



European Connected TV: From the Accessibility Vision into Market Reality

Press Release

March 2014

The HBB4All consortium is proud to announce the start of the European project **HBB4ALL** (Hybrid Broadcast Broadband for All).

The project addresses media accessibility for all citizens in the connected TV environment. HbbTV (Hybrid Broadcast Broadband TV) is a European standard increasingly adopted by European broadcasters. One of the challenges in the coming years will be the delivery of multi-platform audiovisual content (anytime, anywhere, any device) and making this content accessible for all. The elderly and people with various disabilities rely on subtitles, audiodescription or sign language. Customizing accessibility services through options for personal preferences is only one example of future possibilities.

HBB4ALL is co-funded by the European Commission under the *Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)*. The project started in December 2013 and runs for 36 months. The official kick-off meeting was hosted in Barcelona (13/14 January 2014) by HBB4ALL coordinator UAB (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain).

Main objectives

The HBB4ALL project aims at:

- Advancing future-proof solutions for improved accessibility to media, both utilizing and supporting the successful uptake of HbbTV throughout Europe;
- Introducing and large scale user testing of such innovative services in at least three European countries;
- Introducing and expert testing of novel workflows for the production of accessibility services at European broadcasters;
- Understanding interoperability in a multi-platform and multilingual environment to test easy solutions for media accessibility;
- Benchmarking quality of access services from a user-centric approach and promoting accessibility as an added value for education and social inclusion;
- Becoming a major platform/player in the e-Inclusion economy currently taking place, fostering the future market take-up of exciting innovations in conceiving universal accessibility tools and concepts to satisfy the diverse interests of all societal groups.

The project will examine the delivery of TV content to PC, tablet, smartphone and TV's with an array of communication solutions such as subtitling, audio description, clean audio, and many customizable features. Multiple EU languages, large and small, sign language, and language situation – monolingual, bilingual - will be taken into consideration as well as the three translation modes: dubbing, subtitling, and voice-over.



For more information or interviewing one of the partners please contact: Hadmut Holken
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For this purpose, the project will test access services in various pilot implementations in three European countries and gather user feedback to assess the acceptance and the achievable quality of service in the various delivery scenarios (broadcasting, hybrid, full IP). Four interlinked sub-pilots will be implemented in the HBB4ALL project:

- ✓ Pilot-A: Multi-platform subtitle workflow chain,
- ✓ Pilot-B: Alternative audio production and distribution,
- ✓ Pilot-C: Automatic UI (User Interface) adaptation – accessible Smart TV applications,
- ✓ Pilot-D: Sign-language translation service.

On this basis, HBB4ALL will elaborate pertinent guidelines, guides of good practice, metrics, and recommendations. It will initiate campaigns to promote the project results and thus raise awareness not only on the necessity of access services but also on the technical solutions available. For that purpose, and to transform the accessibility vision into reality, HBB4All targets all relevant stakeholders of the value chain from content providers to user associations.

The Consortium

The consortium includes 12 European partners, two of which are academic institutions, four broadcasters, two research institutes and four SMEs, all experts in the field of media accessibility.

2 Academic Institutions	<p>The HBB4ALL project coordinator Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) plays a leading role in scientific research in Spain. It was selected in the top 5 universities to reach the label of Campus of International Excellence from the Spanish government. UAB participates in the project via the Research Center for Ambient Intelligence and Accessibility of Catalonia (CAIAC) from the Engineering School and Translation Studies Department. Created in July 2010, it comprises 60 members, it aims to understand and analyze human reaction through perception and cognition research. The UAB team is multidisciplinary with experts from the field of engineering, psychology and audiovisual translation.</p>
	<p>Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM), Spain’s oldest and largest technical university, has participated in more than 130 European R&D projects over the past four years. The research centre for HBB4ALL collaboration in UPM is the Telecommunication Engineering School (E.T.S. Ingenieros de Telecomunicación) ETSIT-UPM, through the research group “Visual Telecommunication Application Group” (G@TV), which has experience in multimedia modelling, digital image processing, accessibility, design and implementation of transmission channels and video communications. G@TV is in charge of the Indra-Fundación Adecco Chair for the accessible technologies, which aims the audiovisual accessibility and the work integration of people with disabilities.</p>
4 Public Broadcasters	<p>RBB is the public broadcaster for the federal states of Berlin and Brandenburg and part of the ARD (Association of Public Service Broadcasting Corporations) in Germany. It produces and broadcasts one television channel and six radio stations and provides interactive services including websites, mobile, teletext and HbbTV-based connected TV services. RBB has longstanding experience in EC co-funded research projects, gaining extensive knowledge in the creation of innovative formats and services, in content production, distribution and user experience testing of services. Recent activities concentrated on accessibility services, collaborative content production, personalized media, and especially the future of HbbTV - also in the context of improved accessibility for hearing and sight impaired people.</p>
	<p>RTP is the Portuguese public radio and television broadcaster, the oldest and largest media enterprise in Portugal. HbbTV services are operational on an experimental basis. RTP has internationally-recognised experience in the planning and implementation of television accessibility, not just access services but also a broad interpretation of accessible media developed for and with persons with disabilities. RTP’s professional network in TV accessibility policy, regulation and standardization wants to ensure the take-up of media accessibility not only in Europe but also in territories that make use of European standards (DVB, HbbTV among others).</p>
	<p>TVC is a Spanish Catalan public broadcaster with long standing experience both in research projects (DTV4ALL, TV-RING) and industrial applications in digital DVB-T broadcasting, interactive online applications, IPTV HbbTV applications (of which TV-RING is a prime example), mobile apps, subtitle management, generation, broadcasting and online publishing.</p>

	<p>SWISS TXT is a company of the public broadcaster SRG/SSR in Switzerland and provides a vast variety of services to the broadcaster and other third party customers. One of its sectors is subtitling where SWISS TXT supplies more than 24'000 hours of subtitling per year in three languages (German, French and Italian) on seven TV channels. SWISS TXT wants to optimize - through the HBB4ALL project – the integration of access services of a broadcaster (subtitling, signed programs and audiodescription) into the service at reasonable cost.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">2 Research Institutes</p>	<p>IRT is the specialized non-profit broadcast and multimedia technology institute (founded in 1956,) company, IRT jointly owned by the German speaking Public Service Broadcasters of Germany, Austria and Switzerland (ARD, ZDF, DRadio, ORF and SRG/SSR). IRT strongly favours open technical standards and horizontal system markets. Consequently, IRT is heavily involved in the technical work of the EBU (the European Broadcasting Union) and is an active contributor to the relevant standardisation bodies and initiatives, from WorldDMB to HbbTV, and from ETSI to ITU.</p>
	<p>Vicomtech (VIC) is an applied research centre for Interactive Computer Graphics and Multimedia located in San Sebastian (Spain). It is a non-profit association, founded in 2001 as a joint venture by the INI-GraphicsNet Foundation and the EITB Broadcasting Group. The role of VIC in the market is to supply the society with technology by transfer of primary research to industry. This is done through collaborative R&D projects. VIC's main research lines lay in the fields of multimedia, computer graphics and interaction. VIC's Human Speech and Language Technologies (HSLT) Group and The Interactive Media Technologies (IMT) Group will be participating in the project.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">4 SMIES</p>	<p>vsonix was founded in 2007 by a team of senior researchers of Fraunhofer IGD (Germany), one of the biggest research institutions for applied visual computing world-wide. The company's long term research expertise includes state-of-the-art technologies within different areas of networked media ranging from interactive and immersive video, multimedia analysis as well as object detection and tracking for augmented reality enabled applications. vsonix aims at the exploitation of actual research in visual computing to provide innovative media services and applications for web based and mobile platforms.</p>
	<p>Screen Subtitling Systems, based in the UK, started life back in 1976 as Screen Electronics and pioneered and launched the first ever electronic subtitling system, providing the first digital character generator to the BBC. As one of the market leaders, Screen specialises in developing products for the preparation and delivery of subtitling and value-add information services across multiple platforms and devices including HbbTV and Smart TV platforms. Screen's major customers in the worldwide broadcast market include broadcast networks, content producers and service companies. Screen have consistently innovated world-leading systems to reduce production costs and increase transmission reliability and capability.</p>
	<p>People's Playground (PPG) is based in Amsterdam (Netherlands, NL) and was founded in 2010, on firm background experience in web software development, i.e. video/media streaming and backend technology. The last three years PPG has been involved in several Connected TV and HbbTV R&D projects for various clients, e.g. NPO's (and NL's first) HbbTV catch-up service portal "NPO Uitzending Gemist". PPG is a member of the Dutch HbbTV forum which aims to set the standards for nation-wide implementation of HbbTV within the Netherlands. PPG is member in the ICT PSP CIP project TV RING.</p>
	<p>Holken Consultants & Partners (France) is specialising in b-to-b market research and strategic & marketing oriented business consulting, operate in connected creative, cultural and media industries and IT markets. Their missions anticipate new content & services related business models in emerging and digital markets. Besides business intelligence and dissemination activities, the company organizes colloquia and conferences in the cross and trans media field, as well as social innovation events. It launched recently the Media4D initiative (in 2012), a high level event about accessibility and media (www.socialmedia4d.com).</p>

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Website coming soon www.hbb4all.eu



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