

Accessibility metadata from a user's perspective

Hans Beerens

Product manager / Accessibility officer

Dedicon – The Netherlands

dedicon

Accessibility metadata

- **Accessibility metadata:** data providing information about the accessibility of a digital publication.
- **Designed for**
 - **end users:** to communicate accessibility modes and features so users can discover publications that meet their needs and preferences.
 - **systems:** most accessibility metadata are machine-readable.

1. Accessibility

- Designed to make known to end users what to expect about the overall quality and degree of accessibility of the publication **before** buying/borrowing.
- For example:
 - the publication is screen reader friendly.
 - the reading order is logical and correct for text to speech.
 - font and font size can be adjusted to improve readability.

2. Discoverability

- Designed to enable exchange of data in systems and interpretation by search engines and search in catalogues.
- Can be used to support users with faceted search (filters) to narrow down search results in a catalogue.
- For example, select all publications
 - with 'Table of Contents navigation'
 - with 'Print page numbers'
 - that are 'Screen reader friendly'

Some more examples

- a human-readable text explaining the (degree of) accessibility
- accessibility guidelines conformance (for example EPUB accessibility 1.0 – WCAG 2.1 AA)
- synchronized audio and text
- reflowable
- fully rendered in text
- high colour contrast
- alternative texts for images
- accessible mathematical content

Notes about metadata (1/2)

- **Challenge**
 - Make metadata useful, understandable and usable for users.
- **Key information versus details**
 - Some information is key to know and **MUST** be included.
- **Inform users accessibility metadata only if they are relevant**
 - If, for example, there are no images in the publication, metadata about alternative texts will not be relevant.

Notes about metadata (2/2)

- **Accessibility metadata are about the publication, not the reader.**
 - Actual use of some features may depend on what the reader has to offer. For example:
 - The e-book facilitates page number navigation.
 - The e-reader does not provide a 'Go to page' feature.
- **A legal requirement for e-books (European Accessibility Act)**
 - Must be used by all economic operators in the supply chain to communicate the degree of accessibility.

Benefits (1/2)

Accessibility metadata are beneficial to

1. End users with a reading impairment

2. All users

- Accessibility requirements are quality requirements.
- Metadata inform all users about the quality, usability and accessibility of the publication.
- Some accessibility features are useful for everyone (for example: improving text readability)

Benefits (2/2)

3. stakeholders in the supply chain

- help manage user's expectations
- prevent buyers/borrowers from returning (inaccessible) e-books
- prevent complaints from dissatisfied customers/borrowers
- diminish customer support
- promote efforts made to create a born accessible publication

4. the inclusive publishing community

- help raise awareness about reading impairments and accessibility

References

[Inclusive Publishing in Practice \(IPIP\)](#)

- detailed, cross-sector and multilingual learning platform
- open-source content in English, French, German, Dutch
- e-learning materials are practical and interactive



Accessibility Metadata learning units

- [Accessibility Metadata – Role in inclusive publishing](#)
- [EPUB accessibility Metadata – Implementation](#)
- [ONIX accessibility Metadata – Implementation](#)