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Project Ref: 2015-1-ES01-KA203-015734

ACT MULTIPLIER EVENT E4

WORKSHOP 3

Belfast, 17.05.2018

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1. Summary of the event

ACT Multiplier Event E4 (“Workshop 3”) was held at The Lab, The MAC Belfast, 10 Exchange Street West, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 2NJ on 17 May 2018 from 12.00 to 16.00, and was organised by the QUB ACT team. The workshop was disseminated via the Project website (http://pagines.uab.cat/act/sites/pagines.uab.cat/act/files/info_on_workshop_e4_for_act_website_qub.pdf). Also, emails and Eventbrite invitations were sent to 50 relevant stakeholders locally, 3 stakeholders were contacted by telephone, and the event was publicised via social media (Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/act.belfast.3> and Twitter @ActBelfast).

The title of the workshop was: *Including all audiences: a workshop on arts accessibility training*. There were 25 attendees, who were representative of the relevant stakeholders in the ACT project’s activities since they included representatives from local and national arts and disability organisations (such as the RNIB, the University of Atypical Arts & Disability Forum, Open Arts), accessibility managers from local arts venues (such as The Grand Opera House Belfast, Black Box, Down Arts Centre), access facility users (Deaf sign language users, wheelchair users, patrons who are blind, patrons with a learning disability) and providers (theatre captioners, audio describers, sign language interpreters), and accessibility researchers.

The aim of the workshop was to present and gather feedback on the ACT project, the training in arts accessibility management developed by the project as part of IO4, and the course materials created by the QUB ACT team, on the implementation of arts accessibility facilities at arts events. Feedback was gathered using a questionnaire (see Appendix) developed by the University of Antwerp, the leading partner of IO4, and via focus group discussions held at several points during the workshop.

This report presents the various stages of this Multiplier Event and the feedback provided by participants via questionnaire and focus group discussion.

2. Multiplier Event activities

The workshop agenda was as follows:

- 12.00-12.15: Welcome and registration (with tea, coffee & shortbread)



- 12.15-12.30: Presentation of the ACT project (Sarah Devlin)



- 12.15-12.45: Presentation of the ACT MOOC on arts accessibility (Sarah McDonagh)



- 12.45-13.00: Questions and discussion



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- 13.00-13.45: Lunch
- 13.45-14.20: Presentation of training videos produced by the QUB ACT team (Sarah McDonagh)



- 14.20-14.35: Questions and discussion



- 14.35-15.00: Presentation of interviews with arts managers and access facility providers (Sarah Devlin)



- 15.00-15.15: Questions and discussion



- 15.15-16.00: Filling in questionnaire and discussion (with tea, coffee and scones)





3. Participants

Information about the participants was gathered via questionnaire and informed consent to participate in the questionnaire and focus group discussion and permission to take photographs and audio recordings were also obtained from all participants (see Appendix for questionnaire and Informed Participant Release Form).

A total of 13 participants completed the questionnaire. 9 were female and 4 were male, and their ages ranged between 27 and 75 years (mean=47.1). 12 participants stated that their native language was English and 2 indicated British sign language (BSL) as a native language. The countries of origin of the participants were stated as Northern Ireland (7 participants), Ireland (1 participant), the UK (1 participant), Scotland (1 participant), England (1 participant), South Africa (1 participant) and the Falkland Islands (1 participant). The participants' countries of residence were stated as Northern Ireland (11 participants), Ireland (1 participant) and the UK (1 participant).

6 participants reported having completed secondary education, 5 participants indicated that they had completed a Master's Degree, and 2 participants had completed a Bachelor's Degree. 6 participants work for local arts venues, centres or associations, either specifically for people with disabilities or aimed at all audiences. 3 participants are access facility providers (theatre captioners and a sign language interpreter) and 2 participants work or are involved with a national association for people with sight loss. 2 participants indicated that they are unemployed, 1 participant is an accessibility researcher, and 1 participant is retired. The profiles of the participants working in the arts, for user associations or in accessibility research were as follows:

- Theatre captioner working for a local charity that promotes theatre, and also provides arts and crafts engagement activities for people with mental health issues.
- Artistic director, writer, theatre captioner, set/lighting designer and fight director.
- Doctoral researcher at a local university designing bespoke accessible musical instruments for people with disabilities.
- Community access worker/activity leader for a national association for people with sight loss, who helps people with sight loss to access social activities and runs confidence building courses.
- Arts officer working with people who are deaf or deafblind and people who are interested in learning BSL or ISL (Irish sign language).
- Arts officer at a local council-run arts centre.
- Musical director of a local disabled-led arts and disability organisation.
- Director of a local arts venue that hosts regular social events with dance and music for and by people with learning disabilities.

4. Questionnaire: results

In terms of the overall structure of the MOOC, it was rated by participants on a 7-point Likert scale, which ranged from “extremely satisfied” to “extremely dissatisfied” (see Appendix). Overall, the responses were very positive, with almost half of the participants (6) indicating that they were “extremely satisfied”, 4 were “moderately satisfied”, 2 were slightly satisfied, and 1 did not provide a response. In terms of the comments provided by participants in relation to the overall structure of the MOOC, one participant felt that it was very well organised and glad that such a course had been made, and another commented that it looked very do-able for their arts venue staff in terms of the time needed to complete the course within working hours. However, there were several suggestions for improving the MOOC. One participant thought that it should be longer, one stated that there were some inconsistencies between the voice overs and the text on the slides, and one thought that work was needed to make it more visually appealing.

Notably, three participants commented that the MOOC needed to be made more accessible, with one suggesting that in-vision sign language interpreters be included in the videos and that signed versions of the test materials be provided, and another commenting that it would be good practice to have the videos audio described. Moreover, while the majority (62%) thought that the overall structure of the MOOC was relevant and that it covers the most important accessibility topics, a sizeable minority (38%) thought it was only “more or less” so, and several indicated that better accessibility was needed.

The participants’ comments regarding the accessibility of the course were acknowledged and it was explained that while the online platform provided by Coursera has some accessibility features, others are unfortunately lacking. Coursera allows users to view videos with subtitles and to download transcripts of the audios and the subtitles. Each video also has an interactive transcript below it, where each phrase is highlighted as the instructor says it. The playback rate of the videos can be slowed down, and most pages and features on Coursera are compatible with screen readers. However, it does not allow for audio descriptions to be added to videos. It was explained that as a result, instructors attempted to integrate descriptions into the videos to some extent, by for example describing their appearance when introducing themselves.



In terms of the participants' ratings of specific aspects of the unit presented in the workshop (Unit 3b), the results are presented in the table below:

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Unit structure	0%	8%	46%	46%
Length of the videos	0%	16%	38%	46%
Video content: relevant, clear, informative	0%	8%	69%	23%
Voice, delivery, speed	0%	23%	46%	31%
Subtitles	0%	8%	46%	23%
Additional learning materials (reading, references, etc)	0%	23%	54%	8%
Evaluation (tests)	8%	8%	62%	0%

When the total percentage for an aspect of the unit does not add up to 100%, it means that not all participants provided a response for that aspect. In relation to the responses relating to the subtitles, three participants did not respond due to visual impairment. As for the additional learning materials and evaluation, some participants felt that not enough information had been provided for them to evaluate these. Moreover, some participants commented that the videos and reading materials were too short.

8 of the 13 participants responded that they would like to take the MOOC when it is available, and gave the following reasons:

- *I want to work for accessibility for all in the Arts.*
- *I've been involved, I believe in promoting accessibility and it's the best way to keep it collaborative and responsive.*
- *I am responsible for programming live performances in an arts centre and want to ensure that there's inclusivity for all members of my audience. I would like to be active rather than reactive in addressing audience accessibility issues.*
- *I run a venue and I would be keen to test it and roll out across all staff.*
- *I would like to raise my awareness of accessibility and related issues.*
- *It would be a recognised qualification.*
- *To extend my knowledge of accessible services.*

2 participants would possibly like to take the MOOC if they had more information about the course or if time constraints did not prevent them, 2 participants would not like to take the MOOC, as one felt too involved in the MOOC already and another commented that they were retired, but did like to go to the theatre. 1 participant did not respond to this question.

When participants were asked if they would prefer to take parts of the MOOC only, only 1 participant interested in taking the MOOC wanted to choose some units only. The only unit they were not interested in taking was Unit 5 – Management.

When participants were asked if they would recommend the course to potential participants, 62% replied “yes” and 38% responded “maybe”. A last question asked for general feedback, and the responses were as follows:

- *Once you have the finalised beta model, please let all participants and relevant parties have the opportunity to comment/add further feedback.*
- *Before this course is launched – this needs to be evaluated by a panel of disabled people.*
- *A disabled member of staff might struggle to access this course as it stands at the minute. Excellent resource but still needs some work before launching.*
- *I expect you’ve looked into this already but I wonder if Coursera has any native accessibility features you could take advantage of, for example screen reader support.*
- *Great idea and really good initial presentations / course materials – with some of the tweaks discussed and ongoing development this looks like it has the potential to really develop into an excellent and effective CPD/continuing education course.*

5. Focus group discussions: results

As is outlined above in section 2, three 15 minute focus group discussions were held throughout the afternoon, and the observations are presented in the following paragraphs.

Several participants commented very positively on the fact that the MOOC has been made, remarking that it has been very much needed in Northern Ireland and the UK for a long time. A participant also commented positively on the focus on the needs of patrons with sight and hearing loss in the course as people with varying sensory abilities and disabilities are often overlooked and there is a need to redress this imbalance. Some participants also commented that they had found the workshop and the MOOC materials very informative, one remarked that the MOOC would be relevant to a lot of different people, and arts venue/centre managers commented that it would be beneficial to them and their staff to learn about how to make their venues/centres more accessible and inclusive.



However, several participants made the point that the MOOC is not yet fully accessible and made suggestions as to how to improve the accessibility of the course. One participant suggested that native signers may struggle to fully understand all of the subtitles, transcript and written materials in the course, and therefore it would be a good idea to include sign language interpreters to the videos and give learners the option to create signed versions of their assessment materials. Other participants recommended that the videos be audio described and that the MOOC be tested with people who use screen readers to make the course more accessible to learners with visual impairments, and that visually impaired learners should have the option to present their assessment materials in audio form. One participant noted that the printed materials are hard to read for people with dyslexia. Another commented positively on the fact that the videos are subtitled, but remarked that at times there was too much variation between the words in the audio, on the slides and on the captions, which could be confusing for learners.

Moreover, participants made suggestions for how the MOOC could be made even more inclusive for wider audiences. One commented positively on the inclusion of tutorials on touch tours in the MOOC, but remarked that touch tours are also beneficial for patrons who are deafblind, who are often overlooked. They also recommended the inclusion of translations for deafblind patrons and commented that this is an area that needs to be looked at and addressed. Another participant commented that relaxed performances can be beneficial for patrons with vertigo who are sensitive to loud noises and flashing lights, or that patrons with vertigo can benefit from being made aware in advance of the points during a performance at which there will be loud noises or flashing lights, even by providing them with a marked script. Other participants remarked that the course could also cover patrons with disabilities taking a more active role in arts events, such as music or woodworking workshops.

Nevertheless, the participants welcomed the MOOC as a positive first step and the opportunity in the workshop to share views. There was also more general discussion of access to the arts, and the following observations were made:

- It is beneficial to bring experts from each disability group together in the same conversations to connect with each other and take on board each others' opinions.
- The potential impact of Brexit on funding for research projects and on accessibility legislation is concerning.
- One important issue is that accessibility is usually added on at the end as an afterthought and should be integrated into the design of arts events from the beginning.
- People born with disabilities face different barriers to people who experience sight or hearing loss as they get older. For example, people who are born deaf are more likely to grow up using sign language,

whereas people who experience hearing loss at an older age find it difficult to learn sign language at that stage of life and as a result their quality of life can suffer. Therefore promoting learning sign languages is crucial.

- Communication/promoting accessible events and reaching out to audiences with disabilities is crucial and needs to be better addressed. It is important to change attitudes towards audiences with disabilities, as there is still a tendency to see audiences with varying abilities as a social group to be pitied, and a lack of awareness of why for example a deaf person may want to go to a musical.
- Budget cuts are a concern, with the costs of holding accessible events. Thus, arts venues should reach out to audiences and promote events using as many channels as possible, and social media is particularly useful in this regard. Close communication between arts venues, arts and disability groups and user associations is also very useful for promoting events.
- Arts venues should be aware that some people are very reluctant to declare that they have a disability and need to use access facilities, and they may not realise that many people in the audience are likely to benefit from captioning, for example, not just patrons who have declared to the box office that they use captions. Moreover, one participant commented that before the workshop they did not appreciate how much work goes into theatre captioning, and commented that captions are so important to them for attending live events, as they can enjoy live performances with everyone else and would not get out of the house as much without the availability of captioned performances.

6. Conclusions

The aims of the workshop, which were to bring together relevant stakeholders in arts accessibility locally to present and gather feedback on the training in arts accessibility management developed by the project, and the course materials created by the QUB ACT team, were fulfilled. The participants' evaluation of the training was largely positive and they provided very useful feedback for how the course materials could be improved, most notably in terms of improving the accessibility of the course, as discussed in sections 4 and 5. Overall, the participants welcomed the development of training for arts accessibility management and stressed the need for this kind of training, which highlights the relevance and impact of the training materials created as part of Intellectual Output 4 of the ACT Project.



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Appendix: Workshop Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is part of the ACT Erasmus+ project on Accessible Culture and Training.

The project ACT proposes the definition of a new professional profile, that of the "Media Accessibility Expert/Manager for the Scenic Arts", and also the various types of training activities associated to this professional.

The project focuses on promoting equal opportunities and accessibility to cultural events (scenic arts) across countries and languages searching to establish and qualify the profile of accessibility expert to empower all citizens and especially people with disabilities.

Please note that there are no personal risks involved in filling in this questionnaire. All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and we guarantee your anonymity. Of course, you are free to discontinue your participation at any time. However, your responses are of great value to this project. That is why we would like to thank you for your time and contribution. If you have any questions or concerns or if you want to know more about the project, please feel free to contact Sharon Black (sharon.black@qub.ac.uk).

Thank you very much in advance for your participation.

Best wishes,

Sharon Black, Sarah McDonagh, Xi Wang and Sarah Devlin,
Members of the Queen's University Belfast team of the ACT project.

Informed Participant Release Form

I agree to take part in this survey in connection with research being conducted by the Queen's University Belfast team of the ACT project. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that **anonymised** data from the questionnaire and discussions today may be used in ACT presentations or research papers and that my name and/or other personal information **will not be used** in the publication and presentation of any findings. I understand that my information and data will be held securely and in confidence, and treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

I can confirm that I have been informed about the purpose of the questionnaire, the aims of the ACT project, and that I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the project and/or the questionnaire.

I give permission to be photographed and for audio recordings to be taken of my participation in the discussions today, and I understand that these may be used in ACT presentations or research papers.

SignedDate

PRINT NAME.....



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Demographics

1. How old are you? e.g. 35

2. What is your gender?

Male

Female

I prefer not to state

Other

3. What is your native language?

4. What is your country of origin?

5. What is your country of residence?

6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Secondary education
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Other _____

7. Where do you work? E.g. education institution, theatre, opera house, museum, etc.
Please specify.

8. Please describe your current job or function.



Workshop feedback

1. How would you rate the following aspects of the workshop day as a whole?

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Registration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall programme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Venue (facilities for participating)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Venue for coffees, lunch, reception	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technical support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Catering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Networking possibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. How satisfied are you with the overall structure of the MOOC?

- Extremely satisfied
- Moderately satisfied
- Slightly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Slightly dissatisfied
- Moderately dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

3. Please feel free to comment on the previous question.



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4. Do you think the overall structure of the MOOC is relevant and covers the most important accessibility topics?

- Yes
- More or less
- No

5. If you have answered "more or less" or "no" on the previous question, please explain why. If you think some topics are missing, please tell us.

6. How would you rate the following aspects of the unit itself?

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Structure of the unit presented in the workshop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Length of the videos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content of the videos: relevant, clear, informative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Voice, delivery speed and background of the videos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Subtitles of the videos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional learning material (reading, references, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evaluation (tests)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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7. Would you like to take the MOOC when it is ready?

No, because _____

Yes, because _____

8. Would you prefer to take parts of the MOOC only? If yes, which one(s)?

Unit 0 - Introduction

Unit 1 - Inclusion

Unit 2 - Venue accessibility

Unit 3a - Access services concepts

Unit 3b - Access services implementation

Unit 4 - Communication and dissemination

Unit 5 - Management

9. Would you recommend the course to potential participants?

- No
- Maybe
- Yes

10. Please feel free to comment on any aspect of the course. Your feedback is valuable.

11. Thank you very much for your participation. If you want to be kept posted about the results of the project, please fill in your mail address here. Thanks again!
