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TAD Module 5

Accessibility of information in the tourism sector



Module 5 – Accessibility of information in the tourism sector

Reading notes

The module does not describe in detail the specific technical phases of the design and production of accessible information: the material cannot be considered exhaustive from a technical point of view but it represents a support to understand and frame the fundamental and crucial questions on the subject and to orient oneself within a complex landscape in continuous evolution.

In the document bold is used in order to:

1. highlight terms or text elements that we consider of particular relevance
2. highlight the terms and elements of the text that are deepened through the notes

In the document the images have captions that explain the content.

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Introduction to Module 5

At this point in the course, you acquired all the information necessary to clearly outline the overall framework of the topic; now you know and understand, through the exploration of the previous modules, what is meant by the expression tourism for all, what are its dynamics, which are the actors and which are the opportunities: cultural, social, ethical and economic.

At this point you know that tourism for all is a sector in which much has been done and much remains to be done. Indeed, much remains to be done in the communication sector, as well as in policy, strategy and implementation of new practices. In this Module we are going to analyze the basic principles of accessible information.

In this module you will learn:

- Why accessibility of information is important to customers and businesses in the tourism sector.
- How to design and implement accessible information in different formats.
- Where to find additional resources (key references, websites, analytical tools, videos and other aids which will enable you to make your own in-depth studies in this important field.

Module 5 is divided into three sections: the first section introduces the principles relating to accessibility criteria for the design and implementation of information, in compliance with the principles of Universal Design.

The second section, starting from the premise that the diffusion of information accessibility cannot disregard the accessibility of the information itself, describes the possible ways of transmitting information, reporting the main elements of the process and the third section presents some examples and good communication practices that we have analyzed taking into account the principles, tools and methods shared in the previous sections and using the proposed evaluation tools.

The content of the module is inspired by various “open source” documents and online resources, including:

- the principles elaborated by the United Nations World Tourism Organization ([UNWTO](#)) in their technical manual “Recommendations on Accessible Information in Tourism”,

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- the “Toolkit on Universal Design for Customer Engagement in the Tourism Sector” developed by the Centre of Excellence in Universal Design, (Ireland);and
- the technical guidelines of the major operators in the digital information sector such as: Adobe, Microsoft or Google.

Regarding the section on the accessibility of websites, the key reference point is [W3C®](#). The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) was born in October 1994 from the meeting between Tim Berners-Lee (co-inventor with Robert Cailliau of the World Wide Web) and CERN in Geneva (the European Organization for Nuclear Research) with the goal of defining common protocols for system development ensuring their interoperability. The content of the module is also enriched by resources from the third sector: universities, associations, research institutes.

At the end of each section of Module 5 you will find an extensive Annex containing an annotated list of websites and other resources for further study.

Section 1 - How to design accessible information

The natural accessibility of communication

At the opening of the Module, we are proposing to you some reflections on the term communication and how it relates to the concept of "accessibility".

Communication, as such, is a process that has its founding principle in accessibility: when, in fact, the message is not received, understood and decoded, there is not a communication process.

In other words, we can say that when our message is not accessible to all those to whom it is ideally addressed, it loses its effectiveness altogether and the communication process does not exist.

This applies to every type of communication, but even more, in a context where the information or message transmitted is part of a wider process of **marketing communication** as the one we are referring to.

There are many theories about communication, but they all have in common some terms of reference that we are going to present briefly below:

- **sender** (subject transmitting the message),
- **receiver** or receiving subject (subject who receives the message and who in turn can, by sending replies or feedback, become a sender),
- **encoding** and **decoding** of the message,
- **message**,
- **channel** (the tools used for the transmission of the message),
- **barriers** (all obstacles that can reduce or completely cancel the transmission and reception of the message).

The following is a hypothetical situation, showing all the elements we have listed above.

“Imagine you (the sender) are calling a friend of yours (the receiver) who lives in Kenya. The connection is poor (barrier) and she is sleepy (barrier): you are calling her in the middle of the night!

You have a relevant piece of news to tell her (the message) and you have prepared a nice speech (coding) but she is too tired to understand (decoding). You are going to tell

her that you succeeded in passing your last exam at the university and she is answering that you are crazy: she has no exam to pass. At the end you understand that the mobile (channel) is not the best choice. An e-mail is probably a better option!”

Within this framework it is evident that each of the elements identified has its own specific relevance in contributing to the (in)effectiveness of the communication process as a whole, as it is evident that the last element expressed - the barrier of the poor phone connection - made this the wrong choice of “channel”. The term “barriers” that you saw analyzed in the previous modules from an architectural point of view, in the context of the theories related to communication processes, is used as a technical term, which includes multiple factors: environmental, cultural, social, technological.

The barriers to communication are perhaps more widespread and difficult to overcome than the architectural ones because they are hardly recognizable - that is, until we pay attention to them. Our prejudices, the inability to listen, the lack of attention, a language we do not know, the desire to affirm our ego can all be barriers to communication. Other factors include the sender’s lack of knowledge about communication elements, such as an unclear writing style or use of a "serif" typeface (and we are going to explain the term later) which can be difficult to perceive because it is too "distracting" for some readers. . Breaking down the barriers to communication and communicating effectively, although not always easy, is a possible mission: in this Module we are giving you the basic directions to reach the goal.

Note on marketing communication: for an in-depth look at the concept of marketing in a broad sense and marketing communication, we recommend reading Philip Kotler and his marketing lessons (14th edition), which contains a brief excerpt on marketing from which you can easily guess how communication is an extremely relevant element.

[Philip Kotler](#) Summary on Marketing

1. Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders. Marketing management is the art and science of choosing target markets and getting, keeping, and growing customers through creating, delivering, and communicating superior customer value.
2. Marketers are skilled at managing demand: they seek to influence its level, timing, and composition for goods, services, events, experiences, persons,

places, properties, organizations, information, and ideas. They also operate in four different marketplaces: consumer, business, global, and nonprofit.

3. Marketing is not done only by the marketing department. It needs to affect every aspect of the customer experience. To create a strong marketing organization, marketers must think like executives in other departments, and executives in other departments must think more like marketers.
4. Today's marketplace is fundamentally different as a result of major societal forces that have resulted in many new consumer and company capabilities. These forces have created new opportunities and challenges and changed marketing management significantly as companies seek new ways to achieve marketing excellence.
5. There are five competing concepts under which organizations can choose to conduct their business: the production concept, the product concept, the selling concept, the marketing concept, and the holistic marketing concept. The first three are of limited use today.
6. The holistic marketing concept is based on the development, design, and implementation of marketing programs, processes, and activities that recognize their breadth and interdependencies. Holistic marketing recognizes that everything matters in marketing and that a broad, integrated perspective is often necessary. Four components of holistic marketing are relationship marketing, integrated marketing, internal marketing, and socially responsible marketing.
7. The set of tasks necessary for successful marketing management includes developing marketing strategies and plans, capturing marketing insights, connecting with customers, building strong brands, shaping the market offerings, delivering and communicating value, and creating long-term growth.

The principles of Universal Design in the information sector

“Good design enables, bad design disables”

- **Paul Hogan** (founding member of the Institute for Design and Disability)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=46&v=397fLrRjwF8

The concept of Universal design, which was examined in the previous modules, is, as you know, a very broad concept and refers to the "design of products and environments that can be used by all people, to the greatest possible extent, without the need for adaptation or specialized design".

For a long time, the priority fields of application of the Universal Design principles have been those of architecture and product design but gradually these principles have established themselves in different sectors, including those of training and information: designing from a perspective of accessibility for all means to design effective information and communication tools as potentially universally accessible. In practice, as you will discover in the following sections of the module, it means creating easily understandable texts that include organized text structures, easily navigable contents, images with alternative text or subtitled videos.

Now let's see how seven principles of Universal design, which you saw previously applied in different sectors, can be applied to the communications sector.

- **Equitable use:** in the context of reference of the module, this principle is stated when the information is transmitted in such a way that it can be used by the widest possible number of target groups (people with sensory, or motor or intellectual disabilities, people with limited technical abilities).
- **Flexibility in use:** this principle is stated when the information transmitted adapts to a wide range of individual preferences and abilities (example: possibility of choosing the language in vocal synthesis instruments; presence of alternative text to describe the images).
- **Simple and intuitive use:** this principle is stated when the information transmitted is easily understandable, regardless of experience, knowledge,

language skills or user's concentration level..

- **Perceptible Information:** this principle is stated when the information transmitted is perceptible by the user, regardless of the environmental conditions or the user's sensory abilities (example: presence of subtitles in television programs; possibility to adjust the contrast when reading a web page; presence of alternative text to describe the images;).
- **Tolerance for Error:** in the context of reference of the module, this principle applies when the information is transmitted in a way or ways that minimize the risks and the negative and accidental consequences of unwanted actions (example: instructions that provide both voice and visual information).
- **Low physical effort:** in the framework of the module, this principle is stated when the information transmitted can be perceived efficiently and comfortably with a minimum effort (example: possibility of controlling the speed of video playback).
- **Size and Space for Approach and Use:** in the framework of the module, this principle is stated when the information transmitted is perceptible regardless of the body size, the posture and the mobility capacity of the person (example: explanatory texts of artwork placed at visible height for all).

For further information on UD in general, please visit the North Carolina State University "[The Center for Universal Design](#)" online, but also the website of the [EIDD Design for All Europe](#), founded in Dublin in 1993, with the support of the European Union under the Horizon program, to which associations and institutions of many European countries belong such as: Italy (the first National Member Organization of the EIDD), Portugal, Lithuania, Belgium, Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and Hungary.

An additional useful resource is the The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) [website](#) on which you can find the "Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service", a communication toolkit specifically designed under the principle of Universal design.

The reference principles and the features of accessible information

Let us now see, in detail, what is the universally accepted definition of "accessible information" and what are the reference principles in this context.

The principles from which we want to start are those set out in Article 9 of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [CRPD](#).

The article explicitly declares that the information and communication sector must be part of the strategy to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise their rights on equal terms with others.

“To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to **information and communications**, [our emphasis] including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:

- A. Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;
- B. **Information, communications and other services**, including electronic services and emergency services.”

In addition, it asks member states to implement (inter alia) the following measures:

- to promote other appropriate forms of assistance and support to persons with disabilities to ensure their access to information;
- to promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet;
- to promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communications technologies and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost.

The Convention defines as accessible, information which is provided in formats that allow each user and/or learner to access the contents "on an equal basis with others". In line with this definition, accessible information is ideally information that:

- allows all users to easily find their way within the content;
- can be perceived and understood through the use of different perception channels: visual, auditory and tactile channels.

Given that Tourism for All refers particularly to the market of persons with disabilities and/or people with specific access requirements, we once again want to emphasise the principle that the concept of accessibility of information in tourism does not apply exclusively to these groups, as the ability of each of us to decode information or use a service can be influenced by the context, by the physical—mental state of the moment and by the tools that we have available. e.g. a “hands-free” telephone when driving or using equipment. Typically it is a great benefit to all users when information is provided by **at least two sensory channels**, so that any interference or impairment in one channel may be compensated by the other. Moreover, each of us can have need of information in another format at a certain point in life, e.g. when being in a noisy environment or as we get older and hearing becomes weaker: having accessible information available is an advantage for everyone.

The business case for Universally Designed communications

This, and the following subsections, are extrapolated from the **Universal Design for customer engagement**, addressed to the owner or manager of a small tourism business. As a TAD Access Advisor, the lessons presented here - and the further reading materials - will enable you to appreciate and apply the techniques that are described.

Universal Design for customer engagement is the design of all forms of customer communications so that they can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability and disability.

These sections will signpost you to useful tips and methods for designing communications, following a specially prepared “Toolkit” developed by Dolmen (www.dolmen.ie) on behalf of the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design at the National Disability Authority, Ireland. The Toolkit, which is widely accepted as “best practice” training materials in the tourism sector, is [free to download](#), as it is intended that it should be widely used by the tourism sector as a means of improving profitability and ensuring greater customer satisfaction.



Image caption: the image is from The [Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#) website where you can find the above mentioned toolkit.

The Toolkit was designed for all businesses that provide services to tourism customers. This ranges from small Bed and Breakfast establishments to large hotels, from coffee shops to large restaurants as well as music venues, cultural institutions, tour and transport operators, and everything in-between.

Business owners communicate with their customers in various ways, from the initial contact to purchase, as well as during and after the tourism experience. At all the “touch points” where the service provider and the customer meet, it is vital to ensure the best

possible communication, taking into account the widest possible range of customer requirements.

The business owner/manager should ask him/herself:

- Is a warm welcome being translated into a better experience for your customers, and more revenue for your business?
- Are we communicating with our customers as well as we can in our print materials, on our website, over the phone and in person?
- After we make the first sale, how are we keeping customers engaged?

Better communication can increase the spend by your customer, widen your market, improve brand recognition and customer loyalty.

By adopting a Universal Design approach to communications you will:

- Increase the number of repeat customers.
- Improve word of mouth referrals and online reviews.
- Improve how you successfully communicate to a wider market.
- Increase spend by your customers.

From the use of the customer communication Toolkit in Ireland, it was demonstrated that:

- 52% of customers purchase more from a business as a result of a good customer experience.
- Two thirds of customers are willing to spend an average of 13% more with a business they believe provides good customer service.
- 24% of customers will continue to use the service providers for two or more years after good experiences.

All businesses should be focused on meeting the needs of as many existing and potential new customers as possible. Businesses need to consider providing a better service and experience to existing and future customers. Crucially, improving the accessibility of written, verbal and web-based communications will give an immediate increase in market reach, making your services available to a larger number and broader range of potential customers.

- All your customers will benefit from universally designed communications
- Communication will be more accessible, easier to understand and more useful to as many of your customers as possible.

- The more flexible your service is and the more options it gives your customers, the more likely a service is to meet the diverse needs of as wide a customer base as possible.

As your customers get older, they are more likely to experience practical difficulties when travelling and using tourism services. In Europe, tourists over 65 are the only customer segment that has grown (by 10%) between 2006 and 2011. Their tourism expenditure grew by 33% in these five years and the trend continues today. This is because there are an increasing number of tourists over 65, who have money to spend and more leisure time than other customer segments. Tourism customers over 50 years old buy 40% more than the under 30s, averaging 5 or 6 trips per year.

- **A good reputation makes good business sense.** A satisfied customer will tell other people about your service, increasing awareness and potentially creating new customers. Two thirds of customers are willing to spend an average of 13% more with a business they believe provides good customer service.
- **What's good for society benefits your business.** If you incorporate a Universal Design approach in your business, you are likely to receive a reputation for a high level of corporate social responsibility. Welcoming all customers to use your service not only increases your bottom line - it benefits your local community and society as well.
- **The Demographic Case.** There are no typical tourism customers. They can be male or female, of all ages and all different in size and ability. Tourism customers typically consist of a range of nationalities, where English may not be their first language.
- It is important to remember, that at some stage we all will experience some form of difficulty, such as only having the use of one arm because you're carrying a baby, or having difficulty hearing because of loud background noise. However this additionally may include more long term personal difficulties, ranging from hearing and seeing difficulties, to mental health and physical difficulties.
- How we design our communications to cater for all users is an essential part of the tourism manager's or consultant's skill set.

Watch this video as an Introduction to the Business Case for Universal Design and the Irish Toolkit:

- [Better tourism business through better design](#)
- Download and read Toolkit section 1: [Business Objectives and Overview \(PDF document\)](#)

Written communication

The Irish Toolkit section, “Written Communication”, aims to give tourism business owners/managers an introduction to the key issues that apply to every use of writing. It will:

- help you assess your written communication to ensure the information is easy to read; and understand for your target market;
- help you to better engage with your customers through written communication;
- help you to deliver a better customer experience;
- help you to develop new customer communications.

Written text guidance:

The way you communicate with your customers is very important; your tone, the words you use and the way you write. It is important to think about who you are writing for (your target market) and what they know about your business (particularly their familiarity with the technical terms you may use).

The following checklist gives some key pieces of guidance on how to communicate with your customers effectively:

- Think of the person you are writing for
- What background information do they know about your business?
- Are they familiar with the technical terms your business uses?
- How will they read the document? Will they just skip to the section of interest to them?
- Be personal: Use ‘I’, ‘we’ and ‘you’ in your documents.
- Use active verbs: Try to put the person, group or thing doing the action at the start of the sentence as often as possible. This will help make your text more personal and clearer.
For example, write “We will send you a confirmation of your booking on Tuesday” instead of “A confirmation of your booking will be sent on Tuesday.”
- Make text easy to read and understand

- Always use the simplest and clearest language possible.
- Avoid technical language that your customer may not understand. If you must use technical language, clearly explain what it means in plain English.

You may also consider these tips for organising and preparing your written content:

- Define unfamiliar abbreviations or acronyms: Where your customer may be unfamiliar with an acronym, spell it out the first time it is used followed by the acronym in brackets. For example, the Visitor Information Centre (VIC).
- Try to keep unfamiliar abbreviations or acronyms to a minimum.
- Keep sentences short: Aim to use no more than 15 to 20 words per sentence. Break up sentences with full stops, rather than semi-colons. Use one space after a full stop to help with accessibility, particularly for your customers using text-to-speech software.
- Be consistent with the terms and formats: Use the same terms and formats for the same concept throughout your document. For example, make sure you write dates and numbers consistently; don't change from using the word 'seven' to writing the number '7'.
- Use questions and answers: Questions and answers help to get information across or emphasise certain facts.
- Proofread your document: It is important to proofread your document. It is recommended that this is done at least an hour later, though preferably 24 hours later. This helps you see the document with fresh eyes, making you more likely to notice mistakes. If possible, ask someone else to proofread it as well.
- Use a house style: Create a house style of terms, phrases and explanations of technical terms that everyone in your business uses repeatedly. This can also be applied to writing and layout standards for your written communication.
- Do you have standard explanations for technical terms that you use for people outside your business? What standard explanations for technical terms may not be understood by all your customers?

We also suggest you to take a closer look at the topic related to "[easy to read](#)" writing and compare the following documents to discover how the technique can transform a complex document in a "easy readable" one:

- [Resolution on European Disability Strategy](#)
- [Resolution on European Disability Strategy in Easy to Read](#)



Image caption: the European easy-to-read logo

Other sections of the Written Communications toolkit cover the following subjects, each with a Checklist and examples to support a practical approach by the business owner/manager or staff:

- Document Design
- Form Design
- Signage Guidance
- Signage Design

Watch this YouTube video as an introduction to [Written Communication \(Viking Splash\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mzejm8xHIKM&feature=youtu.be) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mzejm8xHIKM&feature=youtu.be>

Download and read Toolkit section 2: [Written Communication](#)

Face-to-face, telephone and video communication

The Irish Toolkit section, “Face-to-Face, telephone and video communication”, aims to give tourism business owners/managers an introduction to the key issues that apply to every use of face-to face communications. It will:

- help you assess your face-to-face, telephone and video communication to ensure you are communicating in a way that is easy to understand;
- help you to better engage with your customers through face-to-face, telephone and video communication;
- help you to deliver a better customer experience;
- help you to develop new customer communications.

Sections of the **Face-to-face Communication** toolkit cover the following subjects, each with a Checklist and examples to support a practical approach by the business owner/manager or staff:

- Verbal Communication
- Face-to-Face Communication
- Non-Verbal Communication
- Telephone Based Call Routing and Message Service

Verbal communication should be applied when designing how to communicate with customers verbally. While this guidance is focused on face-to-face, telephone and video communication, it equally applies to speeches, conversations, presentations, machine voice recordings and public announcements.

- Use Plain English. Always use the simplest and clearest language possible. Avoid using technical words that your customers may not be familiar with.
- If you must use technical language, clearly explain what it means.
- Think about what you are saying: are you answering your customers’ questions?
- Are your customers familiar with the technical terms your business uses?
- Speak clearly: speak in a clear voice, clearly pronouncing your words.
- Speak slowly: take your time and speak slowly to your customer.
- Tailor what you are saying to meet your customer’s needs.
- Keep your message simple: state one piece of information at a time.
- Provide the information in a logical order.

- State the purpose of your conversation: at the start of your conversation state the purpose of it.
- Listen and respond to your customer: be aware of the language your customer uses and their literacy level.
- Consider that adults may have literacy and numeracy difficulties and may not be familiar with your language.

To deep we suggest you to:

- watch this YouTube video as an introduction to [Face-to-face communication \(Jurys Inn\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAM93ok4Hco&feature=youtu.be);
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAM93ok4Hco&feature=youtu.be>
- Download and read Toolkit section 3: [Face-to face, telephone and video communication](#)

Electronic and Web-based communication

The Irish Toolkit section, “Electronic and Web-based communication”, aims to give tourism business owners/managers an introduction to the key issues that apply to every use of electronic communications, including Web-sites, social media, apps and so on. It will:

- help you assess how you engage with your customers to ensure information is easy to read, use and understand your target market;
- help you to better engage with your customers through electronic and web-based communication systems;
- help you assess your face-to-face, telephone and video communication to ensure you are communicating in a way that is easy to understand;
- help you to better engage with your customers through face-to-face, telephone and video communication.

This contents of this toolkit are described as “just good common sense” but will help staff members who prepare electronic or Web content, either as information managers, developers or service personnel who use electronic tools to deliver services to customers.

There are two levels of changes that this Toolkit will deliver:

- Incremental changes: these are small changes that are easy to put in place, which can improve your customer's experience and make information easier to understand. This can range from the language and tone you use in emails, to the images you use on your website to explain your services.
- Radical changes: these are bigger changes that create tangible impacts. This can range from creating a more efficient and effective ways of communicating with your customers, enabling you to target new customer segments, improving customer engagement by responding to your customers' enquiries faster.

Sections of the Electronic Communications toolkit cover the following subjects, each with a checklist and examples to support a practical approach by the business owner/manager or staff:

- Writing Good Web Content
 - Writing for the web
 - Content quality
 - Links and microcontent
 - Titles and descriptions
- Designing and Developing Usable Websites
 - Website navigation guidance
 - Forms
 - Login details
 - Time out messages
 - CAPTCHAs
 - Search functions
 - Multimedia, images and colour.
 - Accessibility
- Mobile Web Content and Apps
 - Apps for smartphones and devices
- Email and Newsletter Guidance
- Accessible Documents and Brochures
- SMS Based Communication
 - General guidelines for SMS (texting).
- Social Media Guidance
 - Twitter
 - Facebook posts
 - Youtube

- **Watch this YouTube video as an introduction to [Electronic and Web-based communication](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujNKBLV6oTU&feature=youtu.be) (Purty Kitchen)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujNKBLV6oTU&feature=youtu.be>
- **Watch this [W3C video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20SHvU2PKsM) to understand what web accessibility means**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20SHvU2PKsM>
- **Download and read Toolkit section 4: [Electronic and Web-based communication](#)**

Annex

Annotated List of Websites

- <http://www2.unwto.org/>

The [World Tourism Organization](http://www2.unwto.org/) (UNWTO) is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

- <https://www.w3.org/>

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international community where Member organizations, a full-time staff, and the public work together to develop Web standards. Led by Web inventor and Director Tim Berners-Lee and CEO Jeffrey Jaffe, W3C's mission is to lead the Web to its full potential.

- <http://www.philkotler.com/>

Philip Kotler is an American marketing author, consultant, and professor: one of the most relevant academic in the sector.

- <https://projects.ncsu.edu/www/ncsu/design/sod5/cud/>

The Center for Universal Design (CUD) is a national information, technical assistance, and research center that evaluates, develops, and promotes accessible and universal design in housing, commercial and public facilities, outdoor environments, and products. Our mission is to improve environments and products through design innovation, research, education and design assistance. **Note:** the Center for Universal Design is currently (April 2019) not active due to funding challenges.

- <http://dfaeurope.eu/>

EIDD Design for All Europe is a unique international platform for different organizations with a common goal: a more inclusive Europe for everyone.

- <http://www.dfaitalia.it/>

DfA Italia is the Italian member association of DfA Europe.

- <http://universaldesign.ie/Home/>

The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) was established by the National Disability Authority (NDA) in January 2007 under the Disability Act 2005. The Centre is dedicated to the principle of universal access, enabling people in Ireland to participate in a society that takes account of human difference and to interact with their environment to the best of their ability.

- <http://www.universaldesign.ie/tourism>

The Universal Design Toolkit for Customer Engagement was developed by Dolmen (www.dolmen.ie) on behalf of the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design at the National Disability Authority, Ireland. It was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders involved in the tourism industry. The Toolkit is based on the specifications contained in the Irish Standard (I.S.) 373:2013 'Universal Design for customer engagement in tourism services', published by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-9-accessibility.html>

The link reports you to the United Nations website where you can find the Article 9 of "The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities".

- [WebAIM](#)

WebAIM is a non-profit organization based at the Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University. WebAIM (Web Accessibility In Mind) has provided comprehensive web accessibility solutions since 1999. These years of experience have made WebAIM one of the leading providers of web accessibility expertise internationally.

- <https://www.odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/a-guide-to-making-easy-read-information/#What-is-easy-read-information>

The Office for Disability Issues is the focal point in government of New Zealand on disability issues. The Office support implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

- <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/add-alternative-text-to-a-shape-picture-ch>

[art-smartart-graphic-or-other-object-44989b2a-903c-4d9a-b742-6a75b451c669](https://support.office.com/44989b2a-903c-4d9a-b742-6a75b451c669)

The link goes to a specific section of the Microsoft support service for Office. The page is focused on alternative text: in the page you can find all the specific instruction to apply the function on all the Office software.

- <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/creating-accessible-pdfs.html>

The link opens a page specifically designed by the Adobe support service to explain how to create an accessible pdf file.

- <https://webaim.org/techniques/captions/#ad>

The page shows a deepening on audio descriptions.

- <https://www.w3.org/People/Berners-Lee/>

The link goes to a page on which you can find a short biography of Tim berners Lee.

- [Linguee](https://www.linguee.com/)

Linguee is a web service that provides an online dictionary for a number of language pairs. Linguee incorporates a search engine that provides access to large amounts of bilingual sentence pairs found online.

- <https://yoast.com/>
- <https://yoast.com/tag/accessibility/>

Yoast is a search-optimization firm based in Wijchen, Netherlands. It develops and supports a popular Yoast SEO WordPress plugin that counts millions of active installations.

- <https://www.w3.org/WAI/people-use-web/user-stories/>

The page “Stories of Web Users” reports a selection of stories, which admittedly are not real but refer to potential situations of reality. The stories are presented through a brief description that outlines the user's profile, describes their disabilities and contextualises their need, identifying the possible response strategies.

- [Essential Components of Web Accessibility](https://www.w3.org/WAI/people-use-web/user-stories/)

The page shows how web accessibility depends on several components working together, and how improvements in specific components could substantially improve web accessibility. In addition, it provides the foundation for understanding the different accessibility standards developed by the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

- [W3C Accessibility Standards Overview](#)

The page introduces guidelines and other standards related to web accessibility.

- [WCAG 2.0](#)
- [WCAG 2.1](#)
- [How to Meet WCAG 2](#)

The links guide you to the exploration of the WCAG guidelines (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.0 and 2.1 editions.

- <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/translations/>

The page lists translations of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 and 2.0.

- <https://www.3playmedia.com/2017/08/22/countries-that-have-adopted-wcag-standards-map/>

Video Collection

- <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/accessibility-video-training-71572a1d-5656-4e01-8fce-53e35c3caaf4?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US>

The link goes to the Accessibility video training by Microsoft support service for Office.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peTuJm_8HtM

The video lasts about 2 minutes, it contains English subtitles and it is created and published by Microsoft. The video provides an overview of text alternatives and explains what they are, how long they should be, and when they are not needed.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cz55qjW-0bU>

The video shows a series of interviews published by Adobe on the knowledge of the acronym PDF. The video lasts about 1 minute. English subtitles are provided.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQKd-Or1-VI>

The video is published by the University of North Carolina. It explains, in a simple way, some differences between an accessible PDF document and a non-accessible PDF, emphasizing some features of "Adobe Acrobat Pro's Accessibility". The video lasts about 3 minutes and English subtitles are provided.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnLJhvfG5YU&feature=youtu.be>

The video is presented by Lucy Greco, UC Berkeley's Web Accessibility. It lasts about 7 minutes and English subtitles are provided. Using a simple and clear language, the video shows the differences between an inaccessible and an accessible PDF document.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_GrYOruY7w&t=43s

The video is proposed by RNIB, the Royal National Institute of Blind People. It lasts about 2 minutes and tells about Audio Description.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20SHvU2PKsM>

The video lasts about 4 minutes and presents, in summary, the principles of web accessibility and the W3C Standards: an international reference point for the sector. The video comes with subtitles, available in about 15 languages, and transcripts.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RHG_XiQ0ck

"Web Accessibility Perspectives: Voice Recognition" is a video presented by W3C and introduces the theme of accessibility of websites looking at the topic from the user point of view. The video lasts about 1 minute and is part of a series that you can find on the W3C.org website.

- <https://www.washington.edu/doi/videos/index.php?vid=35>

The video is produced by DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and

Technology) Center. The video is one of the many materials that the center makes available to learners and teachers for the implementation of accessible educational materials; it lasts about 13 minutes; it is subtitled and also offers the possibility to slow down the audio.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOmehxAU_4s&t=47s
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56zCnwj58e4>

The links show you two videos on Accessibility Testing. The people who play in the videos speak very fast, but the videos are subtitled and you can reduce the playback speed.

Additional Resources

- [Recommendations on Accessible Tourism](#)
2013, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

- [Recommendations on Accessible Information in Tourism](#)
2016, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

- [State of captioning 2019](#)
A document published by 3PlayMedia on the use of captions in videos. 3PlayMedia is a company dealing with captioning technologies and services.

Section 2 – How to deliver accessible information

Introduction to section 2

In the first section of the module, we have seen that communication cannot ignore the concept of accessibility and the transmission of information on accessibility cannot ignore the accessibility of the information itself. In this second section we are going to investigate what are the possible ways to design and deliver the messages, focusing on the tourism sector and reporting some basic elements of the process.

If it is unlikely, as you saw in the previous modules, that the goal of a fully accessible tourist chain can be achieved in the short-medium term, the design and delivery of information, appropriate to the needs of people with disabilities or special needs, is a goal achievable in the short term and it is considered to be one of the most effective tools for expanding the market and tourism opportunities for all.

As we have seen, communication is a process through which information, ideas, facts, behaviours, opinions, emotions are shared and must be understood as a social and reciprocal act of participation. The basic rules of communication have as their main objective making effective the exchange between a subject who transmits information and a subject to whom the information is addressed, through a specific channel and using a specific, identifiable and decipherable coded language, in a circular process mediated by the use of significant symbols between different individuals and groups.

We saw in the first section of the module which are the basic elements of the process. Contextualizing them in relation to the tourism sector, we can identify the following elements in detail:

1. **sender:** the individual operators (tourist facilities, specialized sites, sector associations, public and private bodies that provide information relating to the elements of the tourism chain);
2. **message:** information relating to the accessibility of tourist facilities, services or products;
3. **code:** pictograms, descriptive texts, maps, videos, images;
4. **channel:** digital and / or traditional channels (websites, videos, brochures, specialized guides)
5. **receiver:** people who use tourist services and / or buy tourist products.

The reference framework

[A recent European survey](#) (GfK - Growth from Knowledge - 2015) suggests that up to half of people with disabilities do not travel on holiday, due to a combination of **lack of reliable information**, lack of funds and previous bad experiences. Yet, the desire to travel remains, with studies showing that it is not a person's impairment that impedes their travel but a series of interpersonal, attitudinal and structural constraints (Daniels et al., 2005; Darcy, 2003).

- From: "Accessible tourism futures: the world we dream to live in and the opportunities we hope to have" - Eleni Michopoulou , Simon Darcy, Ivor Ambrose, Dimitrios Buhalis
Journal of Tourism Futures, Volume: 1 Issue: 3, 2015.

The reference text from which we want to start the exploration of the theme is the one published in 2016 by the world tourism organization UNWTO: "[Recommendation on Accessible information on tourism](#)", text elaborated with the collaboration of the ONCE Foundation (Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles) and ENAT.

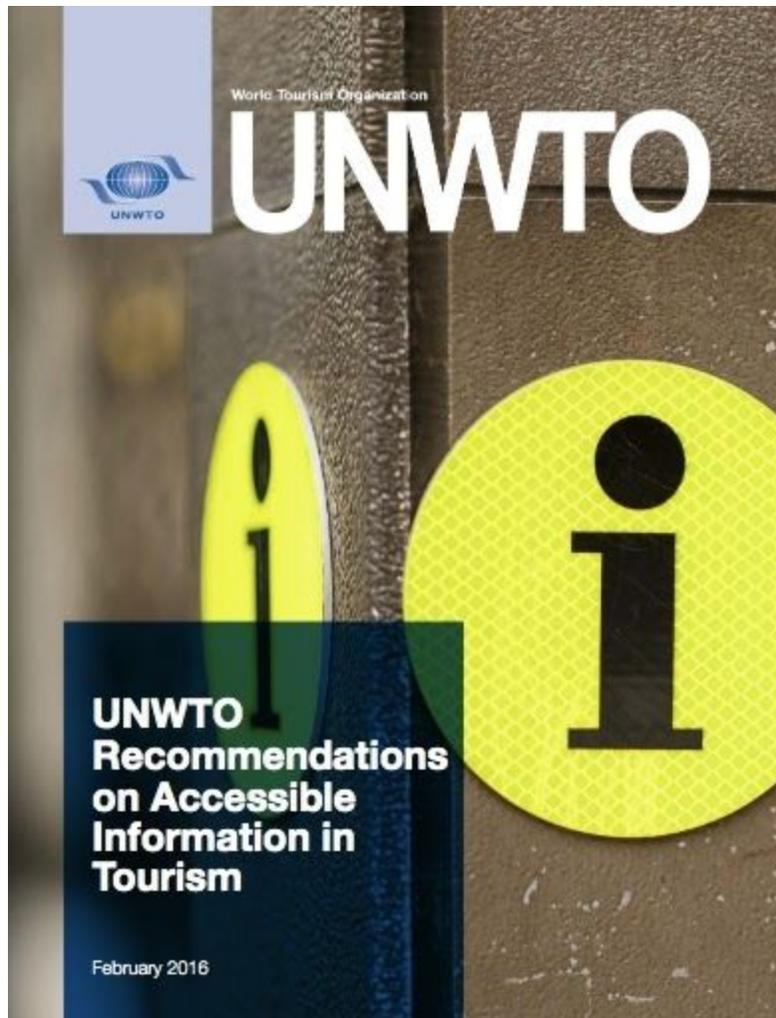


Image caption: cover of the UNWTO Recommendations on Accessible Information in Tourism

The document examines the basic elements that are essential for the accessibility of information, identifying the transmission of a reliable and decodable message by everyone as the main objective. The elements highlighted, which are summarized as follows, indicates **five elements** that each of us, working in the tourist information sector, should follow.

The first element is related to **information transmission methods**.

The possible ways identified by the UNWTO Recommendations are two, in sequence, where the first hypothesis represents the choice highly regarded:

- A. including information regarding the accessibility of infrastructures and services

within the informative products (website, brochure or other);

- B. providing resources where this information can be found: specialized sites, specific sector magazines or guides.

The second element highlighted relates to the **customization of information** and the communication relationship which, as we have anticipated, must be understood as a social and reciprocal participation act. In this regard, the document highlights the need to provide a point of contact to allow users to obtain more information, including customized messages.

The third element relates to the **coherence of information**. This element is obviously relevant in every type of communication, but it is even more crucial when it is addressed to people whose needs are special and to whom incorrect information can cause problems difficult to overcome. The consistency of the information implies a coherent message on all the media and channels used, including information provided online and in person by the staff, both on the site, either by phone or by email.

The fourth element, closely connected with the previous one, relates to the **training of the staff** who must be prepared to respond competently to questions relating to the accessibility of a structure, a service or a product. To explore this point in more depth we invite you to return, if necessary, to Module 3.

The last element identified by the document is related to the **regular updating of information**. Also in this case, the principle is valid for every type of communication and in particular for digital information: the frequency of updates, for example, is one of the determining factors for the **usability** of a website.

Note: usability measures the degree of ease and satisfaction with which users relate to the interface of a website.

The sender

Resuming the "Recommendations on the transmission of information on the accessibility of UNWTO" we now evaluate a possible way of cataloging the senders: the subjects that provide information on accessibility in the tourism sector. As we have seen, in relation to the methods of conveying information, there are two possible ways identified by UNWTO:

1. including information regarding accessibility within informative products.
2. providing resources where this information can be found: specialized sites, specific sector magazines or guides.

From the analysis of a series of cases, that we report in the third section, we have verified that when the information is included directly in the information products (website, brochure or other) in general it is the responsibility of the provider of services and/or products to present them. In this case it is a service provider that has an accessibility policy, more or less mature, but certainly started.

Alternatively, the publication of the accessibility information relies on third parties. In this case they are providers of services and/or products that do not have an autonomous capacity or willingness to start a specific information policy in this area and they rely, instead, on external agents managing the information through specialized websites or publications.

In this second case, we have verified, through a sample search, that often the information is not consistent: different types of information are provided by different senders. The examples we could present are many and a targeted search will easily lead you to personally verify the reasons why we believe that the first option – including information regarding accessibility in the reference information products directly released by the service provider– is the best option. When, as operators in the tourism supply chain, we start an accessibility and tourism policy for all, we cannot ignore communicating in first person - through all the communication channels we regularly use - about **our services** in a coherent and inclusive way. Including information on accessibility in all our informative and promotional materials, and doing it in first person, facilitates the planning and distribution of consistent, with easily updatable, customized and, above all, inclusive messages.

The message

The communication process has in the message – and in the content that the message intends to convey – its central element. In this regard, the UNWTO Recommendations highlight, in particular, two elements: **consistency of information and regular updating of information.**

Speaking more generally of the communicative process, we can however affirm that, the message must be, in order to be subject to an effective communicative process, easily decodable by the receiver and, above all, adapted to his needs, and that means customized. Of course it has to be updated and consistent, as well.

Also in this case we can refer to the Recommendations, where they underline the need for **customization of the information.** The document limits the customization of information to an individual context but the message transmitted should always be designed and constructed with the aim of anticipating the questions of the potential customer and accompanying him/her in drawing the map of the journey he/she intends to make. By customizing the message as much as possible in relation to the needs of our reference target group we will be able to offer the tools to imagine and "dream" a possible travel experience for our potential customers. Technical information and suggestions are clearly essential and are the basis for the construction of an accessible experience.

In section 1 of the module, outlining the design and implementation phases of accessible websites, we emphasized, referring to the W3C guidelines, the importance of involving end users in the different design and implementation phases of the product or service. In this section, we want to reiterate the same principle: the involvement of end users and the ability to listen to the needs of our potential customers are crucial. In designing the communication materials we cannot disregard the needs, expectations and desires of those who will receive our messages: be they purely informative or promotional.

The code

Starting from the general overview outlined through the analysis of the basic rules, let's now see what are the methods of transmitting information on accessibility through the analysis of some theoretical elements. You will find later, in section 3 of the module, the analysis of some real cases.

In general we can state that information on accessibility is generally realized using:

1. graphic symbols;
2. graphic symbols and supporting texts;
3. documents of various kinds, other than symbols, such as, for example: descriptive texts, videos, audio descriptions.

Let's analyze below the three different modes, without forgetting a contextual analysis of the basic elements expressed in the previous unit.

Graphic symbols

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppNYZq-hYTw/w>

The [video](#) we are proposing you is published by TEDEd, has a duration of about 4 minutes, it is in English and has subtitles. The title of the video is: "What does this symbol actually mean?" You can view the video as you wish, before or after reading the text. Please also read some of the comments on the video.

To suggest you some more reflections on the topic and as an example, we have chosen the following one:

"I used accessible facilities at the end of my pregnancy. I just wish I could have used disabled parking as well, because carrying groceries in the weeks before giving birth isn't easy at all. They should really introduce a temporary disability card for women in their third trimester."

Graphic symbols are stylized images that represent, by visual analogy, objects or concepts. This is one of the oldest forms of written communication. Its uses are many: in recent years, pictography has been widely used in the context of digital communication as a bearer of undeniable functions of synthesis and communicative immediacy.

It is the preferred tool in road signs and it is widely used in the adaptation of texts for people who have difficulties in functional communication field. Without being able to enter into the details of the theme in this context, we propose an analysis of some of the elements of strength and weakness of this communication code that plays, in the context of accessibility, a relevant role.

Its main strengths are in its capacity to attract attention and in its potential to cancel language barriers. We could add to these two elements the ease of decoding, but this element, which may appear to be a potential at first sight, reveals, to a more in-depth analysis, the main element of weakness of the instrument. The ease of decoding is in fact closely linked to the recognisability of the symbol: **the graphic symbol can live on its own life only where it is universally recognized and transmits, as such, a unique information.** In many cases, in the absence of a clear in-depth definition, the use of the symbol does not allow the user to correctly decode it.

Among the graphic symbols that most represent the theme of accessibility of structures and services, not only within the tourist sector, there is certainly the **ISA symbol** (International Symbol of Access). The symbol is known and used internationally and its function is to inform about the presence of "accessible facilities" such as: reserved seats and parking areas, ramped access routes, toilets with accessibility features and hotel rooms with adequate services and dimensions access for people with reduced mobility. The symbol is internationally recognized, and is used to identify, mark or indicate buildings and structures accessible and usable by all persons whose mobility is limited, first of all wheelchair users. It is used on the basis of a self-declaration (by the service providers) which should be in line with the relevant national legislation.

Note: for further information on ISA symbol we suggest you visit the [RI Global](#) website: an international level organization for the rights of people with disabilities. In the early sixties, RI Global was the promoter of the symbol. If we can affirm that the ISA symbol is a milestone in the field, we must also recognize that, as a whole, the frame of reference is not so simple and clear. The universe of disability and special needs is much more vast and diversified than the ISA symbol, in its communicative immediacy, can evoke. This limit has generated, over time, a number of different graphic symbols in a more or less successful attempt to represent in an unambiguous and immediate way the universe of diversity of which people with disabilities and special needs are carriers: to better understand we suggest you explore the following links: [France](#), [Flanders](#),

[Denmark](#), [Portugal](#).

As an example we propose you the following video by [Visit Flanders](#)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctfukDRj9IA>

Note: for a relaxing break, we suggest you explore the works of [Outmane Amahou](#) and try to identify the painters who represent the different pictorial currents in the graphic symbols of the French artist. If you prefer sport you can try to decode the symbols that were used to represent the different sports in the 2016 edition of the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Graphic symbols and supporting texts

As we mentioned in the previous section, in many cases, in the absence of a clear in-depth definition, the use of the symbol does not allow the user a correct and exhaustive decoding of the information. In the attempt to overcome this limitation and with the aim of transmitting information regarding the accessibility of tourist facilities, services and products in a flow of inclusive information, some operators have developed different communication strategies that partially or totally exceed the use of graphic symbology. The partial overcoming of the limit occurs when the symbol is correlated with textual descriptions that provide additional information or reinforcement of the message expressed by the graphic symbol.



Level Access and Automatic Doors (or No Doors)



The approach and circulation is level (this may include the use of lifts). Doors will be automatic and opening widths a minimum of 75cm.

Image caption: example of graphic symbols and supporting texts (form [AccessAble](#)). The example represents the way AccessAble use a mix of symbols and text.

Code mix

In other cases, the symbol is completely overcome and a mix of tools is used: in these cases information on accessibility - more or less detailed, in relation to the qualitative level of accessibility policies of the structure or of the service provider - is generally included “naturally” in an overall communication plan that informs and narrates the accessible product or service just as any other type of service and product. In these cases the description of the characteristics of the tourist structure, service or product is entrusted exclusively to the text, images or other instruments with the exclusion of the graphic symbology.

On the websites of providers who have chosen this communication strategy you can find sections dedicated, for example, to the items: accessibility, family, smart solutions or you can find specific search filters for the selection of criteria such as: minimum room sizes, dedicated parking spaces or availability of specific equipment. To learn more, please visit section 3 of the Module.

The channel

By the term channel or medium, we mean, as anticipated, the element through which the message is conveyed. In the tourism sector, as in most commercial sectors, the channels used are traditional, such as telephone communications, catalogs, newspapers and magazines (offline), or digital, such as websites and social media (online).

To let you better understand, we propose a short text that contains the testimony of an experienced traveller: Carrie-Ann Lightley, a “Disabled Travel Blogger”. The text, taken from Carrie's blog, is extremely interesting because it lists, substantially, all the channels through which information on tourist services and products is conveyed and describes the methods of use.

These are, in summary, the channels Carrie-Ann Lightley lists:

- Specialized sites
- Word of mouth (opinions of friends)
- Sites of the structures (with particular attention to the photographic material)
- Tripadvisor
- Telephone contact with the establishment

“I use a combination of specialist accessible travel websites, TripAdvisor, Facebook groups and good old Google. I'll start with a destination or two in mind, ask for recommendations from friends and on Facebook groups, see which hotels are noted as being accessible in that area, check the hotel's actual website and/or a listing site that goes into detail on accessibility to make sure it broadly meets my requirements, and then cross-reference with TripAdvisor. From there I'll build a shortlist, and contact the hotel directly to confirm accessibility in writing and photographs – this is very important as things can get lost in translation if you're travelling internationally.

Then it's about checking the nice-to-haves – is it close to the town/restaurants/beaches, do I like the look of the dining options, can I get a spa treatment?! Ok, I'm high maintenance. And then I repeat the process looking for transport options, things to do/places to visit, restaurants and most importantly cocktail bars. TripAdvisor's forums and Facebook groups like the Accessible Travel Club are invaluable for this kind of local information. If all else fails, simple Google searches like 'wheelchair accessible hotel in...' 'mobility equipment hire in...' 'wheelchair accessible airport transfer in...' usually

yield some results. If the thought of spending hours doing your own research fills you with dread, there are websites and companies out there who can help.

If you're travelling in the UK, AccessAble list loads of hotels and places to visit which have all been assessed in person (yes I work for them but honestly I don't know of any other company that has quality, factual accessibility guides to so many venues – 125,000+!) For international travel, there are a few specialist tour operators who I've worked with over the years who really do know their stuff. You might pay a little bit more to book through them, but they'll save you hours of time and give you the extra confidence that comes with knowing you've used an expert. Accessible Travel and Leisure, Enable Holidays, DisabledHolidays.com and Limitless Travel are all doing amazing things.”

The receiver

By the term "receiver" we mean, in this context, all the people to whom the messages related to services and products in the tourism field are directed.

Since the communication, as we have repeatedly stated in the module, is a multidirectional process and not a one-way street, the receivers of our messages can interact with us through the different channels we have previously mentioned, becoming themselves message bearers or senders.

The used channels are generally the same that are used by the operators of the sector: telephone, email, social media, website.

The receivers of the messages and users of the services offered by the accessible tourist supply chain can today, with ever increasing ease, interact publicly in the web, expressing opinions and review the quality of the services.

We propose you an example taken from [AccessAble](#) site: a website specialized in the review of shops, pubs, restaurants, cinemas, theaters, railway stations, hotels, universities, hospitals in the United Kingdom and Ireland (for further details we invite you to visit section 3 of the Module, where we guide you through the exploration of the website).

On the website we found the following assessment under the title: "What people are saying..." and you can find many more examples surfing on the AccessAble website.

1. "The website is great. I love that you can select and filter your results. As my mum has limited hearing and vision it's great to be able to find places quickly and easily that I know she will like and not feel anxious at. Thank you AccessAble!"
2. "This will eliminate the need for "rookie runs" when planning outings, to allow for more fun and spontaneity."

In order to carry on deepening, you can search (just an example) on Tripadvisor. Making a research using key words such as: Accessibility, accessible, family, old people, wheelchair, you can find a lot of examples and reviews to understand what people say.

There are also many blogs managed independently by people with disabilities who tell and share their travel experiences online.

Among the many that you can find on the web we point out that of [Carrie-Ann Lightley](#) we introduced you before. Her blog is an award-winning one, which shares reviews, guides and expert advice on wheelchair travel. The blog aims to encourage people with motor impairment to travel, explore and discover new spaces in the world.



Image caption: The homepage screenshot of the website of Carrie-Ann Lightley. The image reports a picture of Carrie Ann and the headline of her blog: “Award-winning accessible blog - Providing advice, expertise and inspiration”.

For more information we suggest you to surf the web and browse other blogs: the exercise allows you to understand which are the suggestions shared on the web, the difficulties and the expectations of travelers. The careful exploration of these websites offers suggestions and indications, sometimes "enlightening", to better design the contents of our messages. You can start here:

- [Accessible Italy? Yes we can!](#) Italy in a wheelchair: first-hand travel impressions
- [Packed again](#) Travelling with children: suggestions and resources
- [Old people travelling](#)

Annex

Annotated list of websites

- <https://www.gfk.com/en-gb/insights/press-release/promoting-accessible-tourism-can-positively-contribute-to-the-economy/>

The link opens a page on GfK Belgium (Growth from Knowledge) where you can find a press release (11.05.2015) on the following topic: “Promoting accessible tourism can positively contribute to the economy”. GfK is a private company offering services of advanced analytics.

- <http://www.riglobal.org/about/intl-symbol-of-access/>

RI Global is an international level organization for the rights of people with disabilities.

- <http://ee.france.fr/en/information/national-tourism-handicap-label>
- <https://www.visitflanders.com/en/accessibility/designation-labels/>
- <http://www.godadgang.dk/gb/main.asp>
- <https://www.visitportugal.com/en/content/accessible-beach>

The links show some examples of the use of graphics symbols in different countries: France, Flanders, Denmark and Portugal.

- <https://mymodernmet.com/outmane-amahou-minimalist-art-movement-posters/>

The page introduces the artwork of the France-based graphic designer Outmane Amahou who created a series of posters to visually document the history of art. The series, entitled “Minimalist Art Movement Posters”, features single shapes and solid blocks of color to portray the Renaissance, Expressionism, Surrealism, Dadaism, and Abstract art, to name a few.

- <https://www.accessable.co.uk/>

AccessAble is a website specialized in the review of shops, pubs, restaurants, cinemas, theaters, railway stations, hotels, universities, hospitals in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

- <https://www.carrieannlightley.com/>
- <http://wheelchairtraveling.com/wheelchair-accessible-italy-disabled-tour/>
- <https://packedagain.com/best-travel-resource/#accommodation>
- <https://www.nomadicmatt.com/travel-blogs/interview-senior-backpacking-travel/>

The listed links present some blog of “special travellers” who tell about their experiences, expectations, dreams.

Video collection

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppNYZq-hYTw>

The video is published by TEDEd, has a duration of about 4 minutes and tells the story of the ISA symbol., it is in English and has subtitles. The title of the video is: What does this symbol actually mean?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctfukDRj9IA>

A video on Visit Flanders accessibility label. The video lasts about two minutes and is presented both by reading and written text and sign language.

Section 3 – Experiences

Introduction to section 3

In this final section of the Module we present you with some examples and good communication practices we have analyzed taking into account the issues and requirements shared in the previous two sections.

Through the examples we suggest possible and easily feasible ways to design and create clear, legible, effective and, above all, inclusive information materials. The examples, although not always “impeccable”, represent a sample of positive experiences that testify to an awareness of accessibility on the part of the tourism operators, which demonstrates their increasing sensitivity to the topic.

Experience 1 - Royal National Theatre of London

Access

<https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/your-visit/access/caption-glasses>

To start the exploration of the first proposed experience, we suggest you to watch the video.

The video is about a new product and service offered by the National Theater to its guests: smart glasses that allow deaf or hearing impaired people to follow the shows by reading, directly on the lenses they wear, the texts of the dialogues and the description of the effects sounds produced on stage. The video lasts about 4 minutes; it is presented both on the National Theater website and on Youtube; it is accompanied by sub-titles in English and offers the possibility of reducing both speed and quality, in the event of insufficient connection. The content of the video presents the product through a brief description and through the words of a series of different voices: a testimonial that tells the product from a professional in the sector and from user, the technical director of the theater and a group of end users.

Smart caption glasses: user instructions: (Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hdtf4qUWos4>



Image caption: the image shows a group of people wearing smart caption glasses during a performance.

Analyzing the communication process the National Theater exploits to present the new

service and using, schematically, the elements presented in section 2 this is the synthesis we propose to you:

1. **Sender:** National Theatre. The message is transmitted in first person by the provider. On the web it is also possible to find articles on the product and on the service published by national newspapers or by social media of other sources (such as [EveningStandard](#), [Financial Times](#), [The Reviews Hub](#)).
2. **Message:** the content of the message describes the product and its functionalities, both from a technical and from an emotional point of view. The message is in fact conveyed through the testimony of the service provider (technical director of the theater) but also through the involvement of the end users.
3. **Code:** descriptive text, videos, and images. In the transmission of the message different codes are used, in a coherent and complementary way.
4. **Channel:** internet website, Youtube, social media of the sender. The Theater also provides a [Help center](#) section and direct contact details (telephone and email address) if the information contained in the section were not sufficient. "Contact us if you can't find what you want in the Help Centre".
5. **Receiver:** people with hearing disabilities. The receivers of the product and the services offered are directly involved in the construction of the message.

As we write, the service is still relatively recent and appears in the "News and events" section, linked to an internal page of the website. To access the information it is also possible to use the homepage menu under "Access". In addition to including the "Smart caption glasses" section, the Access section provides access to a detailed submenu which offers alternative solutions and facilities for people with disabilities. Web accessibility is also included in the list.

To measure the accessibility of the website we invite you to use one of the suggested tools, such as: [AChecker](#).

Experience 2 - Hotel Scandic

Accessibility as a distinctive element

Scandic's marketing choice includes accessibility as a distinctive element of its customer care policy, but at the same time includes it in its services as an element that is "naturally" part of the company mission. The "[Always at Scandic](#)" section provides access to a rich list of proposals and facilities for all Scandic guests. Integrated in this section "family friendly" proposals and proposals for people with special needs. The "special needs" item is part of a list of services that are apparently placed on the same level of relevance and have equal dignity. The message is clear: in a Scandic hotel there are no special guests because all the guests are special. However, some of the Scandic guests have special needs: the company is aware of this and makes sure that they always find the right answer to their needs.



Image caption: the image shows Dixi and Magnus Berglund, Director of Accessibility at Scandic Hotels.

By opening the "[Special needs](#)" section, which can also be accessed directly at the bottom of the page, through the "Quick links", an in-depth window opens which, in turn, gathers a series of specific links.

The word Accessibility is used to introduce the users to the specific services offered, always updating.

- Accessible attractions
- Scandic's e-learning in accessibility
- Smart solutions
- How it all started
- Hotels with mobile lift
- Accessibility standards
- Travelling with dogs
- Mobility scooter
- Allergy-friendly rooms

Each of these items opens a dedicated page that describes the highlighted elements in detail. In addition, each page contains an email address for specific requests - access@scandichotels.com - and a telephone number for direct contacts (Please call us when you'd like to book a room, so we can assure that you'll get a room for your special needs).

We invite you to explore the individual pages because they represent a reference model and a source of inspiration but we particularly point out the pages dedicated to [accessibility standards](#).

This is the introductory page of the document.

“Here you can read our 135 point accessibility standard. It has been drawn up by carefully following the route taken by guests from the car park on through the whole hotel. We have also talked to disability organisations and guests with physical disabilities and received lots of ideas from our own keen staff. Although we rent our hotels rather than owning them, there is a lot that we can do. 90 of the 135 points are compulsory for all hotels. All 135 of the points need to be applied as we renovate or build new hotels. The standard applies in all nine of the countries in which Scandic is represented. Of course we also have to comply with the legislation in the country concerned. This means that if the legislation in the country in question is stricter on any particular point, that takes precedence. In the cases where our standard is higher than the legislation, of course our standard applies. Our accessibility standard doesn't include everything that we actually do on the ground. Accessibility issues are incorporated as part of our day to day work, whatever the area. This means that for

example, safety issues involving accessibility are in our safety standard, signs in our signage standard, and so on. In other words accessibility issues are an important part of the whole of Scandic and everyone in our team undergoes training in them. We describe the accessibility for each individual hotel on their respective websites. We are the only hotel chain in the world to do this.”

Returning to the opening page - the homepage of the chain's official website - we propose you to explore, following the in-depth outline that the website suggests - the point: "family friendly". You will discover that the mechanism is similar: starting from the link on the home page, you can access an internal page which in turn offers links for further information with technical data and emotional suggestions, images, videos and the mascot is not missing either: [Sigge](#).

To conclude, we propose you an analysis of the peculiar elements of the Scandic communication on accessibility using, as proposed for the experience of the National Theater, the elements used in the two previous sections.

This is a summary of the overall picture:

- **Sender:** Scandic hotel. The message is transmitted in first person by the provider and the information on accessibility is an integral part of the communication policies
- **Message:** the content of the message is a mix of technical information and messages that enhances the stay experience as an unforgettable experience (see for example the list of reference standards, the map of the hotels in the chain equipped with a mobile lift or the many "Declarations of love" that the chain addresses to its customers: "You're always welcome whatever disability, sight or hearing, allergy or wheelchair bound, we've seen to it that you'll feel at home").
- **Code:** descriptive text, videos, and images. To convey the message different codes are used, in a coherent and complementary way. The images have different profiles, in line with the contents of the message: some are purely evocative, while others are descriptive to confirm what was declared.



Image caption: the image is both decorative and informative as it represents some features of the accessible rooms. In the photograph you can see some elements of accessibility: bed height adjustable for back and the extra electrical socket for electric beds on the wall below the headboard.

- **Channel:** internet website, Youtube, social media of the sender (Scandic has three channels of social communication: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter that are regularly updated and report the information on the website consistently and in line with the type of channel and user), [brochure](#).
- **Receiver:** people with disabilities and special needs. The declared choice is to consider each guest as a guest with special needs, regardless of the specificity of the need.

In addition, we outline an element that, highlighted by the UNWTO Recommendations, we have rarely found reported in the communication on accessibility: staff training.

This is what is stated on the official website on the "Scandic's accessibility standard" page:

[“At Scandic we take accessibility seriously. Read more about how we train our staff and make our hotels more accessible to make every guest feel welcome.”](#)

Experience 3 - Airbnb

New challenges on the horizon

Searching for good and innovative practices and new paradigms we have landed on the Airbnb community, which we present to you as an example of change and new attention to accessibility in the tourism sector.

Browsing the portal you can discover that Airbnb, on its internet space, has a large section dedicated to support guests with disabilities and offers a series of practical instructions and suggestions on how to optimize the accessibility of the home's hosts and on "Things to consider when talking about accessibility with guests".

Airbnb has been working with important organizations to develop increasingly effective and timely proposals in terms of accessibility.

The following is the first paragraph of [Airbnb Accessibility declaration](#).

“Airbnb is committed to making sure everyone — including people of all abilities — can find and book travel experiences they love. To help achieve that goal, Airbnb has been making a number of improvements that will make our community more open and more accessible to everyone. The work we've done so far is just a start. We have more to do and we wanted to provide an update on our current efforts and plans for the future.”

Through its collaboration with CFILC [California Foundation for Independent Living Centers](#) and with [California Council of the Blind](#) Airbnb has developed 21 new filters - present on the platform since 2017. The new filters aim to fix the accessibility features of the houses available on the platform so that the guest can easily orientate himself/herself in the selection.

Starting from the elements used in the previous Sections of the Module, we present a summary analysis of the Airbnb communication process on accessibility.

1. **Sender:** in the case of Airbnb the sender is double. Airbnb designs the filters format and gives to the host the opportunity to convey the information on the accessibility of his/her house through the platform; the host, that is actually the final service provider, can choose among the available options and can, if necessary, add few written information.
2. **Message:** the content of the message describes the product (the structure) and

its functionalities, both through data and detailed information (on the positioning of the structure, on the services it offers and on the host), and through the reviews of the users who have previously used the structure.

3. **Code:** short descriptive text, additional descriptive texts, images. In the transmission of the message, different codes are used as the descriptions of the proposed structures, apart from the accessibility filters that are fixed by Airbnb, are proposed autonomously by the hosts. Of course, the descriptions follow the suggestions and directives of Airbnb and they are under its supervision. The same rules are for the images that the hosts can upload.
4. **Channel:** home-sharing platform for which Airbnb is known and the internet sites connected to it (see below), Youtube, social media. All channels are updated. By accessing the service centre through a personal account, Airbnb provides a direct contact, both for hosts and guests with direct contact details (phone and email address). The reference channel for Airbnb initiatives is the [Airbnb Press Room](#) on which you can find a [selection of articles on accessibility](#). A [Community center](#) is also present on the platform: a space created by Airbnb specifically for hosts to share experiences and to receive advice and updates.
5. **Receiver:** according to what Airbnb assess its target people is “people of all abilities” in a perspective of inclusion and [no discriminatory policies](#). Both the principles are spread through the Airbnb Citizen community, a movement active on a global scale, equipped with the tools to understand and defend practices related to all-home sharing.

As regards accessibility the main relevant element of the policy are the following:

Airbnb hosts are not allowed to:

- Refuse a guest on the basis of a real or alleged disability.
- Impose different terms or conditions based on the guest's disability.
- Decide a priori on the adequacy of housing with respect to the needs of a potential guest with disabilities, replacing the latter in the decision.
- Investigate the existence or degree of disability presented by the guest, or the means used to manage it. However, if the potential guest raises the question of their disability, the host can, and must, assess with the potential guest whether the offer actually meets the needs of the latter.
- Prohibit or limit the use of mobility aids.
- To charge guests with disabilities higher amounts for rental fees or other fees, including costs for the presence of assistance animals when the guest stays with

one of them as a result (for example for psychological support or service) due to his own disabled condition.

- Publish offers or make statements that discourage or indicate a preference for or against a guest, due to the fact that the latter has a disability or not.
- Refuse to communicate with guests through accessible and available means, including relay operators (for people with hearing impairments) and email (for people with visual impairments who use screen readers).
- Refusing to provide reasonable accommodation for guests with disabilities, including being flexible if the latter requires minor changes to the rules of the structure (eg bringing an animal with them, if necessary to lend assistance to them, or using a parking lot located near the 'accommodation). Where the guest requests such accommodation, the latter and the host must agree on the methods to be used so that the accommodation meets the needs of the guest.

Airbnb hosts are allowed to:

- Provide accurate and objective information about the accessibility features of the accommodation (or their absence), to allow guests with disabilities to independently assess whether the accommodation is suitable for their needs.

Experience 4 - AccessAble

Specialized websites

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-Ku7JqFtC8&feature=youtu.be>

The video presents an interview with Gregory Burke, the creator of AccessAble. The video has a duration of about 1 minute; it has English subtitles and is equipped with transcript. In the interview, Gregory Burke tells the reason for AccessAble and what is the goal of the service it offers.

Here, some of the most significant assessments (according to us):

“We don’t say whether something is accessible or not. We give you the information so that you can make the choice about what is suitable to you and your requirement that day, because we know that disability is not necessarily static. We give you the data, you make up your own mind and you’re in control.”

As it is said in the video, AccessAble is a website specialized in accessibility. Most of the structures reviewed have a connection with the tourism sector, but the reviews on universities and hospitals are also available. The reference area concerns the United Kingdom and Ireland.

AccessAble works in collaboration with some important commercial partners such as Next (retail store chain), Kew Green (one of the leading UK hotel management companies) and Marks & Spencer (another major retail chain in the UK) and with the support of a relevant network of organizations and organizations that, in different ways and with different missions, deal with disabilities and equal opportunities.

Entering the site we immediately understand the mission of AccessAble: supporting users in finding information on accessibility, in the perspective told by Gregory Burke in the video.

The site (<https://www.accessable.co.uk/>) may initially appear complex, but has good

usability:

- the information is clear and logically organized;
- the pictograms chosen are not "universally recognized", but the site offers a guide for a reading that describes them in detail;
- the images are informative and complementary to the texts;
- the search is guided and facilitated by the presence of intuitive elements;
- in line with the topic, the website proves to have been built in compliance with W3C guidelines on the accessibility.

In this regard, we advise you to learn more about AccessAble's use of ["Recite me"](#), a specific software for improving internet accessibility.

In summary, starting from the elements used in section 2, this is the reference framework for AccessAble:

1. **Sender:** AccessAble, organization specialized on accessibility
2. **Message:** information on public spaces of tourist interest but not only.
3. **Code:** pictograms. The code chosen by AccessAble is that of the pictograms: a system of 32 symbols that are detailed on a [dedicated page](#) of the site and are used in all the descriptive cards available. The cards are completed with detailed photographic images (parking areas, entrance doors, bathrooms or other) and short descriptive texts.
4. **Channel:** internet website, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Youtube)
5. **Receiver:** all persons seeking detailed information on the accessibility of public and private facilities in the area of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Annex

Annotated list of websites

- <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/>

The official website of the National Theatre of London

- [EveningStandard](#)
- [Financial Times](#)
- [The Reviews Hub](#)

A selection of articles talking about the smart caption glasses offered by the National Theatre of London to its clients you can find on the Internet.

- <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/help-centre/contact>

The link opens the Help centre info page.

- <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/help-centre/accessibility#website-accessibility>

On this page you can find a selection of FAQs on accessibility such as: “How do I book a wheelchair space” or “To view caption, which seats are best?”. For each question a detailed, informative answer is provided.

- https://membercard.scandichotels.com/e-learning/accessibility/story_html5.html

By the link you can access a course on accessibility provided by scandic., To understand better we suggest you follow it. The course lasts about 30 minutes and guides the user in exploring the interiors of a Scandic hotel and discovering the "facilities" that the chain makes available to its guests.

- <https://www.airbnb.com/designing-an-accessible-community/>

The Airbnb Accessibility declaration.

- <https://cfilc.org/>

CFILC (California Foundation for Independent Living Centers) is a registered non-profit Corporation. It's members are the Independent Living Centers (ILCs) of California.

- <http://ccbnet.org/drupal7/>

California Council of the Blind is a statewide membership organization, whose mission is to increase the independence, security, equality of opportunity, and quality of life for all Californians who are blind and visually impaired.

- <https://press.airbnb.com/>
- <https://press.airbnb.com/?s=accessibility>

The reference channel for Airbnb initiatives: Airbnb Press Room. The first link open the Press Room homepage; the second one open the section focused on Accessibility.

- <https://community.withairbnb.com/t5/Community-Center/ct-p/community-center>

The link goes to the Airbnb Community center: a space created by Airbnb specifically for hosts to share experiences and to receive advice and updates.

- <https://www.airbnb.it/help/article/1405/airbnb-s-nondiscrimination-policy--our-commitment-to-inclusion-and-respect>

The link opens a page where you can find all the relevant element of Airbnb non-discrimination policies.

- <https://www.reciteme.com/>

“Recite me” is the brand name of a software for improving internet accessibility. Opening the linked page, you can understand how its works, what are its specific features and its cost.

- https://www.accessable.co.uk/access_symbols

The page shows the system of symbols used by AccesAble in describing the features of all the reviewed venues.

Video collection

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=46&v=397fLrRjwF8

The video is by The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD), an organisation dedicated to enabling the design of environments that can be accessed, understood and used regardless of a person's age, size, ability or disability.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hdtf4qUWos4>

The video is about a new product and service offered by the National Theater to its guests: smart glasses that allow deaf or hearing impaired people to follow the shows by reading, directly on the lenses they wear, the texts of the dialogues and the description of the effects sounds produced on stage.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQuk29gW38s>

The video presents the Scandic mascot specifically designed for the hotel chain youngest guests.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-Ku7JqFtC8&feature=youtu.be>

The video presents an interview with Gregory Burke, the creator of AccessAble. The video has a duration of about 1 minute; it has English subtitles and is equipped with transcript. In the interview, Gregory Burke tells the reason for AccessAble and what is the goal of the service it offers.

Additional resources

- <https://www.scandichotels.com/contentassets/2ce6650a89b24e6e8e54e6ec8c14da49/minimistandard-tillganglighet-eng-2016.pdf>

The linked document is the Scandic's Accessibility standard, available on the hotel chain website. The document contains 135 accessibility elements: 90 of the 135 points are compulsory for all hotels. All 135 of the points are applied in renovated or build new hotels.

- <https://www.scandichotels.com/contentassets/2ce6650a89b24e6e8e54e6ec8c14>

[da49/accessibility-at-scandic_eng.pdf](#)

The link shows you an example of printable brochure disseminated by the hotel chain. The opening message is: "Making sure everyone is welcome is easier said than done". Between the lines, what they want to assess: many say it, we do it.