Accessibility

University of Southampton, ECS, INFO2009 Academic Year 09-10

Abstract

10 million people in the UK have some form of disability. Disabilities, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, can be anything from actual physical disabilities to mental illnesses. Accessibility seeks to address some of the issues faced by these people. This is Accessibility, 'the ability to access', and is what we address in our resource set.

Luc Moreau's Tutor Group

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> Tutor Group
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Everyone in the team contributed fairly to the activities.

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Introduction

Some people are less able to carry out certain tasks than others, whether they have a disability, or are unable to understand the language in a document. Accessibility aims to rectify these issues by making adjustments for these people so that they can carry out their tasks more effectively. Such adjustments range from putting in disabled ramps to making documents available in a larger font.

The resource we have made aims to educate the reader on the kind of methods that are used to increase accessiblity and the legislation that is relevant to accessibility.

Background

Our interest in accessibility stems from when we studied accessibility in our Human Computer Interaction module. The Disability Discrimination Act was passed in 1995 - it promotes cival rights for disabled people and protects them from discrimination.

Accessibility is important as not only will a more accessible workplace increase productivity, but it is immoral to discriminate unfairly against someone.

Method

After being set the project, we had some initial discussions and decided to choose accessibility as our topic. The skill set in our group includes html, css and flash. Therefore, in addition to making a resource as a pdf, we agreed to create a website containing the information on the topic – which was to include a multiple choice quiz made in Adobe Flash. This combination allows a reader to learn from the website, test their knowledge with the quiz and get a handy resource (the pdf) to view offline or print.

Our initial research was done on Google, to make sure we fully understood the topic from the perspective of professional and legal issues. The core text book was also very useful, as it had a fair amount of information on accessibility and some particularly helpful bits on the legislation surrounding accessibility. We also used Webcat and the ACM Portal to search for relevant articles, which helped us get some more technical details.

Our target audience is a student – and we aimed to make the site as informative and useful for them as possible. We also hope that lecturers will teach with our resources or recommend them to their students.

Discussion

For ethical, legal and commercial reasons it is crucial to provide suitable access to services, learning resources and information. The importance of accessibility is of a high level as it gives equal opportunities in employment, learning and social life. Service providers, employers and educational institutions are obliged by the Disability Discrimination Act to provide appropriate environment.

Currently various adaptive technology products exist on the market - although the price sometimes is not affordable for ordinary people. Our group strongly believes that accessibility significantly reduces discomfort of disability.

Keywords

Access, accessibility, blind, computer science, DDA, deaf, dexterity, Disability Discrimination Act, disabled, ECS, hearing, INFO2009, language, legislation, speech, technology, visual, University of Southampton.

Conclusion

Accessibility is a major issue in society. Almost one fifth of the entire population of the UK are disabled, which is a significant amount of people. Because of this, it is neccessary to make arrangements so that these people can enjoy an efficient way of life. The aim of this project is to raise awareness of your rights and provide a suitable resource to educate the reader on the problems faced by disabled people on a day to day basis.

For more information:
• View our EdShare collection:
  > Link to the resource set website
    - **http://www.edshare.soton.ac.uk/4413/**
  > List of references
    - **http://www.edshare.soton.ac.uk/4412/**
  > This poster:
    - **http://www.edshare.soton.ac.uk/4434/**
• Or go straight to the resource set:
    - **http://users.ecs.soton.ac.uk/fal1g08/info2009**

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