

Summary



Books for All – Thanks to the Marrakesch VIP Treaty / Facilitating Access to Published Works Now Easier (Christiane Felsmann)

(pp. 718 – 721)

The so-called Marrakesch VIP Treaty, and in particular the opportunities that it can offer libraries, are not yet widely known in Germany. The original idea for the treaty can be traced back to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which the United Nations General Assembly adopted in 2006. The European Union ratified it in 2010 with the goal of achieving barrier-free accessibility throughout Europe. Just as the convention was written with significant involvement of disabled individuals and self-help associations, the treaty of Marrakesch found powerful advocates at the international level and wide support around the world: 61 parties (states or intergovernmental organisations) have signed the treaty so far, whereby the 28 member nations in the EU count as one party.

Goal of the treaty is to significantly ease the accessibility to published materials. Before adoption of this treaty a cumbersome system of requests and reviews of licensing agreements was required in order to process titles and make them available in accessible formats. These steps have been done away with. With the Marrakesch Treaty it is finally possible to offer titles for the blind and visually impaired reader even across national borders. Due to copyright laws this had not been possible before. Previously, for example, it had been necessary to negotiate the rights to »Harry Potter« or the Bible separately for each Spanish-speaking country or each English-speaking country; now a work can be processed just once for each language group. Since ratification at the beginning of 2019 the Marrakesch Treaty is being implemented piece by piece in Germany thanks to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Digital Accessibility / Tips and Information on Accessibility in Documents and on the Internet (Julia Dobroschke)

(pp. 724 – 726)

Cultural organisations, government agencies and other public institutions have been obligated to make digital devices and applications more accessible to users with disabilities since the issuance of EU Directive 2016/2102. In Germany there are about 7.6 million severely disabled people. For this group of users easy accessibility to information is indispensable. According to Directive 2016/2102 it is not only necessary to facilitate access to the websites of public offices, but also to all their documents, such as forms, publications, newsletters, etc. As of September 2019 all newly developed websites must be designed as accessible websites. Previously designed websites must become accessible by September 2020.

In order to design an accessible website specific expertise in web technology as well as in word processing and layout design are needed. Furthermore, it is necessary, above all, to have practical experience and the ability to adopt the user's perspective in order to achieve good and accessible solutions. At the beginning of such a project it is advisable to put together an interdisciplinary team which includes experts, such as users with disabilities, but also agencies or external advisors who are specialised in matters of accessibility. The planning should involve consultation with users groups at an early stage, especially so that team members can become familiar with their working methods and requirements. In the planning stages as many potential barriers as possible should be considered and prioritised. People with disabilities can provide useful tips as to what these are.

Major Bookmobile Gathering in Hanover / Impressions of the First International Mobile Libraries Conference (Johannes von Freymann)

(pp. 746 – 748)

Many a resident of the city of Hanover could not believe their eyes on the early morning of 6 September, as 27 quite colourful bookmobiles pulled up one behind the other at Goserieplatz in the city centre. A large number of participants at the First International Mobile Libraries Conference, which took place on 6-7 September 2019 in Hanover, had left the conference venue to be present at the gathering of the bookmobiles. Their primary interest was to share their experiences and expertise with one another. How often does one have the opportunity to inspect such a large number of mobile libraries with such a variety of designs, and to join in first-hand technical dialogues and demonstrations of best practice applications?

On centre stage was the new vehicle of the Hanover mobile library. Designed from the beginning for complete accessibility, the side entrance offers nearly ground-level access via a ramp. A contrast to the brand-new Hanover bus was provided by the bookmobile of the public library of Saarbrücken. Built in 1989 and just 30 years old, it was the only real »antique« vehicle present. Appropriate to today's concerns, the debate over the choice of motor type for bookmobiles was addressed in several speeches. What alternatives to the diesel motor will be available in the future? One practical suggestion was provided by the TAM company from Slovenia, which presented the prototype of an e-bus with a modular design that can be developed into a smaller or a larger library bus. A highlight of the conference was the presentation of the bookmobile awards to the three vehicles which the conference attendees judged to be the prettiest and most impressive. The winners were the Mobile Library of the County of Cuxhaven, the Danish Central Library of Southern Schleswig, and the »Rolling Library« (robi) of the Heilbronn Public Library.

Translated by Martha Baker