

## **ISOC-IL Web Accessibility - Interim Reports**

### **Activities undertaken in the period between October 2007 and April 2008**

1. Internet-site manager seminar – a seminar titled "Leading Websites Open the Door for the Disabled" was held on December 2007. Seventy website managers from some 40 leading websites in Israel's public and private sectors took part in the event. Feedbacks from participants indicated that the seminar was highly effective. Subsequent follow-up sessions were held with most of the companies which took part in the event, the majority of which expressed their wish to build accessible websites. About ten websites either have immediately initiated accessibility procedures or have decided to include accessibility tools in websites scheduled for the upcoming year. Ten more website managers are endeavoring to procure funding for website accessibility.
2. Web developer seminar – website-developer seminar was held on January 2008 together with Microsoft Israel with a turnout which astonished the organizers – 130 participants attended the seminar. About 54% of the participant developers are in-house developers and about 41% of the companies develop websites for other companies. Feedback forms filled by the participants indicate that 87% were pleased with the issues addressed in the seminar and 92% replied they intended to promote accessibility practices in projects they were engaged in.
3. Various lectures and seminars – a variety of lectures on web accessibility were held as part of professional conventions, in universities, public organizations (i.e. government, army and police) and web-development companies. In total, about 1,300 people attended these events.
4. All the presentations used in the conferences and seminars were uploaded to the project-website and many of the participants in the intra-organizational training seminars.
5. Media Campaign
  - a. Media coverage – approximately five PR releases appeared in the media – including in the three leading newspapers and in leading TV and radio networks - eliciting a high exposure rate.
  - b. Web accessibility surveys were conducted throughout the year among various sectors such as government offices, insurance companies, television and radio networks and marketing networks. Notifications were sent to companies whose websites were found to be inaccessible and the overall response was positive. The results of the survey were publicized in the newspapers.

- c. The Israel "**WebiAward**" competition – the Israeli website "Oscars" – placed web accessibility on the list of criteria in the competition. Head of the project, Mrs. Gila Gertel sits on the panel of judges. Each year one website is granted the special "Accessible Site Award".

6. Perches of Jaws for Windows – for web accessibility consulting.

## Performance against goals

The goals determined for this period were accomplished as follows:

1. One of our tangible aims was to render ten large websites and ten mid-scale websites accessible or to have them initiate an accessibility process.

At present, 10 websites are already accessible, links to these sites can be viewed at ISOC-IL [NAGISH](#) website ("Nagish" means accessible in Hebrew)

We know of 25 large and mid-scale sites, which are engaged in the development of accessibility.

Furthermore, upgrading of government website scheduled for 2009 will include accessibility2.0

2. The high participation in our seminars and lectures and the media's interest in the project indicate there is awareness of the issue among internet professionals in Israel.

Moreover, accessibility has become trendy among website owners and developers. According to some of Israel's leading web development companies, most of the RFPs from large public and private-sector bodies include requirements for accessibility measures.

3. A considerable number of leading web development companies in Israel are on their way to establishing expertise in the field of accessibility development although there still is a lacuna of knowledge that will need to be filled in the future.

## Insights

- ▶ In light of the promising results of our seminars, it appears we struck the right balance of persuasiveness. The "winning" formula in Israel is a combination of legislation, reputation and ROI – SEO and ROI being the most effective incentives for ensuring web accessibility.
- ▶ The financial sector – i.e. banks, credit companies etc – has proven to be the most permeable sector as regards to website accessibility.
- ▶ The public sector has a relatively low response-time due to extended bureaucratic procedures and much encumbered decision-making mechanisms.

- ▶ The high education sector is hard to penetrate due to low web-development budget allocations in universities resulting in outdated websites.
- ▶ Four years ago, in the early stages of accessibility development, website developers were reluctant to be the vanguard in the field and to sway their clients to invest in accessibility for their websites. Nowadays, however, when demand comes from the clients themselves and most RFPs include requirements for accessibility, developers realize the importance of having proven expertise in the field.

### **Project future Work plan**

1. We intend to perform another web-site developer's seminar.
2. Embedding of the Stamp of Accessibility – the accessibility stamp announced as part of the project, indicates website accessibility in compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
3. A collaborative effort with the Israeli Ministry of Education to create a framework of standards for the development and the assessment of school websites.