

The case of LIA-Libri Italiani Accessibili

Piero Attanasio, Fondazione LIA

Information Accessibility for Learning
From Development to Implementation of Guidelines

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Summary

Our case

Lessons learned

About the future



2011 – 2013. The LIA project

- The Italian Ministry of Culture was spending 3M€ per year to fund the production of accessible books
 - Distributed to many operators, including many publishers
 - Outcomes: c.ca 200 titles per year
- The Italian Publishers Association (AIE) proposed to invest the same (1 year) money to create a platform so to exploit digital opportunities
- We also promised to produce 2,000 titles
 - Outcomes at the end of the project: the platform and 10,000 titles

2013 – 2014. The LIA service

- The platform allows us to produce c.ca 4,000 new titles per year, at a cost of 400,000€
- The cost per title is 98% lower than before

2014... The LIA Foundation

- In May 2014 AIE created the LIA Foundation, a membership not-for-profit organisation, open to all stakeholders
- Currently the only funds come from private publishers

An European excellence globally recognized



Mention as international best practice by G3ict (Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs), UN's initiative about ICT and inclusion



Nomination for the e-Inclusion Awards 2012, a European Commission contest aimed at raising awareness and reward the excellences and the best practices on the use of digital technologies to reduce digital divide in Europe



Nomination among best innovative practices 2014 by Zero Project, international initiative aimed at supporting disabled people's rights

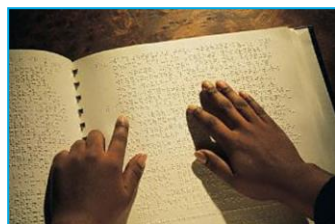


One of the four finalists selected by WIPO Accessible Book Consortium in the International Excellence Award 2014

How this was possible?

The traditional landscape

Accessible versions created, on demand by users, by dedicated structures that, starting from printed books, that produce specific formats:



Braille



Enlarged characters



Audiobook

The public sector role

Funding the entire procedure and the production of single copies

Lot of money for many micro-results

The reader

Long time, long delay before obtaining the desired book, low quality

Not a miracle: a simple solution

The landscape with LIA

Accessible versions, thanks to the **LIA** service, are created by publishers distributed in mainstream channels in ebook format (EPUB) that can be read:



with **Braille displays**



with **enlarged characters**



listening to **text to speech** or **vocal synthesis**

The public sector role

Stop funding the production
Funds needed just to check the files,
and to educate producers and readers

The reader

Is informed *about* books, access the book
in the same way, and at the same time as
any other reader

Full inclusion approach

The **driving concept** of LIA is its breakthrough approach to accessibility:

- **same information**
- **same books**
- **same channels**
- **same reading system**

for an **inclusive** digital reading experience

Equal opportunities: the same information and search

- VIPs should reach the same information *about* books and use the same search facility than any other reader
www.libriitalianiaccessibili.it
- VIPs should access the same catalogue than any other
 - Today 35% of new ebook titles are accessible at the moment of publication
 - The final goal should be 100% and think to the backlist

Equal opportunities: the same bookstores and lending platform

The screenshot shows the MediaWorld website interface. At the top, it says 'MediaWorld COMPRA ON-LINE' and 'Il tuo negozio di libri digitali'. Below the navigation bar, there are search fields for 'Cerca Titolo' and 'Cerca Autore'. The main content area shows search results for 'Autori: dan brown'. On the left, there is a list of genres with counts, such as 'Audiolibri (702)', 'Biografie (2700)', etc. The search filters include 'Titolo', 'Autore', 'Genere', 'Editore', 'Pubblicazione', 'Formato', and 'Protezione'. The book 'Inferno' by Dan Brown is highlighted, with a price of €4.99 and the LIA logo indicating it is accessible to people with disabilities.

- From the LIA website users move to the preferred bookshop to buy
- Only 3 stores joined. The final goal is having all the stores on board
- Any store can show the accessibility metadata (expressed in ONIX)

- If their library offers an e-lending service, they can lend the book through any Italian e-lending platform



The screenshot shows the MediaLibraryOnline website interface. At the top, it says 'ML OL MEDIA LIBRARY ONLINE LA BIBLIOTECA DIGITALE QUOTIDIANA (24 7 365)'. Below the navigation bar, there are search fields for 'Tipologie' and 'Argomenti'. The main content area shows the book 'Inferno (Versione italiana)' by Dan Brown. The book cover is displayed on the left, and the title and author information are on the right. The description of the book is provided below the title.

Lesson learned: collaboration and pro-active approach

A shared effort is necessary, involving all the actors in the value chain:

- Publishers
- Reading software developers
- Producers of e-readers and tablets
- Online stores and e-commerce platforms
- Electronic payment system

LIA is part of an international network:

- ABConsortium
- IDPF (International Digital Publishing Forum)
- Radium Foundation
- Bisg Accessibility Group

DIGITAL VALUE CHAIN

Bookrepublic – Istituto Cavazza – Deastore – Informazioni Editoriali – Intesa Sanpaolo – MediaWorld – Media Library Online – Rete Indaco – Sella – Setefi - Ultima Books

ICT

Cefriel – Cineca – MDV – mEDRA

COMMUNICATION

Streamcolors – Uramaki

INSTITUTIONS

ABI – Associazione Bancaria Italiana – Artlab14

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

BISG, Books Industry Study Group – Brailletnet – Celia Library for the Blind – DAISY Consortium – European Blind Union – Editeur – International Digital Publishing Forum – Radium Foundation – Royal National Institute for the Blind - Tisp

Collaboration in a digital environment means use of standards

- Standard format: EPUB
 - some devices / platforms do not use it
- Standard metadata: ONIX
 - some stores / platforms do not use it

Examples of issues

We are able to pass to everybody standardised metadata about accessibility feature at title level

However, some platforms don't accept third party data, in any format

So, for example:

- Apple is the best platform from the accessibility viewpoint, but...
- An Italian VIP is obliged to search accessible books in our platform and then move to Apple Store and search again the same book

Accessibility depends on the commitment of all in the value chain

A LIA ebook can be read using **personal computers, smartphones, tablets** and in different ways (Braille display, Enlarged characters, TTS vocal synthesis)

BUT

to date no devices and no reading software are 100% accessible to VIPs

LIA carries out a steady **monitoring of the accessibility level** of the most popular **ereaders, smartphones, tablets** and of the main **reading software and applications**

We also developed a reading software optimised from the accessibility viewpoint

We are now collaborating with the Radium Foundation and EDR-Lab to introduce accessibility features

MISSING POINTS

- Not only trade books but **professional, education, public sector publications** etc.
- **Production tools** do not include accessibility as mainstream feature
- There is not yet a **fully accessible reading system for e-books with Adobe DRM**
- Inclusion of **accessibility metadata in global online bookstore** which use proprietary schemas is missing
- **E-reading technology** is always evolving and changing: more research and development focused on mainstream accessibility is needed
- **Consultancy and training** is needed both for publishers, software developers and production suppliers
- Specific **training** is needed for **visual impaired people**

Educational books (and content in general) should be the first next step

Some **technical complexity**

- Structure of the content (e.g. graphs, formulas, etc.)
- Probably difficult to fully incorporate in mainstream production and distribution

A promising field

- We are confident to obtain similar results with lower investment, since we can reuse some previous result

Difficult to find the money to cover the **investments**

- Difficulty to calculate the ROI for the public administration when the service is in-sourced (as it is currently in Italy for the university)

Reasons for **optimism**

- Stakeholders are ready to collaborate: publishers, VIPs and dyslexics organisations, universities and school systems

On November 13^o in Milano Fondazione Lia hosted
in occasion of the Daisy Consortium Board Meeting an
**International Seminar on Accessibility
in the Publishing Ecosystem**

See: <http://fondazionelia.it/eventi>



On December 14^o in Milano Fondazione Lia will host
in occasion of the EMERGO Project the workshop

**Digital Accessibility and
Diversity Management**

See: <http://fondazionelia.org/workshop-accessibilit%C3%A0-digitale-e-diversity-management>

Thank you

Piero Attanasio

piero.attanasio@fondazionelia.org



Fondazione LIA

Corso di Porta Romana, 108, 20122 Milano (Italy)

Tel. (+39) 02 89280801

Mail: segreteria@fondazionelia.org

www.fondazionelia.org

www.libriitalianiaccessibili.it

Twitter #fondazionelia