



MULTIPLIER EVENT 6 | REPORT

4th June 2019

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EXTENDING THE CIRCLE OF AD

PROJECT DETAILS

TITLE | Audio Description: A Laboratory for the Development of a new Professional Profile

ACRONYM | ADLAB PRO

EC PROJECT NUMBER | 2016-1-IT02-KA203-024311

NATIONAL PROJECT ID | GU10213041978

FUNDING SCHEME | Erasmus+

SUB-PROGRAMME | Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices

ACTION | Strategic Partnerships for higher education

DURATION | 36 months

COORDINATOR | Università degli Studi di Trieste

BENEFICIARIES

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ES)

Universiteit Antwerpen (BE)

Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu (PL)

Utopian Voices Ltd. (UK)

Soundfocus B.V. (NL)

Radiotelevizija Slovenija Javni Zavod Ljubljana (SI)

Royal National Institute of the Blind (UK)

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Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

OBJECTIVES

The sixth ADLAB PRO Multiplier event, held in Ljubljana on the 4th June 2019, was the closing event of the ADLAB PRO project. The title of this event was “Extending the circle of AD” and the main aim was to present the result of three-year work made by 8 partners. The organiser of the event was RTV Slovenija, which together with other partners presented the project training materials to the audience, which included possible future trainers, end users, representatives of different cultural institutions and other members of civil society. The total number of participants was 95, including partners. The primary aim of the event was to reach out to the East-European countries not participating in the project and extend the results to those regions and countries in which audio description is at its beginning and where there is a strong need of education in this field. RTV Slovenija has invited speakers from Croatia and Serbia. They presented the situation in their countries, but most of all learnt how to benefit from the results of the ADLAB PRO project. All the training materials (e.g. reading list, trainer’s guide, tasks, etc.) will be accessible for all the audiences and to be used in different ways and in different environments.

At the event also the feedback from prospective users or trainers was gathered, and all sessions were recorded, and their re-use as course contents will be explored.



ORGANIZATION

Chair and moderator: Miha Zor, Veronika Rot (RTV)

Organiser: RTV Slovenija

Presenters (in order of speaking): Igor Kadunc (RTV), Mateja Vodeb (RTV), Igor Mljavec (ZDSSS/ MDSSNG) Marko Prpič (former employee RTV), Veronika Rot (RTV), Miha Zor (RTV), Carmen L. Oven (RTV), Elisa Perego (UNITS), Anna Matamala (UAB), Louise Fryer (UV), Gerhard Protschka and Gabi Rechsteiner (Look&Roöl), Mojca KOsi and Antun Smerdel (e-Arh.si), Bojana Rogelj Škafar (SEM), Tomislav Juzbašić and Antonio Pavlović (HSS), Violeta Vlaški (Homer Association)

Round table: Christopher Taylor (UNITS), Miha Zor (RTV), Antonio Pavlović (HSS), Gerhard Protschka (Look&Roöl), Tomaž Wraber (ZDSSS), Violeta Vlaški (Association Homer), Bojana Rogelj Škafar (SEM); **Chair:** Pilar Orero (UAB)

Minute taker: Jaša Levstik (student/ RTV)

Photographer: Laura Simonin (UNITS)



WELCOME AND PRESENTATION OF RTV SLOVENIJA

Igor Kadunc, general director of RTV Slovenija

General Director of Public institution RTV Slovenija said some welcoming words to the participants, expressing the support to the ADLAB PRO project, in which RTV Slovenija participated as a partner together with other academic and non-academic partners. He also expressed the support to the intentions and development of accessibility at RTV Slovenija.

Mateja Vodeb, Head of the Department for the Accessibility at RTV Slovenija

Mateja Vodeb welcomed the audience, especially the representatives of the Blind and partially sighted unions from Slovenia and Croatia. She presented in general terms the accessibility of the RTV Slovenia's programmes with a special emphasis on the adaptation of the programme for the deaf and hard of hearing and blind and partially sighted. She also presented the web portal www.dostopno.si, and the development of different technologies for accessibility of audiovisual media.

Igor Miljavec, vicepresident of the Slovene Union of the Blind and partially sighted

Igor Miljavec expressed thankfulness for the invitation to the event and also for the inclusion of blind and partially sighted people at the preparation of the event and in the involvement in the ADLAB PRO project, as they answered the questionnaires distributed at the beginning of the project. He emphasized the importance of the involvement of end users in the creation of AD and above all as evaluators of the produced audiodescriptions. He congratulated RTV Slovenija on their development of accessibility and on the quality of their work.



SESSION 1: AUDIO DESCRIPTION PAST AND PRESENT

Marko Prpič (ex RTV employee): How everything started

The author and the initiator of the adaptation of television content to the blind and visually impaired on TV Slovenia was Dr. Marko Prpič. Mr. Prpič was employed at RTV Slovenia for 21 years, where he performed various functions, and with his advanced ideas, he inspired many innovations. At the beginning of the 1990s, he began to be interested in the Internet, he initiated the installation of the first Internet server of RTV Slovenia, and became a member of the EBU Group for Internet and New Technologies. He dealt with subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing and laid the foundations for an audio description for the blind and visually impaired. Blindness also marked his life, because at the age of fourteen he was seriously injured by a bomb that remained since the Second World War. In his presentation Mr. Prpič looked back at the past, to the beginning of audio description at TV Slovenia, but he also talked about the need to define technical standards for audio description and the accessibility of it at the European level.

Veronika Rot (RTV): How are we doing it today

Veronika Rot is an employee of RTV Slovenia and she works in the Department for Accessibility. She is also the leader of ADLAB PRO and EASIT project at RTV Slovenia. In her presentation she explained the process of audiodescribing at TV Slovenia at present stage, she briefly explained the technical part of the work, the way of distribution and the audiodescribers that are in the team of adapting TV programme to blind and visually impaired. She also showed some examples of RTVs work and of their efforts to promote the new technologies to the Slovene blind community. She prepared the interview with Maja Šumej, RTV audiodescriber, who could not be present at the conference.



Presentations of RTV Slovenija audiodescribers

Maja Šumej, RTV audiodescriber – video presentation

In the interview, which was recorded as part of the creation of additional videos for the ADLAB PRO course materials, Maja Šumej explained the main features of her work as audio describer and she focused on the different approaches to audiodescribing regarding different genres. She also touched the problematics at audiodescribing sensitive content such as violence and sex scenes.

Miha Zor, RTV audiodescriber- Audio description of documentary films and docudramas: questions of jargon/accessible language and multilingual sequences Miha Zor focused on audiodescribing documentaries and the correct use of the terminology in audiodescription. He also explained his method of inserting the subtitled dialogues or information written on the screen into audiodescription.

Carmen L. Oven, audiodescriber: Between words and emotions

Carmen L. Oven focused in her presentation of her approach to audiodescribing on the balance between subjectivity and objectivity in describing sensitive, emotional scenes. She talked about the importance of choosing the right words, which have to be in concordance with the general atmosphere of the content. She gave some examples of the text – different variations for different contexts. She also touched the importance of the interpreting, the speed of pronunciation, the tone of the voice of the interpreter of audio description.

** Coffee Break **



SESSION 2: THE ADLAB PRO PROJECT RESULTS

Elisa Perego (UNITS): Project and course overview

University of Trieste was the leading partner of the project ADLAB PRO. Elisa Perego presented the partners, from academia: University of Trieste (Italy), Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona (Spain), University of Antwerp (Belgium), University of Poznan (Poland). Non-academic partners are: Utopian Voices Ltd. (UK), Soundfocus B.V. (The Netherlands), RTV Slovenija (Slovenia), Royal National Institute of the Blind (UK). The details of the project: 36 months (Sep. 2016 – Aug. 2019); Financed by European Union under Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 2 – Strategic Partnerships. The Course Materials are the result of the work of all project partners, who have interacted and offered their different and complementary expertise, to produce a 6 module course (with relative training materials and ECTS/ECVETS attribution) that the partners hope will be useful to as many people as possible.



Veronika Rot (RTV): Introductory video

Veronika Rot showed the introductory video entitled “General Overview”, created by RTV Slovenija, which was also responsible for producing short, vivid introductory videos for each course module. Videos will be easily accessible on the ADLAB PRO webpage, so that the visitors will be able to get an idea of what kind of materials and content they will get in every course module.



Anna Matamala (UAB): The ADLAB PRO course materials: structure, type, quantity and aims

Anna Matamala explained the development of the course content: the aims of IO4 included the creation of self-contained units, which were flexible and adaptable. Materials were distributed in modules and units following the course structure created as a result of IO3. More specifically, there are 6 modules (valued as either 6 ECTS/ECVETS or 3 ECTS/ECVETS each). The materials include core videos, reading lists, suggested tasks, additional videos, trainer’s guides, and introductory videos.



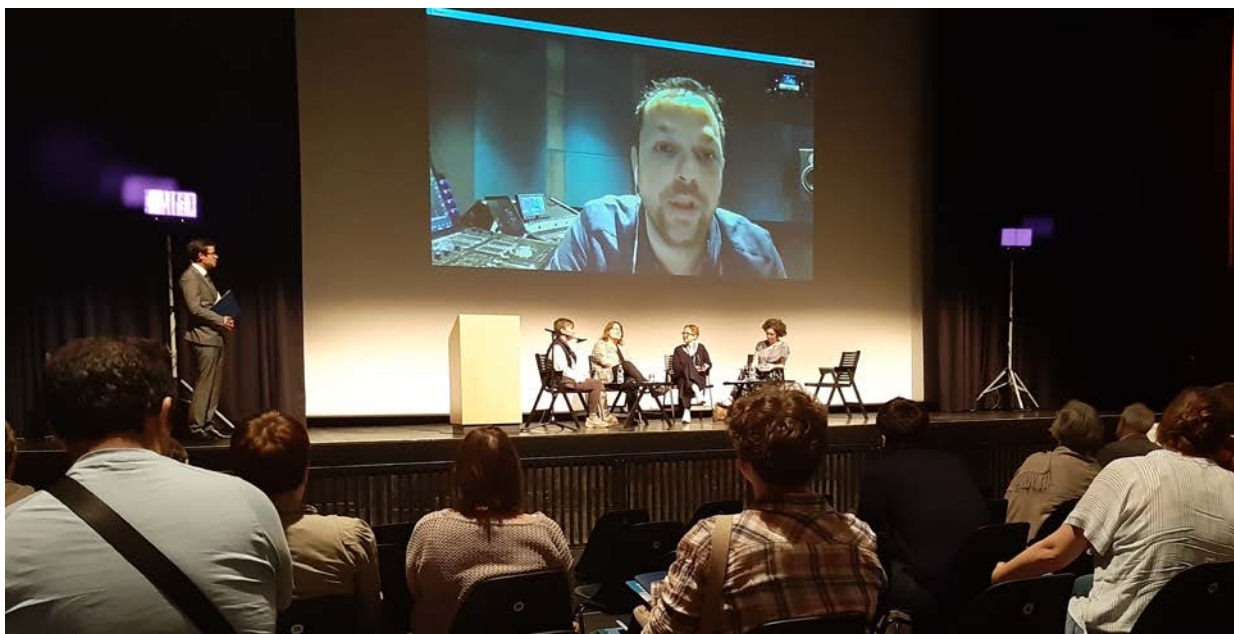
Matamala went through each type of material: presentations are available in different formats such as video files, powerpoint files, transcripts, together with subtitles in multiple languages. As regards reading lists, each module includes 5 basic references plus 5 additional references. Anna Matamala showed examples of different materials. She explained the audience that all materials are available on the [project website](#) and on an open access repository at UAB.

Mereijn Van der Heijden (SF) – video presentation: The ADLAB PRO course materials online: overview of the project website

Mereijn Van der Heijden, partner from the Netherlands, could not come to Ljubljana but he prepared a video presentation of the ADLAB PRO webpage, which is accessible by accessibility standards. After the video presentation he joined the conference via skype and answered a few questions about the accessibility and structure of the webpage.

Louise Fryer (UV): A guide to the evaluation of training materials: ADLAB PRO a case study

All partners have contributed to the evaluation process, which was the focus of IO5. Evaluation provides evidence that justifies the value and viability of training programmes. Louise Fryer explained the methodology followed for the evaluation process of the materials produces and also illustrated the final results. Overall, the results are positive in qualitative and quantitative evaluation, as illustrated in [IO5 report and in the Evaluation Handbook](#).



Lunch break

Lunch was prepared and served by blind people from the Union of the Blind and partially sighted from Slovenia and Zavod Gost, a social company.



SESSION 3: PERSPECTIVES ON ACCESSIBILITY

Gerhard Protschka and Gabi Rechsteiner (LOOK&ROLL): Accessible filmmaking and involvement of end users

Gerhard Protschka, director of the international short film festival Look&roll focusing on related topics, presented his view on audiodescribing, focusing mainly on the need of involvement of blind people in the creation of audio description. He gave an overview of the festival Look&Roll and combined his presentation with Gabi Rechsteiner, who is blind.

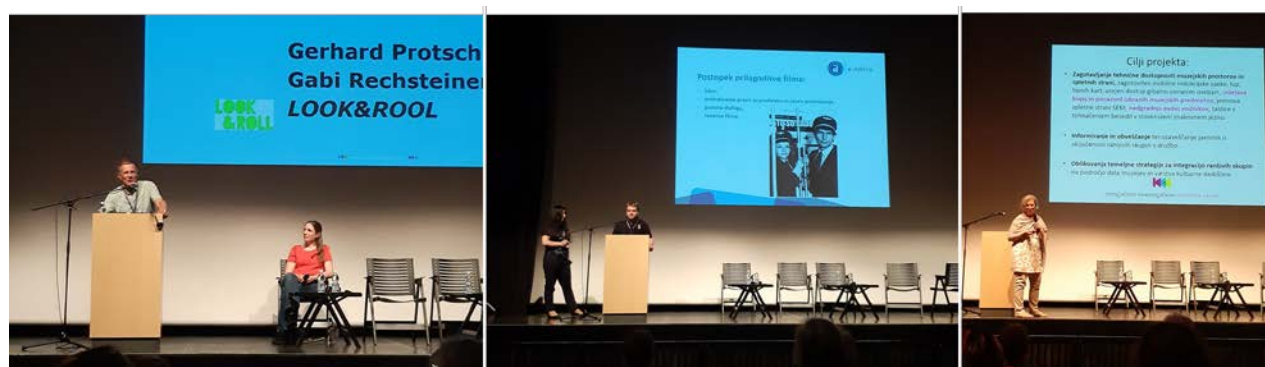
Mojca Kosi and Antun Smerdel (e-ARH.si): e-ARH.si: Challenges in adapting archive material for blind and visually impaired

Mojca Kosi and Antun Smerdel presented part of their work for the Slovene electronic archive, which relates to the necessity of making it accessible. They presented the project of adapting one of the classic Slovene films *To so gadi* to blind and visually impaired and to deaf and hard of hearing. They showed some examples of audiodescribed content accessible in e-ARH.si. Antun Smerdel is a blind person. They stressed the importance of the accessibility of the archive and of cultural content to all citizens, and also the need of inclusion of people with different disabilities in the process of adapting the content.

Bojana Rogelj Škafar (SEM): Accessibility in Slovene Ethnographic Museum. Copies of Museum objects infocus.

At the conference, Bojana Rogelj Škafar presented an EU project of SEM, in which copies of some of the exhibits of the museum were made and the audio descriptions for blind and visually impaired visitors were offered. Due to the increased accessibility of museum collections, within the framework of the Access to Cultural Heritage project to vulnerable groups, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum ensured the production of copies of museum objects intended for a tactile visit. Under the title *The touch of the past*, they complement the permanent exhibition *Between Nature and Culture*. In their placement, the SEM followed recommendations for the appropriate height of information tables and counters, and ensured that the copy paths were displayed

on the floor. They are equipped with audio descriptions in several different languages, with shorter text for visually impaired in enlarged font and with video sign language. The accessible exhibits are accompanied by a bilingual publication (Slovene and English) entitled *The touch of the past* with drawings and descriptions of the copies.



SESSION 4: EAST MEETS WEST

Tomislav Juzbašič (HSS) and Antonio Pavlović (HSS): AD in Croatia

Tomislav Juzbašič from Croatian Union of Blind explained the situation of AD Croatia, which is in its infancy. Their public TV (HRT) is not putting enough effort in providing AD and does not have the technological knowledge and condition to provide audiodescribed programmes. There are some initiatives in museums and theatres, but the situation is very unsatisfactory for the blind and visually impaired people.

Antonio Pavlović works in the Center for audio description in Croatia. They are doing some audio descriptions for films and festivals, but not enough for the need of people. He expressed a very strong opinion on the fact that blind people can be - and must be - part of the process of the creation of audio descriptions.

Violeta Vlaški – Association Homer: AD in Serbia

According to Violeta Vlaški, who recently started to be involved in the audio description and is a mother of a blind girl, the situation in Serbia is not good. RTS (Serbian Public broadcaster) should provide a programme for people with disabilities, but it does not. In Belgrade there are many film festivals, but only one mini-festival is made accessible for visually impaired patrons thanks to the Homer Association. Homer made an initiative to screen AD films between 2011-2016. The audio description in museums is rare, but good quality. She envisages better laws, better cooperation between association and institutions.



ROUND TABLE AND CLOSING REMARKS: SUSTAINABILITY AND NEXT STEPS

Chair: Pilar Orero (UAB)

Participants: Christopher Taylor (UNITS), Tomaž Wraber (ZDSSS), Miha Zor (RTV), Bojana Rogelj Škafar (SEM), Gerhard Protschka (Look&Rool), Antonio Pavlović (HSS), Violeta Vlaški (A. Homer)

At the closing discussion, participants were asked what still needs to be done. They highlighted the fact that this kind of projects are very good and important to encourage new accessibility pathways, but that countries should be involved more consistently in the process of implementing accessibility in a sustainable way. There is still a lot of work to be done in dissemination and in increasing awareness of the needs and rights of blind and visually impaired people, the inclusion and integration are very important. The discussion also tackled upon crucial and widely debated issues such as the use of different forms of AD, the use of synthetic vs. human voice in AD, machine translation, quality and quantity and many more. The panelists seemed to prefer a human approach to AD and they think quality is very important as well as quantity. The decisions are not always easy, but the general orientation should be an integrated society with accessible audiovisual media and cultural institutions. One of the most important conclusion is that blind and visually impaired have to be part of the process of audio describing not just as end users and evaluators but also as AD professionals. In fact, it is important to aim at integration rather than only to inclusion, because the former implies the actual participation and real contribution of the disabled in the process of making, and does not limit their role to final users of what sighted people created for them.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This event was organised by RTV Slovenia. We thank our colleagues from the ADLAB PRO Project who provided support and expertise that greatly assisted the organisation and delivery of the sessions. We thank specially to Kino Šiška and their staff for technical support. We would also like to thank all the speakers and panel members for sharing their insights and best practices with us, the audience for their enthusiasm and very positive reactions.

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