# DAISY Consortium Showcase 2020

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>> Richard: DAISY members, supporters, and friends, welcome to the showcase of the work of the DAISY consortium. In this presentation you will hear from some of our staff team, DAISY members, supporters, friends, and partner organizations as we highlight some of the wonderful activities of our organization. Let's begin with a reminder of our guiding vision which is that people have equal access to information and knowledge regardless of disability a right confirmed by the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. And the mission of the DAISY consortium to develop global solutions for accessible publishing and reading in partnership with civil society, publishing, and technology industries, standards bodies, and governments. So, this leads us to the domains in which we work. Supporting the DAISY community to provide standards and best practices tools and technologies to support accessible reading services, extended the DAISY community to expand accessible reading services and partnership with the publishing industry in developing countries and Industrialized nations and driving inclusive publishing. To bring about the era born accessible publications. First let's turn to Avneesh who will tell us about the DAISY consortium and accessibility standards. Avneesh?

>> Avneesh: Hello, everyone. I'm delighted to present work on our team. We started more than two decades ago and created the world's best accessibility the DAISY format. It became the most popular and accepted format worldwide. We did such a nice job that even today the DAISY format is considered great for recorded audio books. A decade ago armed with the knowledge of DAISY standards, we took another big initiative, and this was to make EPUB the mainstream accessible publishing format accessible. The EPUB3 has been quite popular after that. Now, EPUB3 is not an accessible publishing format? It's true but when you create the EPUB3 publications by following the accessibility specifications then you create the really accessible publications. So the EPUB3 has ingredients of accessibility with all the ingredients and the specifications puts together accessibility in the right way. EPUB accessibility was originally developed under IDPF and went to W3C and then in 2018 we decided to submit it under the ISO. We are glad to inform you that we resulted the voting. All have been received by EPUB accessibility in the ISO. So we will soon see EPUB accessibility becoming an ISO standard.

Taking it forward we are also planning to submit EPUB accessibility under the European accessibility act and all of you know the impact. Why EPUB accessibility is such a nice thing? EPUB accessibility is built on the well-known web content accessibility guidelines. It adds specifications on to it. It guides you on what to do to make your content accessible and what kind of accessibility metadata you should be putting in your publications, so your readers are able to recognize that you put so many efforts on accessibility.

So EPUB accessibility takes care on the production side. But I would like to know if you are able to identify the accessible publications from the website. Not so easy right now. To help users we are working on another document which is named as user experience guide for displays accessibility metadata. The retailers and the distributors are provided guidance on what to do, how to interpret the machine readable metadata in the right way and how to display to the users, to the readers in the right way. This work is going on in W3C, the community group and VitalSource became the first one to implement it and more retailers are likely to follow.

Now, let's move to another topic the web content accessibility guidelines. You heard me saying that EPUB accessibility is built on the well-known WCAG. Now why do we need two specifications? Why can't we put the publishing requirements in WCAG itself? It is possible. We have started work on it. It may take some years to complete but we have started the collaboration for achieving this with the web content accessibility working group.

So, we can move to the tools now. Should I continue?

>> Richard: Please.

>> Avneesh: We all know that everything starts from the accessibility standards. At the same time, it is very important to know that the specifications sitting on the website will not provide any benefits to the users. For providing benefits to users we need to work on the tools to implement these standards, these specifications. So I will like to present the suite of tools developed. Let's start with obi. Obi is the production tool. It is one of the world's most popular production tool for producing audio books. DAISY can produce the books in DAISY 2.0, DAISY 3 and add support for new formats easily. In 2008 highly regarded person in DAISY community said that obi will be loved by DAISY community for at least a decade. It was 2008. We are in 2020. 12 years down the line the popularity is increasing. Let's hear from Andrew from Australia.  
Hello, this is Andrew. I'm the technology support manager at the Vision Australia Library.   
Proud to be a long‑time member of the DAISY Consortium. We provide library services for   
approximately 16,000 Australians who are blind or vision impaired. I'm very happy to add that in recent years we have replaced all of our audio production tools and now only use OBI software to create our DAISY books. But also after successfully Using it in our studios, we are expanding our production capacity by introducing a home‑based recording service

Using obi. This home base recording service allows us to be more flexible and meet increased demand which is important in these COVID times.   
You may be interested that all our studio and home‑based narrators are volunteers and   
they have found OBI easy to use. That’s important because they operate the DAISY features of the software at the same time as narrating.

Also, because it is accessible, OBI allows us to involve blind and low vision volunteers in the   
production process. So it's been a good news story And We have been really pleased at   
the ongoing development by the Consortium that means OBI is improving all the time

>> Avneesh: Let's continue with toby. Don't be confused. There's a T in front of obi. Toby was the first tool to produce the EPUB 3 media overlay. Another achievement is that it provides image description which empowers you to create image descriptions. Tobi is now in maintenance mode because all the features have been added. Let's move to the next one, the DAISY pipeline. There was pipeline 1 and 2. This is the backbone of the production workflow of DAISY members. It is a cross platform tool. It is not only a tool I would say. It is a huge collection of number of tools for conversion of one format to another. Let's see what kind of conversion formats are in pipeline. There's DAISY 3 to DAISY 2.02, DAISY 3 to EPUB 3, DIASY 2.02 to DAISY 3, DTBook to RTF, DTBook to DAISY, DTBook to EPUB. Oh, my god this will take an hour to complete. You get an idea how powerful is DAISY pipeline. Let's move to another segment of tools. These tools are for EPUB production. We saw tools for DAISY EPUB production. I would like to mention that the three tools you saw earlier these are designed to support both DAISY and EPUB and the architecture is created in a way to quickly add the support for new formats. Now I move to the EPUB 2. These tools that I will be mentioning now these were actually created for the mainstream. The publishers, the aggregators and also some for the disability service offices. I'm glad to inform that our DAISY members are benefiting from these tools. Starting from ace by DAISY. Ace is the accessibility checker for EPUB. It's an award winning tool which has the highest impact on driving that includes publishing worldwide. Ace is cross platform. It guides you how to correct. It's an automated tool. You can integrate ace into your workflow. You can also use ace app. We have provided the ace app version recently to enable everyone across the publishing to use ace. Everyone who is producing accessible books ace is essential for that person.

Ace can work with any production tool. You may use XML base workflow or maybe InDesign. The impact of ace can be seen even though it’s a mature tool we’re we are observing about 14,000 downloads in 5 months. Now I will hand over to George to talk about the SMART tool.

>> George: Hi, everybody. I want to start off talking about SMART which is a compliment to ace. Ace is the automatic tool. SMART is the simple manual accessibility reporting tool. Because you cannot do everything automatically SMART takes the report generated by ace and provides the publisher with the ability to review the things that are identified in the publications that needs manual review.

It's a check list of various items and provides reports and information on the ‑‑ what you need to be looking at.

These integrate with the DAISY knowledge base, that's very important for showing the best practices on how to do things.

Next I want to talk about WordtoEPUB which I'm delighted to have the DAISY consortium release this year. It's something that I've been dreaming about for years. It's fabulous that it's been released. I'm thought the only one who thinks this is great. The association learned and professional society has short listed DAISY ace for their innovations in publishing award. This is a society of over 300 publishing organizations around the world. So we are going to see a lot more of the exposure to the WordtoEPUB tool that's available to us.

The best thing about the WordtoEPUB is that it makes perfectly accessible EPUBs, provided you use the built‑in features word like headings and footnotes and such. Those features will come through in the EPUB.

Sorry.

>> Richard: Next you would talk about EPUB check and thorium reader.

>> George: With EPUB check this is a collaboration with the publishing industry at the W3C where they funded the DAISY consortium to build the EPUB check tool. Yesterday we released 4.2.3. A maintenance update and fund raising within the publishing community has been going well. There's still a little bit to complete with that fund raising but we expect that to happen.

On this slide we have thorium which is developed by EDR lab. It's a cross platform application. I'm using it on windows and just love it. It's the most accessible reader, the most powerful reader I've ever used, and I'm delighted that we have moved in that direction. So, moving on we have got additional collaborations between the DAISY consortium members, various experts, and the DAISY staff on various projects. One of these projects is the diagram project. This is funded in the United States by the Department of Education. It's been awarded to Benetech and the DAISY consortium has been collaborating with Benetech for many years now. We are in the final year of this 5 year grant. The focus has been on all of the graphical content that we might find in books. We have jointly developed the standards that identify what to do with meaningful content, what to do with images that are decorative and images that need long descriptions or extended descriptions. So this is part of the domain that we collaborated with Benetech, and it just is demonstration of one of those fabulous collaborations that we have. Moving on to other collaborations Richard?

>> Richard: Let's talk about another collaborative project which is the braille music project. We are going to hear from Sarah who will tell us more about that.  
Hi, I'm Sarah Morley Wilkins, the project manager and user experience consultant for the DAISY music braille project. Our project Sets out to identify prioritize and deliver both   
short‑term and long‑term improvements to secure the future of braille music production. We aim to have at least one improve tool for rapid professional accurate and automated music braille transcription which produces global formats and is linked to a production workflow. Work is progressing well with the team developing Hodder and MakeBraille at DZB Lesen. Another project aim is to have at least one improved interactive music braille user tool. This eases the blind musicians to independently read, write, convert and explore music in accessible ways in education, work and leisure. A request for funding proposal is currently open with expressions of interests due at the end of this month. The project a cross sector activity that’s possible due to the collaboration that distinguishes the DAISY   
consortium. We have a project circulation list of over 150 worldwide music braille specialist, end users, individual and agency transcribers, music teachers, developers, service heads,   
musicologist and many more. DAISY members and supporters have kindly stepped up to   
provide the financial resources we need.

>> Richard: Thank you, Sarah. I will ask Avneesh to tell us about the joint project with NNELS.

>> Avneesh: We are having another project with NNELS. There's a lot of deliverables but I will focus on some key things. The joint projects was instrumental in increasing the reach of ace by DAISY and EPUB test which is the testing website. They supported us for internationalization of both ace and EPUB tester. The accessibility metadata in the ace app you can now also edit the accessibility metadata using ace. Also the training materials we were able to produce nice videos and training material with their help. The project also contributed to DAISY pipe HP line project. Richard, you can move forward.

>> Richard: As well as development projects coordinated by DAISY, you will hear that our member organizations are innovating production techniques. Many members are interested in audio books using smart speakers. So we brought together some examples to share these learnings. One was from blind low vision New Zealand. Here's a short clip of the system being demonstrated.  
>> Alexa, open Sonnar library.   
>> Welcome back. What book would   
you like to read?  
>> Moby‑Dick by Herman Melville.   
>> This book is 24 hours and 37   
minutes long. To continue

Reading from the last moment, say  
continue. To read from the   
beginning, say start. Or choose   
one of the following: Table of   
contents or description.

>> Start.

>> Alexa: Great, enjoy  
your book.   
>> Moby‑Dick by Herman Melville.   
Chapter 1. Looming’s. Call me   
Ishmael. Some years ago,   
never mind how long precisely,

>> Richard: So the DAISY consortium is a platform to exchange information about challenges and opportunities and innovations so the best ideas can be shared between members. This can be through the DAISY planet, articles on our website, through online meetings or through a webinar. Let's turn to DAISY's role in driving inclusive publishing.

>> Avneesh: In addition to the list of projects you can see, we are also working on some projects which provide the essential framework for driving accessibility in the mainstream publishing. Let's start with EPUB 3. I mentioned in the beginning of the presentation that EPUB has the ingredients of accessibility along with other ingredients. EPUB accessibility specification force the ingredients in the right order and makes the publications accessible. What would EPUB accessibility do if there's no EPUB 3? Why is the framework important? We worked a lot for the initial version of EPUB 3 which was released in 2012 but the work did not end there. EPUB 3 developed further. It evolved further. We continued to contribute to EPUB 3 to ensure that accessibility remains the high priority.

Last year only the community released the latest version of EPUB 3, EPUB 3.2. Let's move to the next project which is the DAISY knowledge base. When we started working in the mainstream for accessibility, we observed that the mainstream publishers were finding it difficult to follow the accessibility standards. Why so? The reason was that unlike the DAISY members, the mainstream publishers are not the accessibility experts. They need comprehensive guidance to produce accessible publications. So the DAISY knowledge base was developed to address their pressing need. The DAISY knowledge base you will find almost all the techniques you would need to make your publications accessible. It may be a simple technique to putting page numbers to complex markup for extended descriptions. It's such a rich resource that it is being used across the publishing industry and we are also using the DAISY knowledge base in tools ace and SMART.

Next let's move to the best practices for inclusive publishing. We are working with the publishers closely to understand what are the pain points of the publishers which they face while producing accessible content. We work with them to find the work arounds and to find the best practices for overcoming the challenges. Let's see what Richard from Macmillan has to say about it.  
>> My name is Rachel Comerford   
and I'm the senior director of   
content standards and   
accessibility at Macmillan   
learning. I'm happy all of us   
are here prioritizing   
accessibility. It's been a real   
joy and I'm glad that we are   
here together trying to make   
education more inclusive. I   
really appreciate what you are   
doing to help us get better at

Making good ebooks.

>> Richard: Great. So publisher such as Macmillan learning and Pearson and many others are creating born accessible publications. If the reading systems, the apps, websites don't support the accessibility features needed by people with print disabilities. We lead an effort to rigorous tests. We do this with a wonderful crowd of volunteers including people with blindness, low vision, and print disabilities such as dyslexia. Let's hear from one of them.

>> Hi, I'm Julie Clementson. I'm an individual with a print disability. I've been volunteering with DAISY to test reading systems. I'm excited to see how our tests and improve reading systems in the future.

>> Richard: I'm excited to see those improvements too. The DAISY consortium has developed this website to be the go to source of trusted information on the web on the topic of inclusive publishing. It's rich with guides and links and lots of information for publishers, educators, and consumers. With many countries moving into world of accessible publications. The DAISY consortium is a global organization. In many regions of the world accessible books are just in their infancy. Fortunately, the DAISY consortium has been able to provide support for partners organizations. Let's hear from a member of the DAISY team, Dipendra, about our work to extend the DAISY community.

>> Hello, this is Dipendra Manocha I'm a director of developing countries program at the DAISY consortium providing face to face trainings in countries. For example, last year we have been providing training in several south Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal. In south Africa. In Ethiopia. We are able to not just provide training but in many places start the new method of production distribution of books. In the Covid era we have been innovating and not just getting suck in the lock down. We here is a person who benefited from this training which went on the online mode and has learned how to produce accessible EPUB books.

>> Hello, my name is Douglas Omweba. I'm an Assistive Technology instructor at enable. I really appreciate DAISY consortium. My colleagues and I have learned and been empowered to create accessible digital material using EPUB. The variety of accessible training materials plus practice exercises on this platform made the training interactive and enjoyable. I'm already using the skills I have gained to solve the challenges affecting the visually impaired in my country Kenya.

>> We have developed several materials that have been able on the DAISY consortium website that can be referred as any point in time. We have also built up a community through e‑mail list which is our DAISY mailing list. There's good problem and solution sharing which is happening on the mailing list. All these efforts are rallying us to increase our community to reach out to several parts of the world where these technologies did not exist earlier. This family will grow, and the solutions will really reach people who really need these solutions, especially in the low income countries.

>> Richard: So in summary then and in conclusion, the activities featured in this showcase show how DAISY member organizations and the DAISY team are working together to fulfill our mission. Now more than ever is the time to redouble our efforts to ensure that digital information systems are accessible to everyone for reading, learning, work, or pleasure. The DAISY consortium is here for you.