bcs The Chartered Institute for IT

Digital Accessibility Specialist Group

Minutes Committee Meeting 15/04/15

1   Attendance

Present:

- David Rippon (chairman)
- Geoff McMullen
- Gill Whitney
- Jean Irvine
- Jeff Hughes
- Peter Dudley
- Ray Waddington-Jones
- Peter Abrahams (secretary)

Apologies:

- E. A. Draffan
- Daniel Ballin
- Howard Leicester
- Nigel Lewis
- Ricci Downard

2   Minutes of last meeting

Minutes accepted.

3   BCS views of DASG

Introduction

DR: Since the last meeting GMc attended the Spring Convention for Member Groups and I had email contact with David Evans. These both indicate the BCS view of us (see the two notes in the appendix).

We have got noticed by the Best Practice Committee and other groups.

The gist of it is that specialist groups promote knowledge and run events and that is not what we have been doing. The boards and administration do not see it as our role to tell the BCS about internal accessibility.

If we ran events, especially with third parties, we could use them to highlight lack of accessibility within the BCS.

This meeting needs to discuss a change of direction.

So suggestions as to activities we can organise.

FE Conference

GW: City University want an event relating to accessibility as part of IT accreditation, not accessibility of courses.

JISC tech stopped a few months ago.

Vince Cable less money for students.

How many students disabled 7-8%. Need to get statistics on disability by type.

Action All: Find statistics of types of disability in student population.

Action GW: to set up committee for event Easter next Year

Action DR: to organise room booking

Accessible document roadshow

PA: I would like to create a how to create accessible documents roadshow (see 13 Road Shows below)

PARN Conference

JI: Working on a joint conference wit PARN (see 4 PARN conference below). .

4 PARN Conference – Questions & Dates

JI: Now aiming for a joint conference with Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) in early autumn.

Will discuss conference with EHRC.

A questionnaire will be sent out before the conference, questions will include what statistics do you have on disabilities and do you have an accessibility policy.

Planning for 40-50 people in meeting

Action JI: to circulate questions and draft agenda.

Action DR: to get room availability late September.

5   Accessibility for BCS Staff & Members – D. Rippon

DR: Howard Leicester wrote an article on accessibility that has been published in ITNOW. The Accessibility Bunfight see p28 www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/itnow-mar15.pdf . The meeting thanked Howard in his absence.

DR: David Evans asked about comparison of BCS to other organisations. Should reply to him that the BCS completing the BDF Maturity model would help answer that question.

Action DR: reply to David Evans.

JH: Have we managed to progress the accessibility of ECDL raised by the British Dyslexia Society.

DR: No. It appears we do not have the mandate or power to do that. John Buttriss has not reported back on the issue. Suggest that the BDA continue to push and JH should report back to us on progress.

Action JH: Report lack of progress from our side back to BDA and ask them to keep us informed.

DR: Given David Evans view there seems little point in pushing these issues directly at this stage.

6   BCS web site and document accessibility – P. Abrahams

PA: Brian Runciman did not provide an update on the new website.

Has HL complained about web

Action PA: check with HL if he has complained about the website through the official process and ask him to report on the result.

PA: I have set up a Linkedin group (see 15 Support for IT Professionals with disabilities below).

7   Representation on Membership Board Committees – P. Abrahams

PA: I put in a nomination for the Best practice Committee. Apparently it was not an election and my name was passed on to the chairman Garfield Southall. We are in correspondence but I do not yet feel an active member.

Action PA: Continue communication with chairman and hope to become an active member.

8   BCS Staff Accessibility Champion – D. Rippon

DR: Wrote to Ian Thomson who said that they did not need an accessibility champion.

9 BCS Academy – G. McMullen

No progress

Will talk to McGee

Action GMc: to follow up with the academy.

10 Turing Lecture – G. McMullen

Need meaningful candidate

Vince Serf inventor of internet interested in accessibility. Does anyone have any suggestions?

Action All: forward suggestion of speakers to GMc

11 Joint events with other organisations – G. Collins/G. Whitney/N. Lewis

Covered under FE Conference and PARN above.

12 Digital Design for Everyone – P. Abrahams

PA: This is in abeyance and may be resurrected when the ADA website is available.

13 Road Shows

PA: I will create a presentation on the creation of Accessible Documents starting from a word processor.

DR: Need to advertise it, will talk to N London members group to see if they are interested in running the pilot session.

Action PA: to create

Action DR: to contact North London Group to see if they would be interested in the talk.

14 Liaison with other organisations (One Voice, BCS Health, IAAP, Tech UK)

PA: OneVoice has been wound down, and will be incorporated into the Alliance of Digital Accessibility (ADA) an organisation run out of BIS. More details about ADA should be available for our next meeting.

In the meantime the OneVoice web site remains open so that its content can be moved to the ADA site.

Action PA: continue contact with ADA and report back to next meeting

Action DR: to write to BCS Education SG and Human interface SG about FE conference.

15 Support for IT Professionals with disabilities

PA: Created Linkedin group 'Accessibility for IT Professionals' A forum for IT Professionals with disabilities to discuss accessibility issues and solutions moderated by the BCS DASG. To join go to Linkedin and search for the group with that name.

We now need to advertise this through the BCS.

Action PA: find routes to making this group known within the BCS and externally.

16 Finances – N. Lewis

Agenda item for next meeting

17 AOB

IT4C has lost staff not sure of status.

PD: next WCIT lunch followed by Abilitynet demo of accessibility.

18 Date of next meeting

16th July at 2 pm

19 Appendix

BCS Spring Convention For Member Groups Views On DASG From Other Attendees - DR

Informal conversations with several attendees identified a perspective on DASG that we need to understand and recognise. The attendees typically have a long term interest in SGs and some are on Membership board and its committees.

1. DASG is seen by members of other SGs as unusual. Most new SGs want to spend far more than their budget in running events either to promote the agenda of their members to outsiders, or to share knowledge amongst members. We do neither. It is worth asking ourselves why this is so.

2. Our interest in shaping the BCS more effectively to support an inclusiveness agenda is seen as understandable, but eccentric. We're being supported by BCS to support a collective overall agenda from our particular area of interest, so coming within the structure to work out how best to do so would be viewed as normal, rather than standing outside and preaching to the body of the BCS, which is what observers see us as doing.

3. What this means is that we should show that we have some authority to speak about Digital Accessibility by developing an agenda and running events that develop and promote it, then set about influencing the BCS's broader agenda. It will take time, but could have a good effect. It is clear that some of our members are

already distinguished players in the accessibility and impairment field, but we should show what we are able to do as a group.

Email fom David Evans (BCS Membership Director) to David Rippon (DASG Chair)

David,

Chris (Butcher – BCS Head of Customer Service) passed on your email to me, and having discussed with Chris, I think it's probably a good idea for me to tie some of this together.

You're right, I think there are some misunderstandings, and some confusion around roles and responsibilities. There are a number of different activities, such as the accessibility of ECDL and the Charter. These activities are governed through various routes, but DASG doesn't play a role in that governance. I only mention that for the avoidance of doubt, should it not be clear.

There may well be opportunities for DASG to assist, but on a consensual basis. For the staff involved, this is but one of many things going on. You're clearly not getting traction with the staff team, and I think more of the same is not likely to change the situation. I'd be happy to share some thoughts on different approaches, as I have been in the past. As I've said before, I think the most important thing for DASG to do is focus on digital accessibility as a societal and professional issue rather than an internal organisational one. I am well versed in the counter-arguments to that, but recent experience has only reinforced my view.

Regarding the unconscious bias of BCS towards those with disabilities, it's an interesting question as to whether a legal person has an unconscious! Something I'll give some thought to (smiley face). I found the report you sent over interesting. It raises some important questions about disability UB in society – and as the staff, volunteers and members of BCS are part of society it's clearly applicable. The UB training is perhaps an opportunity to build on. I understand you've fed back your comments to the people responsible for the training; if so the loop is closed on that one.

One point from your communications wasn't clear to me – whether BCS is an organisation with more of an issue with disability than is generally the case. If you've any thoughts on that I'd be interested to hear them.

Regards,

David