MORE ACCESSIBLE ICT IN EUROPE - USING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AS A DRIVER

ETSI’s response to European Commission Mandate 376 Phase 2

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The importance of public procurement

Public procurement is a very large part of the ICT market in most countries
  • 15% of UK ICT market in 2010 according to a UK Government estimate

Many governments have signed up to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
  • Governments that have signed will need to ensure that their own ICT is accessible

Public procurement is seen as a means to influence the wider market
The current state

- Japan has laws relating to public procurement
  - But the means to monitor and enforce are weak

- In Europe EU Directive 2004/18/EC says:
  - “Contracting authorities should, whenever possible, lay down technical specifications so as to take into account accessibility criteria for people with disabilities or design for all users”
  - In practice several European countries ask for accessibility but few have good ways to evaluate

- The US has legally enforceable ICT accessibility for public procurement
  - Section 508 of their Rehabilitation Act
The European way forward

The European Commission issued Mandate 376 to the CEN, CENELEC, ETSI standards bodies

The aim was:

• To achieve a robust European-wide approach to public procurement of accessible ICT
  • Many similarities to the US Section 508 approach
  • Standards harmonization with Section 508

Phase 2 (2011-2014) delivered:

• A European Standard (EN 301 549)
• Guidance material (technical reports)
• An on-line toolkit for public procurers
The US Section 508 talks about “standards”

Their “standards” are a mixture of:

- Policy/regulatory language (Subpart A)
- Functional accessibility requirements expressed in a way that Europe would recognize as “standards” (Subparts B to D)

People expected the standard to specify

- ICT that does not have to meet the standard
- Contexts in which the standard need not be applied

Only European regulation can make these policy statements

- Such European regulatory text is not yet written
Routes to achieving accessible ICT

Guidelines and standards (national and international)
- US. Section 508 Standards
- ISO 9241-171 (Software)
- WCAG 2.0 (Web)

Regulation (public procurement)
- Section 508 of the US. Rehabilitation Act

The missing link: European Procurement/Accessibility Acts that reference ...

New ICT accessibility requirements for any ICT – EN 301 549
THE NEW STANDARD EN 301 549 AND ITS DEVELOPMENT
ETSI contribution to M 376 Phase 2

The main ETSI deliverable is a European Standard EN 301 549
  - The standard is the focus of this presentation

Other deliverables
  - A report that gives background information about how EN 301 549 has been developed
  - A report that addresses how “Award Criteria” can be used in the procurement of accessible ICT
A European Commission co-funded Specialist Task Force (STF416) was formed to produce these deliverables.

The 12 person team included:

- Human factors/accessibility standards experts
- Experts from major ICT companies (voluntary effort)
- A European Disability Forum representative
The EN 301 549 standard

**Title:**
- “Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services in Europe”

**Providing a set of functional accessibility requirements applicable to public procurement of any ICT product or service**

**Ensuring that the requirements are testable**

**Providing tests that demonstrate requirements have been met**

**Acknowledging that there can be several ways to achieve accessible ICT**
- Meeting the accessibility needs of potential users is what is important
- Meeting the accessibility requirements in the standard is one way to show how those needs have been met

**Being a one-stop shop for accessibility requirements**
A first draft of the requirements tried to harmonise with an early proposed revision of Section 508 (ANPRM 2010)

In a second proposed revision of Section 508 (ANPRM 2011)
  - There was a proposal that WCAG 2.0 could be used as the requirements for documents and software as well as for the Web
  - Applying WCAG 2.0 to documents and software was said to be “straightforward”

STF416 eventually concluded that this was feasible (if not straightforward)!
Applying WCAG 2.0 to ICT

- STF416’s first attempt to apply WCAG 2.0 to documents and software was promising.
- There was global concern that there might be diverse interpretations about how to apply WCAG 2.0 to non-Web ICT.
- W3C set-up the WCAG2ICT Task Force to ensure that EN 301 549 and a revised Section 508 applied WCAG 2.0 consistently.
- STF416 were highly involved in this Task Force (providing a co-chair).
- EN 301 549 is consistent with the W3C Working Group Note produced by the Task Force.
It is software

- It has closed functionality
  - 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5
- It is platform software
  - 11.3.2.1, 11.3.2.2, 11.3.2.5 to 11.3.2.17
- It is assistive technology
  - 11.3.2.4
- It is an authoring tool
  - 11.6
- It provides access to emergency and relay services
  - 13

- It provides a user interface
  - 5.2 to 5.7, 12
  - 11.3.2.3, 11.3.2.5 to 11.3.2.17, 11.4, 11.5
  - 11.3.2.1, 11.3.2.2, 11.3.2.4

- It is non-web software
  - 11.2.1
  - 11.2.2

- It provides two-way voice communication
  - 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5
  - 11.3.2.3

- It also provides video communication
  - 6.5, 6.7

- It provides video playback
  - 7.1, 7.2, 7.3

- It is web software
  - 9

- It provides access to emergency and relay services
  - 13
Questions?

Thank you for your attention

Any questions?