Minutes of the e-Accessibility Forum: 12 January 2017

Present

Helen Petrie (Chair)
Linda Brosnan (Secretary)
Richard Walker
James Browne
Mike Dunn
Dan Wiggle
Alex Wray

16-17/7  Apologies

Apologies were received from Jo Fletcher and Kate Stephenson

16-17/8  Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2016 were approved for publication on the web.

16-17/9  Matters arising

a. Membership of the Forum

The Chair reported that agreement had been received from the Deans, about inviting a representative from each faculty, to join the Forum. During discussions, it was suggested extending the invitation to two members of staff in each faculty and one of these being a departmental disability officer.

It was agreed that the Chair would follow up with the Deans.

Action - Chair

b. Accessibility of the University webpages

The Chair reported that the audit of the main pages on the University website is still in progress.

Action – Chair

c. Accessibility of the VLE

The Chair reported that negotiations are still being formalised with the supplier of the VLE, to undertake accessibility testing on the new version of the software.

Action - Chair
d. Revision of the e-Accessibility leaflet

It was noted that a number of revisions to the leaflet had been suggested by members of the Forum. The Secretary was asked to send a reminder and request final comments/revisions by Monday 23 January. Copies of the new leaflet would then be circulated to departments.

**Action - Secretary**

16-17/10 Feedback from the Disability and Accessibility Group

a. 2016-17 Objectives

The Chair had been asked to propose an objective, about ways to promote the work of the Forum and e-Accessibility more widely across the University.

During discussions, it was agreed that the Chair would circulate a draft objective to the members of the Forum for comment.

**Action - All**

b. Accessible tools and resources

- A one year pilot for access to the Sensus Access website ([www.sensusaccess.com](http://www.sensusaccess.com)) had been agreed. This provides a self-service solution that automates the conversion of documents into a range of alternative formats. It can also be used to convert, otherwise inaccessible documents, such as image-only PDF files or scanned images into more accessible formats.

- A meeting took place in December to look at the provision of accessible tools and resources at the University and included representatives from; Information Services (Library and IT), Disability Services, Equality and Diversity Office, E-Learning Development Team, Chair of the e-Accessibility Forum and the GSA.

The number of key areas were identified at the meeting for further action and development. These included; a need for a best practice policy and guidelines, training for staff and students, raising awareness in relation to disability, a mechanism to review current and new assistive software and improved communications process.

During discussions, the following points were made:

- The E-Learning Development Team had produced training materials including the [TEL Handbook](index.html) and an online tutorial on ‘Creating Accessible Learning Resources’.

- Disability Services had been asked to look at departments who currently provide exemplars of good practice.

- A postgraduate researcher in the Department of Computer Science had been tasked with creating a webpage that would list new accessible software and reviews/comments on these products.
The Chair would present recommendations to progress this work to the next meeting of the Disability and Accessibility Group.

**Action - Chair**

**16-17/11 Update from the E-Learning Development Team**

**a. VLE**
- The suppliers of the VLE ran a webinar on inclusive design.
- There are plans for a third party plug-in to the VLE (referred to as Blackboard ALLY), that has the facility to check documents uploaded to the system and convert them into more accessible formats. There is also an option to run an institutional report to assess inclusivity of learning materials.

During discussions, concerns were raised:
- That the addition of this software would give the wrong message. Instead, we should be promoting the need to create accessible documents before they are uploaded to the VLE.
- About the effectiveness of this software to convert document to accessible formats
- The E-Learning Development Team will seek to secure a trial version of this software and run tests on it.

**b. Updated TEL handbook**
The handbook now includes guidance on inclusive practice in section 1.1.

**c. Lecture capture**
- The Panopto system now has the facility to add automatic subtitling to recording but the accuracy is limited when technical language is used and presenters have strong accents.

During discussion, the Digital Marketing Team reported that they had found that adding a transcript to a YouTube video from scratch, was less time consuming than amending the automatic captions.

**d. Online submission of student work**
An issue had occurred with stickers not appearing on work submitted by disabled students. It had been report to SCA but appeared to be linked to departmental processes.

It was explained that the current process starts when a department, who then notify the Examinations Office about special arrangements. This information is then submitted to SCA for approval before any student records can be updated.
During discussion, Disability Services suggested that a reminder to departments about the special arrangements process could be added to student support plans.

**Action – Disability Services**

16-17/12 Review of Assistive Technologies

There was no update available for the meeting.

16-17/13 Any other business

a. Online campus map

Concerns were raised about the accuracy of the map when searching for room locations. It was explained, that at the moment, a search for a location on campus would drop the pin the centre of the building and not on an individual room. This is due to the fact that, currently the map does not include GPS coordinates for all rooms on campus. It is hoped that this will be possible in future.

During discussions, the following points were made:

- Any issues with the map should be reported via the feedback form.
- A search for a specific room code will provide directions, similar to the information issued on timetables.
- Adding a direction search would also be useful.

LB/January 2017