Expert Community

Atos Breakout session
12 09 2019 – 10.00

Building Accessibility into The Digital Workplace

Jim Smith

Trusted partner for your **Digital Journey**

Atos

Building Accessibility into The Digital Workplace

Expert Community

- With the advent of legislation such as the European Accessibility Act and the strengthening of the Americans with Disabilities Act, providing accessible products and services has moved from the category of "nice to have" to "must have" in Request for Proposals from State and semi-State organisations. This is also true for many large private organisations. Understanding how Accessibility should be integrated into the Digital Workplace is essential to the design and management of an effective Digital Workplace and in ensuring that legal obligations are met.
- In traditional workplaces Accessibility is seen primarily as part of Testing and Compliance and, as a result of this view, considered a burden and poorly implemented. In a modern Digital Workplace Accessibility should form an integral part of all aspects of the Digital Workplace improving the work environment for all. The key areas where Accessibility forms part of the Digital Workplace considered in this paper are:
- Supporting users in the Digital Workplace
- Ensuring that the core components of the Digital Workplace are accessible
- Creating accessible bespoke applications and services
- Providing testing and remediation for legacy products and services
- Accessibility being a key consideration within the Procurement process
- Proactive testing and product roadmaps
- Monitoring and improving the Accessibility of the Digital Workplace through Maturity Modelling

Atos

Building Accessibility into The Digital Workplace

Expert Community

- Users should be supported by ensuring that the Accessibility components inherent in the operating system and core application software are enabled and that the users are aware of them and trained in their use. Where the inherent components do not provide sufficient support, third party Assistive Technology tools should be provided *via* a managed catalogue and support for these Assistive Technology tools be part of the general support services of the Digital Workplace.
- The core components of the Digital Workplace, such as the application software and the internal management and communication tooling, should be Accessible and will require monitoring and testing in line with the update cycles of the components. As the inability to fully use internal tooling typically has a significant impact on a user's career progression, ensuring these components are accessible will likely be a legal requirement under various discrimination legislation.
- All new applications and services should be "Accessible by Design". In order to achieve this Accessibility must be a key requirement of any application or service and be included in the requirements gathering and design stages as well as in the more traditional build and testing stages of development. Accessible products and services are typically more efficient or easier to use, therefore everyone benefits from the Accessible by Design approach.
- Often legacy products and services are to a lesser and greater degree inaccessible. Where it is not possible to fix defects workarounds, either to processes or to the products themselves must be provided and manged. Where the workaround relates to a product, solutions based on scripting for Assistive Technologies may have to be implemented and supported.
- Ensuring that accessibility is a key consideration or even a requirement in procuring products and services for the Digital Workplace will greatly aid in creating an accessible Digital Workplace. However, each new product or service should be tested and reviewed in addition to the claims of the manufacturer or supplier before they are added to product or service catalogues.

Atos

Building Accessibility into The Digital Workplace

Expert Community

- Assistive Technologies interact in a complex manner with the operating system and other application software. This, combined with the more rapid update cycles associated with operating systems and application software, results in a greater likelihood of changes to the operating system or application software causing the Assistive Technologies to fail to function as expected. To mitigate the impact of these failures on users who rely on the Assistive Technology, it is essential that updates within the Digital Workplace environment are managed at a slower pace than the updates are released by the manufacturers. This will allow for proactive testing to take place and allow the third-party manufacturers time to correct any issues before users in the Digital Workplace are exposed to these issues. It may, however, not be possible to resolve these issues so a mechanism to delay updates to selected users must be in place. This proactive testing must be combined with detailed asset roadmaps and knowledge scanning to be effective.
- In order to manage the accessibility of the Digital Workplace effectively an Accessibility Maturity Modelling exercise should be implemented and maintained throughout the organisation and the Digital Workplace. This modelling will allow continuous improvement of the accessibility of the Digital Workplace and should be ongoing. It will provide a snapshot of the "Accessibility Health "of the Digital Workplace and indicate areas requiring attention.
- Although Accessibility has become a requirement, it is often implemented poorly or not at all. Atos has considerable experience and expertise in "Enterprise Accessibility"; by embracing Accessibility and building it into our Digital Workplace offerings Atos has an opportunity not only to create better Digital Workplaces, but also to differentiate ourselves from the competition and offer Accessibility as a Service to our customers.

Atos

Building Accessibility into The Digital Workplace

Expert Community

Presenter:

Jim Smith

N Digital Workplace
Senior Expert

Atos