



ACCESSIBILITY IN ESTONIA FOR HARD OF HEARING

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Information space

- If we usually talk about the accessibility of physical space, then we are talking about the accessibility of information space.
- Usually HoH persons have no problems in physical space but we have troubles about understanding audio in the information field around us.




Accessibility in Estonia

- Legislation level
 - Regulation - Requirements for the building due to the special needs of disabled people – (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication)
 - It is for new and renovated buildings, not for existing buildings.
 - This obliges to provide induction loops for rooms where open services for everyone are available – for example theater halls, seminar rooms, reception rooms, etc. But also for intercoms and elevators. (Continued)



Accessibility in Estonia

- Legislation level (continued)
 - At least one checkout in store must be accessible to people with disabilities – i.e. there must be a loop system also;
 - At least one hotel room must be accessible to people with disabilities, i.e. there must be a light or vibrating alarm to wake up and a suitable fire warning system for HoH people.
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Accessibility Audits

- We in Estonian HoH also make accessibility audits for companies and state and local government agencies.
- In audits we also use standards and regulations for lighting and noise
 - Lighting – HoH person doesn't hear very well – in this case – person wants to read – and in this case good lighting in inner rooms is very important (at least 200 lux or more). Also noise - If the ambient noise exceeds 65-70dB - it is difficult to understand from talking.




Subtitles in Media

- In Estonia we have an Act for Media services.
- It has not yet been confirmed but has passed Parliament's first reading.
- Although most foreign film productions on both public and private channels are currently subtitled, there is a problem with subtitles for Estonian-language programs. There are also troubles with animated films where the speech is conveyed with the help of local actors.



Media Services Act

- This obliges each TV channel to submit an annual accessibility plan, which sets out both the planned activities and the activities performed.
 - The accessibility plan is one of the components on which the TV license also depends.
 - Organizations of people with disabilities are also involved in the evaluation of this plan.
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Subtitling in TV

- Only ERR (national channel) has added subtitles to Estonian-language programs, but only to some programs (only ca 10% Estonian language programs have subtitles).
- Private channels have not done so.
- Previously, required 5% an annual increase in production where subtitles was required. This didnt work.




Automatic subtitles

- In the autumn of last year, € 1.4 million was allocated from the Government of the Republic's reserve fund for the development leap of Estonian language technology, within the framework of which automatic subtitling software will be completed, as well as ERR (state television) and two private channels can use this.
 - The software will be completed by the summer of this year and it will be presented in May. This software has been developed for over 10 years.
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Subtitles in online media

- There are no special rules. We hope that automatic subtitles will be introduced in the ERR portal Jupiter. In the online content of newspapers, we are hoping for an accessibility directive on the basis of which the Accessibility of Products and Services Act will be adopted in Estonia.
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Subtitles in Films

- Every Estonian-language film that receives support from the Estonian Film Institute must have HoH subtitles. It's gone well. It is very good to read not only the spoken text but also the lyrics of the songs.
- There is also work on adding subtitles to older films, but there are many copyright issues.




112 Service

- At the moment SMS based – very unconvienient to use;
 - We have talked to the Ministry of the Internal Affairs and the Rescue Board – We want to introduce a pictogram app that reduces the pressure to speak and listen.
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In conclusion

- We work with other organizations of people with disabilities - this gives a wider voice
 - Everything takes time - for example, we talked to the Ministry about the regulation of buildings for 4 years.
 - If you do not speak, no one will ask.
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Thank You!