Reaching All Customers: How do European NTOs Compare on Online Accessibility?

Lilian Müller
ENAT President
Manager, ‘Access Sweden

Angelika Laburda
ENAT Board Member,
‘IBFT’ Austria
Overview

- About ENAT (European Network for Accessible Tourism)
  - History, mission, recent activities
- eAccess+ Project
  - Objectives, topics, activities
- Online Accessibility Benchmarking Report
  - General framework, methods, questions
  - Results of the study
- Recommendations
- Follow-up by ENAT
About ENAT

- European Pilot Project, 2006 – 2007
- ENAT Non-profit Association (since 2008)
  - Registered in Brussels, Belgium
  - Secretariat in Athens, Greece
- Multi-stakeholder network with about 200 members in 30 countries
  - NTOs, researchers, enterprises, NGOs, etc.
- Affiliated with UNWTO
ENAT‘s Mission

- To make European tourism destinations, products and services accessible to all travellers, and
- To promote accessible tourism around the world
Activities

- Online information for the tourism sector at www.accessibletourism.org
- Conferences and seminars
- Accessibility training and e-learning for tourism businesses
- ENAT ’Code of Good Conduct’
- European projects and studies
  - Project partner of eAccessplus
The eAccess+ thematic network will establish and systematically develop a cooperative platform for co-ordinating, supporting and improving the implementation of eAccessibility throughout Europe.

- 25 members, over 100 stakeholders from all over Europe
- coordinated by the University of Linz (Austria)
- ENAT’s role: promoting accessibility in the tourism sector
eAccess+ focus

- Implementation of:
  - Web accessibility
  - Accessible convergent communications and accessible digital audio-visual systems
  - Self-service terminals (SSTs) and devices for banking and financial services, public transport, tourism and cultural heritage, e-government
Web accessibility and tourism

- Definition of accessibility in the www:
  - Information has to be **accessible to all people**, no matter whether they are impaired or not
  - Information is accessible **independent** from which **browser** one uses **or** which **device** is used
Web accessibility and tourism

A few technical remarks about accessibility of websites

- Standard HTML code defined by the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium)
- WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) by W3C
  - WCAG level 1.0, or level 2.0
  - Accessibility level A, Level AA, and Level AAA
Web accessibility and tourism

- Reasons for accessibility in the www
  - Most important source of information and communication
  - Bookings through the internet increases steadily
Web accessibility and tourism

- Without accessibility:
  - Possible loss of customers in general
  - Loss of customers from the increasing segment of people with special needs or disabilities
    - Aging society
    - UN-convention of the rights of people with disabilities
Web accessibility and tourism

- Reasons for accessibility of NTO-websites
  - NTO-websites are an important medium for information visiting a specific country
  - Provide links to other websites and providers
    - Offers, tourist packages, travel and transport possibilities, accommodation, reservations and ticketing …….
First Question

- Are NTO websites accessible for people with disabilities?
  (Compliance with web content accessibility guidelines)
ENAT Survey of 39 Websites of National Tourist Organisations in Europe
(Summer 2011)

First Question

- Are NTO websites accessible for people with disabilities?
  (Compliance with web content accessibility guidelines)
ENAT Survey of 39 Websites of National Tourist Organisations in Europe
(Summer 2011)

- Second Question
  - Is there access information on NTO websites for the customers who need it e.g. people with disabilities, seniors and others? (Review by market researchers)
ENAT Survey of 39 Websites of National Tourist Organisations in Europe (Summer 2011)

- Second Question
  - Is there access information on NTO websites for the customers who need it e.g. people with disabilities?

(Review by market researchers)
ENAT Survey of 39 Websites of National Tourist Organisations in Europe

- **Test methods**
  - Automated accessibility test (T.A.W. analyzing software)
    - selected level **WCAG level 1.0**
      - Accessibility level A
    - Accessible information was reviewed by market researchers

- **Limiting factors**
  - Snapshot taken in summer 2011
  - Automatic testing is just a part – much manual work has to be done
Results of the survey: Accessibility of the websites

- Result of the automatic testing (WCAG 1.0 level A)

- Passed 31%
- Failed 69%
ENAT Survey of 39 NTO websites:

T.A.W  Accessibility Test

11 NTO sites passed WAI-A – but only on the basis of automated testing
Results of the survey: 
Accessibility of the websites

- A few countries which have passed:
  - Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Slovakia, Spain

- A few countries which have not passed:
  - Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia …France, Germany, Greece, Holland …Sweden

- Reasons for failing
  - Syntax problems and faults
  - Design problems
Results of the survey:
Accessibility Information on the websites

19 out of 39 NTOs’ websites have some accessibility information (shaded BLUE).

NTOs presenting accessibility information on websites:
- Austria
- Belgium
- Cyprus
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovenia
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Turkey
- U.K.
Results of the survey: Accessibility Information on the websites

- E-mail contact for tourist enquiries: Yes
- Information on accessibility: Yes
- Access resources for visitors: Yes
- Link(s) to dedicated accessible tourism website: Yes
- Booking for accessible accommodation: Yes
- Access resources for policymakers: Yes
- Access resources for business: Yes
- Booking for accessible events / attractions: Yes

Jan. 25th, 2012
ENTER 2012 Destination
Slide Number 22
Conclusions

**Facts**

- Less than one-third of the tourist boards provide websites that are accessible to users with disabilities.
- There are very variable rates of failures on automatic testing and of in errors that require human checking.
- Web accessibility is often poorly understood and badly implemented in a majority of European countries.
- More than half of the NTO’s do not provide information about the accessibility of venues, attractions, accommodation etc.
  - This information is essential to disabled and elderly people in order to make a decision whether to visit a country or not.
Conclusions

- The market for accessible tourism is not functioning equally well in all countries and regions of Europe
- The lack of access to websites and the lack of accessibility information means
  - There is not a “single market” where customers can find sufficient and adequate information
  - The choice of destinations and products is severely limited for those people who need good access
Web Accessibility: “To do” list:

- Communicate with **all** your customers!
- Check the accessibility of your website
- Use accessibility guidelines: WAI / WCAG2.0
- Include accessibility statement on web pages
- Use automatic evaluation tools
- Visit [www.eaccessplus.eu](http://www.eaccessplus.eu)
Recommendations

- All tourist boards should systematically address the issue of web accessibility in order to comply with WCAG Guidelines.
- Organisations that lack in-house competence in this field should acquire the necessary assistance by requiring accessibility in their procurement procedures.
- Web accessibility should be regularly checked by webmasters and content managers.
- Countries without any published accessibility information should take steps to gather this information and make it available through their websites.
- Countries which do collect and publish accessibility information should ensure that:
  - The information is placed in sections that are easy to find.
  - With navigation links from the main (landing) page.
- Access information should be regularly checked and updated.
Thank you for your attention

Contact for further information about the study:

Mr. Ivor Ambrose
Managing Director
European Network for Accessible Tourism asbl.
ENAT Secretariat c/o EWORX S.A.,
Jean Moreas St. 66
GR-15231 Halandri, Athens
Greece.
Tel. 0030 210 614 8380
Fax. 0030 210 672 9312
E-mail: enat@accessibletourism.org