



Accessibility Toolkit



Section 1

Purpose of toolkit

Why this toolkit?

This toolkit offers simple and easy to read information about the needs of people with disabilities and how to accommodate these needs in different situations.

It is intended for ICT professionals, educators, healthcare providers, carers, students, policy makers and the general public.

The **ACCESSIBILITECH** project aims to improve and enhance e-inclusion and e-accessibility for people with disabilities and other groups with similar needs. This project is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, that aims to empower this population, so they can realise their rights.

To ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities it is important to keep accessibility in mind and to comply with current standards and laws.

Although there have been many advancements in accessibility in the past few years, many technological products that are not accessible are still reaching the market. This is partly due to the fact that there is still a lack of knowledge and misinformation about accessibility and needs of users.

The goal of this toolkit is to provide knowledge about the needs of users when interacting with technology and guidelines on the following:

- > Common accessibility mistakes
- > How to improve accessibility in digital documents
- > How to improve accessibility in videos
- > Organizing accessible events
- > Accessibility features in mobile devices

The toolkit also provides external resources that complement the information provided.



Section 6

Organizing accessible events

Tips to improve accessibility in events

1. Ask your audience about their needs

When organising an event, consider the possibility that there might be someone in the audience with a disability or some type of sensorial or cognitive difficulty.

To anticipate these needs, ask potential attendees on the registration form what accessibility features they need to get a better access to your event.

If your event is open to the general public and does not require a registration form, try to figure out some of these needs. For example, someone with hearing loss may benefit from closed captioning.

For in-person events, make sure the venue is in conformance with accessibility requirements for the built environment. All signage used during the event must also comply with accessibility standards.

For instance, if you are handing out information on paper, such as programme print outs, make sure to have an accessible alternative for those who cannot see. It can be a digital version in a website that can be accessed with a screen reader.

You can also ask presenters to describe aloud the visual elements of their presentations for attendees with visual difficulties.

2. Consider the accessibility needs of presenters

Presenters may be persons with disabilities. Ask them if they have accessibility needs. For example, some may need closed captioning to fully participate in the Q&A session or accessible videos or PPT presentations. This is important for both in-person and online events.

3. For online events, choose an accessible videoconferencing platform

If your event is online or hybrid, make sure to choose an accessible videoconferencing platform. There are several solutions available that offer different plans and prices and include several accessibility features, such as the following:

- > Captioning support (autogenerated, manual or third-party captioning)
- > Screen reader support
- > The possibility to allow users to set their cameras to block the view of specific participants such as the sign language interpreter
- > Downloadable transcriptions

Make sure to keep these solutions up to date.

4. Be aware of the accessibility gaps in videoconferencing

Some videoconferencing platforms and apps may have accessibility issues that must be taken in consideration, such as the following:

- › Recordings do not keep the camera configuration settings, so other options must be used to keep the sign language interpreter always in view. For example, recording the screen with a capture device.
- › Some platforms do not support multilanguage captioning.
- › The autogenerated captioning may fail to pick up conversations correctly
- › Shared documents may not be read by screen readers
- › Some platforms use icons and terms that may not be easily understood by some people.

5. The registration form and dissemination materials must be accessible

Registration form and all dissemination materials as well as channels used must be accessible, including websites and apps. Make sure to follow the WCAG 2.1 guidelines for accessible digital documentation.

Keep the registration form simple. Avoid asking for unnecessary information, such as the phone number. People with hearing loss may not be comfortable providing their phone number.

Use communication channels that support accessibility and set up an email address to resolve accessibility queries from the attendees and presenters.

6. Instruct presenters to make their interventions accessible

Provide instructions to your presenters on how to make their interventions more accessible. Below are examples of instructions that you could provide your presenters with:

- › Do not to speak too fast or too slow. Someone in the audience may be reading the captioning or your lips to understand you better. If you speak too fast, the captioning software may not pick up the speech correctly. Speaking too slowly makes it harder for people who read lips to understand you.
- › Keep your speech as short as possible. Long speeches can be exhausting for people reading captioning or lips. It can also affect their attention span.
- › Describe images and read aloud any text you may show on the screen during your intervention. Avoid using abstract language such as “as you may see here”. Explain or summarize graphic and tables for people who cannot see the screen.
- › Turn on your camera and make sure you are well lit. This helps people who rely on lip reading.
- › Avoid using complex language or technical jargon. If it they’re relevant to your presentation, try to explain them in a simple manner. This will help people with cognitive disabilities or that are not familiar with those terms.
- › Do not use only images in presentations. Adding a brief written summary of the topics discussed helps people with hearing disability follow your speech.
- › Make presentations and other materials accessible and send them to the audience in advance. For example, the images and the text of your presentation must have sufficient colour contrast and the size of the text should be 22 pts or larger.
- › Make sure your videos have captioning and audio description. If it is not possible for you to add them, describe the content of the video before playing it for people who may not be able to hear it or see it.
- › Reduce or eliminate all background noise.
- › Avoid using flashing elements in your presentation.
- › Allow one person to speak at a time. Overlapping conversations affect the captioning and can be distracting and confusing for people with hearing or cognitive disabilities.

7. Additional accessibility services

Allocate budget to outsource some accessibility services for your event such as sign language interpreters. It is recommended to do this even if your event is online.

Consider outsourcing professional captioners for some events. Although automatic captioning works, some people find it troublesome as it doesn't always pick up the speech correctly.

If you plan on showing videos as a part of the event, consider hiring someone to audio describe the visual content in the videos.

8. Issues to consider

If your event is online, be aware that technical issues such as connection failures due to power or internet outages happen sometimes, and little can be done about it. However, there are other problems that can be prevented or at least minimised such as issues with the microphones, camera, lighting or ambient noise.

These situations can be controlled by organising a technical rehearsal at least half hour before the event begins. These rehearsals can also be useful to test some accessibility features and make sure they work as expected.

Muting the microphones and shutting off the camera of anyone that is not presenting reduce unwanted noises and general distractions.

Be prepared for unforeseen situations such as having an attendee with an accessibility need you didn't think of.

9. The event's recording must also be accessible

If you are planning on recording an online event and make it available for further viewing, you must guarantee it is accessible.

Make sure the sign language interpretation offered during the event is clearly shown on the video. If the captioning is not recorded, add it to the video. There are several tools, services and apps available that provide automatic captioning to videos such as YouTube.

Best practices in accessible events

AccessJobs

AccessJobs is an accessible videoconferencing tool developed by Fundación ONCE, based on Artificial Intelligence and other disruptive technologies. It offers virtual meetings in a customized and automated way according to users' needs. It includes the following features:

- › **Automatic captioning with speaker identification:**
AccessJobs uses natural language processing technologies to convert audio stream to text. These transcriptions are afterwards improved using segmentation algorithms and punctuation. It also generates summaries that are converted into automatic meeting minutes.
- › **Accessible shared content:**
AccessJobs makes shared content accessible to screen readers by providing automatic descriptions of images, graphics and texts shown onscreen.
- › **Text simplification:**
AccessJobs transform the text generated by the captioning system and extracted from shared content into simple language for people with comprehension issues.

Resources

[Making events accessible: Checklist for meetings, conferences, training, and presentations that are remote/virtual, in-person, or hybrid](#)

[Holding inclusive events: A guide to accessible event planning](#)

[ZOOM accessibility features](#)

[Microsoft Teams accessibility features](#)

[Google Meet accessibility features](#)



Funded by European Union

This project has received funding from the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020).

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.