Digital Accessibility Specialist Group

Annual General Meeting

Minutes 17/10/2017

2 pm at BCS, First Floor,
The Davidson Building,
5 Southampton Street
London, WC2E 7HA

1   Welcome and Introductions

- EA Draffan
- Graham Collins
- Howard Leicester
- Jean Irvine
- David Rippon
- Terry Freedman
- Nigel Lewis
- Claire Milne
- Peter Abrahams

2   Apologies for Absence

- Robert McLaren
- Peter Dudley
- Suzanne Keith
- David Brew
- Malgorzata van Leeuwen
- Geoffrey McMullen
- Ricci Downard
- Gill Whitney

- Andrew Knight
- Marianne Markowski

3   Minutes of previous AGM

Approved

4   Matters Arising

None

5   Chair's Report

This is attached below..

Accepted

6   Treasurer's Report

For the previous year ending Aug 2017

Income £890
Cost £351.74
Surplus £538.26

At the time of the AGM we are still awaiting approval of our budget submission which was the same as 2016/17.

7   Election of Chair, Treasurer and Committee Members

David Rippon stood down as Chair and Nigel Lewis stood down as Treasurer.

The following were re-elected unopposed:

- Secretary Peter Abrahams

The following were nominated and elected unopposed:

- Chair: Graham Collins

- Treasurer: Terry Freedman

BCS The Chartered Institute for IT
Digital Accessibility Specialist Group

8   Any Other Business

The chair's report raised a number of issues and discussion these are minuted with the minutes of the committee meeting that followed on directly from the AGM.

Digital Accessibility Specialist Group

Chair's Annual Report 2017

Overview

There were 4 committee meetings during the year.

The primary focus of the SG is raising an awareness of accessibility needs within the IT profession in general and BCS membership and staff in particular. Awareness of digital accessibility needs remains very low within both the profession and the BCS in general.

The SG has some 180 BCS members signed up, however very few of these members engage with the SG in any meaningful way.

All of the work of the SG is undertaken by a core group of under 10 individuals.

Programme

What We Did Last Year

An event on Robotics

A presentation on 'Disability, accessibility, personalisation, inclusion and design' was prepared and given to the Kent BCS Branch.

A member of DASG joined the Best Practice Committee to further the cause of inclusion and was instrumental in the definition of the Inclusion Officer role, although the adoption of this initiative is extremely slow.

A member of DASG joined BCS Council to attempt to further the cause of inclusion within the BCS (and has so far failed).

Making IT Good for Society

How We are Making IT Good for Society as a Member Group

We are attempting to make 'IT Good for Society' by raising awareness of the increasing digital divide in this country. However, this is an uphill task with very little support from the BCS members or staff.

Our focus is on events and publications but we remain constrained by the lack of commitment from the wider BCS membership/staff.

Community

Who We Serve and How We Engage with Our Community

We attempt to engage with users of IT based services who have accessibility issues (sight, hearing, mobility, etc) to identify how IT systems could be improved to ensure they are accessible. We do this by linking with external organisations active in this area of concern.

We also attempt to engage with IT professionals who provide these services to raise awareness of accessibility issues. We do this through events and articles.

In both cases we are severely hampered by a lack of resource despite the fact that 20% of the UK population has an accessibility issue of one type or another.

Leadership

How we provide Leadership to Our Community

I do not know how to answer this question.

Excellence

How We Excel

We have not excelled as we have failed to persuade either the BCS or the wider world to take any notice whatsoever on the issues of accessibility.

Objectives for Next Year

Our Plan

Carry on doing the best we can in the face of the overwhelming inertia that we face.

Achievements

Our Successes

Working with the Best Practice Committee on the need for Inclusion Officers.

Presenting an event on Robotics.

Using LinkedIn to increase awareness of accessibility as an issue.

The Barriers We Face

Lack of interest from society as a whole and the BCS membership and staff in particular on the need to address digital accessibility. This is also a failure of DASG but with the number of active members that we have it is difficult to see how we can improve the situation.

Inclusion and Diversity

How We Are Working for Everyone

When I personally undertook the BCS unconscious bias training it did not even cover disability as an unconscious bias area. When I raised this at the session it was obvious that everyone else present (BCS members and staff) thought this omission was acceptable.

Until such time as the BCS staff and members take proactive steps to ensure that accessibility becomes an issue on the same level as gender and race discrimination the BCS cannot claim to be 'Working for Everyone'. Ignoring accessibility issues will obviously contravene current legislation.

In particular the SFIA+ framework needs to be rigorously tested to ensure that it promotes best practice on digital accessibility. Until this is done the BCS cannot claim to be 'Making IT Good for Society' as it is promoting professional standards which discriminate against the 20% of our population who suffer from some form of disability.

Committee

About the Committee

The Committee consists of anyone who can turn up for one of our regular meetings. This is usually from a pool of around 10 people, the vast majority of whom have day jobs.