acess to culture :

The "Acess to Culture Project" 2001-2013 was created in order for blind and partially sighted people to be able to enjoy and participate in cultural life on an equal basis with others, cultural websites, movie theatres, books, TV have to be accessible.

- Acess to information :

EBU is spearheading a campaign to get the EU to introduce binding legislation to make all public websites accessible by 2015.

d. The MeAC

The MeAC (Measuring Progress of e-Accessibility in Europe) is a study implemented in early 2006 as part of the follow-up to the European Commision's Communication on eAccessibility of 2005. For the first time, this study has provided a comprehensive benchmarking of the eAccessibility situation in the EU member states and 3 non –European countries. The MeAC project was terminated in 2008 after 3 year duration. The research represents by far the largest and most representative information on e-Accessibility that have been available at that point and respect the Unified Web Evaluation Methodology (UWEM).

e. "Defis" Association

Is a French association for e-inclusion created in 2007 to help reduce digital divide lending computer to people with low income mainly for free. Its members are active in helping users exploring the computer and use of the Internet.

They also provide their technical and material support to associations (loan machines, using the grip, production of websites, technical advice).

In 2010 "Défis" became "Inter-Regional Pole" and is now responsible for the development of the sector reconditioning Ordi 2.0 on the Brittany, upper and lower Normandie.

In 2011 "Défis", with the support of the Brittany Region theu launched Ordi-Solidaire Bretagne- a network for reuse synergize players reconditioning and E-inclusion.

Ordi-solidaire Bretagne :

A new network to develop the sector reconditioning computers freedom and solidarity in Brittany. France.

This network already includes fifteen refurbishers hardware in a social and solidarity distributed throughout Brittany. They wish to continue to coordinate and structure their development at the regional level and try to limit the waste of hardware in the region while improving access for all tools and use of computers and the Internet.

5. Other activities against electronic social exclusion

Every year, French government and association organize the « European Forum eAccessibility». The 7th European Forum eAccessibility will be held at the Science City - Universcience, Paris, 18 March 2013, under the patronage of François HOLLAND, President of the Republic. The main theme will be "Making eAccessibility professional competence." It is organized by the Institute of eAccessibility, BrailleNet Association and the City of Science.

a. General description

Most digital content professionals recognize the legal and business case for developing accessible products and services.

Nonetheless, campaigns exhorting e-Accessibility tend to ring hollow as the professionals concerned lack the basic training to be able to implement the associated techniques, methodologies and technologies. Accessibility is absent from the curricula of most universities, and companies rarely consider it sufficiently to be the subject of employee training and development.

In the current economic climate, companies are pushed to do more with less. The business and legal consequences of non-compliance are such that a company can no longer afford to relegate e-Accessibility to the periphery. Never before has there been a more marked need for in-house skills to deploy e-Accessibility effectively. The skills of organizations' employees in implementing accessibility in-house, or outsourcing to trained professionals, is crucial to the future success of e-Accessibility, and central to organizations' competitiveness, edge and growth ambitions.

The role of industry specialists and policymakers is paramount in fostering e-Accessibility as a professional skill. Governments and organizations wishing to see increased levels of e-Accessibility will need to act decisively to ensure professionals have access to quality educational resources

The 7th European Forum on e-Accessibility will address the following themes:

The e-Accessibility Profession today

- Existing body of highly specialized, largely self-taught, practitioners
- Courses and modules available to undergraduates and professionals

- Barriers to the wider inclusion of e-Accessibility in university and professional courses

Added value and immediate business relevance of e-Accessibility training

- Immediate business needs in terms of e-Accessibility
- Examples of the return on investment

How to plan, implement and evaluate e-Accessibility skills

- Models for effective learning (e.g. degrees, in-house training, professional qualifications, mentoring, online training courses, etc.)
- The role of policymakers
- The role of business
- e-Accessibility competence certification

On-going professional development and knowledge management

- Professional bodies and organizations
- International advocacy, networks and resources

Presentations will explore e-Accessibility skills relevant to a variety of digital professions such as web development, software development and digital publishing.

b. Certification

The Institute of Digital Accessibility (IAN) aims to qualify individuals, organizations, processes, products and service in order to guide the actors from the existing skills in France.

For this purpose, the IAN is working to put in place a medium-term process of certification for individuals, organizations and services.

These activities will be based on audits defined in standards, in compliance with international standards and national regulations.

c. Associations

Example with DEFIS

The association « Defis » created a project « Ordi-Solidaire Bretagne » which is a new network to develop the sector Breton reconditioning computers freedom and solidarity.

The association has identified challenges and federated network of Bretagne region's industrial players reconditioning equipment. Since March 2010, this network already includes 15 refurbished hardware in a social and solidarity throughout the distrib. As leader of this industry in Britain (challenges is a regional hub Ordi 2.0) They want to continue to coordinate and structure their development at the a regional level and allow to limit the waste of hardware in the region while improving the access to all the tools and the uses of computers and the Internet.

Main Missions:

- identify the actors
- discover and solicit donors
- inform and equip prescribers (CCAS, EPN, PLIE etc.).
- strengthen the network of refurbishers and share expertise
- to provide material for SSE actors and the world of e-inclusion

etc..

6. Characteristic of the DEFIS Association

DEFIS is an association located in Lanester, in the Bretagne region of France. The association was created by Joel Coché and Gilles Le Couster who are passionate about the IT technologies and the Sustainable Development in general. The association counts around 15 volunteers and employees in total.

a. Their missions

- Reducing web accessibilities inequalities
- Create a social link
- Be a debate initiator

b. Their values

- Solidarity, humanism and teaching
- Citizenship, education and support
- Commitment, militancy

That is express by the desire to:

-Share put at everyone's disposal various skills
- Develop practices of solidarity
- Promote new ways of consumption (recycling, re-use, co-working…)
- Invest time in humanitarian actions
- Respect the Human being

c. The association added-value

It is all about proximity, that is to say geographical proximity, social proximity, technical proximity…

The association is a fusion of technical knowledge of ITs and a strong motivation for militancy and development. DEFIS is working in partnership other associations and institutions.

d. Their Actions

- Reconditioning: a recycling action as well as a social action.
The DEFIS association is Ord2.0 certified, that means that the
The association is actively participating in the collect, reconditioning and re-distribution of computers. Computers are given by companies and communities and given to people in need of computers.
The average time needed for the reconditioning is 45 minutes per computers. Currently, the association has the capacity to recycle 150 computers per month.

- Lending computers: the association is lending computers (for free or at a very low renting price) at first to families and people in real need with very low incomes but also to other associations in France that are leading the same actions. The DEFIS is currently lending around 30 computers around the region for a period that can go to 1 year (mainly in Lorient and Lanester).

- Internet/computer use support: the DEFIS association is giving support and individual training to computer and internet novices that cannot have personal support from their surroundings.
The main topics are: internet navigating, document managing, downloading basis, internet communication tools and law and regulation around the Internet use in France and worldwide.

- Services to other associations: the DEFIS association is giving its technical support to other associations that are fighting for social and exclusion cause.

- Tupperweb gathering: the DEFIS is organizing gathering around internet subjects in order to share knowledge and democratize the use of the Internet and computers.

Conclusions

After going trhough the politican and social context of e-exclusion we can make quite a number of suggestions and comments regarding the European Union level of actions. Achieving and boosting the accessibility in general as well as WCAG.2. 0 implementaion across the Member States can not increase without leading actions of public awareness and training.

First of all, creating a consideration and stimulate the e-Accessibility culture among the population and show them where the barriers for disabled people are when using the internet, is the basic step to make understand the reality of the situation. This is where the EU can invest more rather than spending all its efforts only focusing on the implementaion of WCAG.2.0.

Moreover, the Member States schould be more cohesive over e-exclusion subjects and exchange exeriences in relation to web accessibility. The lack of opportunities to share experiences and learn from others, especially in relation to technical and other aspects of implementation is felt to be an important limitation at the moment.

Also, the governments schould enchance their political pressure towards the implementation of appropriate legislation on web accessibility.They have to foresee serious penalties for new created websites when they are not respecting the WCAG.2 standards. In the same time, helping with financial supports the small companies/actors to adapt their existing website to these standards.

Besides these suggestions, we can also encourage and identify the good pratices that are appearing in some countries such as the nascent University Diplomas over Web-Accessibility proposed by the University Pierre and Marie Curie, Paris VI and the public administration training staff available in Northen Europe countries.

To finish with, we have to realise that the scope of coverage of existing web accessibility legislation/regulations varies across the Member States. WCAG 2.0 may well ultimately bring positive benefits in terms of the levels of accessibility that are supported but the process of implementing the new guidelines is, unfortunatly seen in many Member States to give rise to new challenges and costs.

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