

"DfA in the European Information Society - Status Workshop"
AAATE Conference Lille
Sept 8, 2005

Status report on standardisation related to DfA
Jan Engelen

Overview

Following ongoing activities have been monitored:

- EU Communication on eAccessibility
- several international workshops
- a few EU projects (COPRAS, NO-REST) and the USEM project proposal
- activities by ESO's (European Standardisation Organisations) and the coordinating bodies ICTSB and DATSCG
- W3C guidelines
- EDeAN/D4ALLnet web portal and SIG on standardisation

In this note you will find extra information on these items.

1. EU Communication on eAccessibility

This communication will be made public on October 21, 2005 during the UK eAccessibility conference¹. It will focus, among many other aspects on 3 standardisation related issues: public procurement, existing legislation and exploring the use of certification.

a. Procurement

As is well known, governments can impose rules for the products or for the conformity with certain rules for products and services that a government will buy. Although this does not formally enforce their application in other circumstances, the US example has shown that it is a powerful means to implement accessibility issues. In Europe, public procurement covers 16% of the gross domestic product of 15 00 M€.

The EU public procurement directives are currently under revision and several EU Directorates, including DG INFSO H3, are working very hard to make accessibility part of the directives.

In October 2004, an EU Procurement Conference related to eAccessibility was organised². Its programme and many of the presentations made at that occasion can be found on the web³.

There was e.g. a presentation by Keith Dickerson, chairman of ICTSB on "Use of Standards to support Accessibility"

b. Standardisation Mandate

The Commission is preparing a mandate⁴ to the European Standards bodies with the purpose to generate a toolkit for procurers. Not much is known about the mandate itself at this point in time.

c. Certification

During the kick-off of the CEN Workshop on Web site accessibility certification (cf. below), it became clear that many groups are opposed (for various reasons) to the certification idea. Therefore the European Commission, together with DATSCG and ICTSB, are planning a workshop on this aspect in March or April 2006⁵.

¹ <http://www.rnib.org.uk/eaccessconference>

² However one should be aware that many other "pressure" groups are active. On October 29, 2004 an EU handbook on "Green Public Procurement" was published...

³ http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/accessibility/regulation/pubproc_ws_2004/index_en.htm

⁴ A "mandate" is eurospeak for a piece of work that is defined (and paid) by the European Commission but will be performed by one of the three official standardisation bodies (CEN/CENELEC/ETSI)

⁵ Not many details are at the time of writing. More info will be made available through the Standardisation and Benchmarking SIGs at www.edean.org

2. International workshops and conferences

Over the period concerned at least three major events took place.

2.1 *EU procurement conference (Brussels)*

The EU Procurement conference was already mentioned above.

2.2 *Policies and Legislations (Paris)*



On January 31, the French organisation Brailenet and the partners of the Support-EAM project organised a one day workshop on: "Policies and Legislations in favour of e-accessibility in Europe". A large number of speakers explained how Web accessibility was implemented in their country. The very important proceedings are publicly available⁶.

2.3 *eAccessibility, the role of standardisation (Florence)*



The European collaborative action COST219ter focuses on: "Accessibility for All to Services and Terminals for Next Generation Networks". On March 8, 2005, they organised in Florence a specialised Workshop under the theme: "eAccessibility Legislation and Policy, the Role of Standardisation". Proceedings are forthcoming⁷.

3. European projects and the USEM project proposal

3.1 *NO REST project*

The IST project NO-REST (Networked Organizations – Research into Standards and Standardization Project) aims to assess the impact of standards in the ICT and eBusiness environment. No-REST recently launched a survey on this issue⁸.

3.2 *COPRAS project*

The EU Commission is funding under its framework 6 programme this project whose major goal is to contact all other IST project consortia to discuss their standards related activities (be it as a standards user or as a group developing a standard) and make sure their standardisation needs are brought forward to the relevant standardisation bodies. More details can be found on the Copras website⁹ and in a recent EU communication¹⁰.

3.3 *USEM project proposal*

Several AAATE members introduced on February 1, 2005 a European project proposal under the acronym USEM (USer EMpowerment in Standardisation). This was done under the so-called PRIORITY 8.1 Call 4., which is a funding line for policy support actions.

One of the objectives stated is:

"This support action concentrates on the growing group of customers of higher age and customers with disabilities. The standardisation community is prepared to interact with these users, but not enough well trained users from user organisations are available to act in the standardisation process in a professional way. USEM takes up these main problems, by offering a concept, to user organisations, to empower users for full participation in standardisation."

The proposal got a very positive evaluation mark. However, at this point in time it is not sure if enough EU funding will be available to start the work.

⁶ <http://www.brailenet.org/colloques/policies/program.html>

⁷ <http://www.cost219.org>

⁸ <http://www.norest.isi.fraunhofer.de>

⁹ <http://www.w3.org/2004/copras/>

¹⁰ <http://istresults.cordis.lu/index.cfm/section/news/tpl/article/BrowsingType/Features/ID/78141>

4. Activities within the European Standardisation bodies

4.1 ICTSB/DATSCG

Both organisations have been mentioned in previous reports to AAATE members. They focus on the coordination of standardisation efforts on a European scale. ICTSB is the ICT- related Standardisation board and DATSCG is one of its working groups, the Design for All and Assistive Technology coordination group.

The DATSCG met several times over the last year. Its major achievements are

- establishment of contacts between European companies and the US groups involved in 508 work
- organising the initial steps for the EU procurement conference (October 2004)
- discussions of the forthcoming STF's (cf. below under ETSI's activities)
- exchange of information on several EU initiatives (eAccessibility Communication, COPRAS, Professionalisation of standardisation work in EU, DfA curricula, etc)
- preparation of next year's conference on accessibility certification (cf. above)

4.2 CEN

CEN Workshop agreements are created to consult the target groups about needs for and ways to standardisation in specific fields. They are not a formal standardisation activity but play an important role in the preparation thereof. More details on the CEN web pages¹¹.

Some CWA's have produced very important reports. E.g.

- CWA14661
Guidelines for Standardisers of ICT products and services in the CEN ICT domain
- CWA 14835
Guidelines for making information accessible through sign language on the web

Two ongoing CWA-agreements should be mentioned specifically:

- WS/WAC: Specifications for a complete European Web Accessibility certification scheme and a Quality Mark¹²
[promoted by the Support-EAM project and the IST-eInclusion WABcluster]
- CEN/ISSS Workshop on Document Processing for Accessibility (WS/DPA)¹³
[promoted by the EUAIN project]

Furthermore CEN established **BT/WG 157** "Accessibility for All"

- to consider work resulting from decisions made at the European "Accessibility for All" Conference¹⁴ (Nice March 2003)
- to consider adaptation of ISO/IEC Guide 71 to other areas¹⁵
- to make proposals for further standards action in the CEN domain, including:
 - accessibility of built environment
 - accessible transport services
 - labelling for accessibility to services

4.3 CENELEC

Most accessibility issues do not fall under the scope of CENELEC. An exception is CENELEC's "TV for All" action, covering standardisation requirements for access to digital TV and interactive services by disabled people¹⁶.

Furthermore this organisation recently made sure that their web pages were made accessible (WAI level A).

¹¹ <http://www.cenorm.be/>

¹² <http://www.cenorm.be/cenorm/businessdomains/businessdomains/iss/activity/ws-wac.asp>

¹³ <http://www.cenorm.be/cenorm/businessdomains/businessdomains/iss/activity/ws-dpa.asp>

¹⁴ <http://www.etsi.org/cce/>

¹⁵ The above mentioned CWA14661 report is an example of such an "ISO/IEC Guide 71" adaptation.

¹⁶ <http://www.cenelec.org/Cenelec/CENELEC+in+action/Horizontal+areas/ICT/e-Accessibility+and+TV+for+All.htm>

4.4 ETSI

Especially the Human Factors group [ETSI-HF] within ETSI is very active in accessibility issues. Several specialised task forces (STF's), i.e. small ad hoc research groups have been set up.

- STF 181: Requirements for Assistive Technology Devices in ICT
- STF 183: Modality of Icons, Symbols and Pictograms
- STF 184: Design for All Guidelines for ICT Products and Services
- STF 201: Access to ICT by Children
- STF 204: Multimodality in ICT
- STF OJ: Telecare in Intelligent Homes

More recently a few new STF's have started in which DfA principles play (or should play) an important role:

- Human related technical guidelines for real-time person-to-person communication services (HF 2362)
- Enabling and Improving the use of Mobile e-Services (HF 2366)
- User-oriented handling of multicultural issues in broadband and narrowband multimedia telecommunications (HF 2372)
- Duplex Universal Speech and Text (DUST) communication [e-Inclusion] (STF 267)

More information can be found on the ETSI website¹⁷. This list of STF's is also mentioned in the above mentioned article by K. Dickerson¹⁸.

5. "Informal" standards: W3C Guidelines

In relation to Design for All or Universal Design, there is one very well known example of a powerful organisation that is not a formal standardisation body: the World Wide Web consortium and especially the **Web Access Initiative**¹⁹ that produced several guidelines on web accessibility. Although almost universally accepted as the primary reference point for web accessibility matters, many countries establishing legislative actions for imposing web accessibility, were not able to refer to the WAI guidelines as the W3C cannot be considered a standardisation body in the proper sense of the word. Unfortunately, this has already led to several national variants of version 1 of the web accessibility guidelines.

During 2005 major steps have been put to produce version 2 of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG2.0). It is expected that a final version can be presented for voting by the end of this year. In this version a strong attention is paid to the automatic testability of the new criteria.

6. EDeAN/D4Allnet Standardisation SIG

The EDeAN discussion platform Hermes has been mentioned in previous reports. All SIG information was recently made public, but only members are allowed to post messages and to comment. Actually the Standardisation SIG²⁰ has 193 members, a doubling in about one year's time. Most come from Europe (but new EU member states are underrepresented), a few from the USA, Australia and Hong Kong. Also observers of the European Commission and experts involved in standardisation organizations are taking part in the discussions.

Currently open discussion lines can be seen on the screenshot below.

¹⁷ <http://portal.etsi.org/stfs/>

¹⁸

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/accessibility/regulation/pubproc_ws_2004/a_documents/keith_dickerson-slides.pdf


¹⁹ Link: <http://www.w3.org/WAI/>

²⁰ <http://www.edean.org>

[Accessibility Options](#) | [Go to content](#) | [Quick Access Links](#)

EDeAN

European Design for All
e-Accessibility Network



Welcome Guest you are at : [Standardisation](#) > [Message Board](#) [Help](#)

Special Interest Groups

- Policy and Legislation
- Standardisation
 - [SIG Info](#)
 - [Message Board](#) <
 - [Links](#)
 - [Documents area](#)
- Curricula on DfA
- Benchmarking
- Proactive Assessment
- Tools
- DfA Resource Centre

Join us

- [Join Us](#)
- [Registered Users](#)
- [Sign in](#)
- [Downloads](#)

Standardisation : Message Board

[Past Topic\(s\)](#)

Viewing topics 1 - 5 (Total 5) [First page](#) | [Previous page](#) | [Next page](#) | [Last page](#)

Topic	Activity	Last modified	Messages
Status of ISO-16071-TS	open	20 February 2005	1
ISO-16071-TS: Software accessibility of Human-Computer Interfaces			
Accessibility Certification	open	02 March 2005	6
Ongoing certification activities in Europe			
ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee 1: Establishment...	open	30 March 2005	3
Planning for such a SWG			
General info	open	26 May 2005	7
Announcements and short messages			
Coding of user requirements / User profiling	open	20 February 2005	3
On EN 1332-4 and ETSI work on user profiling			

Publications

CENELEC, 'A Primer on Standards', the PDF version can be downloaded from:

<http://www.cenelec.org/Cenelec/CENELEC+in+action/News+Centre/Primer+on+standards/Primer.pdf.htm>

Various contributions to the COST219ter standardisation workshop in Florence (March 2005)

<http://www.cost219.org> or contact J. Engelen (email: 9@i.am)

J. Engelen, 'Standardisation: Seeing the Forest through the Trees', introductory presentation at the COST219ter standardisation workshop in Florence (March 2005). Can be downloaded from:

http://www.esat.kuleuven.ac.be/pub/bscw.cgi/d19576/Standardisation_JE.ppt

P.L. Emiliani and Jan Engelen, 'eAccessibility Legislation and Policy: the Role of Standardisation', presented at HCI2005 (Las Vegas), Can be downloaded from:

http://www.esat.kuleuven.ac.be/pub/bscw.cgi/d19580/standardisation_JE_PLE_final.doc