

BCS Digital Accessibility Specialist Group

Draft Minutes Committee Meeting 23/01/18

2:00 pm at BCS, First Floor,
The Davidson Building,
5 Southampton Street
London, WC2E 7HA

1. Attendance

Welcome:

HL: Welcomed the meeting and explained that would be chairing this meeting as GC, our new chairman, is unwell. HL wished GC a speedy recovery on behalf of the meeting.

Present:

- Peter Abrahams (Secretary)
- Geoffrey McMullen
- Howard Leicester (deputising chair)
- Terence Freedman (Treasurer)
- Jean Irvine
- Nigel Lewis
- Andrew Barnes
- Teum Teklehaimanot
- EA Draffan
- Ray Waddington-Jones

Remote

The option was available to sign in remotely, but this time no one took it up.

Apologies:

- David Rippon

- Malgorzata van Leeuwen
- Claire Milne
- David Brew
- Graham Rees-Evans
- Graham Collins (Chair)
- Gill Whitney
- Rob McLaren
- Jeff Hughes

New Members

- Andrew Barnes
- Teum Teklehaimanot

AB: Andy Barnes has over a decade's experience in STEMM, working in the NHS, academia, and private sectors. He's particularly interested in databases and programming, is an expert problem solver, finds football commentary hilarious, and listens to weird music. He sometimes solves complex maths problems but never learned his times tables.

He is a member of several specialist groups including DMSG, SGAI, FACS, OWASP, IEEE Computer Society, DASG, and is working with or part of various groups and charities trying to make IT more accessible in the Information Age.

TT: Over 18 years' experience of supporting and coaching learners to improve their IT skills, Mathematics, research and referencing skills. Highly experienced in supporting learners 'at risk' including with challenging behaviours to build their self-confidence and independent learning. Skilled in eLearning and website development. Specialist in information security assurance and risk management to protect information assets and IT systems.

Work for a charity as a volunteer web developer to design and administer its websites and implement information security features and digital certificates (encryption) to protect the charity's confidential information.

In 2016, I was elected Support Staff Governor and joined the Governing Body. I am a member of Audit, Curriculum Quality & Improvement Committees.

Resignations

- Marianne Markowski is going on maternity leave and will rejoin the SG when she returns to work.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Accepted.

Except that Claire Milne did not attend and should have appeared under apologies.

Matters Arising not dealt with elsewhere

None

3. Engagement with DASG membership – All

This item was not discussed directly but came up in several of the later agenda items. Any actions from the later discussions that related to Engagement with Members are collected together at the bottom of this section.

MvL and CM could not attend this meeting but sent emails related to engagement which are included here:

MvL: (by email) Thank you for emailing the minutes. They make a depressing reading, particularly when read in context of the recently published BCS Diversity Report (<http://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/diversity-report-2017.pdf>). I think that we have reached a point where a more vigorous action is needed – starting with asking for some changes at the BCS (for example, provision of accessibility awareness training for committee members). I would like to help. I am planning to ask at work if I would be allowed some of DASG activities as part of my work duties.

CM: Thank you for being prepared to continue as secretary (and my thanks also to others who have served, or are now prepared to serve, as officers for the group). I know all too well how hard it is to keep going with these grossly under-appreciated efforts to support a cause that we feel matters.

It makes a refreshing change to read an honest report of such a group's activities, that admits that in fact we made little difference.

I'd like to share my awareness of how some other groups with related objectives are faring in these difficult times, just in case they might offer any useful connections for DASG:

- The National Consumer Federation, having been at a very low ebb in recent years, now seems to be back on its feet, and has recently held a successful conference

whose report names various bodies and organisations that are supporting it. The theme of (potential) consumer vulnerability which was discussed represents a shared concern with DASG – as being a consumer (or simply citizen) moves online, digital accessibility for all is increasingly vital.

- The Essential Services Access Network, which focuses on ensuring access to energy, water, financial services and communications, will pick up on the themes of consumer vulnerability and digital accessibility in its planned conference on 12 March 2018.
- The Government's consultation on its internet safety strategy, which closed in December, is supposed to lead to a reshaping of the UKCCIS to cover online safety for everyone, not just children, and possibly including safety around the Internet of Things. The latter is an area I've been particularly concerned with in recent years, including through BCS. Disability groups have been highlighting both how smart gadgets can help to overcome impairments, and how their user interfaces and instructions must be usable by their target users. In parallel, the proposed Council for Data Ethics and innovation is supposed to be getting £9m government funding. IoT security, with its implications for (physical) safety and (data) privacy, is also getting a lot of attention.

Action GC PA HL: create a 'newsletter' and questionnaire to the membership that suggests planned actions and events for 2018, including: offer from IAAP, need for deputies for chair, secretary and treasurer. Also suggest possible other projects and ask the membership what they would like done and how they can help we should concentrate on 2 or 3. PA and HL will help GC set this up.

4. GDPR and communications with members – Peter Abrahams

GDPR mandates that as little personnel information should be held on private machines and where possible should be kept on the BCS site.

A distribution list of BCS members of DASG is created by the members registering for the SG. This creates a list held by BCS that can be used by the officers to communicate with the membership without knowing any information about the individual members.

A similar list will be set up for non-BCS members of the SG.

Obviously there is a need for committee members to communicate directly and personnel information being held on private machines. This is allowed as long as it is agreed by both parties.

The BCS has not yet published best practice notes on these processes. When available they will be incorporated into the SG practice.

Action PA: will ensure this works as best as possible. He will also ask the Best Practice Committee for BCS standard practice notes.

5. BCS Webinars around diversity/inclusion/social mobility – Nigel Lewis

The SG received the following request from Olivia Wolfheart and NL agreed to respond and help.

Olivia Wolfheart: (by email to D David Rippon and Graham Collins) My colleague Sallyann passed your details on to me as BCS are making plans to run a series of webinars around diversity/inclusion/social mobility.

We are keen to access the expertise of our communities for these webinars, and for volunteers and members to have the opportunity to be presenters.

One of the topics we would like to cover in the series is digital accessibility. The points we would be looking to cover are along the lines of:

1. General inequality in the labour market affecting members of the group, (e.g. issues like the BBC unequal pay saga)
2. Personal experience and barriers overcome during education and career
3. Recruitment, promotion, equal pay issues affecting members of the specialist group
4. How the specialist group works for its members
5. What benefits members can gain from the specialist group – e.g. networking with people with similar life experience, sharing those experiences and learning from each other, providing support to members etc.
6. Promote the specialist group to members at large and ask for more members to join
7. Actively promote IT to community at large.

There are no fixed dates yet but are planning this for sometime in the spring. I understand there is a plan to transfer the role of chair from David to Graham so I'm contacting you both to see if either of you would be interested in this or if you would be able to recommend someone.

Kind Regards,

Ms Olivia Wolfheart, BA (Hons), MBCS

Community Development Manager

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT

Action NL: NL has responded to say that he is willing to help.

6. Assistive Technology week 19 March at University of Arts London – P. Abrahams

DASG received the following request from Barbara Denton:

Barbara Denton is planning an Assistive Technology week in March, at University of Arts London (Probably at 2-3 of our sites). It will be aimed at disabled staff and academic staff supporting students.

I wondered if there was capacity from the DASG to come and do a talk on a related topic? Any thoughts/experience you have about running an event like this will be gratefully received.

We have a high number of students with SpLDs (Specific Learning Difficulty) and we are an arts university, with only a scattering of exams and a lot of practical and making work. Thankfully our AT week program has developed since this request was sent to you. Our Keynote speaker is Hector Minto the Microsoft accessibility guru. The week is about assistive technology and we are covering autism (brain in hand), online video resources to support learning, staff experiences of using AT, access to work, mental health and the cognitive model with relevant apps, teaching using assistive technology, Mindview, DAC talking about web accessibility, office 365 built in options, Adobe creative suite accessibility options, Trello, built in apps on Macs and in Word, and then a moving show covering traditional AT that we provide here.

I think anything that will be of practical help to staff either for themselves or that they could use in supporting their students is what we are looking for. An inspirational speaker who uses AT from another organization, particularly if they have an SpLD for example. We are open to any ideas though.

Thanks very much for your help.

If you can help contact:

Barbara Denton

Assistive Technology Coordinator

ITS

University of the Arts London

12th floor, Tower Block

Elephant and Castle, London SE1 6SB

T 020 7514 6956

E b.j.denton@arts.ac.uk

www.arts.ac.uk

EAD: noted that this is the week of CSUN and that may cause a problem.

HL: said that his experience may be of interest and he asked PA to put him in contact with BD

Action HL/PA: PA to contact Barbara Denton and introduce her to HL with the offer of help.

7. Robotics Event – J.Irvine/G.McMullen

Jl: been in touch with Gurvinder Singh from CLAWAR (its mission is: The advancement of education and science for the public benefit in the field of robotics and associated technologies.)

A conference will be held 20th June at BCS on 'Robotics in health'. This is being organised by Jl and GMcM for DASG.

Jl: There was a meeting last week run by the AI SG on 'Are robots good for society'. She was planning to attend but was unwell but will contact the AISG to understand how it went and how it could relate to conference.

Jl :will also check with BCS Health if the eHealth conference will include robotics.

Jl: will also connect with Royal society of Medicine via WCIT to find out what they are doing on robotics. Also the RSA held an event on 'Are robots going to take over people jobs.'

AB: is applying for vice chairman of eHealth.

Action Jl/GMcM: update SG on progress of events.

8. Best Practice Committee: Inclusion Officer – P. Abrahams

The official announcement of this role is still awaited. There is a meeting of the Best Practice Committee this Thursday (25/1/18) and PA will chase.

HL: Ben Watson and Andy Gibbon are actively running Inclusion Officer in Kent.

Action PA: chase announcement with BPC.

9. NHS – Accessible Information Standard–

J.Irvine/N.Lewis/H.Leicester

Jl: Chairs patient participation group in North London. The view is that AIS is up and running but it does not seem to be achieving its full objectives.

HL: anyone with accessibility issues can ask for info in the best format for them, this requires the patient to register and the information shared with relevant health care professionals.

Sign Health is now part of 111 so deaf users can get on-line sign language.

There are different IT system across NHS England. These systems should talk to each other and be able to collect information.

HL is working with Lancs to try and prove that the Lancs system is working.

AB: willing to help as he has experience in this area.

Jl: Could we run an event later this year on how this is progressing?

Action HL/AB/Jl: set up conference.

Action HL AB: to communicate about working together.

Action HL: to report back on progress of AIS.

10. Assistive Technologies Interest Group –

P.Abrahams/H.Leicester

Carry forward.

11. IAAP Membership – N.Lewis/P. Abrahams

NL: PA and NL met with MD of International Association of Accessibility Professionals in November. IAAP runs a certification program.

Following the meeting BCS has been offered Access to IAAP Webinars for DASG members for \$4000 pa. The meeting felt this could be a good offer.

Need to ask SG members if they agree that it is good idea.

To get funding we would need to put in special request to BCS. To start this rolling TF will send the necessary form to NL to complete.

Action TF NL: send form to NL to fill in.

Action NL/GC: GC needs to send out note to SG Members about this offer. NL will send link to the IAAP website with information on the webinars.

12. Accessibility Training/SFIPlus – P.Abrahams

PA: PA submitted suggestions of changes to SFIA and we now wait to see how the suggestions are incorporated.

He will also be at an inaugural SFIPlus update on Wednesday (24/1/18). He will see how accessibility can be incorporated.

Gareth Jones is working on SFIPlus and PA has asked him to press for the inclusion of accessibility.

TT: Is a SFIPlus content reviewer so can influence accessibility.

Action PA: Send suggested changes to TT so he knows what was suggested.

Action PA/TT/GJ: work on SFIPlus to ensure accessibility is well represented.

13. Collaboration with software testing SG – P. Abrahams

Carried forward.

14. University procurement of AT – R.McLaren/E.A.Draffan

EAD: Procurement in universities for Assistive Technologies tends to be carried out by individual institutions as they are formally independent bodies and are not Government owned (see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universities_in_the_United_Kingdom).

The University of Kent student services have a good example of how they advise their colleagues on making sure procurement of digitally accessible software, apps and ebooks can be implemented (see:

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/studentssupport/accessibility/procurement.html>). This type of guidance will be necessary with the implementation of the Directive on "Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services in Europe". This will be based on the requirements set forth in clauses 9, 10, and 11 of European standard EN 301 549 V1.1.2 (2015-14) (see: <http://mandate376.standards.eu/standard>) and comes into force this September before Brexit.

There is no national body dealing with AT procurement in Higher Education but the British Assistive Technology Association (BATA) (see: <http://www.bataonline.org/>) is the organisation that has been very involved in the recent changes to the technology side of the Disabled Students Allowances.

TT: FE Colleges and schools would be able to implement digital accessibility if the Department of Education (DoF) and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) made digital accessibility a part of funding requirements.

Action EAD: send list of reports to PA and HL.

Action HL: Write to BATA saying we are willing to help

Action NL: mention to BATA AGM.

15. Disability, accessibility, personalisation, inclusion and design Presentation – P. Abrahams/J.Irvine/G.Whitney

John Lamb and Peter Abrahams have presented to branches about Digital Accessibility. This needs to be turned into a package that can be offered to branches and delivered by various members of DASG.

Action PA: send note to JI/GW/JL with suggestions

16. BDF Conference – J.Irvine

Jl: Last year AGM BDF worried that the IT profession does not include enough people with disabilities. How can we help to increase that.

Action JI/AB: to discussed

Action JI: To find out who is the contact with BCS and BDF.

17. Finances – Terence Freedman

Spent £70 of over £2000 available.

Action NL: Send budget to TF

18. Succession Planning for secretary – Peter Abrahams

PA: Said that he has health problems and there may come a time when he will have to stand down as secretary and a new secretary will have to be found.

HL: suggested that this is a more general problem and that we should appoint deputies for all roles: chair, secretary and treasurer. He is already the deputy chair.

Action GC: should try and find deputies as part of the newsletter to members. See item 3.

19. AOB

GMcM: Said that the SG was looking at a lot of interesting initiatives but we currently do not have sufficient band width to cover them all. We need to ask the membership which ones they think are most important and which ones they can help with. We need a questionnaire to members to cover this? The action for this is in Item 3 of the minutes.

PA: Noted that we do not yet have a date fixed for the third meeting in 2018. He suggested 18th October but will action GC to confirm and book.

Action GC: set and book date for third meeting in 2018.

20. Dates of 2018 meetings:

- Tuesday 10th April 2018
- Tuesday 17th July 2018

All meetings will be from 2 pm to 4 pm and a sandwich lunch will be available at 1 pm.