Standardising accessibility

a game changer for Free Software?

Olaf Schmidt, Akademy 2008
1. Why open standards are important
2. Why accessibility is important
3. Software accessibility
4. KDE and accessibility standards
1. Why open standards are important
standard devices
standard plugs
standard APIs

KDE4
Qt4
2. Why accessibility is important
Free and democratic election
universal access is required by law

Free and democratic election
universal access
is required by law
3. Software accessibility
accessibility barriers in software
Accessible documents

Normal PDF is not accessible
• only tagged PDF (e.g. OpenOffice)

OpenDocument
• accessibility improvements were needed for government deployment
4. KDE and accessibility standards
alternative output for blind users

standardised communication

screen reader

Qt Accessibility Framework
alternative input for impaired users

standardised communication

on-screen keyboard or other accessibility aid

Qt Accessibility Framework
other uses

standardised communication

Qt Accessibility Framework

testing, scripting
Standardising Accessibility

OpenAccessibility

- part of the LinuxFoundation, but focus beyond Linux
- standards can be forwarded to ISO
- Keyboard Accessibility Specification
Cooperation with Windows

IAccessible2
• Windows port (by OpenAccessibility)

UI Automation
• competing standard (by Microsoft)
Accessibility aids in KDE

colours and sizes ✓
magnification ✓ ✓
text-to-speech ✓ ✓
mouse settings ✓ ✓ ✓
mouse emulation ✓ ✓ ✓
keyboard settings ✓ ✓ ✓
...

support for bigger assistive technologies (screen readers etc)
What does this mean for KDE?

Accessibility standards as danger for KDE
- extremely small team, huge amount of work
- lack of accessibility support can harm KDE adoption rates (especially in governments)
What does this mean for KDE?

Accessibility standards as chance for KDE
• Give everyone the freedom to use and improve KDE
• Make blind users part of our community
• Make accessibility a core part of our identity