

eAccessibility: update on the Standardisation efforts

Jan Engelen - Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium)

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Standardisation – Why?

- | Traditional approach in accessibility
 - o Development of assistive devices

- | Emerging situation
 - o Design for All or Universal Design (a term mainly used in the US): main stream products built so that they can be useful for persons with impairments too, and this without adaptations
 - o Support (US, Japan and the European Union) by legislative actions

- | Emerging need
 - o Reference to international standards, as it would be unwise (and often also unacceptable) to write down technical - and therefore time-bound - requirements into a law
 - o Formal standardisation activities
 - o Ad hoc and company driven standardisation activities
 - o Informal standardisation activities

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Standardisation Evolution

Traditional situation

- ∅ Voluntary action set up by commercial partners who believe that the standardisation will permit easier exchanges of products and goods
- ∅ Acceptance
 - ∅ Voluntary and based on expected commercial benefits

Emerging situation

- ∅ Laws imposing the acceptance of several standards (e.g. on safety or on ecological aspects)
- ∅ Stimulation and pushing for many standardisation initiatives by public bodies (e.g., in Europe, directly and indirectly by the European Commission)

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Formal Standards

ISO standards (ISO = International Organization for Standardization)

- ∅ Formal documents
 - ∅ Consultation with many national standardisation organisations
 - ∅ Rigorously established voting procedure.

European standardisation



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Informal Standardisation Work

Name	Website	Names of related activities
ISO	http://www.iso.ch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Publicly Available Specification (PAS) •Technical Specification (TS) •Technical Report (TR) •International Workshop Agreement (IWA).
ITU-T	http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Recommendations
CEN	http://www.cen.eu/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CEN Workshop Agreement (CWA)
ETSI	http://www.etsi.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Specialist Task Forces (STF)
CENELEC	http://www.cenelec.eu/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CENELEC Workshop Agreement (CWA) •CENELEC Guides
CEN/CENELEC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CEN/CENELEC Guides

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Ad hoc and Industry Standards

- Developments by companies put forward as a standard to which others have to adhere in order to build, e.g., third party products (e.g. technical specifications of Microsoft products).
- Guidelines or recommendations for standardisation of matters important to their community worked out by industry groupings (Open E-book, Daisy, WAP, Bluetooth etc. and IEEE standards - e.g. on WiFi).

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DfA Related Standardisation

Impact on Design for All standardisation because of its explicit mention in the eEurope2002 plan

- ∅ Set up of coordinating working groups and organisations
- ∅ Democratisation of the standardisation processes
- ∅ Increasing impact of non-formal standardisation bodies
- ∅ Establishment of standardisation related discussion fora open for non-specialists

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Coordination Initiatives

ICTSB (ICT Standards Board)

- ∅ Initiative from the three European standards organisations to co-ordinate specification activities in Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)
- ∅ Functions
 - ∅ To listen to requirements for standards and specifications that are based on concrete market needs and expressed by any competent source.
 - ∅ To consider what standards or specifications need to be created, and how the task will be carried out (and by whom).

DATSCG (Design for All and Assistive Technology Standardisation Co-ordination Group)

- ∅ Objectives:
 - ∅ To ensure co-ordination of the ICT related standardisation work in the DfA and AT fields;
 - ∅ To act as an overall focal point on design-for-all and assistive technology standardisation;
 - ∅ To assist in organising promotional activities on design for all and assistive technologies standardisation requirements in ICT;
 - ∅ To promote the knowledge and awareness of existing guidelines and tools
- ∅ Membership on invitation, including organisations of, or for, persons with a disability as the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE)

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eAccessibility Expert Group

eEurope actions for the promotion of ICT use in Europe

- ∅ “High level Group on the Employment and Social Dimension of the Information Society (ESDIS)” (1999)
 - ∅ Support of the European Commission in the analysis of the impact of the information society on employment and on social cohesion.

eAccessibility expert group

- ∅ Discussion of the eEurope topics related to persons with a disability or elderly persons
- ∅ Production of an overview document on standardisation (2002)
- ∅ Recently devoted to support the eInclusion activities of the European Commission’s Directorate General on Information Society and Media (EC-DG INFSO-H3)
- ∅ Work will now be based on the I2010 Action

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Standardisation Efforts through Workshops

NEW: Working groups and task forces established by standardising bodies, where all interested people are welcome, minimally as observers but often as contributors too

CEN Workshop agreements in the DfA field

- ∅ CEN Workshop [now closed] on “Design for all in ICT”, CWA14661 “Guidelines to Standardisers of ICT products and services in the CEN ICT domain”
- ∅ CEN Workshop on “Specifications for a complete European certification scheme” concerning the delivery of a Quality Mark for Web Content Accessibility - WS/WA
 - ∅ Quality Mark based on the use of a methodology for assessing Web Accessibility within a European certification scheme
- ∅ CEN Workshop on Document Processing for accessibility

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ETSI STF's

Teams of highly-skilled experts working together over a pre-defined period to draft an ETSI standard under the technical guidance of an ETSI Technical Body and with the support of the ETSI Secretariat

- o Requirements of Assistive Technology Devices in ICT (STF 181)
- o Speech recognition, Voice user interfaces (STF 182)
- o Study on the multimodality of icons, symbols and pictograms (STF 183)
- o Design for All: Guidelines for ICT Products and Services (STF 184)
- o Key issues, solutions and actions for ICT multimodal interaction, communication and navigation (STF 204)

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

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“Informal” standards: W3C Guidelines

Example related to Design for All or Universal Design

- o World Wide Web consortium
- o Web Accessibility Initiative

Guidelines on web accessibility

- o Web content accessibility guidelines v.2.0 will soon be ready

Impact

- o Accepted as the primary reference point for web accessibility matters

but

- o 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

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Standardisation related projects

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.

COPRAS project

- ◊ An EU-IST project helping other projects make sure their standardisation needs are brought forward to the relevant standardisation bodies.

USEM project proposal (under negotiation)

- ◊ USEM stands for User Empowerment in Standardisation
- ◊ It is focussing on the training of people within user organisation so that they can interact with the standardisation bodies and play an important role (as a user) within the discussions

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EDeAN Standardisation SIG

eEurope programme for stimulation of IST use

- ◊ Action line: Creation of a network of major expert centres in Design for All → EDeAN
- ◊ Action line: Publication of Design for All standards for accessibility of information technology products, in particular to improve the employability and social inclusion of people with special needs → 2002 report on Standardisation

European Design for All network (EDeAN)


- ◊ Electronic information exchange set up by the D4ALLnet project (IST-2001-38833, Design for All Network of Excellence) with the creation of the HERMES collaborative web-based platform, developed by FORTH-ICS as an accessible web – based platform to enable virtual networking and cooperation as well as information and knowledge exchange between EDeAN network members
- ◊ Activity as discussions in Special Interest Groups (SIGs).
- ◊ SIG on Standardisation
 - ◊ Almost 200 members (from Europe, the USA, Australia and Hong Kong).
 - ◊ SIG Messages are now available for public reading
 - ◊ Virtual workshop planned in November 2005

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EDeAN

European Design for All
e-Accessibility Network



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Conclusions

- ▮ Focus on the very important changes that take place in the standardisation field
 - ∅ the informal work
 - ∅ more open discussions)
- ▮ Impact of the changes for improving the situation in the field of Design for All and Assistive Technology
- ▮ More activity needed in the EDeAN discussion forum on standardisation !

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