**APrIGF Delhi 2014**

**Workshop Summary Report**

**Date:** 4th August 2014

**Time:** 3.30-5.00pm

**Workshop Title:** Towards an accessible Internet for people with disabilities

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**Moderators:** Satish Babu

**Panelists:** Gunela Astbrink, Arun Mehta, Dipendra Manocha, Sunil Abraham, Satish Babu

**A brief summary of presentations**

Gunela Astbrink (Internet Society of Australia) introduced the topic by providing statistics and international policy directions to underpin the need for increased accessibility to the Internet for people with disability.

Arun Mehta (BAPSI) detailed work on low-cost technological solutions for people who are deaf-blind. He emphasized how programmers can easily write software and how this will make a significant difference in developing countries. However, reaching out and training people is a much more complex process.

Dipendra Manocha (DAISY Consortium) discussed the issue of accessibility of digital documents to enable access to digital books for people who cannot read print because of vision impairment, dyslexia or are not physically able to hold a book. Digital documents need to adhere to two important standards: EPUB standard for Digital Document format ([www.idpf.org](http://www.idpf.org)) and Unicode standard for the fonts ([www.unicode.org](http://www.unicode.org)). Affordable assistive technology such as screen reading software in local language on low cost phones and tablets remains another gap that needs to be filled to provide access to digital documents to persons with print disabilities.

Sunil Abraham (Centre for Internet and Society) outlined the role of copyright reform in enabling the provision of digital books to people with print disability.

Satish Babu (International Centre for Free and Open Source Software) explained the role that people with disability can have as software developers to build more accessible products.

**A substantive summary and the main issues that were raised:**

This is the first time that a workshop on accessibility for people with disability has been held at an APrIGF.

The workshop provided an overview of a number of accessibility initiatives in India and embedded this in domestic and international policy and legislation discussions. For

example, adequate access to digital books for people with print disability was blocked by publishers until the World Intellectual Property Organisation’s (WIPO) Marrakech

Treaty. This Treaty relates to books and people with print disability. However, the 2012 amended copyright legislation in India was both disability and works neutral.

The issue of linguistic diversity also presents barriers for people with disability in obtaining software and hardware to meet their needs. For example, there is a need for Indian languages to use fonts compliant with Unicode. On another and more positive note, open source screen-reading software called NVDA used by blind people is currently being translated into 16 Indian languages. However, it is important to consider how the move to IDNs will impact people who rely on assistive technologies to use email and browse websites.

Other important issues discussed included applications for deaf-blind people and the training of young people with disability in IT.

**Conclusion & Further Comments:**

This workshop explored general accessibility topics through an Indian perspective and related it to international policy.

The Internet community can play a significant role in supporting and promoting accessibility to the Internet for people with disability.

The establishment of more training programs in IT for young people with disability would offer valuable employment opportunities as well as providing further integration of people with disability into the community. It will further assist in improving IT accessibility. Funding support is welcomed for such an initiative.

With the move to IDNs, ICANN needs to study any impact that this may have on accessibility to assistive technologies.

In conclusion, it would be valuable to continue the debate on the many and varied accessibility issues after this APrIGF and at the next APrIGF.