

# PROVISION OF INFORMATION ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY : A NEW APPROACH TO HARMONIZATION OF CRITERIA IN EUROPE

Case Study - OpenBritain

# Introduction

- The debate about standards/harmonisation – top down or bottom up?
- Case study – Tourism for All UK, and OPENBRITAIN
- The needs of the market
- Issues for an information system

# Benefits of standards

- Provide common level of accessibility
- Focus on essential requirements (risk oriented, for example)
- Promote the wide diffusion of knowledge and good practices
- Standards contribute 1% to the annual growth of the German economy: 20.000.000.000€ (DIN study, 2000)
- Standards have contributed 13% towards the growth in the productivity of British workers since 1945 : 2.500.000 £ (BSI / DTI study)

# Negatives

- Standards reduce the variety of services (customers' needs are not homogeneous)
- Standards prohibit inventive solutions
- Standards prohibit quick adaptation because process is time consuming
- Although standards make specifications transparent and usable by all interested parties, they are generally defined by a small set of stakeholders
- Small companies are not represented (even if they represent a great majority in the service sector)
- The trade barriers are already high in most service sectors

# Recent example

- The new legislation regarding air transport is creating improved access in airports – however, there are many differences in interpretation – campaigns still needed to make sure benefits are evenly spread – more time needed before clarification of these issues



Working for a world class tourism  
experience for everyone

# Who we are

## TOURISM FOR ALL UK –

a national charity, consortium of members from public and private sectors, information service to disabled travellers

## TOURISM FOR ALL SERVICES –

offer consultancy, advice services, destination audits, printed guides

## OPENBRITAIN –

New guide and website launched to cover accessible tourism in the UK for the consumer

# KEY MESSAGES

- Tourism and leisure an entitlement for all
- Accessibility is NOT a niche issue – ageing population, temporary incapacity, being a carer, stress-related illness, mums with buggies, people with luggage – ‘DESIGN FOR ALL’
- Size of the market justifies investment – not about problems, but opportunities
- Its about quality customer service
- Preparing for London 2012 Games.

# Size of the Market

- 10m in the UK have a disability that qualifies under the Disability Discrimination Act, with an annual spend of at least £80bn. Figures for Europe are in the region of 127m people with a spend of 166bn Euros
- By 2018, there will be 4m more people over 50 than in 2008 in the UK alone, with corresponding increases in those with hearing, visual, and mobility impairment. (There is a big new market in grandparents taking grandchildren on holiday, day trips etc)
- 30% of us will have some kind of non-permanent incapacitation due to accident, sickness, mental or emotional crisis etc
- 1 in 3 can expect to be a carer at some time in our lives

# More business points

- Many people in these groups are not tied to school holidays or weekends
- Conference organisers are required to make events accessible and want destinations that meet these needs
- Visitors from US, where 20% of population has a disability, have high expectations of accessibility
- 120m people in Europe “would travel more if they were confident of finding the right facilities”
- Disabled people are loyal customers who give repeat business

“Nothing has the potential to deliver results as simply and effectively as accessibility”

## **BUT**

- Very small percentage of potential players explicitly address the needs for accessible tourism
- Specialised providers are already offering suitable information about accessible facilities for the market, however they only address small parts of the market
- Generic players are not yet concerned with accessibility - often suppliers see disability as liability

**This clearly demonstrates the need for eTourism as a value added mechanism!**

# Information issues

- Small percentage of the tourism supply is accessible
- The market requiring accessibility is very diverse including people with different needs and requirements according to type and severity of disability
- Tourism related on-line content is often inaccessible to disabled users employing assistive technologies
- Accessibility Information is:
  - Difficult to retrieve
  - Often false and unreliable
  - Scattered in different players
  - Available in different formats

# One Stop Shop

- Disabled people express frustration at having to trawl through many websites just to source essential information for a simple trip.
- Visit Britain's Access Consumer Research' conducted in 2007 states:

*“... there is currently no comprehensive source of information relating to accessible accommodation in England. If there was this would remove significant barriers when planning a holiday, including psychological barriers such as ‘worry’, ‘fear’, ‘anxiety’.”*

**OPEN**  
**BRITAIN**

Three of the country's leading charities for the disabled have teamed up in partnership with the main tourism bodies to create **Open Britain**, with an all new definitive guide book and web site for people with disabilities and special access requirements.

RADAR, Shopmobility and Tourism for All are the charities, with partners now including VisitBritain, Visit Wales, Visit Scotland, British Hospitality Association, the AA, the Caravan Club, Hudson's and more.



# OPEN BRITAIN 2010

## The Guide

- High impact glossy cover
- Accommodation entries
- Where to visit, eat and drink
- Special indexes • Price £9.99



The definitive guide to accessible Britain



Central England | Norfolk

**Ketteringham Guest House**



AA Enjoy England \*\*\*\*\*  
 Dates: 4 Sleeps: 4-6  
 Open: All year

Low season price: £318.00 - £342.00  
 High season price: £334.00 - £374.00  
 Sleeps: 4-6  
 Pets: +5ml/pc

Access:

**Highlights**  
 Specially restored, well equipped former dairy wing or 'kitchen' house in period of near 'Victorian' market town. Ground floor double bedroom with adjacent bathroom, lounge, double bed and twin bedrooms, bathroom. Newly refitted kitchen leads to enclosed courtyard. Great for parties.

**Location** Conveniently located just off the A11, and close to the well served village of Kettlewell. Norwich is less than 15 minutes by car and the Norfolk Broads.

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# The Website [www.openbritain.net](http://www.openbritain.net)

# OPENBRITAIN.NET

# OPEN BRITAIN



# Information criteria

Combined approach taken by OpenBritain:

- Use of standards/legislation: UK: NAS, PAS, international transport
- Use of symbols as part of guide key
- Use of access statements/minimum criteria
- Defining search fields: OSSATE
- Signing up to principles
- Mystery shoppers
- Consumer reviews
- Focus on consumer marketing – window stickers, literature display – to create brand recognition

# Added benefits

- Along with brand recognition, and customer reviews, we can create a platform for campaigns
- Companies who join OpenBritain are offered free online accessibility staff training
- Getting away from 'disability measures' towards 'design for all'
- Flexible system that can include new features as they are developed and move towards becoming standard
- Brand lends itself to sub-brands eg OpenLondon
- People and activity focussed, theming, editorial that looks fun not just functional

# Conclusions

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- Standardisation across Europe could help in the longer term but must be flexible to technological change
- In the short and medium term, the engagement of the industry in a marketing and information system may have a better chance of increasing the level of the offer to disabled people