

Recommendation 2016 concerning standards on eAccessibility and eInclusion

(drafted at the IN LIFE Workshop “Strategic Standardization Issues Concerning eAccessibility & eInclusion” at the 15th International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special Needs – ICCHP 2016, in Linz, Austria, in July 2016)

Purpose:

Increasingly R&D projects and the software industry – especially for mobile technologies – consider the “Recommendation on software and content development principles 2010” whereby

“decision makers in public as well as private frameworks, software developers, the content industry and developers of pertinent standards /should be/ aware that multilinguality, multimodality, eInclusion and eAccessibility need to be considered from the outset in software and content development. These considerations are required in order to avoid the need for additional or remedial engineering or redesign at the time of adaptation, which tend to be very costly and often prove to be impossible.”

Since 2010, hundreds of standards about eAccessibility and eInclusion were developed or revised by technical committees in standards organisations at international, European, or national level – not to mention many industry standards developed by other standards developing organisations (SDO). In addition, there are possibly thousands of standards that have a bearing on persons with disabilities (PwD). In particular, ‘accessibility’ in a broad sense rarely occurs in the title or in the body of these standards.

“Recommendation 2016” addresses critical issues identified in recent conferences, initiatives and projects dealing with eAccessibility and eInclusion and related topics concerning the difficulties faced by system developers, their customers, health care providers and end-users when trying to find and apply pertinent standards.

The organizations endorsing Recommendation 2016 call upon stakeholders of eAccessibility and eInclusion, in particular standards developing organizations (SDOs) to:

- develop a more refined classification or keywording approach to identify content in standards with a bearing on eAccessibility and eInclusion
- register the potential relevance for eAccessibility & eInclusion of an emerging standard right from the beginning of a standardization activity
- cross-reference standards having a bearing on eAccessibility and eInclusion
- encourage the formulation and use of consistent vocabulary / terminology
- implement search functionalities that ease the use of standards
- facilitate the active involvement of PwD as end-users in standardizing activities among others by providing standards documents in an ‘accessible’ format

Implementing the above measures would enhance interoperability of eAccessibility&eInclusion related products and services and thus benefit users of standards and standardization at large.

Recommendation:

Standards development processes and monitoring in conjunction with standards about eAccessibility and eInclusion and related aspects, should allow the coordination of standardizing activities across technical committees and SDOs, leading to content coherence among standards about similar themes. This would help industry and other organizations to comply with standards’ requirements referring to corporate social responsibility and risk management, as well as with the latest legal regulations on accessibility in eProcurement and public websites.

Supportive measures may be worthwhile pursuing, to (a) promote certification schemes based on standards about eAccessibility and eInclusion, (b) encourage education and training activities regarding such standards, and (c) enhance the positive role that media (both institutional and social) and civil society can play here.

Endorsed by **AAATE**



Dr. Peter Cudd
President of AAATE
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The Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe wholeheartedly supports the "Recommendation 2016 concerning standards on eAccessibility and eInclusion". Its implementation will help to identify relevant standards on eAccessibility and eInclusion, and so avoid major breaches of the European Accessibility Act. A more comprehensive consideration of these standards in products and services will contribute to including persons with disabilities not just in the use of technology, but also from the life and work opportunities that eInclusion can deliver.

AAATE calls upon other organisations, institutions, networks, committees etc. being stakeholders in the matter addressed by Recommendation 2016 to join in this initiative and endorse the Recommendation.

Specific motivations for AAATE to endorse this recommendation

- Barrier-free design of ICTs is important in order to meet the needs of all users and to allow them to actively participate in the digital society.
- The effective use of standards regarding eAccessibility & eInclusion will further barrier-free design.
- Institutions and organizations as well as single experts in fields related to disability and technology have great difficulties to engage with standards and with standardization processes. An important reason for this is that access to information on pertinent standards (or parts thereof or paragraphs therein) is difficult.
- Standardization bodies do not have refined information tools that provide the information in a selective way. In order not to overload people with non-relevant information, structural and procedural measures need to be developed and access to information on standards need to be disclosed.
- The above requires further action and highlights the need to speed up with competence certification schemes in order to cope with the exponentially increasing need for qualified eAccessibility & eInclusion experts.
- AAATE can and wants to play an active role in promoting effective use of eAccessibility & eInclusion standards, **the recommendation will be presented at the 14th AAATE international conference in Sheffield on 12th September 2017** in the framework of the IN LIFE consortium activities.

If you wish to endorse the recommendation too send an email to *hoogerwerf at aaate dot net* using the following format for your email :

Subject: Endorsement of Recommendation 2016

Body text:

Name
Organization
Country
Website
Motivation (*optional*)

This list of endorsing organisations will be regularly updated on the website.