**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS OF THE
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
STANDARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
9:30 A.M – 11:30 A.M., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2017
DXC TECHNOLOGY, 200 GRAHAM AVENUE**

Present: Lisa Snider (Chairperson), Jeff Buhse, Tanis Woodland, Tony, Chris Bohemier, Jim Hounslow, Paul Knapp, Carol Bartmanovich, John Wyndels (DIO)

Regrets: Doris Koop, Allen Mankewich

Carol Bartmanovich was welcomed to the committee. Carol is the Manager of the Internet and Social Services for Communications Services Manitoba (CSM).

We are still waiting for information from Ontario in reference to the guide and how if differs from the regulation in the e-law. Jutta Trevianus. Who is one of the leading proponents of accessible information and communication (IC) and is involved in the five-year review of the IC standard in Ontario, has been unavailable to contact us likely due to travel, but we will contact her again when she is back in Toronto. There are many laws worldwide that have been developed with respect to information and communications. The majority of these, such as in Quebec and the EU, have regulations that apply exclusively to the government, not to public-sector, private or not-for profit organizations.

The committee resumed discussions of the side-by-side in Section 4 – Accessible formats and communications supports. The Ontario standard was put in place in 2010. Technology such as apps were not referenced in the standard and now they are in the midst of a five-year review with apps being one of the omissions that will have to be incorporated. The use of apps is prevalent with a lot of them not being developed in an accessible manner. Apps often have visual cues or require motor skills to use them, and if they are not made accessible, they can be unusable for a portion of the population.

There is a leaning to be more general in how and what the standard will apply to rather than being specific. With electronic communication moving so rapidly there is fear that specific language will fail to capture devices that have not been developed, or currently have broad application. Technologies like holograms, Virtual Reality (VR), Artificial Intelligence (AI) are expanding areas that could well be within the scope of a information and communication standard. These, along with games, are increasingly being used in many areas, including educational settings.

The central tenets of accessible formats are fully agreed to by the committee. While there will be always be the need to convert materials into accessible formats, there has to be a greater effort to developing language/materials/documents in an accessible manner from the outset. The AODA wording in Section 12(1) was problematic, because it could suggest that accessible formats were only available on request, eliminating the need to create something in an accessible format from the outset.

While we embed accessibility standards into the development of websites, there must be equal effort from developers and students of computer science to learn accessibility from the get-go. They need to learn the importance of accessible language and formats. As well, digital communications are more than websites, they can be in the form of an email, infographic, etc.

We began discussing Section 5 – Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information. There is language in the proposed employment standard that may provide guidance.

The first requirement in the section is confusing as it seems to only allow for one accessible format, in the wording '…shall provide the information in **an** accessible format…'. As well, the term 'upon request' may indicate that organizations don't have to provide their emergency information in advance, when they already have emergency procedures that can be made public and it isn't a real time emergency situation.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. The next meeting of the Information and Communications Standard Development Committee is August 30 from 9:30a.m. – 11:30 a.m. at DXC Technology, 6th Floor, 200 Graham Avenue.