Delivery of the One Stop Shop platform for collecting and distributing accessibility assets

Short report

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1 Executive Summary

The LEAD-ME project[1], an acronym for Leading Platform for European Citizens, Industries, Academia, and Policymakers in Media Accessibility, is a transformative initiative designed to support various stakeholders in the field of Media Accessibility across Europe. The project's primary objective is to enable these stakeholders to meet the legal milestones outlined by European legislation. It aims to accomplish this by, among others, providing a unified platform that collects, creates, and disseminates innovative technologies, solutions, best practices, and guidelines relevant to media accessibility. This report delves into the development, implementation, and implications of one of the project's deliverables, the One Stop Shop platform, a comprehensive resource that offers a single point-of-access to pertinent Media Accessibility technologies.

Media accessibility, a fundamental component of social and cultural inclusion policies, practices, and research worldwide, has seen a surge in interest and development. Numerous national and international institutions have been drafting or approving specific legislation, recommendations, and guidelines related to this field. Concurrently, social organisations have been lobbying and raising awareness about media accessibility, while the industry has been developing new technical solutions. Researchers have been testing access services, carrying out reception studies, suggesting new approaches to accessibility studies, and providing training in various modalities related to media accessibility.

However, this explosion of information and development in media accessibility has resulted in a fragmented landscape. The vast amount of information produced is scattered across different repositories and languages, making it challenging to find and access. This fragmentation hampers the development of a unified research and policy agenda that can effectively tackle the challenge of creating a globally inclusive society.

The LEAD-ME project, with its One Stop Shop platform, addresses this issue head-on. Instead of creating a new platform from scratch, the members of LEAD-ME Working Group 1, responsible for the deliverable, made a strategic decision to adopt an existing platform. This platform, known as MAP[2] (Media Accessibility Platform), was developed by members of the same working group from UAB.

MAP's vision is to create a world where everyone has access to media, a goal achievable only through a significant global effort. This effort involves sharing information about practices, services, technologies, and instruments in media accessibility. In line with this vision, MAP's mission is to provide a unified atlas charting the worldwide landscape of media accessibility. It accomplishes this by creating a structured platform that serves as a hub for research, policies, training, and practices in the field.

LEAD-ME's contribution to MAP has been twofold: raising awareness about the platform and organising structured efforts to collect data about more projects to be stored on MAP. As of the end of October 2023, MAP displays information about 81 projects, nearly 3000 publications, 66 courses, and 88 events.

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[1] https://lead-me-cost.eu

[2] https://mapaccess.uab.cat

In conclusion, the LEAD-ME project, through the MAP platform, is making significant strides in media accessibility. By providing a unified and comprehensive resource for collecting and distributing accessibility assets, it is contributing significantly to the goal of creating a globally inclusive society. The ongoing efforts to expand and improve MAP's offering will continue to enhance its role as an invaluable resource in the field of media accessibility.

2 Introduction

Media accessibility is a critical aspect of social and cultural inclusion policies, practices, and research worldwide. This field, which ensures that all forms of media are accessible to all individuals, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, has seen a significant surge in interest and development in recent years. National and international institutions have been drafting or approving specific legislation, recommendations, and guidelines related to this field. At the same time, social organisations have been lobbying and raising awareness about the importance of media accessibility.

Simultaneously, the industry has been proactive in developing new technical solutions to facilitate media accessibility. Researchers have been diligently testing access services, carrying out reception studies, suggesting new approaches to accessibility studies, and providing training in various modalities linked to media accessibility. This concerted effort from multiple stakeholders has led to a massive amount of information on media accessibility, covering a wide range of perspectives.

However, the rapid increase in information has also led to a challenge. The information, though extensive and valuable, is scattered across different repositories and languages. This fragmentation makes it difficult for stakeholders to easily find and access the information they need. The lack of a unified platform for information and resources on media accessibility has a negative impact on the development of a cohesive research and policy agenda. It hampers efforts to tackle the challenge of creating a globally inclusive society where media is accessible to all.

In response to this, and others, challenges, the LEAD-ME project was initiated. LEAD-ME is a project designed to provide a solution to the fragmentation issue. It aims to provide a unified platform for European stakeholders in the field of Media Accessibility to meet the legal milestones requested by European legislation.

One of the project's deliverables is the creation of a One Stop Shop platform. This platform will collect, create, and disseminate innovative technologies, solutions, best practices, and guidelines related to media accessibility. Through this platform, researchers, engineers, scholars, businesses, and policymakers will be empowered with a common and unique platform. This platform will serve as a comprehensive resource, providing all the necessary information and tools to enhance media accessibility.

The LEAD-ME project is a significant step towards creating a globally inclusive society. By providing a unified platform for media accessibility resources, it enables stakeholders to easily access and share information, technologies, and best practices. This collaborative approach is expected to accelerate the development and implementation of media accessibility solutions, thereby ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their abilities, can access media.

3 MAP – The One Stop Shop platform

The Media Accessibility Platform (MAP), a deliverable of the LEAD-ME project, is a significant achievement in the field of media accessibility. MAP is more than just a platform; it represents a vision of universal media access and a mission to chart the global landscape of media accessibility.

MAP's vision is to create a world where everyone, regardless of their abilities, is given equal access to media. This vision acknowledges the importance of media in our modern world, serving as a crucial source of information, entertainment, and connection. Ensuring media accessibility is not just a matter of inclusion; it's a necessity for creating a world where everyone can participate fully and equally. However, achieving this vision requires a substantial global effort. It involves sharing information regarding practices, services, technologies, and instruments in media accessibility across borders and languages.

With this vision in mind, MAP's mission is to provide a unified atlas that charts the worldwide landscape of media accessibility. This mission recognises the importance of having a centralised resource that can act as a hub for all things related to media accessibility. It aims to create a structured platform that gathers and disseminates information related to research, policies, training, and practices in the field of media accessibility.

The MAP platform is structured into five main sections, each serving a unique purpose and contributing to the overall mission of the platform.

1. Research: This section contains information about past and current research projects, publications, and presentations in workshops and conferences. It serves as a comprehensive database of research efforts in media accessibility, providing valuable insights and findings that can guide future initiatives.
2. Training: The training section tracks formal and informal courses in Higher Education institutions, MOOCs, and professional training courses. It recognises the importance of education and training in promoting media accessibility and provides resources for individuals and organisations seeking to improve their knowledge and skills.
3. Events: This section includes information about past, current, and future conferences, seminars, workshops, and other events related to media accessibility. It serves as a global calendar, facilitating networking and collaboration among stakeholders in the field.
4. Modalities: All data in MAP is displayed in this section according to different media accessibility modalities. This categorisation allows users to easily find information relevant to their specific needs or interests.
5. Accessometer: The Accessometer provides a world map of the legislation, standards, and guidelines on media accessibility organised by country. This section focuses exclusively on media access services regarding sensorial barriers, providing an invaluable resource for understanding the global landscape of media accessibility legislation.
6. News: This section covers the latest developments in media accessibility, helping users stay up to date with the rapidly evolving field.

The LEAD-ME project's contribution to MAP has been significant. It has raised awareness about the platform, promoting its use among stakeholders in the field of media accessibility. Additionally, it has organised structured efforts to collect data about more projects to be stored on MAP, enriching the platform's content, and making it an even more valuable resource.

As of the end of October 2023, MAP displays information about 81 projects, nearly 3000 publications, 66 courses, and 88 events. These numbers are a testament to the platform's success and the significant efforts of the LEAD-ME project and all those involved in contributing to MAP.

In conclusion, MAP serves as a beacon in the field of media accessibility. It provides a unified platform where stakeholders can find and share information, learn from past research, discover training opportunities, stay informed about upcoming events, and understand the global landscape of media accessibility legislation. The ongoing efforts to expand and improve MAP will continue to enhance its role as a vital resource in the field of media accessibility.

4 Conclusions

The LEAD-ME project, through its association with the Media Accessibility Platform (MAP), represents a significant stride towards a more inclusive society where media is accessible to all. By providing a unified and comprehensive resource for collecting and distributing accessibility assets, it has made a substantial contribution to the field of media accessibility.

This project deliverable, MAP, is more than just a platform; it is a vision of universal media access and a mission to chart the global landscape of media accessibility. It serves as a beacon in the field, providing a unified platform where stakeholders can find and share information, learn from past research, discover training opportunities, stay informed about upcoming events, and understand the global landscape of media accessibility legislation.

The success of MAP is clear from the wealth of information it currently hosts. As of the end of October 2023, MAP displays information about 81 projects, nearly 3000 publications, 66 courses, and 88 events. This wealth of resources is a testament to the concerted efforts of the LEAD-ME project and all those involved in contributing to MAP. The platform has become a central hub for media accessibility, bringing together researchers, engineers, scholars, businesses, and policymakers in a common and unique platform.

The decision by LEAD-ME's Working Group 1 to adopt an existing platform, rather than developing a new one from scratch, was a strategic move that optimised resources and allowed for a more efficient achievement of the project's goals. This decision also highlights the importance of collaboration and leveraging existing resources in addressing complex challenges such as media accessibility.

The LEAD-ME project's contributions to MAP have been significant, raising awareness about the platform and organising structured efforts to collect data about more projects to be stored on MAP. This effort has enriched the content of the platform and made it an even more valuable resource for stakeholders in the field of media accessibility.

Looking forward, the ongoing efforts to expand and improve MAP will continue to enhance its role as a vital resource in the field of media accessibility. As the platform grows and evolves, it will continue to empower stakeholders with the information and tools they need to promote and enhance media accessibility.

In conclusion, the LEAD-ME project, through the MAP platform, has made significant strides in promoting media accessibility. It has provided a solution to the challenge of fragmented information and resources, creating a unified platform that serves as a comprehensive resource for stakeholders. The success of the project is a testament to the power of collaboration and the importance of a unified approach in tackling complex challenges. It serves as a model for future initiatives aimed at promoting social and cultural inclusion, demonstrating the potential of a unified platform to drive change and create a more inclusive society.