e-Accessibility Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 20 September 2013 at 14:00 in D/N/104

Present
Tom Stoneham (Chair)
Amanda Bacon
Linda Brosnan (Secretary)
Steve Campbell
Peter Halls
Alex Macfarlane
David Swallow
Thomas Ron

13-14/1 Apologies
Julie Allinson, Duncan Jackson, Daria Pawlowska, Amanda Owen, Blayne Parkinson and Helen Petrie

13-14/2 Minutes of the last meeting
The minutes of the meeting held on the 13 May 2013 were approved.

13-14/3 Matters arising
13/3 – Induction leaflet
The induction leaflet was updated with the following web links:
www.york.ac.uk/communications/websites/committees/e-accessibilityforum
www.york.ac.uk/it-services/it/accessibility
www.york.ac.uk/library/informationfor/disabledusers

Copies of the new leaflet will be:
● added to induction packs for new staff
● available on the Disability Services stand at Freshers Fair
● sent to Department Administrators to display on department notice boards
TR requested copies for the YUSU Freshers’ events and College drop-ins.
Action - LB

13/5 – Update on accessibility testing project (Protea)
At the meeting in May no one was given the action to contact Higher York about this project. It was agreed that DS and BP should discuss and take forward.
Action - DS and BP

13/7 – AOB, b.
Additional information about the preparation of dissertations is now included in the undergraduate department handbooks.

13-14/4 Membership of the Group and Terms of Reference
Following a query from the Disability and Accessibility Group, point a. in the Terms of Reference has been amended.
Action – LB to update the Forum webpage

It was explained to new members that the Forum has no decision powers but is a good place to raise accessibility issues. New items can be discussed under AOB.

13-14/5 Update from EDLT

A written update was received and the following points noted:

- The VLE re-tendering process is progressing. Six companies have been asked to prepare detailed responses to the specification of requirements document by the end of September. Further shortlisting will then take place and a maximum of three companies will be invited to demonstrate their solutions on campus.

- The HCI research group have been invited to run accessibility test scripts on the shortlisted platforms.

- Forum members have been invited to work with EDLT to develop test scripts and attend demonstrations of the shortlisted platforms.

- SC and TR indicated that they would like to be involved in the development of test scripts. SC agreed to ask other members of staff in Disability Services if they would also like to be involved.

Action – LB to pass on information to BP

TR would ask disabled students if they would be willing to help with testing.

PH asked that anyone testing accessibility tools, for example, a screen reader, to note how they accessed the VLE and the version of software used.

- The new accessibility features following the Summer upgrade of the VLE were noted.

13-14/6 Update on accessibility testing project (Protea)

As mentioned above, the group will be involving in preparing test scripts for the shortlisted platforms in the VLE re-tendering processing. Testing will take place in late October.

The development of the HCI webpages has been delayed.

The HCI Group always need volunteers to test the accessibility of websites and systems. TR invited DS to attend a meeting of the YUSU Disabled Students’ Network to ask for volunteers.

13-14/7 Review of Assisted Technologies

- A review of Assisted Technologies is currently on hold but a meeting with the Director of Student Support Services is being arranged.

- The migration to Windows 7 is now at 95%. Support for Windows XP will stop at the end of 2013.
• It was explained that accessibility features in Windows 7 have been improved and include voice recognition software. Concerns were raised that students may not be aware of the changes/improvements. AB agreed to review the IT Services Accessibility pages and add information about accessibility features in Windows 7. In addition, links would be added to the accessibility pages for commonly used software including Windows, Microsoft Office and Firefox.

Action - AB

• There was a discussion about the types of software that can be used to create equations. IT Services are aware of issues with different versions of this software, for example, some are not compatible with screen readers. It was suggested that this needs to be reviewed and departments who use this type of software should be asked for their views and feedback. TR agreed to ask course reps in departments for feedback.

Actions – AB and PH and TR

• At the last meeting members of the Forum were asked to review the IT accessibility pages. LB agreed to follow up about the availability of hearing loops in IT classrooms on Heslington East.

Action - LB

• AB reported that an Information Directorate Disabilities Group has been formed and includes staff from the Library, IT Services and Archives. The aim of the group is to gain a better understanding of the needs of students with disabilities and coordinate service improvements. The Terms of Reference and Membership are still to be agreed and the group plan to meet termly.

It was noted that this group has been created following the discussions between TWCS and the Director of the Information Directorate (see minute 12/18).

13-14/8 Discuss the increasing demand to use computers in exams (SC) (Minute – 13/7 a.)

SC reported that Disability Services keep a record of the number of students who are recommended to have access to computers for exams through their assessment of need. For 2013-14 this is expected to increase and Disability Services will monitor the situation as it develops.

In addition, requests are received in the six week period before examination periods and these are often from students who don’t declare a disability when they first arrive at York. Disability Services make recommendations to the Examinations Office based on what is in the best interest of the student.

When a recommendation has been approved and sent to the Examinations Office, special arrangements include setting up a computer in an individual room. This raises concerns about resourcing issues (additional cost implications, rooms, computers and invigilators) for IT Services and the Examination Office.
It was agreed to invite a member of the Examination Office to join the Forum to discuss this and any other accessibility issues relating to their work.

**Action - LB**

13-14/9   AOB

There were no items raised under AOB.

13-14/10  **Dates of future meetings**

14 January - 10:00-11:00 in D/130
30 April - 10:00-11:00 in the Carr Room (H/G19)

LB/September 2013