



Accessibility and Usability Standards for Legacy Applications

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DQ Content Authority	Technology Controller Tiffany Hall (CIO)		
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Contact(s) for Help	Claire Jennings (Head of Access Technology and Usability Strategy) Paul Bepey (Access Technology Manager) Terry Clarke		
Description	<p>Intended Audience: All BBC Staff, Projects Managers and System owners.</p> <p>Strategy document which should be used when updating Legacy applications.</p>		
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British Broadcasting Corporation

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1. Introduction

This document is one in a series of documents which cover Accessibility and Usability Standards.

In June 2004, the BBC Governors announced their intention to increase the proportion of disabled staff at the BBC from 2.8% to 4% by 2007. This target was exceeded: as of May 2009 the figure is 4.4%. There is now a new target in place – 5.5% before the end 2012.

This has inevitably increased the percentage of access technology users needing to access our desktop applications and broadcast technology. Technology Distribution and Archive intend the BBC to be a world class leader for accessibility of technology, implementing corporate ownership of access, rather than the outdated model of associating patch up fixes with the disabled individual. In this way, the BBC will be technologically accessible wherever a disabled person happens to log in and will enable them to move from work-station to work-station or studio to studio.

The Governors' targets are prompted by changes in the law since 1995 (further updated in 2010 and again in 2011) and research which clearly demonstrates a strong business case for employing more disabled members of staff. Providing a fully accessible technological environment will help the BBC to employ the most talented individuals. The aim therefore is to provide an accessible environment that disabled members of staff can work in or move into, not to address 'problems' at an individual level.

The 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was replaced in 2010 with the Equalities Act (EA) and places a duty on the BBC, as it does other UK organisations, 'to make reasonable adjustments' so as not to place a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled and to ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourably than non-disabled colleagues. What constitutes a 'reasonable adjustment' is an important consideration as well as the process that facilitates the decision. This is because a failure to make reasonable adjustments could have considerable financial consequences for the BBC's reputation and brand, as well as having cost implications if a case is brought before a tribunal. The law was further updated in April 2011 to reflect the Public Sector Equality Duty. This new single Duty strengthens UK equalities legislation and covers up to nine groups of people who share certain 'protected characteristics'. The Duty will have significant implications for many BBC activities and functions.

The PSED requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The BBC also recognises the importance of ensuring its technologies and applications are usable to all members of staff. By following a user centred design approach, based on ISO 9241 Part 210, the BBC can ensure that systems allow staff to work more efficiently, effectively and comfortably. In fact, making a product technically accessible is not enough as accessibility does not always imply usability. For instance, coding a form field so that its label is associated with the data entry field will make the field accessible to JAWS or VoiceOver users. However, if the content of the label is not meaningful, then the data entry field becomes meaningless to all users. To ensure all staff can work optimally, accessible products must also be usable, appealing and pleasurable to use.

Investing in accessible and usable products provides a number of significant business benefits:

- Increased effectiveness and efficiency of your workforce
- Decreased training time and learning time
- Reduced maintenance costs
- Better user satisfaction, leading to a happier more confident workforce

2. Legacy Applications

The BBC desktop supports a number of applications that were deployed ahead of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), the BBC Accessibility Strategy and its supporting documentation. This means that a large number of applications remain inaccessible, which could place a disabled employee at a considerable disadvantage to their non-disabled colleagues if they are unable to perform tasks which may be vital to the employee fulfilling all parts of their job.

To ensure that the BBC is providing support to disabled staff and meeting its requirements under the EA, strategic owners of applications and services are required to formulate an action plan to remediate these using project or departmental funding. For the purposes of this policy, “strategic owners” includes partners and third parties who supply applications and services into the BBC. Remediation could include the upgrade of applications or the provision of scripting to integrate with the BBC’s core accessibility applications. This work needs to be offered priority and the fact that it is a legacy application, can not be used as a dispensation.

Whilst the BBC’s internal accessibility team is able to provide consultation and support to BBC and external departments, it should be noted that that it is the application or service owner’s responsibility to initiate and formulate an action plan to ensure continued accessibility.

It is also expected that the system owner fund any Access Technology configuration that would enable the BBC’s core enabling access technologies to work on the application. This work should be carried out in consultation with the BBC’s internally facing accessibility team (Email – accessibilityteam-internal@bbc.co.uk)

3. History

Version	Date	Author	Description
0.1	01/12/2009	Claire Jennings	Created draft strategy
0.2	01/12/2009	Paul Bepey	Added wording
0.3	18/12/2009	Russ Brattan (for Paul Bepey)	Minor wording changes after DQ feedback
0.4	10/12/2010	Terry Clarke	Updated to include change to EA rather than DDA. Brought introduction into line with other documents.
0.5	18/01/2011	Rizwan Nazir	Minor Update to include contact email and role descriptions.
0.6	14/04/2011	Erin Flynn	Updated to include new percentage target set by BBC Governance to increase the proportion of disabled staff at the BBC.

Any comments, queries or change control requests about this document
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