

**Access to the Information Society for deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people
Brussels 25th February 2004.**

Access services in broadcasting: toward European standards

TV for All

Where are we now?

**presented by Pierre Heinrichs - CENELEC
based on the final report of Gerry Stallard**

Digital TV - the Background

- TV is essential to information, culture and entertainment
- Digital TV will be important driver in society
- But a recent report says - “Digital more difficult than Personal Computers”!
- Access to Digital TV a challenge to many - especially disabled people

TV for All Conference Seville June 13 -14 2002

- Organised by CEN, CENELEC, and ETSI
- Delegates: broadcasters, disabled people's representatives, manufacturers, policy makers, consumer groups etc
- A unique and successful conference with many ideas and suggestions
- Recognised many issues need facing

If DTV really is for All what are the issues?

- In some countries, little or no subtitling, audio description and signing
- On-screen messages - hard to read, no audio equivalent
- Remote controls difficult to use
- Complex symbols and terminology
- Navigation of menus confusing

Development of TV for All “Virtual Group”

- Needed to keep the impetus of the conference
- So - agreement to form a Virtual Group.
- Encourage new members to join
- Group to considered ways to open access to DTV, especially to sensory impaired people
- Roadmap placed on CENELEC website
- Interim Report issued in June 2003
- Final Report to EC January 2004

Recent Progress

- Virtual Group met in Barcelona 28 October 2003
- Representative groups, EBU and manufacturers gave their views recommendations
- Not all views were compatible!
- Final report completed in December 2003 taking into account views expressed

Final Report - main areas

- Assistive services (subtitling, signing & audio description)
- Receiver terminals
- Remote controls
- Electronic Programme Guides
- On-Screen Displays
- Interoperability
- Recording Equipment
- Retention of Recordings

Assistive Services

Production and transmission

- Subtitling – in digital and analogue forms, digital much improved
- Audio description – analogue transmission limited but digital has potential
- Signing – analogue has “on screen interference” problems but digital “closed” signing is just possible

Assistive Services

“Best Practices” needed

Some examples:

- Subtitling - Allow adequate reading time etc
- Signing - Wearing clothing of good contrast etc
- Audio Description - Provide key information etc.

Simplified Receiver Controls

- All control functions - switches, knobs, and dials clearly labelled and accessible
- External connections - easy to access
- External facilities (audio messages, Braille printers)

Receivers and Decoders

- Sufficient capacity for all media access services
- Must be capable of up-grading
- Simple installation and information
- Must be capable of supplying Assistive Services - Identification ticket at point of sale?

Remote Controls

- Shape and size – comfortable to use, not too small
- Minimum buttons on “face”
- Buttons clearly labelled, shaped and indication when pressed
- Single button for media access
- Some common codes between manufacturers

Electronic Programme Guides (EPG's) and Navigation

- Must be intuitive, simple and logical
- Menu structure simple and indexes to be unambiguous
- Assistive services easily identified – common symbols?
- Clear text and graphics

On Screen Displays

- All text within “safe viewing area”
- Text - sans serif typeface of the Tiresias form and 24-point minimum
- Good contrast on a TV screen
- Use of simple screen layouts

Interoperability

- Lack of generic standard
- Need to ensure multiple boxes not imposed by vertical broadcasting
- Conditional Access - should have an Open Standard

Recording Equipment

New Personal Recorders:

- Must be able to record and replay assistive services
- Easy to use
- Have Open Standards as proposed by TV Anytime

Retention of Recordings

- Many programmes already subtitled
- Yet re-subtitling continues and is costly!
- EBU or similar to hold list of subtitled programmes for exchange at a basic rate

Final Report

- Contains recommendations to be considered by EC, Manufacturers, Broadcasters and service providers
- Requests deliverables from manufacturers and broadcasters
- Passed to EC in January
- Recommends passing to National Regulatory Authorities for consideration and implementation

Can we expect:

- Legislative action by the European Commission?
- The introduction of technical standards?
- Action plans by broadcasters and manufacturers?

In ten years time?

- A single multi-media device that's truly multi modal?
- Wireless connections between devices such as Blue Tooth?
- “user chooser” displays with choice of subtitle size and speed?
- Voice driven commands?

Thank you

and apologies from Gerry Stallard for not being here!

**Any queries - contact him at
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