EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICES IN THE ACCESSIBILITY OF ELECTRONIC PLATFORMS BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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PROJECT HANDBOOK

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EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICES IN THE ACCESSIBILITY OF ELECTRONIC PLATFORMS BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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PROJECT SUMMARY

This project has 5 main objectives.

1. Exchange of good practices on the use of electronic youth participation platforms that are accessible to all young people, regardless of whether they face barriers such as disabilities, in order to increase/improve the civic competences of European youth.

2. Exchange of good practices in relation to the mechanisms so that the participation of young people is of a multidimensional type and allows their role in the different instances of the civic-democratic cycle regardless of their disability.

3. Exchange of good practices on the design and implementation of tools so that certain groups can participate electronically and be incorporated into this civic-citizen empowerment strategy.

4. Exchange of good practices on the strategies of use and visibility of electronic platforms in terms of accessibility.

5. Exchange of good practices on how to involve political authorities in these types of projects.

Thanks to the exchange of good practices, the project partner entities will be able to increase/improve their know-how, mindset and knowledge about the accessibility of electronic platforms for youth.

In order to achieve this, the partners will evaluate 20 electronic platforms in the following fields of youth participation: political participation, public services, social networks and culture. Each partner will fill in an evaluation template that will identify the essential characteristics and draw conclusions.

The characteristics that will be taken into account will be: the design of the platform, the level of accessibility and the types of disability.

The expected impact on participants, participating organizations, target groups and other relevant stakeholders will be:

- for youth workers, facilitators and educators, the expected impact is that they will be offered a new concrete work tool and with specific recommendations to favour the accessibility of young people to civic-political youth platforms;

- for the young people who participate in the development of the project, the qualitative impact will be measured, thanks to questionnaires and comments from the participants and facilitators, and will be based on an increase in the consultation of youth participation platforms when their accessibility is adequate;

- within the 5 partner organizations, the impact will be significant, as they will be trained in a field as necessary today as is the full accessibility of youth to all resources, regardless of the barriers to which they can be found. At the end of the project, each partner will have experience and competence in the following aspects: strategic partnership projects, activity management and coordination, web accessibility, research and evaluation methodologies, manual writing and information structuring, adaptation in the field of young people with fewer opportunities, worker training ...;

- regarding the other youth organizations, the impact will be visible through visibility and dissemination activities;

- other relevant stakeholders will have access to all the materials developed in this project and are invited to attend the multiplier event to have direct contact with the specialists and develop new partnerships locally.

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PROFILE OF THE ORGANIZATIONS

The **ASPAYM Castilla y León Foundation** began operating in 2004, twelve years after ASPAYM was founded in the region of Castilla y León. C.

Its main objectives are: to promote autonomy, equal rights and opportunities and improve the quality of life of people with physical disabilities, allowing them a meaningful integration into society. In addition, ASPAYM CyL seeks to be a leading association, providing its target users with the tools to achieve that mission. This goal is achieved through the quality of its programs and activities, research and the appropriate use of new technologies.

ASPAYM CyL has a youth department focused on activities with young people. This department is an active member of the Regional Regional Youth Council of CyL, and it is also a member of the Permanent Youth Council of the Province of Valladolid. We are also part of the network of youth information points in the province of Valladolid, which makes ASPAYM the only youth organization with the diversity level that complies with all of the above.

The organization, and also the youth department, has offices in different cities, with special emphasis on rural areas. It includes Ávila, Burgos, Camponaraya (León), Cubillos del Sil (León), León, Matapozuelos (Valladolid), Palencia, Paredes de Nava (Palencia), Segovia (Segovia), Valladolid and Villadiego (Burgos).

The youth department of ASPAYM CyL develops a multitude of activties: advocacy, non-formal education, employment, as well as years of experience and multiple awards. Also the awareness project "Ponte en mis zapatos" (Put yourself in my shoes), whose main objective is the standardization of disability in schools, community centers, youth organizations, etc. In recent years, the organization has been committed to the use of gamification as a methodology in non-formal education activities. In this sense, ASPAYM CyL has developed board games, video games, escape rooms and manuals based on this technique to work with youngsters, always from an inclusive perspective in order to ensure equal access of young people with disabilities to all available resources.

In addition, within ASPAYM we have a project called JAVACOYA, which was born with the pretension of personalized service to our clients and the dream of overcoming the daily challenges set by the market. In addition, it offers a wide range of resources diversity of resources, all of them oriented to optimize and profit, with complete adaptation to your needs, such as:

–Web site design, specializing in the realization of web pages accessible to everyone.

–Web updating, creation and management of profiles on social networks to provide them with new content. Webmaster tasks, web positioning and marketing campaigns.

–Design and development of custom software.

https://www.aspaymcyl.org/

Biderbost, Boscan & Rochin, SL (BB&R) is an international consulting company with an outstanding track record in corporate social responsibility in the field of youth.

BB&R headquarters are in Salamanca (Spain), university center of excellence in southern Europe. Its staff consists of ten young professionals from various cultures and disciplines. BB&R have carried out projects for different international organisations (European Union, EU-LAC Foundation, InterAmerican Development Bank, United Nation Development Programme, World Bank, International Organization for Migration), NGOs and government agencies (Spain, Brazil, Norway, Canada, Bulgaria, UK).

BB&R seeks to add value by incorporating tools and strategies that train young people and youth workers with skills for successful integration into the labor market and active civic life.

For lifetime achievement, BB&R has been awarded by the Chamber of Commerce of Peru in Spain with the "Award for Best Business Initiative in Spain" (2015).

https://www.bbyr.com/en/

ROSTO SOLIDÁRIO

The work of **ROSTO SOLIDARIO - RS** aims to foster global citizenship and solidarity by improving the human and social development of local communities.

The basic principles of RS are civic participation, social integration, solidarity, networking and partnership. The organisation's scope of work includes four main areas: international development cooperation, global citizenship education, volunteerism and family-based social support. Gender equality, human rights and social inclusion are addressed as cross-cutting issues in all programmes promoted. Also Rosto Solidário takes Non-Formal Education approaches to foster lifelong learning opportunities following the Global Citizenship Framework.

 RS's legal status of public utility as an NGO has been recognised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2008. As a member of the Portuguese NGOD Platform, it is represented in both the Working Group on Development Education and the Working Group on Ethics.

RS is an accredited hosting and sending organisation for European Voluntary Service projects since 2011.

At local level, RS is a member of Rede Social do concelho de Santa Maria da Feira (local network of 115 organisations providing social services - following the National Action Plan for Inclusion Guidelines). Within this network, RS has been awarded four times with recognition for its work in promoting voluntary work and supporting the development of local communities.

https://rostosolidario.pt/

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Narodno chitalishte "Badeshte sega 2006"
was established in 2006 by experts in the field of
education and training.

Our mission is: To enrich the process of personal development and learning inspired by nature.

The main objectives of Narodno chitalishte "Badeshte sega 2006" are:
- Improving Quality of Youth work;
- Developing alternative educational programs;
- Training teachers and educational staff in alternative methodologies;
- On-line and digital learning;
- Environmental and adventure education;
- Promoting Non-formal education and learning;
- Social integration of young people with fewer opportunities.

Main fields of activities implemented by our organization are: on-line learning and schooling, youth work, non-formal learning, personal development of children and youth, support for people with fewer opportunities, environmental and civic education, career guidance. We deliver training on national and international levels (Youth in Action, Euro-Med Youth IV, Life Long Learning, Erasmus +), we also implement EVS projects, youth camps, trainings for teachers and extracurricular activities for schools.

 Until now, the organization has worked with more than 150 projects funded by Erasmus+, Youth in Action, LLL, ESF on Human Resource Development Programme, EEA Grants, CEE Trust, UNDP and Governmental funding. These projects were in the fields of youth work, environmental non-formal education, civic education, motivation and personal development.

On regional and local level, as leading organization, we have implemented many projects related to ecology, social inclusion, youth initiatives and policy reforms. Together with local youth organizations we are running youth hub (youth center in the city of Smolyan).

NC Future Now is an active member of National network for Kids (NMD) where we work with more than 250 organizations dedicated to kids and youth development.

Since 2009, NC Future Now is established the National Authority for The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – the largest International program for personal development of young people working in over 144 countries with more than 8 million youth since 1956. In 2020, the program reached nearly 1000 youth from all over Bulgaria.

NC Future Now is also a member of networks, such as CEEweb for Biodiversity and Rückenwind for the support of young people with fewer opportunities. NC Future Now has established and manages a network for sustainable exchange of good practices, called Alive Places.

Since 2010, we are one of the founders and an active member of the National Youth Forum in Bulgaria, which is a national youth representing organization, member of European Youth Forum (YFJ).

Narodno chitalishte "Badeshte sega 2006" owns and develops educational center "School in Nature" in Gudevitsa village in the Rhodope Mountains, which demonstrate sustainable community and educational practices and conduct training for children, youth and adults.

https://gudevica.org/#

The **HRYO - Human Rights Youth Organization** is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation founded in Palermo (Italy), in 2009, with the aim to strengthen the Human Rights at a local and global level.

Our Vision. HRYO believes in a world governed by peace and mutual understanding. We see education as an essential aspect towards creating a reality that promotes and protects human dignity, all aspects of equality and sustainability. As an organization we see the importance in supporting local action and developing the potential of a single human being, for small changes lead to big process.

Our Mission. To facilitate, through various means, the fulfilment of Human Rights and establish an international network of organisations and individuals who are actively contributing to their local context.

Our Goals.
1. To restore Human dignity by using non-formal educational projects that respond to the needs of society and the individual;
2. To break down prejudice by connecting different realities and facilitate an intercultural dialogue;
3. To raise awareness of oppression and suffering and the issues surrounding them;
4. To establish a network that supports local movements in conflict zones;
5. To create, facilitate and communicate a pathway towards a culture of peace, respect and sustainability;
6. To be of influence in the change of law, rules and policies that protect the Human Rights;
7. To establish a local Human Rights Centre that educates about and promotes the integration of Human Rights with daily life;
8. To promote culture as a tool in the acceptance and understanding of diversity;
9. To use a holistic approach in the achievement of tolerance amongst the new generation;
10. To promote peaceful action towards liberation from the influence of mafia and organized crime;
11. To be a leading example in all of the above.

https://www.hryo.org/chi-siamo/

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TARGET GROUPS

ASPAYM Castilla y León (Spain) is an organisation that works with the aim of improving the living conditions of people with disabilities in general and spinal cord injury in particular. Currently, we have more than 2000 members throughout the community and more than 200 workers.

Unfortunately, people with disabilities face daily access barriers to full social inclusion (architectural barriers, digital accessibility, employment barriers...). These can be analysed and reflected in different areas of the person: physical condition, emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, access to employment and educational and socio-cultural resources.

- Education. The process of school inclusion of people with disabilities is relatively stagnant. Gradually the incorporation of students with disabilities into the mainstream education system is catching up, but nevertheless the measures have not fully incorporated young people with disabilities into the mainstream school system.
- Employment. Young people with disabilities encounter many barriers to accessing the world of work: lack of opportunities, long-term health or illness, and lack of qualifications or experience.IHealth. Many young people with disabilities have chronic illnesses, which lead to chronic health problems, whether physical or psychological.
- Social and family relations. Social relations and access to socio-cultural activities, leisure and free time are reduced, leading to feelings of boredom and poor personal development.

This way, and following the main proposal of this project, which works to minimise the risks of social exclusion, we include in our target group young people, between 16 and 30 years old. This group includes people with and without disabilities. Regarding people with disabilities, there are different types: the most common and widespread disability is physical. Most of them need a wheelchair to be able to move around. Other types of disabilities that we can find in our group are intellectual disability and blindness.

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At **Biberbost Boscan & Rochin** (Spain), the main target group will be young university students, between 18 and 30 years old. Although they may already have a certain level of competence in digital platforms for education, we believe that they still have a lack of knowledge on how to participate civically, politically and democratically through electronic platforms.

ROSTO SOLIDÁRIO (Portugal) intends to develop this project with young people in vulnerable situations, namely: young people at risk of dropping out of school, young people from families with economic difficulties and also students from technical and professional courses (the latter often fall into the previous groups).

In Portugal, "huge social inequalities still exist" that directly influence inequalities in education. The Ministry of Education (2019) acknowledges that "there is an education system that does not respond to all those who attend compulsory school". It is therefore important to "implement different educational approaches" to reduce these inequalities. Statistics show that, each year, around 50,000 primary school pupils and another 50,000 secondary school pupils fail, for various reasons: lack of financial means, lack of support from families, poor dissemination of information and the alternatives they feel and their own lack of will.

And what is dropping out of school? It is a scenario in which a pupil leaves school without having completed his or her education, which in some cases can happen even before the end of the school year. It is a very complex and multifaceted phenomenon resulting from a combination of factors that can be social, economic, educational and family. In fact, disadvantaged families have higher rates of school failure, lead and drop-out rates, which limits young people's access to the labour market and perpetuates a weak socio-economic situation. As a general rule, dropping out of school is the result of a long and quite visible process of failure and progressive disinterest in education. Reasons may include: health difficulties; special educational needs; personal or family problems; poor relationship with teachers; poor relationship with peers and negative school climate, e.g. bullying; dissatisfaction with the results obtained.

However, it is known that there are patterns in this choice and therefore some young people are considered to be more at risk than others depending on the context around them. This early school leaving compromises their personal and academic growth, as well as their professional future and social integration, perpetuating social inequalities that lead to job insecurity and poverty, and ultimately to low or non-existent prospects for their professional future and personal fulfilment. On a personal level, these young people enter a process of rupture in their emotional development, in the acquisition of fundamental learning and in the development of skills, acquiring levels of self-esteem and self-confidence that are too low and practically irrecoverable for future citizens.

It is urgent to provide these young people with other tools where they can find relevant information, make contacts, get involved in issues/causes, and thus develop the necessary personal motivation to invest in themselves and their future. In this way, we will be promoting social inclusion, involvement and empowerment of young people, supporting the overcoming of their limitations and vulnerabilities. The digital era we are living in represents, therefore, an opportunity for social inclusion and for the construction of a personal future, as long as there are no "barriers" that prevent access to young people from different social backgrounds, considered in the scope of this project by all partners. The dissemination of the electronic platforms envisaged in this project also aims to motivate young people to civic participation, i.e. their knowledge and involvement in civic-democratic dynamics and decision-making bodies. This practice will result in their personal growth, social inclusion, appropriation of local/national/European causes and issues, resulting in a process of personal and social growth that will greatly benefit their future.

Narodno chitalishte " Badeshte sega 2006" (Bulgaria)

HRYO - **Human Rights Youth Organization** is engaged in implementing educational youth projects at local and international level since its foundation.

At lthe ocal level we organize seminars, workshops, and other educational courses for promoting human rights and other democratic, European values. In our activities, we also involve young people with fewer opportunities (e.g. young migrants, youngsters with disabilities and minors under the restorative justice program). We provide traineeship possibilities for university students and volunteers.

At international level, we have wide experience with the implementation of Youth in Action and Erasmus+ projects. Besides, we have been hosting international trainees from European and Mediterranean countries. We aim to promote, support and implement measures to counter the social problems and assist disadvantaged people in promoting people's wellness, growth, and inclusion. Moreover, HRYO is part of the Italian Federation of Social Disability – Federsid, a not-for-profit Association whose main aim is: – Promoting positive action in the social promotion and culture in the area where he does his work. – Conducting training and non-formal learning, aimed at improving the local environment by improving skills and care workers skills. – Carrying out activities aimed to young adults with disabilities integration and social inclusion, through the organization of trips and periodic recreational moments. – Creation of integrated services for prevention, recreation, education for people with disabilities. – Creation of non-formal mobility and learning opportunities in multicultural contexts for young people, young people with disabilities, and volunteers. – Stimulation of exercises of active citizenship by young people with disabilities and volunteers belonging to the Association through support in the development of youth initiatives and their direct involvement in social sensitization activities.

ABOUT THE CIVIC COMPETENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

How to increase/promote the civic skills of youth through the accessibility of electronic platforms in youth participation.

Participation

The concept of 'participation' is defined in the dictionary as "to share, to intervene, to have common qualities, to be an integral part..."1. Here is one of the most accepted definitions in the international community:

> "Participation is the ability to express decisions that are recognized by the social environment and that affect one's life and/or the life of the community in which a person lives."
>
> (Roger Hart, in "Youth Participation", UNICEF 1992)

Participatory processes are educational, formative and socialising in themselves, both for those who intervene directly and for the community in general, acting as effective mechanisms for the achievement of activities of collective interest. Social participation is an essential Human Right of all people and a society can be considered democratic when all its citizens participate.

Youth Participation

Young people are an important human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic growth and technological innovation. Their participation in decision making is a key priority area, however, to participate effectively, young people must be provided with the right tools, such as information, education and access to their civil rights. Encouraging young people's participation can happen at various levels, according to the United Nations in its Youth Guidelines:

> "Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development and that of their communities. (...) and learn vital life skills, develop knowledge about human rights and citizenship and promote positive civic action".
>
> ("Youth Participation", UN 2013)

- the inclusion of young people in the design, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of instruments, strategies and programmes;
- specific approaches, such as education and capacity-building;
- appropriate information and materials that can be developed with young people themselves, through traditional and/or technological means;
- structures and mechanisms which consolidate young people's participation in decision-making processes on topics which concern them: advisory groups, networks for positive civic engagement, etc.

This participation should take place within a framework of inclusion, equity and gender equality, without any social, economic and cultural barriers that impede access for various groups that tend to be marginalised, such as young people with disabilities, indigenous young people, young migrants, young people affected by conflict and post-conflict situations, young people affected by HIV, girls and young women, etc.

This participation can be promoted on three levels: political, associative and civic.

- **Political participation.** The aim is to provide more training, information and involvement of young people on issues of democracy, thus contributing to the fight against abstention and misinformation and fostering the involvement of young people in decisions;

- **Associative.** The existence of congregating platforms, such as the National Youth Council and similar, which ensure the active and constructive participation of its member organisations, as well as being a vehicle for information and capacity building;

- **Volunteering and Activism.** Serving as a bridge between new forms of participation, such as social networks and other informal forums for dialogue, and bringing the voice of young people into formal spaces (Municipal Youth Councils, Secretaries of State for Youth and Sport and other governmental partners).
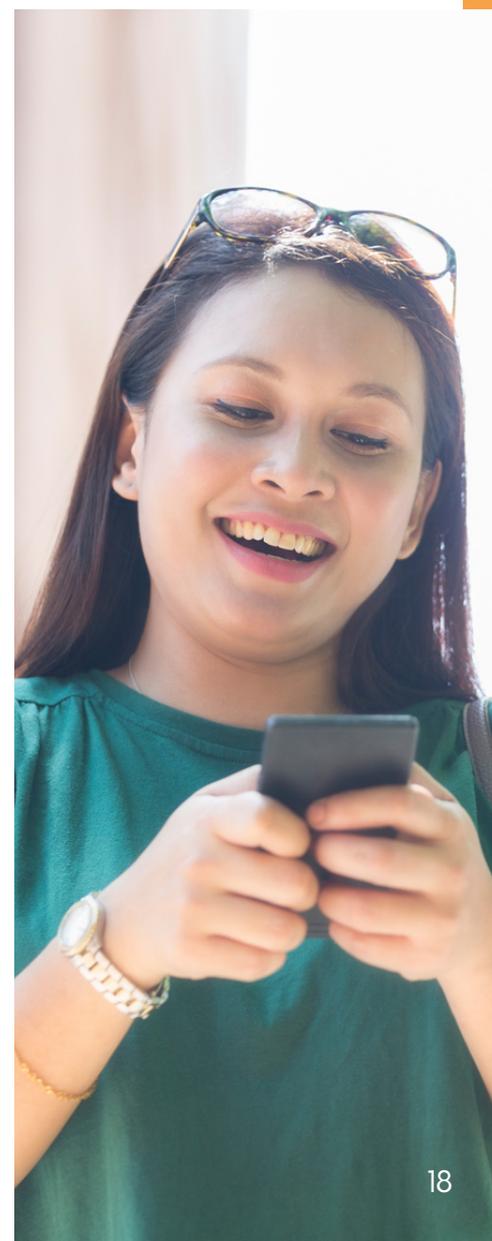
The "Participation Ladder"

"Youth participation should be understood not as mere listening, but seeking to reach what is the last rung of Roger Hart's Participation Ladder, where young people generate the ideas, design the projects and invite the decision-makers to be part of and develop together, never losing the coordinating role, the space for participation and the power of decision."

(by CNJ – National Youth Council, Portugal, 2021)

First published in 1992 by UNICEF, Roger Hart's "Participation Ladder" has become an influential and widely applied model in the fields of child development, education, civic participation, and democratic decision-making.

"The child has the right to freedom of expression; this right includes freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice."

(Art. 3. – Universal Declaration of the Rights of the Child)
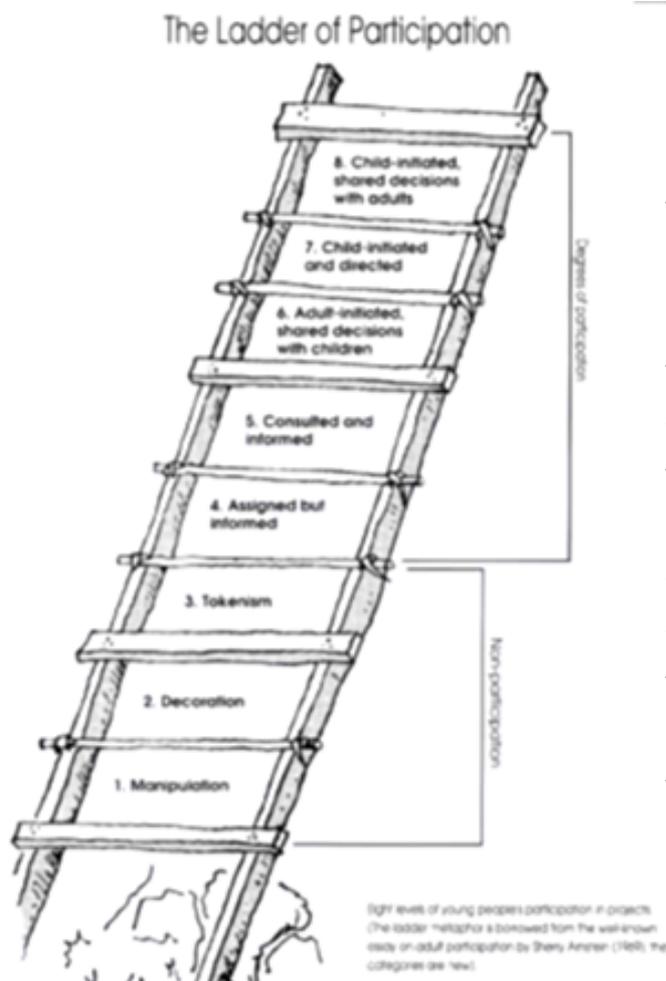
This model has proven to be extremely useful in helping different professional groups and institutions to rethink the way they work with young people. Its simplicity of form and clarity of purpose enable them to find a language which makes everyone reflect on the current format of their work, and thus be able to act towards the change which promotes true recognition of the potential of children and young people in the participation in themes and causes which concern them.

The author defines **8 steps** on the ladder of participation, the first three of which are defined as **Non-Participation**:

(1) Manipulation
(2) Decoration
(3) Tokenism or token participation.

It *happens when young people do not understand the issues motivating their participation, their role, i.e. they are publicly exposed but do not understand the reason or they simply decorate an event.*

For **Participation** itself, the grades start at (4) Designated but informed and move through (5) Consulted and informed, (6) Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people, (7) Youth-initiated and led and end at (8) Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults.

We move up the "Participation Ladder" (from 4 to 8) when young people: *understand the intentions and why they are involved; when they are consulted by adults who are decision makers; when adults already share decision-making with young people of decisions; when young people design and perform in groups; when young people share authority, management and power with adults.*

In 2001, David Driskell proposed a reconceptualisation of Hart's model on an X-Y axis, which he called "The Dimensions of Youth Participation". This new format illustrates the increasing power to make decisions and change and also the different increasing levels of interaction and collaboration, allowing another reading of the possibilities and limitations of adults' actions in promoting Youth Civic Participation.

The dimensions of young people's participation

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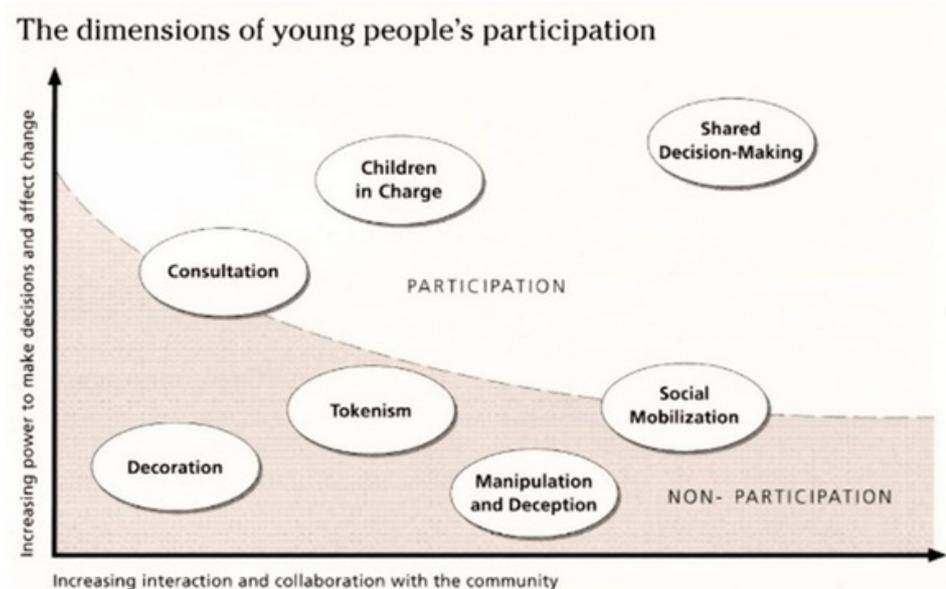
Practical suggestions for promoting Youth Participation

On a practical level, here are some suggestions for Adults to foster Youth Civic Participation.

- **Listening and communicating.** Create and foster spaces and moments for attentive, active and effective listening to young people, creating permanent opportunities for them to express their demands, opinions and wishes on a wide variety of subjects. It is fundamental that this communication is not unidirectional, that is, after collecting young people's contributions, it is imperative to make subsequent feedback happen.

- **Participation in management.** Encourage the creation and strengthening of youth groups and involving them effectively in the management of the cause and the projects, in interaction with other bodies (school, governmental, ...), i.e. involving young people in all the stages of the processes so that they take proper ownership of the issues, their management, decision making, evaluation, etc.

- **Participation in learning.** Including young people as co-authors in their learning and development process and involving them in the construction of projects and concrete proposals (choice, suggestion and planning), enhancing peer learning and empowering young leaders.

- **Youth leadership.** Map leaders among young people, so that they lead actions and encourage other young people to participate. These leaders can have different profiles and be located in different contexts: sporting, artistic, philosophical, political...

- **Participation in transformation.** Look at transformation by listening to young people; valuing and taking advantage of their ideas as a contribution to overcoming the challenges that concern them, as well as ensuring that their expectations are met.

- **Social participation.** Create and strengthen spaces for the leading role of young people from the group within, focusing on the solution of real problems and the realization of interventions that improve their context; empower young people through engagement in local intervention social projects/causes that expand their connections with the community and create opportunities for the exercise of citizenship.

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- **Institutionalization.** Create and implement municipal and state policies that encourage youth participation in community advisory and decision-making structures, so that youth participation becomes part of government procedures and models.

- **Training for participation.** Promote training for adults and young people, focusing on youth leading roles, democratic management, student participation (why get involved, how to foster), conflict mediation (non-violent communication, facilitation, culture of peace, restorative justice), among others.

How to promote Youth Civic Participation in a digital context

"The power of the Web lies in its universality.

Access by everyone, regardless of their status, is an essential aspect."

Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web

In recent years, digital media and networks have become part of our everyday lives, bringing about wide-ranging changes in the way we engage in knowledge production, communication and creative expression. Young people, in a concrete way, are immersed in new digital tools and networks, which allow them the most varied experiences and learning: games, social interaction, fun, study, problem solving, etc. With all this, new skills are developed, as well as new and innovative ways of expressing identity, independence and creativity, learning and expression.

However, in contemporary western societies, there is increasing talk of a *democratic deficit*: less and less engagement in civic life, less and less inclination to vote, to join political parties, to volunteer or campaign for social causes, or to put our trust in the political process. These problems often manifest themselves particularly among young people, who are widely described as *alienated*, *apathetic and disengaged*.

The search for solutions to this problem has led many to look to technology, and especially the Internet. Politicians, activists, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), youth workers and educators have turned to the Internet as a means of reclaiming young people for civil society. The participatory and networked potential of new technologies has been indicated as creating new possibilities for both civics and civic learning and action.

This raises some questions:
- Can young people indeed continue to participate, but in new and different ways?
- Will technology create new forms of political and civic culture among young people, and how can we recognise these forms?
- What constraints and obstacles?

At present, the types of sites and activities enhancing Youth Participation in civic contexts are:

- initiatives by government (including the EU) or political parties (through their youth wings);
- "single-issue" campaigns: on globalisation, discrimination, homelessness;
- more open forums, for particular social groups (disabled, refugees, gays and lesbians) debating their own agenda and issues;
- sites promoting social activity or participation on the basis of religious beliefs or ethnic minorities;
- sites that encourage volunteering and social or community activism;
- sites that address areas that may be seen as problematic, such as political violence or xenophobic hatred.

Such websites are by definition non-commercial sites set up by private individuals, citizens' or public interest groups, governments, political parties, NGOs, or other non-political agencies.

Again, more questions arise:

- To what extent does online participation result in greater civic participation?
- To what extent do these 'virtual networks' constitute new forms of civic participation in themselves?
- To what extent does the model of 'networked citizenship'6 really correspond to the everyday practices and motivations of most young people?
- Are there some types of young people (in terms of social class, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or culture) more likely to respond to such invitations than others?
- And how do responses to these questions vary across different cultures in different countries?

Trying to answer these questions, the dominant view of the Internet is very optimistic, seeming to provide the solution to the problem of young people's alienation from politics and civic life. According to its advocates, the Internet offers enormous possibilities for citizens to make their voices heard, to contribute autonomously to public debates, and to play a more active part in the political process. It provides a form of "network citizenship"6 that is more inclusive and more participatory than the passive and obedient citizenship of the past. It enables young people to become agents and authors of civic action rather than mere objects of adult interventions. Let us look at some of its characteristics in this respect:

Let us look at some of its characteristics concerning these aspects:

- **Anonimity.** It offers opportunities to experiment with ideas, positions, and civic identities without the need for personal commitment;
- **Instantaneity.** Significantly faster than other media in terms of ability to disseminate, obtain feedback, and update information;
- **Accessibility.** Significantly cheaper and more accessible on a daily basis;
- **The ease of ongoing engagement.** Allows for regular and permanent engagement and dialogue;
- **Disintermediation.** In many contexts (though not all), which means more direct access by users;
- **Equality.** (At least in principle) an egalitarian medium in which all participants have the same right to speak and there are fewer formal requirements for participation;
- **Information.** Abundant and with much less input costs for producers than in older media;
- **Deterritorialization.** It allows instant access to information from anywhere in the world, thus offering new possibilities for transnational engagements;
- **Personalisation.** Many of the above features allow users to develop approaches to the medium that will serve their individual motivations and purposes.

Therefore it does not seem to be unreasonable to expect that these possibilities – what we might call the "civic promise" of the Internet – will become particularly visible and attractive to young people.

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CONCLUSION

An entire generation is growing up in an era when digital media are part of the social and cultural fabric of learning, play, and media. Media literacy involves not only ways of understanding, interpreting and critiquing media, but also the means for creative and social expression, online research and navigation, and a range of new technical skills.

At first sight, there are good reasons to believe that Internet use can indeed contribute to an increase in civic participation and that it could at least contribute to new ways of "doing politics " among young people. In other words, it could be a response to the urgent need to create circumstances and contexts in which young people can express their identity, unleash their creativity, learn, make their concerns known, be able to discuss them, seek solutions to them, relate to their peers …

To this end, and in order to confirm the possibility of "citizenship in network", and thus promote the civic competences of young people through electronic platforms, it will be necessary to ensure from the outset: physical access to the Internet and equipment for everyone and a minimum level of digital literacy and critical view of young people on the accuracy of the contents.

As for the platforms: that they are accessible to people with different needs and from the most diverse social backgrounds; that they are adapted to the language and culture of the young people they aim to reach, that they do not feed and/or disseminate fake news and radical and extremist messages and, finally, that they are oriented towards the pursuit of the last degrees of the ladder of participation.

FUNDAMENTAL KEY ELEMENTS OF AN ELECTRONIC PLATFORM ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH LIMITATIONS

Key elements that an electronic platform must have to be accessible to people with disabilities and migrants.

Introduction

According to current European regulations (EN 301 549 V3.1; www.etsi.org; November 2019), any website subjected to be considered accessible must comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 of the W3C at level AA. These guidelines contain 50 success criteria. Analyzing many of them requires great knowledge and experience.

Introduction

Some of the criteria are more relevant than others depending on the barriers that create their non-compliance. Many of them can be grouped to make it easier to evaluate a website. With this in mind, this document simplifies the process of reviewing the accessibility of a website, considering the ten most controversial points in terms of the accessibility of a website. After checking these ten points on a website, if the result is negative, it can be guaranteed that the website does not comply with WCAG 2.1. However, if the result is positive, we cannot guarantee compliance with WCAG 2.1, but we can ensure that it has an optimal level of accessibility.

10 indicators to measure web accessibility

No problems → Good level of web accessibility

→ ¿WCAG 2.1?

Problems → Bad level of web accessibility

→ WCAG 2.1
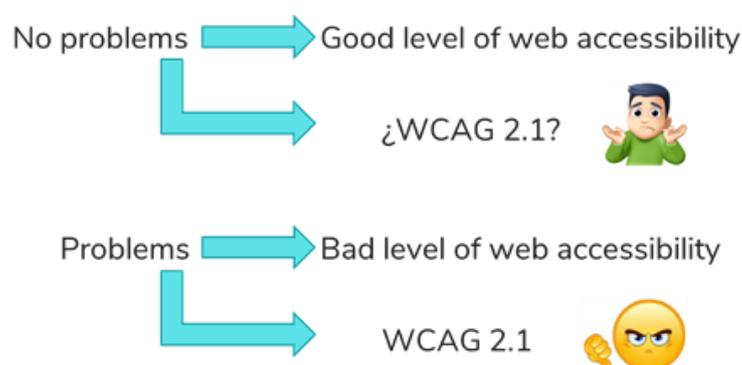
Web accessibility Decalogue

The grouping of the most relevant success criteria of the Web Content Accessible Guidelines has resulted in 10 indicators, so we can speak of a Web Accessibility Decalogue that websites must comply with in order to be able to affirm that they have a good level of accessibility.

Each of the indicators in the decalogue is described below.

1 – HEADINGS

When we access a website, we look at the section titles to see if the content interests us or not. In the same way, blind people use a screen reader to see the contents of a website and can request the list of titles on the page to browse them and find out if they are interested in accessing any section.

The logical structure of the information must be reflected through the existing heading structure, so as to facilitate non-visual reading, understanding and navigation. Everything that is visually a header, must also be in the code.

✓ **All sections of the web start with a header.**
Think of a website as a newspaper. All articles have a title.
And if the article has sections, it has smaller titles. These could
have subsections with smaller titles. All of this has to be reflected at the code level.

✓ **The headers are marked with the appropriate HTML tags** (H1, H2, H3...):

Example of correct use of headings

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– <h1> tag for the main title. It could be the title of the website or the title of the page we are

   on within the website. There should only be one <h1> tag.

– <h2> tag for important titles. If we use the <h1> tag for the website title, the <h2> tag must be

   the one for the title of the page where we are. It would also be used for the common blocks

   of the web page, as they can be contained in a side column or in the footer.

– <h3> tag for sections within content tagged as <h2>.

– <h4> tag for sections within content tagged as <h3>. Its use is rarely necessary.

– <h5> tag for sections within content tagged as <h4>. Very rarely its use is necessary.

– <h6> tag for sections within content tagged as <h5>. Its use will practically never be

   necessary.

✔ **Logical hierarchy of headings**

The hierarchy of headings must be consistent and logical.

For example, within an <h2> section there cannot be an <h4> header without first having an <h3>.

```
 1   <h1>Title of website</h1>
 2
 3       <h2>Title of the page in the webstie</h2>
 4
 5           (-----content-----)
 6
 7       <h4>Section title on page</h4>
 8
 9       (-----content-----)
10
11           <h3>Sub-section title<h3>
12
13           (-----content-----)
14
15       <h4>Section title on page</h4>
16
17       (-----content-----)
18
19       ...
20
```

Example of a bad header hierarchy

In the code represented in the image above, there is a header level jump. The correct code would be like this:

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```
1    <h1>Title of website</h1>
2
3        <h2>Title of the page in the webstie</h2>
4
5            (-----content-----)
6
7            <h3>Section title on page</h3>
8
9            (-----content-----)
10
11               <h4>Sub-section title<h4>
12
13               (-----content-----)
14
15           <h3>Section title on page</h3>
16
17           (-----content-----)
18
19           ...
20
```

Corrected code.

✓ **Headings should not be used to format text.**

If you want to highlight a text, you can do it through the CSS style sheets indicating the font size, thickness, colour, underline ... but you should never use the headings to take advantage of the fact that their predefined format highlights the texts.

✓ **There cannot be two consecutive same-level headings with no content between them**.

Semantically, two titles in a row of the same importance without content in between makes no sense. Similarly, there must not be a minor title followed by a major one with no content in between.

In the code of the image, the text on line 9 cannot be a third-level heading (h3), as it precedes another same-level heading with no text in between. Similarly, it could not be second level (h2) either. Semantically, it only makes sense for that title to be a subsection within that section, so it would have to be a fourth-level heading (h4).

```
1    <h1>Title of website</h1>
2
3        <h2>Title of the page in the webstie</h2>
4
5            (-----content-----)
6
7        <h3>Section title on page</h3>
8
9        <h3>Section title on page</h3>
10
11            (-----content-----)
12
13    <h3>Section title on page</h3>
14
15    (-----content-----)
16
17        ...
18
```

Example of misuse of headers.

2 - IMAGES

A blind user utilizes a 'screen reader' to access the contents of web pages. This software cannot interpret any image, therefore it is necessary that the images with relevant information have their corresponding description within the HTML code. Within the HTML code, this description must be in the alt attribute of the image tag.

The description should inform the purpose of the image in that context. Depending on the context, an image can convey different information. The description should also contain that information. For example:

In this image, if the article says that the price of apples is very expensive, a possible description would be "Photo of a supermarket where apples are worth 349.90". But if the article says that the supermarket is closing because it has no customers, the description could be "Photo of the supermarket with empty aisles."

The description must be precise and brief but without missing relevant information. No more than 150 characters. If more is needed (for example in a graphic, a poster ...) the information of the image should be given in an alternative way, for example, explaining the content of that image in the body of the article.

When an image is decorative, it must not have a description, but it must have an empty alt attribute (alt = "").

The use of images with text inside is not suitable.Logos are an exception.

3 - VIDEOS

The visually impaired and the hearing impaired may lose some of the information in a video if no alternative is offered.

If there is relevant information in the audio of the video, it would be necessary for the video to have subtitles. Better still if it also had a sign language interpreter (benefits people with prelingual deafness). Subtitles must be at least in the same language as the audio of the video.

A video with subtitles not only benefits the hearing impaired; ithere is relevant information in the video images: a video transcription (audio or textual) is required. It also benefits someone who does not have speakers, a parent who wants to watch a video while their baby sleeps, a person who is learning the language, etc.

If there is relevant information in the video images: a video transcription (audio or textual) is required.

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Finally, if it is a decorative video, no actions are required.

On the other hand, videos should not start playing by themselves and there should be buttons to play, pause, fast forward and rewind.

4 – LINKS

As with headings, blind users can ask the 'screen reader' for a list of the links on the website to see if they are interested in accessing any of them. Therefore, it is important that links must be descriptive and consistent (there cannot be two links with the same text and different destinations).

Links such as "More information", "Read more", ... should not be used.Also, there should be no empty links. For example, an image that is a link but does not have descriptive text in the alt attribute of the image tag.

On the other hand, if the link opens in a new window or tab, it must be notified. It can be notified in the link text or with an icon like this:

Example of an accessible link that opens in a new window

5 – Contrast and the semantic use of COLOUR

Poor contrast can make content inaccessible. In order to consider that the contrast of the text with the background is accessible, the following must be met:

– The text must have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1.
–Titles and large text should have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1.

There are some tools that allow us to analyze the contrast of the text and the elements of a website in a simple way.
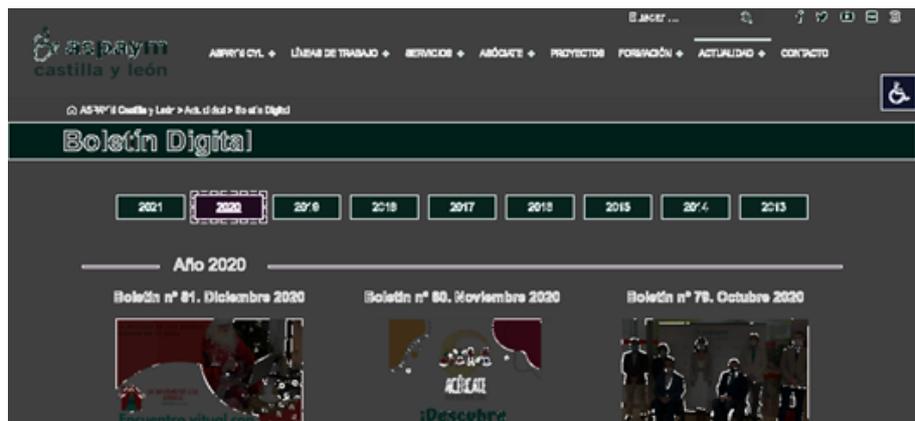
Example of contrast analysis on a website

This image was obtained with the Colour Contrast Analyzer tool, which is a plug-in for the Chrome browser.
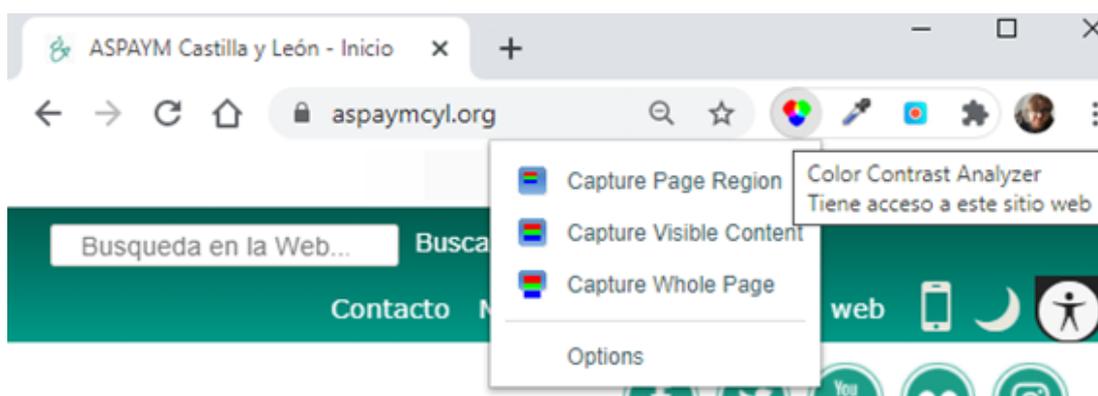
Colour Contrast Analyzer plug-in location after installing it on Chrome.

On the other hand, colour should not be used as the only way to provide information. For example, the required fields are in red.

6 - TEXT SIZE

Some people need to enlarge the font size of the browser in order to see the contents. When they do it, information cannot be lost or difficulties appear to access it.

When you zoom to 200%:

–All texts increase.

–There is no horizontal scroll.

–No information is lost.

Note: press the control key and the plus key to increase the font size of a browser. Press the control key and the minus key to reduce it.
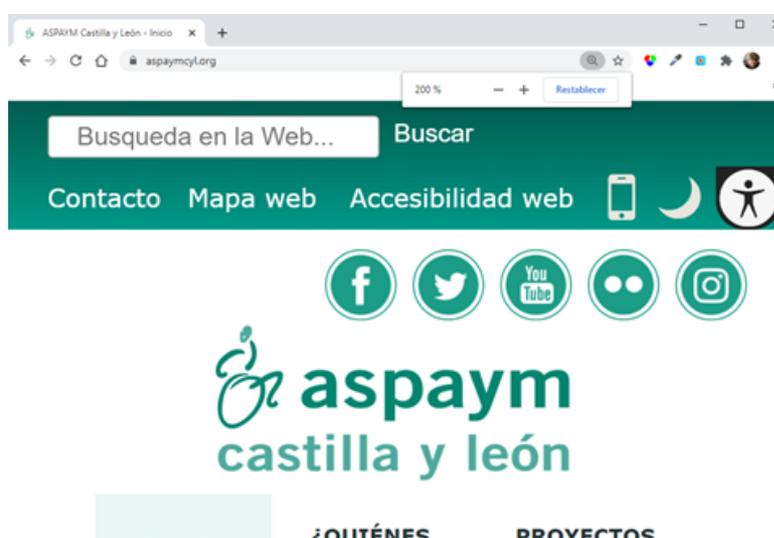
Example of website enlarged to 200%

Images with text sometimes do not satisfy these requirements. For example, if the image is configured to fill 100% width, although the text is enlarged, the image will continue to occupy the same size and its content will not be enlarged.

7 - FORMS

When a visually impaired person using a screen reader accesses a form, they must know the information in the form fields. Therefore, all fields must have the label tag within the HTML code with the purpose of the field.

It is recommended that this label is not hidden. Sometimes the placeholder tag is used to identify the purpose of the field, but it is usually less accessible because the tag disappears when we type inside the field. Besides, it usually has less contrast.

Example of how placeholder text disappears in a form

Additionally, for all users in general, there should be no abnormal behaviours. For example, the form cannot be submitted automatically and there should always be a submit button. Finally, the obligatory fields must be marked so the user knows which fields are obligatory before pressing the submit button.

8 – DATA TABLES

Before style sheets (CSS), tables were used to layout HTML. To this day, using this method for layout is a major accessibility and usability mistake. Tables in HTML should only be used to present tabulated data. It should never be used to layout content.
In order for all users to understand the content of a table well:

✔ Tables must have a title and summary within the caption and summary attributes.
✔ There cannot be merged cells. This makes it difficult for screen readers and some users with cognitive disabilities to understand.
✔ Tables must have a row/column headings.

In general, if information can be presented without using tables, it will always be more accessible.

9 – KEYBOARD & SWIPPING NAVIGATION

Keyboard navigation is very important for blind users as well as people with reduced mobility who cannot use the mouse. Therefore, it is important that all the contents and functionalities of a website are accessible through the keyboard and there are no keyboard traps in which the focus is trapped.

Note: to browse a web with the keyboard the basic commands are:

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–Tab key: move from one link to the next link.

–Shift key + tab key: go back to the previous page.

–Enter key: access link.

In addition, the focus should follow a consistent order, usually from left to right and top to bottom. And it always has to be clearly identified so that the user knows where the focus is.

Example of correctly marked focus

In mobile devices the screen readers (TalkBack on Android and VoiceOver on iOS) use swiping navigation so that users can interact with the mobile device. The same rules apply as for keyboard navigation: all the contents and functionalities of a website are accessible with swiping navigation, there are no 'traps' and the focus should follow a consistent order.

10 - NAVIGABLE

To facilitate the navigability of the website:

✔ There is a mechanism to skip common blocks on pages (eg menu). There should be a mechanism to skip common blocks on pages (eg menu). In the same way that we do not read the entire menu on each page of a website when we navigate through it, this mechanism helps blind users who use screen readers to skip that information.

✔ Pages have a unique and descriptive title. This makes it easier for the user to access the page to know where they are.

✔ The header and footer are common and consistent in all pages. Any user would feel lost if the elements of the header such as the search engine, the language selector or the contents of the menu change on each page of the website.

DECALOGUE SUMMARY

1. Headings

✔ All sections of the web start with a header.

✔ The headers are marked with the appropriate HTML tags (H1, H2, H3 ...).

✔ Logical hierarchy of headings.

✔ Headings should not be used to format text.

✔ There cannot be two consecutive same-level headings with no content between them.

2. Images

✔ The images must have a description in alt attribute within the HTML code.

✔ The description should inform the purpose of the image in that context.

✔ If it is a decorative image, the alt attribute must be empty (alt = "").

✔ The use of images with text inside is not suitable. Logos are an exception.

3. Videos

✔ If the relevant information is in the audio of the video: subtitles and/or sign language interpreter.

✔ If there is relevant information in the video images: a video transcription (audio or textual) is required.

✔ If it is a decorative video, nothing is necessary.

4. Links

✔ Descriptive and consistent links (there cannot be two links with the same text and different destinations). Links such as "More information", "Read more", ... should not be used.

✔ There should be no empty links. For example, an image that is a link but does not have descriptive text in the alt attribute of the image tag.

✔ If the link opens in a new window or tab, it must be notified.

5. Contrast and semantic use of colour

✔ The text must have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1.

✔ Titles and large text should have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1.

✔ Colour should not be used as the only way to give information. For example, the required fields are in red.

6. Text size

✔ When you zoom to 250%:

–All texts increase.

–There is no horizontal scroll.

–No information is lost.

Images with text sometimes do not satisfy these requirements.

7. Forms

✔ All fields must have the label tag within the HTML code with the purpose of the field.

✔ The obligatory fields must be marked before sending.

✔ The form cannot be submitted automatically. There should be a submit button.

8. Data tables

✔ Tables should not be used to layout content.

✔ There cannot be merged cells.

✔ Tables must have a title.

✔ Tables must have row/column headings.

✔ Do not use data tables if it can be avoided.

9. Keyboard navigation and swiping navigation

✔ All the contents of the web are accessible through the keyboard and swiping navigation.

✔ No traps in which the focus is trapped.

✔ The focus must be correctly marked so that the user can know where it is.

✔ The order of focus is consistent.

10. Navigable

✔ There is a mechanism to skip common blocks on pages (eg menu).

✔ Pages have a unique and descriptive title.

✔ The header and footer are common and consistent in all pages.

REFERENCES

- https://www.etsi.org/deliver/etsi_en/301500_301599/301549/03.01.01_60/en_301549 v030101p.pdf

MECHANISMS TO MAKE YOUTH PARTICIPATION MULTIDIMENSIONAL IN CIVIC CONTEXTES

How to use mechanisms so that the participation of young people is multidimensional and allows their protagonism in the different instances of the civic-democratic cycle through electronic platforms on youth participation, regardless of their disability.

Introduction

Digital civic engagement of youth can take the shape of various activities, and can address diverse problems: from pandemic induced educational campaigns, through spread of sexual awareness, to climate change protests. These can take a more usual form, such as reading and circulating news, writing emails to an electedrepresentative or communityorganization (or interactingwith them on social media), or belonging to a campus or community group online, as well as unconventional methods, such as through art.

There are however groups, which despite the common access of digital tools, are having troubles in reaching them. From the perspective of individuals without any disability, online platforms cause little to no effort at all, to operate. Unfortunately, the numerous groups of people with some sort of disability – either physical or mental – are having a hard time using these platforms, and with the current measurements and tools available, in many cases, they are incapable of accessing the complete functionality.

In the following chapters, we will give a general overview on which mechanisms can be used to ensure the participation of young people, regardless of their disability, as well as important information to take into account in engaging with the youth.

What do we mean by digital engagement by young people?

First of all, it is important to adequately define the term "civic engagement" and later on "digital civic engagement". For this, we have decided to support ourselves with the definitions prepared by UNICEF.

According to UNICEF, a *civic engagement* is individual or collective actions in which people participate to improve the well-being of communities or society in general. This has traditionally taken the form of actions such as voting, attending community meetings or functions, contacting public officials, attending protests, signing petitions, or writing articles about one's community.

the first striking characteristic of the regular civic engagement is the fact that basically all forms of it are inbound to take place physically and to involve a group of individuals. Furtherly, such necessity evokes rather high entry barriers, with strong organizational, and in many cases also financial background and infrastructure.

Digital civic engagement is not only a sort of extension of the regular one, but rather a completely new framework, with different characteristics and tools. Following UNICEF, digital civic engagement by youth refers to civic engagement activities specifically done by young people and involving digital media of some kind. Those digital media are basically all the platforms and tools available in the Internet, varying from videos, memes, social movements, coordinated massive actions or even something so simple and trivial as changing profile picture on social media. The forms of such engagement are truly numerous, and what is important – with low entry barriers, as little infrastructure is needed. It also does not require organised and moderated meet-ups of groups of people, which significantly increases the possible participation – especially of the disadvantaged groups.

Internet usage has become an important part of the daily routine for people from all age groups, with the strongest emphasis on younger generations. Clearly visible among teenagers, adolescent students create very tight communities online, participating in both strictly social, as well as more political activities on the web. Internet accessibility is nowadays declared important for education, work, leisure and participation in society.

With the rapid development of Internet platforms, one could observe the trend of an increasing number of interactions between the user and the platform – whether it is in the form of a click, a video to watch or an audio being played. For a user with full mental and physical capacity, these interactions play no difficulty. However, for a person with limited physical abilities, clicking on a tiny window or a link to redirect to another page, may become a major obstacle.

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For this reason, it is also important to introduce the term *digital citizenship*. Digital citizenship, according to UNICEF, is the ability toparticipate in society online. It refers both to the tangible elements – such as proper infrastructure, accessibility to the internet, proper technology – as well as to the intangible, which are the ones referred to an individual's ability to use the technology.

Digital literacy comes in handy at this point, which stands for the knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow children to flourish and thrive in an increasing-ly global digital world, being both safe and empowered, in ways that are appropriate to their age and local cultures and contexts.

In other words, *digital civic engagement* as explored here is a repertoire of practice that falls under 'digital citizenship' and that assumes and requires 'digital literacy' in order to happen.

People with disability going online

Having in mind what are the components of digital civic engagement, it is not difficult to recognize the disproportion of accessibility among various groups, which in consequence directly affect one's potential of digital citizenship. One of those groups are people with any sort of disabilities – both physical and mental.

According to the separate studies performed by S. Lewthwaite "Web accessibility standards and disability: developing critical perspectives on accessibility", K. Alfredsson Ågren & A Kjellberg "Digital participation? Internet use among adolescents with and without intellectual disabilities: A comparative study", and S. Soderstrom "Offline social ties and online use of computers: A study of disabled youth and their use of ICT advances", people with disabilities engage in the online environment much less than their peers.

The conclusions exalted from these studies are rather no surprise. In order to establish a proper framework for disadvantaged people to operate with, first it is crucial to understand what sort of difficulties they are facing, as well as, how it affects their presence online.

What are the key findings?

- **People with disability want to spend time online.** From the data extracted both from the mentioned studies, as from different statistics, people with disability are keen on using the Internet platforms – they want to use them and operate within their structures.

- **Although they want to, they cannot.** Unfortunately, despite their will to browse and interact with the Internet, still many of them suffer from severe negligence in the user interface, which is not adjusted for various disabilities. In result, the majority uses the Internet only superficially.

- **Once they do interact, they usually prefer to discuss civic matters.** As it turns out, disabled youth does not engage a lot in personal matters. Mostly used forms of digital engagement are forums, spreading from topics related to their personal hobbies, to political and civic matters.

- **Anonymity makes them open up.** Online forms of activity give people with disability the possibility to not be perceived through their condition. On the Internet, one can not possibly distinguish a person without disability from a person with it, which diminishes their biggest restraint from active participation in civic engagement – stigmatization.

- **Gives them a chance to prove their competences.** Online frameworks make their impairment unessential, instead emphasizing their competencies and similarities to peers, building solid social ties to local peers. Such interactions make it in return more likely for them to be socially included in groups.
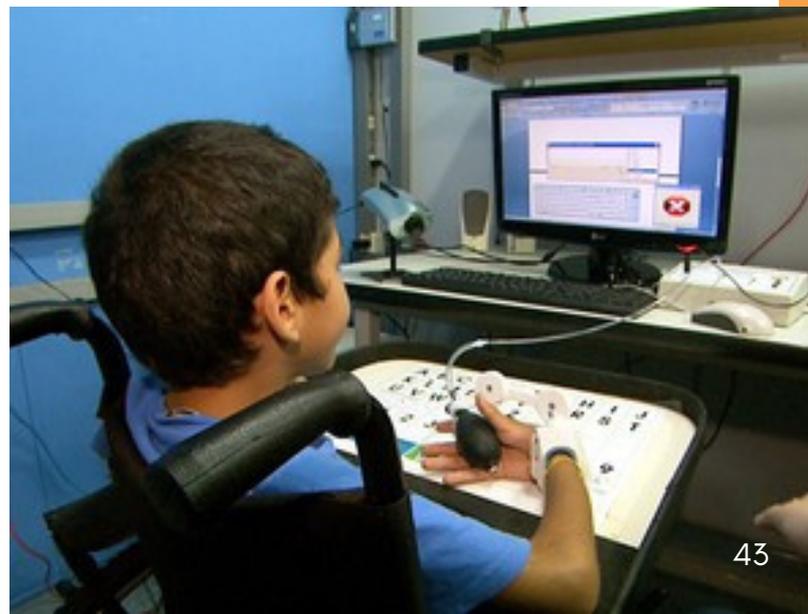
What are the most used platforms?

As mentioned at the beginning of this text, digital civic engagement of youth can take various forms. Usually it takes place on the broadly understood *social media*. With the online environment changing rapidly, the most commonly used platforms are changing with the generations, making it difficult to establish one tunnel of communication. Situation alters when disabled people are taken into consideration, exposing the gap between the groups.

There are various studies taking into scope this specific matter. Most are focused on wealthy countries, but some take into consideration also different nations across the globe. For example, a 2018 report in the US found that **Snapchat** and **YouTube** are the social media that adolescents aged 13 to 17 'use the most'. In contrast, adults in the US most often list **Facebook** as the social media platform that they have used, and still use, most often.

Globally, we know that, as of 2019, adults in 11 emerging economies worldwide (Colombia, India, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa, Tunisia, Venezuela and Vietnam,) are most likely to use **Facebook** and **WhatsApp** as social media or messaging platforms.

Moving far towards the East, communities are operating on completely different platforms than Western societies. It especially affects China, which has its own hermetic Internet with original social media platforms, playing the role of the western ones. The landscape is changing rapidly, and already new platforms are gaining popularity, such as **TikTok**, where the majority of the users are young people.

Situation presents itself a bit more stable when it comes to **communities with disability**. It might be due to the limited research – unfortunately up until now, there have not been many studies dedicated to this specific topic. However, based on the data found in different sources, people with disabilities usually prefer the tools that allow them a simple, text-based communication. As mentioned before, **topic-specific forums** are among the most used digital platforms, however in terms of social media, **Facebook** remains th e constant and stable leader. **WhatsApp** presents itself as the most widely used tool for exchange of communication.

Key considerations to allow young people to engage digitally

Having said all of that, here are some key considerations for those trying to understand digital civic engagement by youth and who are willing to create more opportunities to engage youth this way. They are based on the review of the research literature in this field and on the key findings from "Digital Civic engagement by young people" (2019) from UNICEF.

- Account for blended contexts. Digital engagement is contiguous with, complementary to, and inseparable from offline engagement.
- Appreciate youth creation of varied content: videos, memes, artwork and blogs.
- Appraise local context to better understand the scale, content and platforms young people use.
- Consider how digital civic engagement can drive youth participation in more traditional forms of civic engagement.
- Consider the risks of digital civic engagement by youth.
- Promote and support civic education and development of digital literacies and skills.

Conclusion

Despite the current research showing broad characteristics in digital civic engagement of young people, there are still many unanswered questions, in particular with regard to young people who do not live in wealthy democracies. These differences vary from questions about understanding the platforms young people use to the nature and impact of their engagement.

Those wishing to support youth civic participation will not only need to understand how youth chooses to engage in a given context but also to what extent the prevailing political, social, economic or environmental situation of a country spurs them into action as well as key deterrents to civic engagement.

Therefore, to support young people to participate in civic life through online engagement, we need to understand what they care about and what motivates them to speak out. In turn, we need to better understand whether current support to youth civic engagement — digital, blended, or offline — properly reflects these motivations. Finally, we cannot choose to support young people in their quest for online political or civic expression, without paying attention to the context of the digital media ecosystem, including the opportunities and risks involved.

HOW TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT ELECTRONIC TOOLS ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH LIMITATIONS

How to design and implement tools so that certain groups with greater difficulties can participate electronically.

Introduction

Electronic services open up new possibilities and offer substantial advantages, both for users and service providers, facilitating their interaction and being mutual beneficiaries of them. Electronic services allow a more efficient approach to citizens to meet their needs and demands with greater flexibility, convenience and transparency.

The advantages of an increase in accessibility in electronic services entails an increase in the number of users since it allows the participation of groups that traditionally could present complications to participate. In addition, it also entails an increase in the efficiency of the tool, consequently, improving its perception and use among users.

In general, the use of agile and accessible methods helps to create tools that:

- Meet the needs of users.
- Are easy and convenient to use.
- They can be easily updated.
- Are constantly improving thanks to user feedback.
- Have a lower cost and are more responsible.

To achieve an accessible development with good usability and thus achieve a good user experience, this document offers a series of guidelines to be considered in all phases of development of an electronic platform.

Guidelines for making electronic services accessible

When designing electronic tools, accessibility must be considered from the beginning and at all stages of development in order to obtain accessible tools that facilitate the participation of everyone. Starting with planning, analysis and design. Because if accessibility is not considered, the development phase could reach certain barriers that, in order to be overcomed, will require rework on the previous phases. In the development phase, it will be necessary to avoid creating barriers and accessibility must be considered all the time, so that the testing phase of the tool can verify that everyone can use it. Once it is launched, it will have to be maintained to ensure that it is accessible over time.
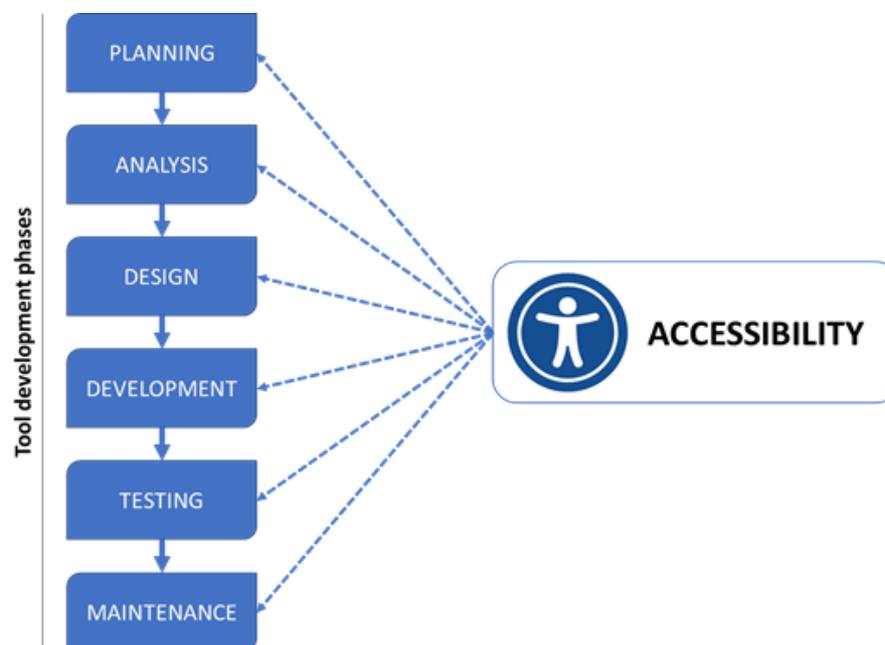
A series of guidelines are described below that, if considered when developing an electronic tool, will help make tools easier to use by certain groups that may have greater difficulties when using computers, favouring their participation in it.

Understand the needs of users

It is necessary to understand the needs of users in order to build a service that:
✓ Help users do what they want to do simply and seamlessly.
✓ It is based on the real needs of the users and not on assumptions.
✓ It is based on the real needs of the users and not on assumptions.

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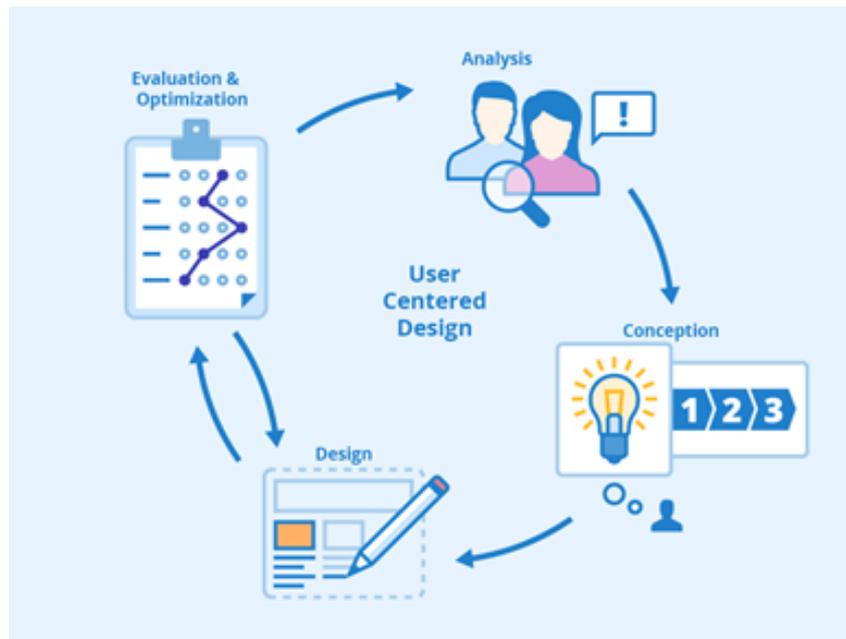
The user-centered design serves to adapt the tool to the real needs of the user, thus improving the user experience.

Do ongoing user research

A plan of continuous investigation of the users must be elaborated to obtain feedback from them and thus be able to improve the service. In addition, this will serve to:

✓ Check that the services are helping users to perform the tasks for which they were designed to.

✓ Continue to improve services taking into account the needs of users.

Have a multidisciplinary team

Have a sustainable multidisciplinary team that can design, build and operate the service, led by a qualified manager with responsibility for making decisions that will achieve the objective of:

✓ Build services efficiently.

✓ Keep improving based on user needs.

✓ Quick decision making.

the needs of users

Make use of agile methodologies

Building the tools using agile, iterative and user-centered methods as indicated in our manual, will help to:

✔ Meet the needs of users.

✔ They will make it easy and convenient for users to use.

✔ It will facilitate possible future changes.

✔ They will help to continuously improve, for example, based on user feedback.

✔ They will make both implementation and future changes less expensive.

Use WAI-ARIA

Although current legislation only obliges the websites of the Public Administration, companies that receive public funding and private companies that have more than 100 workers, to comply with the WCAG 2.1 guidelines, it is also highly recommended (when necessary) to do use of the WAI-ARIA (Web Accessibility Initiative – Accessible Rich Internet Applications) specification, also developed by the W3C.

This set of technical specifications allows the creation of more semantic interfaces and helps to keep the information received by supporting products up to date.

More info about WAI-ARIA: https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/aria/.

Reiterate and improve

Building a service that can be iterated and improved frequently by ensuring you have the capacity, resources and technical flexibility to do so, will:

✔ Easily respond to policy changes that affect service.

✔ Ensure that the service continues to meet the needs of users.

Evaluate tools and systems

Assessing what tools and systems will be used to build, host, operate and measure the service and assess how to acquire them will help to:

✔ Know the limitations or risks involved in using them.

✔ Avoid using tools or systems that are in decline and maybe left without short-term support.

✔ Build a sustainable system, which can be easily managed after the service goes live.

Understand security and privacy issues

What user data and information the digital service will provide or store and what level of security it should address should be evaluated, taking into account legal responsibilities, privacy issues and risks associated with the service. To do this, you must have experts in the corresponding laws.

Users should not use the service unless they are guaranteed that it is confidential and that they can access their information on the service when necessary.

Use open standards and common platforms

The use of common standards and common platforms entails:

✔ Save time and money by reusing things that are already available.

✔ Being able to switch between different technologies, when necessary without the need to adhere to a closed standard that can eliminate its support and maintenance, which could lead to having to redesign the entire tool.

✔ Ease of changing the service when needed, quickly and efficiently.

✔ The use of common platforms will offer users a more rewarding experience by giving more consistency to the system, which will generate more trust.

Test the service from start to finish

When testing the developed tool, we must take into account:

✔ The service must be tested from start to finish in an environment identical to the real version. These tests must be carried considering all possible alternatives and must be carried out in all common browsers and devices.

✔ It is very important that the tests are carried out by a representative sample of users, including users who normally may have difficulties participating in these platforms. This will help us to verify that we have designed the service correctly and to discover possible failures that have been overlooked.

✔ Lastly, in the testing phase, it should be essential that the final tool is tested by the head of the service before the service comes into force since they are responsible for everything that is produced in their departments.

Have alternatives for an offline or down service

It is essential to have a "plan b" for when the service is temporarily offline or down. Users will expect the tool to be operational 24 hours a day, so we must provide them with information on how it may affect them that the tool is offline and inform them when it will be available again.

Care must also be taken with URLs that stop working by offering an alternative to users, either by redirecting to the updated URL that occupies the new place on the page or by giving the appropriate explanations of why it is no longer operational and offering the alternatives. appropriate to the service or the information that was in said URL.

Ensure that the user is successful the first time

Simple-to-use and intuitive services should be created to achieve success for any user who accesses the platform for the first time.

This should be the case regardless of the capabilities and characteristics of the users, as well as the support products they use to access the system.

Encourage everyone to use the tool

Once the service is operational, we must publicize it and encourage everyone to use it.

Collect performance data

It is also important to continuously monitor the use and performance of the service through the appropriate analysis tools. In order to analyze the success or failure of the service and to know the strengths and weaknesses of the system, all of this is taken into account when improving it or developing new services.

To do this, it will be important to identify the service performance indicators, to establish benchmarks for each metric and make an improvement plan.

Finally, it will also be of great interest to offer the performance data obtained on the platform itself in a coherent, structured and easy-to-digest format for users. In this way, we will give a sense of transparency to the public about the performance of the service.

DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION

How to develop dissemination strategies on the accessibility of electronic platforms for youth participation.

Importance of showing the need to give visibility and dissemination on the accessibility of electronic platforms for youth participation

Over the years, technology (specially ICT) has advanced in a dizzying way, adapting, and participating in almost any area of people's lives. This means that more and more people make significant use of technology in their day to day, especially in the EU.

It is surprising how everything that has to do with electronics has changed in recent years. We have gone from using the whole family's landline phone to having each member a mobile device; from having a desktop computer at home, to having a more powerful computer in a cell phone. These differences are understood when we review the data about the people who have been using the Internet over the years and all the technological advances that have occurred. For example, in the year 2000 only 6,53% of the world population had access to the Internet. However, in 2019 that exact same number increased to 51,1%. It is already more than half of the globe. This, added to the fact that the average daily use of the Internet by a user in 2020 was 6 hours and 43 minutes, are some examples of the indicators that show the growing relevance of the use of electronics today.

However, in this study we will focus first on young people and their use of the Internet, to later focus on the importance of making visible and disseminating the need to adapt electronic platforms for youth with disabilities for their participation. To understand the relevance of the use of electronic platforms by young people, data is needed. According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), 94% of young people, between 15 and 24 years old, who live in developed countries, are connected to the Internet. It is also important to note that according to the WHO, 10% of the world's population lives with a disability, which would be about 650 million people. In addition, between 180 and 200 million of those 650 are people between 10 and 24 years old. These data give us indications of the importance of electronic platforms today, which is why it is necessary to think about adapting these tools so everyone can use them, despite the fact if they have a disability or not.

The following will show which are the disabilities that may find difficulties in accessing the Web, as well as the difficulties that an individual who suffers from any of them could encounter. These data have been extracted from the study "How people with disabilities use the Web".

- **Physical disability.** There are pages or interfaces that can only be used with the mouse, very small page buttons for which you must be precise, reduced response times for certain tasks.

- **Cognitive and neurological disability.** the Internet is plagued with long and complex texts to read, with the absence of images that serve as visual support, they can also find difficulties with the handling of the different pages due to the absence of instructions and the use of completely different interfaces by the different websites.

- **Hearing impairment.** There are no transcriptions or sound descriptions of the audio, or soundtracks in certain videos. The texts are long and tedious, and the absence of images does not facilitate their understanding.

- **Visual impairment.** There are texts that do not have a narrative accompaniment so they cannot be heard, their handwriting is very small and always with the same color range and there is little color contrast, which makes vision difficult. Lack of tools that explain images, videos.

As we have seen, there are many "stones on the road" that young people with disabilities can find when accessing electronic platforms. This added to the fact that everything is a little more computerized nowadays, causing the difference between people with disabilities and the rest of the population increase in this issue (Casado García, 2013).

These types of difficulties led countries to create laws that would ensure equal access in certain areas. The pioneer was Spain in 1998, with an experimental standard that was approved in 2004, which ensured that the pages of the state or financed by the state were themselves accessible to people with disabilities. In Europe, in the same way, a law called WCAG was approved, which regulates and shows the mechanisms, as well as the needs of people with disabilities to facilitate their access to the Web. This is going through its third modification, each one of them improves and expands the previous one and adapts to technological advances. The third is not yet finished as the draft was published in January of this year.

Despite these efforts, few companies focus on making their websites accessible to everyone or making gadgets that make it easier for people with certain disabilities to manage. Supposedly, this is due to the high cost of carrying out these adaptations as well as the low economic profitability of this type of investment. However, even if those arguments are true, this should not be an economic issue but rather one of equity since the same access is not guaranteed to all people. Despite all these difficulties, there are companies that do create tools for people with disabilities:

- **Facebook.** Provides functions to the different buttons on the keyboard so that the use of the mouse is not necessary; subtitles can be included in the videos; an option can be activated that performs a detailed description of an image by audio or recites a text; it is also possible to increase or decrease the font size.

- **Microsoft.** Has tools similar to Facebook, such as narrating a text for the computer to write it or listening to a text narrated by the computer; it also has applications to provide reading aids; modify the size of the text or make the computer recognize people or colours; and provide information about a product.

- **Applications.** There are numerous applications that have emerged in recent years to facilitate the use of technology for people with all types of disabilities. Some, such as **Google Talkback** or **Siri,** are among the best known, since they are assistants that allow you to perform tasks with your voice or listen to texts. Nevertheless, other applications more focused on more specific disabilities have also emerged. For example, **Sinoguide** describes the site that is being viewed in writing; another example would be **Hermes Mobile** which has a database with common messages, and you can add your own messages and is used for people with intellectual disabilities. Finally, we found an application for people with motor disabilities, **Accessibility**, which consists of a geolocation system that allows users to find accessible points near their position, or to check previously how to access various places.

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To conclude, we can affirm that even though people with disabilities are increasingly present in the minds of people who can make things easier for them, there is still a very low visibility of their difficulties and the benefits of accessibility for all people (not only people with disabilities).

With all the information collected, it is necessary to adapt electronic platforms to people with disabilities and, in turn, verify that the future is hopeful since there are many governments, institutions and companies that are making a difference in these issues. Which is why it is more necessary than ever, to make this progress visible to encourage other stakeholders to do the same, so that young people with disabilities can also participate on equal terms in the political, administrative, cultural, and educational spheres.

Dissemination strategies on the accessibility of electronic platforms for youth participation

First, we believe it is convenient to talk about the importance of carrying out prior activities and strategies for visibility and dissemination. This previous work would first understand that there is a principle of equality for all human beings, so they should have equal rights and opportunities for every person (Díaz Velázquez, 2010). However, in practice the above does not always happen in life and in all their areas.

It would be necessary to raise awareness about the obstacles that young people with disabilities may encounter daily, in tasks that in the case of most people are considered simple, such as the use of an electronic platform. An example of good practice is the initiative: "Put yourself in my shoes". This program proposes activities that allow people to experience, in some way, the problems that may arise when you have a disability and empathize with these situations.

The purpose of all visibility and dissemination activities is to reach as many people as possible, covering as many channels as possible. It is necessary to focus the actions not only in the main target group, but also in those who have the capacity to change things. This combination, at the same time, must encourage innovation and studies in the addressed issues.

To achieve this, it is necessary to be clear about the methodology to be used as well as the specific objectives that are intended to be achieved with these, so that the tasks can be carried out in the most efficient way possible. Below we will present examples of the different strategies and actions that are proposed for its realization.

The following **examples of strategies** or actions on how to make visible or disseminate the importance of electronic platforms being accessible to people with disabilities will be divided into different subgroups according to their level of action:

a) At the level of entities / institutions:

For entities or institution, it is necessary to raise awareness to make the problem visible and in turn promote change in individuals, since they are the ones who have or will have the power to change things. At the same time, it is important that they have an open mind to new ways of thinking or living, that through the experimentation of new circumstances they manage to put themselves in the place of others. Here are some examples of ideas to carry out activities in different institutions:

- **Carrying out workshops** both in ESO, Bachelor, **training cycles and university studies** in which awareness of the problems faced by people with different disabilities when using an electronic platform is worked, showing through different activities, the obstacles to different disabilities and have students check it out for themselves. This is also intended to show young people the power they must change things, since soon they may be the ones who work to change this situation, that they are aware of the capacities they must improve things.

- A strategy, perhaps somewhat risky, could be **holding workshops for companies that create and manufacture electronic elements.** The design is the area where the change can start. In other words, the way things are thought and designed and then built and assembled can be crucial for the participation of a person with a disability. These workshops can be a way where companies can understand the difficulties that people with disabilities encounter when using their designs and that they can also observe how to solve or minimize these barriers.

- **Encourage researchers and policymakers** to think about broader social, political, and ethical issues regarding accessibility and participation, to raise awareness to those in power to shape the laws, make funding available and change the rules to design new and accessible technologies.

b) At the objective level:

If we focus on the objective, the goal is to make the greatest number of agents aware of the need to make visible the importance of participation of young people with disabilities and their access to electronic platforms on equal terms with anyone else. Therefore, the main goals are: (i) to reach as many people as possible and in turn to get as many of them as possible to become aware of the cause; (ii) reaching out to companies in charge of innovating in this field, as well as to the people who are the future of this sector; (iii) finally, to make the problem visible and provide solutions to adapt electronic platforms to young people with disabilities.

These objectives can be achieved through the different strategies or actions proposed at the different levels, fulfilling small goals that little by little add to the main goal. Here is an example of a strategy at this level:

- In fairness, it should be critical **to do research on the benefits of making web platforms accessible to people with disabilities**. However, these investigations should not only involve the affected groups, but also the political "stakeholders", since they are the ones who can change the laws and make it possible for accessibility to be a reality on a legal and practical level.

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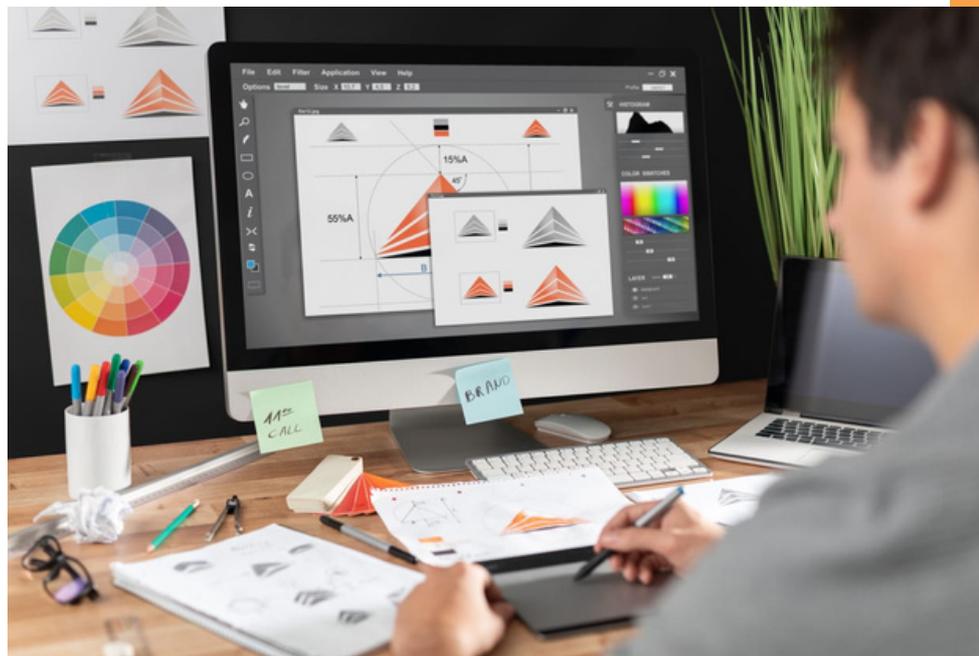
c) At the participant level:

Due to the importance of this issue, the recipients of the message that it is intended to provide would be all people. However, it is necessary to focus on certain groups to carry out the actions or to develop the different strategies. For this topic, we must focus on young people, researchers, innovators, policymakers, and heads of entities, who can design, test, evaluate, disseminate and/or use electronic platforms.

With these agents, different activities will be carried out with the intention of raising awareness and showing their ability to change the course of these dynamics in which young people with disabilities are forgotten. Which in turn will also serve to generate common and social benefits. Below are some examples of dynamics with these participants:

- **Carry out educational programs** in which students carry out tasks regarding computer science related with electronic platforms and considering the needs of young people with disabilities. This means, observing first-hand the different difficulties that may be encountered and how to solve them, in turn that type initiatives can be carried out with the aim of raising awareness among young people who aspire to be the future in computer science issues, about the limitations that this group is facing and the need to adapt electronic platforms for them.

- Another possible way of making this problem visible is **celebrating conferences** in institutes, universities or in any other educational institution, in which the subject in question is deal by showing practical examples regarding the difficulties that young people with disabilities have using and participating in electronic platforms (and the need to overcome these barriers so that they can achieve total equality).

- To make sure the **benefits of research and innovation are shared** widely. Alongside efforts to increase diversity in terms of who becomes an innovator, which take a long time to bear fruit, increasing the interactions between innovators, policymakers and the public could be a necessary and urgent step to addressing the accessibility of electronic platforms for youth participation.

d) At the methodology level:

Most people have probably never had the time or inclination to form an opinion on 'how should electronic platformsbe designed to be accessible to young people with disabilities?' When we engage with the public it's important to understand the need to dig deeper, to explore different views, to provide information where necessary and then to use frameworks to interpret findings.

In this case, it is essential to show the difficulties that young people with disabilities have to face every day using electronic platforms. It can be done through surveys, workshops, discussion groups, conferences, social media campaigns, knowledge pills. Below we will present different methodologies that could serve as an example:

- In order to carry out the following strategy, it would be necessary to **record the reactions of the people who carried out the activities** (carried out in the different educational centros) at the time they experienced the difficulties encountered by people with disabilities. With these recordings (montages of them would be made), collecting the most relevant or striking moments to disseminate them on social networks as a social experiment, in turn they would also try to show them to televisions, radios, online media ... to reach the largest number of people possible.

- **Make visible the usefulness of the applications that already exist to support people with disabilities**, of the methods of certain platforms to make things easier for them ... showing the differences between the use of computer platforms without tools that facilitate or adapt tasks and without them. What we are trying to achieve with this is to make people aware of the need to advocate more for this type of initiative since they help these people enormously, as well as trying to make it work for young people and people who work in this sector, so that progress is made in this type of measure.

Finally, the ideal is to be able to combine all the previous strategies in order to achieve the greatest impact.

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HOW TO INVOLVE POLITICAL AUTHORITIES IN YOUTH PARTICIPATION

How to involve political authorities in the implementation and use of accessible electronic platforms for youth participation

Introduction

In this chapter we will talk about the eParticipation of authorities, politicians, or decision-makers through electronic platforms. This issue acquires even greater relevance due to the global pandemic situation since digital applications have become an indispensable tool for almost anyone today.

Taking that into account, we intend to show that there is no better time than now for authorities, politicians, or decision-makers to get involved and participate through electronic platforms. Because it is a way to reach and communicate directly with their fellow citizens, especially with the youngest. Moreover, this chapter seeks to point out how the use of these electronic platforms can help, facilitate, and even improve their work as politicians. Despite the fact that a political authority has to follow certain protocols, it is still necessary to be updated and modernized, especially in this ever-changing and volatile present time. In addition, these platforms allow learning, firsthand, the requirements of the citizens. It is for all this that we think it is important that authorities, politicians, or decision-makers know the benefits that participating in this type of electronic platforms could bring them.

Finally, we also want to show, through real examples, how participation through electronic platforms by authorities, politicians or decision-makers causes benefits, both for them and for their fellow citizens and localities. Since by not participating in them, a very large space would be free to capture and provide information to practically all audiences.

The participation of political authorities

The main question that we need to address is how to involve political authorities in the implementation and use of accessible electronic platforms. In this regard, in the following lines we present some key points that favor the involvement of political authorities in this kind of digital spaces:

- **Preliminary work.** Before inviting a political authority in a process of electronic participation, we need to be clear about what activity or project we want to involve them in. At the same time, check what ideas and needs they have for the participation process to which they have been invited. This previous work will allow the chances of success to be greater.

- **Added value.** When it comes to getting political authorities to participate in electronic platforms, it is essential that we can present a process that is beneficial to them and that adds value to their daily functions. So they don't think that they are going to waste time.

- **Making waves.** It is considered important to have a previous portfolio of successful activities in electronic participation processes. This portfolio can be presented to the policy authorities, so they can see real examples of what they could achieve in this process. At the same time, the more invitations are made to political authorities and their experiences are positive, the more political authorities will want to get involved in this type of process.

- **Youth as a target group.** It would also be important for politicians to see that there are many young people involved in electronic participation processes, so that they can get an idea of the acceptance of the use of computer platforms for political purposes.

- **Strategic plans and documentation.** It's important for the public authorities to see the relevance of actions with concrete strategic documentation and planning. It is considered important to address specific documents, policies, programs, or laws to be discussed during the participation process. The above will allow you to add a political orientation of the action and add a common discussion with the political authorities.

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However, all these efforts are affected by the existence of different obstacles that directly affect political authorities to be involved in electronic participation processes. The most visible examples are:

- **Political will.** The lack of political will specifically elected officials, to get involved in these forms of electronic participation is still considerable. Being exposed to these spaces continues to be a resistance that must be fought**.**

- **Unstable process.** Another difficulty may be that political authorities feel that they are losing or giving power in these electronic participation processes. Or, on the contrary, feel that despite participating in these processes they will not be able to commit to what is decided in these spaces. It is necessary to continue investigating how to make these processes have organizational, legal, and institutional bases.

- **Electronic platforms.** Another great barrier is the difficulty for these computer platforms to be adaptable to all political authorities, young people, and the territories where the two previous groups are circumscribed. The barrier can be from the available languages, if you have accessibility measures, if your system can have only a specific number of participants, data protection, and so on.

Ultimately, we can see how there are multiple barriers to implement this type of initiative in the political landscape, specifically to convince political authorities of their effectiveness. However, we have also seen how there are different mechanisms to help them change their minds, but it is essential to have a clear and efficient system that shows the viability of the initiative.

Examples of best practices

In this section we are going to show some best practices that were carried out to involve political authorities in the implementation and use of accessible electronic platforms. At the same time, we think that some of these examples help electronic platforms to grow as a valid option for participation and show new methods to municipalities and political authorities on how to approach political issues.

One of the key factors in these best practices is that they are allowed to promote and establish a two-way communication between political authorities and citizens, specially to identify needs and prepare proposals. Furthermore, we want to show how different activities promote and integrate this type of behavior in municipalities, and how, through these best practices, political authorities can put aside their prejudices about this type of participation and are encouraged to collaborate in these kinds of processes.

- **Consensus**. It is an electronic platform that offers different functionalities of citizen participation to the municipalities and that has been used jointly by a consortium of Catalan municipalities since 2002.

  http://barcelonaconsensus.org/

- **DEMOS.** This is a web platform for the discussion of public policies. It has been used in various participatory processes, the most significant being a popular consultation on the future of the city of Hamburg.

  http://demos-deutschland.de/

- **Dito y Digalo.** Web platform for conducting participatory processes, which in addition to including discussion forums allows real-time debates that allow the graphical representation of arguments. It has been used in various processes, including the realization of a participatory budget in Esslingen (Germany).

  https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Abbildung-3-Grafische-Darstellung-eines-Bereiches-von-Dito-in-Digalo_fig3_221413253

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- **EDEN.** Set of tools based on Natural Language Processing technologies to facilitate municipal citizen participation. Various pilot tests carried out in cities in the Netherlands, Poland, Austria, Italy and Germany.

  http://www.eden-online.org/tag/digital-education-action-plan/

- **Ipatinga.** Participatory budget website in Brazil, which allows citizens to submit proposals over the Internet and discuss with municipalities and political authorities.

  http://habitat.aq.upm.es/bpal/onu04/bp2603.html

- **Open Laws.** It is a platform for collaborative law-making, where Argentinian deputies open their initiatives for debate to incorporate citizen views and collaboratively draft laws.

  https://leyesabiertas.hcdn.gob.ar

- **Wiki Legis.** It is a platform through which Brazilian citizens can make their own policies, in the same way it is also allowed to add content to policies design by decision-makers.

  https://edemocracia.camara.leg.br/wikilegis

- **OPIN.me.** It's an all-in-one digital and mobile participation toolbox for youth organizations or public administrations. Build professional eParticipation processes without being a pro!

  https://opin.me/en/

With the different activities that we have mentioned, political participation is promoted, as well as information on measures, making proposals in different countries in Europe and all around the world. These best practices have already been contrasted and with examples of methods that work, which are currently being maintained, which means that they are initiatives that have ended up being established. In this way we can see how it is possible to get political authorities to participate in this type of initiative and get involved in the project, in order to maintain a communication channel with their fellow citizens.

Involvement strategies for political authorities

In this section we are going to comment on different strategies that will be used to try to ensure that the initiatives or practices mentioned above can bear fruit. We will report a kind of necessary structure so that the measures proposed in the previous sections have some essential foundations and requirements so that if they wanted to implement these practices in some other place, or know how to implement them correctly, they can observe this structure as if it were a scheme of the essential elements that the initiative must have in order to be effective.

- **Comprehensive planning of the participatory process.** Before involving a political authority, it is considered necessary to carry out a thorough analysis of the feasibility of the project. That is, to test the different stages of the project, that all the premises are clear. This will allow a well-founded initiative to be presented to the political authorities so that they have less chance of denying their involvement**.**

- **Calendar and rhythm.** We must give the necessary ambition to the electronic participation process. It cannot be too short given the necessary influence that it aims to obtain. it cannot be too long, so that it could not have the chance to affect the processes.

- **Features of the electronic platform.** It is advisable to choose the most suitable electronic platform for the purposes of our participatory process. This includes choosing the platform that best suits the political authorities and citizens. In addition to considering accessibility issues in all its senses: language, reading mode, visual design, interactive modalities.

- **Facilitation of the process.** It is important to have a good clear strategy regarding facilitation. It is necessary that there be a two-way communication between the political authorities and the young people so that this project can work, since it is necessary that there be a communication between both groups so that it can be adapted and improve the content of computer platforms.

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- **Deliberative process.** Participants are expected to have an active role during the electronic participation process, asking questions, submitting proposals, appraising the proposals of all other participants, arguing in their appraisals, always attempting to widen one's views as well as those of the others. It is important to accept that the different proposals might reach a different degree of consensus, and bear in mind that the objective of the process is to obtain a minimum common denominator.

- **Guarantee that all participants have adequate access** to the electronic platform. It is advisable that in order for this project to bear fruit, the computer platforms are at the level of the possibilities of the population to which it is initially directed. Therefore it would be important for all young people to have access to the tools that enable participation in these platforms, since otherwise it would not make sense to carry out this project.

In this way, for those who could not have these tools, solutions would be sought such as specific places where they could have these tools for free.

References

- "Are politicians politically engaged? Analysis of the political commitment 2.0" developed through Facebook; https://bit.ly/3mHWB93
- DemocracyOS; https://blog.democracyos.org

- Process of participative elaboration of the Barcelona Consensus for intercultural alternatives to neoliberal globalization;
  http://barcelonaconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Project2008_ENG.pdf

- "Sistemas avanzados para la participación electrónica municipal: ejes conceptuales para su diseño"; https://bit.ly/3sfmaj0
- "The strategic use of interaction in the communication of Argentineam Politicians in Facebook"; https://bit.ly/3wPtyVH

PLATFORM SELECTION: AREAS & CRITERIA

A working group has defined some criterias in order to clarify the selection of electronic platforms which the partners find adequate for increasing/improving the civic skills of youth participation in the context of accessibility of electronic platforms.

The platforms mustbelong to the **following areas:**

- **Political participation:** We refer to a platform for young people to participate in political or citizenship issues. In this area we also mean civic participation of youth.

    Ex: DemocracyOS (https://democraciaos.org/)

- **Public services**: We refer to platforms that are fully public and offer a free public service. These platforms must give information on how to participate in public life and improve everyday life.

    Ex.: European Commission (https://ec.europa.eu/info/index_es),
    Ministry of Interior http://www.interior.gob.es/.

- **Social networks**: In this case, any type of any type of social network. Social networks can be open or specific in the terms of professional, social, cultural, sexual or other specific orientation.

    Ex. Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp...

- **Culture:** Any platforms that are used to promote the culture of the society.

    Ex.: hipermedula.org (http://hipermedula.org/que-es-la-hipermedula/)

- **Education and training:** Platforms that inform and engage youth in education, training and learning opportunities.

    Ex.: https://www.coursera.org/ (international level)

A list of criteria was also built, trying to define the more suitable selection items a platform must meet in order to be included in this project, whithin the areas metioned above.

- **Navigability.** The links on the platform should facilitate the entry and the exit from the homepage. Also, the links inside must lead to clear content and information.

- **Performance at local, national or international level.** Platforms will be selected according to the level of comprehensiveness that is intended to be achieved. The scope of the platform is important in order to know the coverage of target groups.

- **Relevant.** The platform must have relevant content connected with youth and their participation in the above named areas.

- **Safe.** The platform must be completely safe to enter, with a padlock at the top of the navigation. The outside links must lead to safe websites and/or other platforms.

- **Organization.** The information on the platform must be presented in a logical order, thus allowing moving within the platform with a certain degree of autonomy.

- **Advertising.** The platform must not have excessive advertising.

- **Accuracy/Quality.** The information must be well written, in accordance with its objectives. Therefore, it is important to consider that the information is clearly presented and the ideas are well defined and without spelling mistakes.

- **Languages.** To ensure there are versions in other languages (English, Spanish, Italian...). The English version will be more advantageous and suitable for international partners to have easy access to the content.

- **Reliability**: Reliable sources and information are used and mentioned in the chosen platform.

- **Contact details/email**: Contact details are presented to allow the asking questions or clarification of doubts that may arise while using the platform.

e-participation

PLATFORM ANALYSIES...

INTRODUCTION

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