SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
STANDARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
9:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M., WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2017
DXC TECHNOLOGY, 6ᵀᴴ FLOOR, 200 GRAHAM AVE.

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

Regrets: None

The Chairperson of the Accessibility Advisory Council attended the meeting. It was an opportunity for the chairperson oif the council to meet members of the committee and sit in on discussions of the Information and Communications standard. Jim has received all background materials prior to the meeting, including past minutes and the side-by-side. He is very impressed with the functioning of the committee and the work that has been prepared so far.

The committee has been forwarded the report from Barrier-Free Manitoba and a meeting is scheduled to speak with the lawyers who prepared the report on Wednesday, Novmeber 1 at 1:00 p.m. Committee members were reminded to review the report and be prepared to ask questions of the lawyers.

Lisa and John were in Toronto since the group last met to participate in two conferences focusing on among other things Information and Communications procurement, which will be one of the components of the federal accessibility legislation. Harmonization was central to the discussion with individuals from the US and EU speaking to Section 508 and Mandate 376. National accessibility legislation is slated to move forward in the spring/summer of 2018.

Jutta Trevianus organized the conferences in Toronto and plays a key role in the five-year review of the Information and Communications (IC) Standard in Ontario. Lisa and John have had a conference call with her where she shared her insights on the review in Ontario. We will speak with her in the future as the process moves forward and hope to arrange a conference call where all committee members would be available.

Developing a standard in Information and Communications is a tremendous challenge. While things like transportation and employment have remaining fairly static, information and communications continue to evolve. Section 14 in the side-by-side / Accessible Websites and Web Content does not currently apply to apps in the current Ontario IC standard.

The committee spoke of the term Web Applications and whether that term is all encompassing enough. There was a suggestion that there be two separate sections – one referencing browsers and its applications and a separate section that applies to those entities outside the browser.

Interface and content are the main components of the digital domain. How we receive the information and the information itself. Both have to be accessible on either end; the producing and the receiving. Often the interface is accessible at one end, but sometimes not the other. An example of the problem is a kiosk. The kiosk is delivering information, but can all people reach the kiosk and is the interface accessible to all. Content is one thing, but the interface is how we receive the content.

WCAG guidelines were established in 1999. Even though it was supposed to apply to different technologies, it is commonly thought of to be only website specific. It continues to be troublesome because people don't know what it means. Web developers have different interpretations of what it encompasses, making it difficult to enforce compliance. This is the case in Ontario, which uses WCAG as the basis of requirements in Section 14 of the standard.

WCAG is moving to 2.1 from 2.0, which has more for people with cognitive disabilities and low vision disabilities.The authoring of the content must also be considered for all people, including people with cognitive disabilities. The EU Mandate 376 talks of functional requirements, and one of the recent EU directives uses the principles of WCAG 2.0, without directly identifying it. How do we deal with WCAG updates, such as 2.1 that isn't out yet but will be published in 2018. The additions from WCAG 2.1 are considerable, but these changes happen infrequently. We don't want the standard to be bound to things that are out of date.

Content, archived content and legacy content is something that is being contemplated by Ontario. There is the question of what to do with content that was archived before the legislation came in place. Many universities and municipalities removed content because it was not archived in the required format set out in the standards. This information was then lost to the public, who could not longer access it.

Should signage be a separate section? In Ontario, signage is briefly mentioned in the transportation, built environment and customer service standards. However, signage is not given its own section in the IC, or any other standard. There are well-established best practices in the field of signage but not a standard so to speak.

The committee has agreed to remove the terms intranet, extranet, and internet. We will not make a distinction between the three. The standard we are designing applies to employees, customers and third parties. There may be instances where we have to be more specific, but the general intent is the standard is applicable to all.

Content being pushed to the individual for emergency situation and/or events must make sure that the information is accessible and fit the flexibility of individuals to access that material according to their preferences. This will allow for customization. This flexibility, creativity and customization should be stressed in the Guide.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m. The next meeting of the Information and Communications Standard Development Committee is Wednesday, November 1 at 1:00 p.m. at the Second Floor Executive Boardtroom of the Norquay Building, 401 York Avenue.