

# Wikipedia Accessibility Task Force

## Short report – Concept and course of action

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### Planned Activities

The remaining and last upcoming contributions of the Swiss Foundation „Access for all“ (A4A), as part of the TAO Project, are:

- Setting up a monitoring system regarding the state of implementation and roadmap based on the “Access for all”-Accessibility Test Report
- Take measures to form a sustainable “Wikipedia Accessibility Task Force”

As for any website, accessibility in Wikipedia is an ever ongoing process. Accessibility can't be implemented once and for all times. Concretely:

1. Relics in terms of inaccessible hurdles in the software as well as in the article's contents need to be fixed retrospectively. In view of the sheer dimensions of Wikipedia, this strenuous effort might be accomplished only as a concerted action and with the active support of the Wikipedia community.
2. Any new component and changes in the software need to be tested for accessibility.
3. The community needs to implement a system preventing editors and authors from causing (known) accessibility problems in the future. Non-technical measures need to be implemented in all the different language versions separately.

### Coordination Platform

In order to coordinate such actions and inform the interested audience on accomplished, ongoing and planned actions and activities, the first action from our side (A4A) is to set up a central coordination platform, where all information on accessibility initiatives in Wikipedia converge on one clearly arranged website.

We consider this coordination platform as a necessary condition to bring together the “Wikipedia Accessibility Community” spread all over the world and to concentrate its efforts. Following this logic we hope to reach a “critical mass” of people that are concerned with accessibility issues and will effectively promote accessibility improvements within the various language communities and at the Wikimedia Foundation.

Once a first version of the platform is set up and running, we intend to actively recruit cooperation partners and contributors for further improvements and sustainability of Wikipedia accessibility improvement efforts. We also intend to promote this cause jointly with people from the existing Wikipedia Accessibility Community at the next Wikimania conference in 2013 in Hong Kong.

## Methods

### The Platform

Currently we are discussing which existing platform would suit best for reaching as many interested and already involved potential cooperation partners as possible: Meta-Wiki, Outreach Wiki, as well as project pages on various Wikipedia language versions.

According to today's concept the platform would include:

- A monitoring table tracking the state of implementation of the A4A-Accessibility Test Report and possibly reports from other Wikipedia accessibility initiatives.
- An information pool on, as far as possible, any Wikipedia accessibility initiative worldwide.
- A discussion platform for the coordination of overlapping initiatives and the use of synergies.
- A hub to bring together all the accessibility websites within the different languages in Wikipedia, providing a centralized overview.
- General information on ongoing technical implementations of accessibility improvements of Wikipedia
  - Changes in MediaWiki
  - Testing Tools
  - Special Plugins, Skins
  - Accessibility Assisting Tools (for authors/editors)
- General information and discussions on non-technical approaches for spreading information in communities, which can lead to new technical approaches (e.g.: accessibility assisting tool for authors)
- Exchange of best practice experiences between the different communities (languages)

### Wikimania

We intend to sharpen the profile of the campaign at next year's Wikimania Conference in Hong Kong. We would like to use Wikimania as an occasion to raise the awareness of the community for accessibility issues and to organize a get-together of community members interested in accessibility questions in order to coordinate further joint action.

### Support

In order to build upon the previous experiences of the community and to set up a high quality portal from the outset, we intend to get on board the accessibility experts and other people committed to the issue already that are already active in the Wikipedia community. Existing community members involved in accessibility issues and relevant organizational representatives include:

Pavel Richter  
Alolita Sharma  
Diederick van Liere  
Daniel Kinzler & Kai Nissen  
Sumana Harihareswara  
Jopparn, Dodoïste, RexxS, Johannes Rohr & Mathias Schindler  
Brandon Harris  
Lisa Seeman

Director Wikipedia Deutschland  
Development UI Wikimedia Foundation  
UI  
Software development Wikimedia Deutschland  
Coordination voluntary developers  
Dedicated community members  
  
Developer Wikimedia Foundation  
Co-Author ARIA standards

Erik Möller

Maria Schieve

Head of Engineering and Product Development,  
WMF

Accessibility Expert Wikimedia Deutschland

## Expected Results

The platform, along with a strong presence at Wikimania 2013, will allow us to establish a strong and sustainable Accessibility Task Force within the Wikipedia community, which will establish and keep up-to-date an exemplary accessible Wikipedia.

## About Access for All

Access for All, the Swiss foundation for technology adapted to people with disabilities was created in November 2000 for the purpose of promoting equal-opportunity technology use. The Zurich-based non-profit organisation is a well established and experienced institution for an open and barrier-free use of technologies providing access to people with different forms of handicaps. In association with the Federal Office of Communications, Access for All set up the “Swiss Digital Integration Network” in 2007. The network and its national action plan focus on groups of people who are in the majority currently excluded from the benefits of the information society and who would derive special benefit from applying ICT skills: older employees, seniors, migrants and the disabled. Furthermore, Access for All has tested over 300 websites on accessibility for disabled and elderly users, and since 2006 the foundation also certifies accessible websites in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Access for all leads the expert group “Accessibility” of the Swiss organisation eCH (eGovernment Standards) and is a member of the Swiss Federal Commission for Accessibility Standards.

In the course of the project TAO, several accessibility specialists from Access for All, with and without disabilities, have assessed the accessibility of the German version of Wikipedia. The review was carried out on the basis of a series of tests, and the results recorded and documented according to the (POUR) principles and guidelines of the WCAG 2.0. The [test report](#) is available on the TAO-Website ([www.thirdageonline.eu](http://www.thirdageonline.eu)).

Homepage: [www.access-for-all.ch](http://www.access-for-all.ch)