Accessibility of SBS's Inclusion Program

How TTC is supporting the Special Broadcasting Service in Australia

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As we discussed at our World Usability Day webinar, factoring in digital accessibility and usability from the beginning of any project ensures people with disability, and everyone, have a more inclusive experience. People with disability will be able to perform the task they intended to undertake, easily. Digital accessibility and usability are about people and the experience a person has when interacting with your website, intranet, system or application. A person's day will be impacted by the decisions you have made to factor in accessibility and create an accessible system or site, or whether you decided to de-scope accessibility.

We are expected to do everything online these days; communicate, shop, take educational courses, apply for jobs and find important information online from government websites, such as what to do in an emergency. Our level of participation in any of these activities can increase or decrease depending on the accessibility and usability of our digital world. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) provide the global digital accessibility standard against which we can measure our accessibility, however we also need to undertake user experience testing to understand if the digital environments we create are user friendly. Good practice is to undertake user testing by people with disability using their assistive technologies to understand their user journey and how a person interacts with that environment.

TTC recently supported the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) to understand the user experience for their flagship Inclusion Program. 'SBS is Australia's most diverse broadcaster, they hold a unique place in the Australian media landscape, inspiring all Australians to explore, respect and celebrate our diverse world and in doing so, contribute to an inclusive and cohesive society.' Over the years, SBS has placed focus on access and inclusion both internally (within the workplace) and externally (for their consumers and customers). They have a formal Inclusion Strategy supported by a number of Employee Advisory Groups including 'SBS Access' – whose aim is to make SBS a better place to work for people with a lived experience of disability and carers.

SBS understands the importance of digital accessibility and in factoring in user testing to ensure an accessible and inclusive digital product for their customers. SBS has created the SBS Inclusion Program (an eLearning program) to enable organisations to build the knowledge and skills of their workforces in relation to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. 'Imagine an organisation which is truly inclusive of all types of diversity in its own teams and in the communities and customers it serves. Imagine what they must have learned and what skills they have developed to get there. Then build a program to help deliver that knowledge and those skills to a large portion of the workforce. That is the SBS Inclusion Program.'

The SBS Inclusion Program is a large and growing library of high-quality short films which tell real stories, make complex information accessible to all and provide practical things people can do on a day-to-day basis. This is complemented by a significant body of practical resources designed to help people understand and embrace inclusion and diversity. SBS wants to ensure that this program is accessible to everyone, including learners with disability.

The user testing by people with disability using their assistive technologies was undertaken on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eLearning course. It was important to focus on the key user journeys a learner would undertake to successfully complete the course. This means that the user testers with disability navigated the online learning platform and the SCORM file versions of the eLearn to provide feedback about their experience and identify any challenges or points that could limit a person's ability to participate using different versions of the eLearn.

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User journeys are a robust way to test a site and provide feedback because they are dynamic and the user tester with disability interacts with the site in their way, using their assistive technologies. It means that you have tested how a person interacts with your site, and not solely focussed on static pages. Through the targeted user journeys and the feedback captured, repeated patterns and principles were identified. The findings could then be applied across the entire SBS Inclusion Program (including courses focussing on core inclusion skills, gender, age culture and disability), as they were all designed and developed in the same way.

SBS's learning production team already had skills and knowledge in relation to digital accessibility. They also understood the importance of including people with disability in the testing of their eLearn, and that this testing could highlight issues not already discovered through their own designing, development and testing phases. Once the feedback report was received, the learning production team quickly mobilised to update the accessibility and usability of the course prior to the de-brief, already having a stream-lined process in place to address any accessibility issues. Most fixes were made quickly and were easy to fix, which meant SBS realised some quick wins from this exercise.

Overall, the results of the user testing enabled SBS to identify a better way of working to ensure they create and publish more accessible and inclusive training courses online in the future. Peter Locke, Business Manager and Producer at SBS shared a broader, wider-reaching outcome of undertaking the testing; 'the user testing helped us to select an alternate, more accessible way to publish our courses.' This means that any future content will be even more accessible!

You can re-visit our TTC Global World Usability Day webinar about accessibility and usability, including learning from our partner UsableNet by visiting our video repository at https://ttcglobal.com/what-we-do/technology-solutions/accessibility-testing

About the Author

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