

Digital Accessibility Plenary Session – Day 2, 18th July 2019

Moving forward on digital accessibility

Format: Panel discussion

Duration: 90 minutes

Moderator: Rajnesh Singh, Chair of APriGF MSG

Speakers:

- Gunela Astbrink, Women With Disabilities Australia will introduce the topic of disability and digital accessibility - Remote participation confirmed
- Anatoliy Popko, co-author of Russian standard on digital content accessibility and member of the President's Committee on Disability will introduce the topic of digital accessibility from the Russian perspective - Confirmed
- Muhammad Shabbir Awan, President of ISOC Accessibility SIG will discuss global initiatives in digital accessibility - Remote participation confirmed

The above three speakers will present from the lived experience of disability.

- Naveed Haq, ISOC Regional Development Manager, Asia-Pacific will discuss the digital accessibility situation in APAC - Confirmed
- Babu Ram Aryal, Chairman, Centre for Law and Technology, Nepal will talk about key projects in Nepal - Confirmed
- Maureen Hilyard, ICT Strategy Consultant, Cook Islands Government will discuss Pacific Island activities

Session outline:

The Internet offers an opportunity for inclusiveness – to view the global community of its users as one while recognising its rich diversity. Internet technologies have the potential to give persons with disabilities the means to live on a more equitable basis within the global community in a manner that previously was not possible.

Digital accessibility is a big challenge in the Asia-Pacific region where one in six people live with some form of disability (Ref: ISOC-APAC). That translates to about 650 million men, women and children with a disability in the APAC region alone. Therefore, the wave of digital transformation can be termed as 'all-inclusive' only if we make the Internet accessible to persons with disabilities.

The session will introduce the attitudinal and cultural barriers that persons with a disability may face in general and how this is extrapolated to the digital world. Persons with disabilities can contribute to society like any other member of the community when barriers are removed.

Increasing accessibility to the Internet can help to make that happen.

Various strategies for addressing these challenges will be discussed. This includes international human rights agreements, Sustainable Development Goals, standards and guidelines, private sector actions and national initiatives.

Projected outcomes:

- Increased awareness about digital accessibility challenges and solutions
- Collaboration opportunities between disability organisations and Internet organisations

Agenda:

The moderator will introduce digital accessibility. He will invite each panelist to introduce themselves and make opening remarks for around 7-10 minutes based on their expertise and related to the key questions. Panelists will be encouraged to give practical examples.

Key questions:

- What are the cultural and attitudinal barriers directed toward persons with a disability?
- How can digital accessibility make a difference in the life of a person with a disability?
- How can international, regional and national legal and policy instruments on accessibility be effectively implemented?
- Please explain how a blind person uses a computer and a mobile phone.
- Are there additional costs in making a phone app or a website accessible?

At least 30 minutes will be allocated to questions as well as an open discussion about digital inclusion for persons with disability and possible collaboration opportunities. The audience may be encouraged to share their country/project experience as well.

The moderator will summarise the key points.