JRC Ispra - 24 and 25 November 2003

TV for All

Where are we now?

Compiled by Gerry Stallard (CENELEC)
and given by Paco Cabeza-Lopez (CENELEC)

Digital TV - Background

- TV is essential to information, culture and entertainment

- Digital TV will be important driver in society

- But a recent report says - "Digital more difficult than Personal Computers"!

- Access to Digital TV a challenge to many - especially disabled people

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TV for All Conference Seville
June 13 -14 2002

- Organised by CENELEC

- Delegates: broadcasters, disabled people's representatives, manufacturers, policy makers, consumer groups etc

- A unique and successful conference with many ideas and suggestions

- Recognised many issues need facing

If DTV is really for All – what are then the issues?

- In some countries, little or no subtitling, audio description and signing

- On-screen messages - hard to read, no audio equivalent

- Remote controls difficult to use

- Complex symbols and terminology

- Navigation of menus confusing

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Development of TV for All "Virtual Group"

- Needed to keep the impetus of the conference
- So - agreement to form a Virtual Group
- Encourage new members to join
- Group to considered ways to open access to DTV, especially to sensory impaired people
- Roadmap placed on CENELEC website
- Interim Report issued in June 2003

Recent Progress

- Virtual Group met in Barcelona 28 October

- Representative groups, EBU and manufacturers gave their views recommendations

- Not all views were compatible!

- Final report completed in November 2003 taking into account views expressed

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Final Report - main areas

- Assistive services (subtitling, signing & audio description)
- Receiver terminals
- Remote controls
- Electronic Programme Guides
- On-Screen Displays
- Interoperability
- Recording Equipment
- Retention of Recordings

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Final Report
Assistive Services
Production and transmission

- Subtitling – in digital and analogue forms, digital much improved

- Audio description – analogue transmission limited but digital has potential

- Signing – analogue has "on screen interference" problems but digital "closed" signing is just possible

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Final Report
Assistive Services
"Best Practices" needed

Some examples:

- Subtitling - Allow adequate reading time etc

- Signing - Wearing clothing of good contrast etc.

- Audio Description - Provide key information etc.

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Final Report
Simplified Receiver Controls

- All control functions - switches, knobs, and dials clearly labelled and accessible

- External connections - easy to access

- External facilities (audio messages, Braille printers)

Final Report
Receivers and Decoders

- Sufficient capacity for all media access services

- Must be capable of up-grading

- Simple installation and information

- Must be capable of supplying Assistive Services
  - Identification ticket at point of sale?

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Final Report
Remote Controls

- Shape and size – comfortable to use, not too small

- Minimum buttons on "face"

- Buttons clearly labelled, shaped and indication when pressed

- Single button for media access

- Some common codes between manufacturers

Final Report
Electronic Programme Guides (EPG's) and Navigation

- Must be intuitive, simple and logical

- Menu structure simple and indexes to be unambiguous

- Assistive services easily identified – common symbols?

- Clear text and graphics

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On Screen Displays

- All text within "safe viewing area"

- Text - sans serif typeface of the Tiresias form and 24-point minimum

- Good contrast on a TV screen

- Use of simple screen layouts

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Final Report

Interoperability

- Lack of generic standard

- Need to ensure multiple boxes not imposed by vertical broadcasting

- Conditional Access - should have an Open Standard

Final Report
Recording Equipment

New Personal Recorders:

- Must be able to record and replay assistive services

- Easy to use

- Have Open Standards as proposed by TV Anytime

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Final Report
Retention of Recordings

- Many programmes already subtitled

- Yet re-subtitling continues and is costly!

- EBU or similar to hold list of subtitled programmes for exchange at a basic rate

Final Report

- Contains recommendations

- Requests deliverables from manufacturers and broadcasters

- Recommends that report is considered by Joint Technical Committee and passed to EC

- Recommends passing to National Regulatory Authorities for consideration and implementation

Can we expect:

- Legislative action by the European Commission?

- The introduction of technical standards?

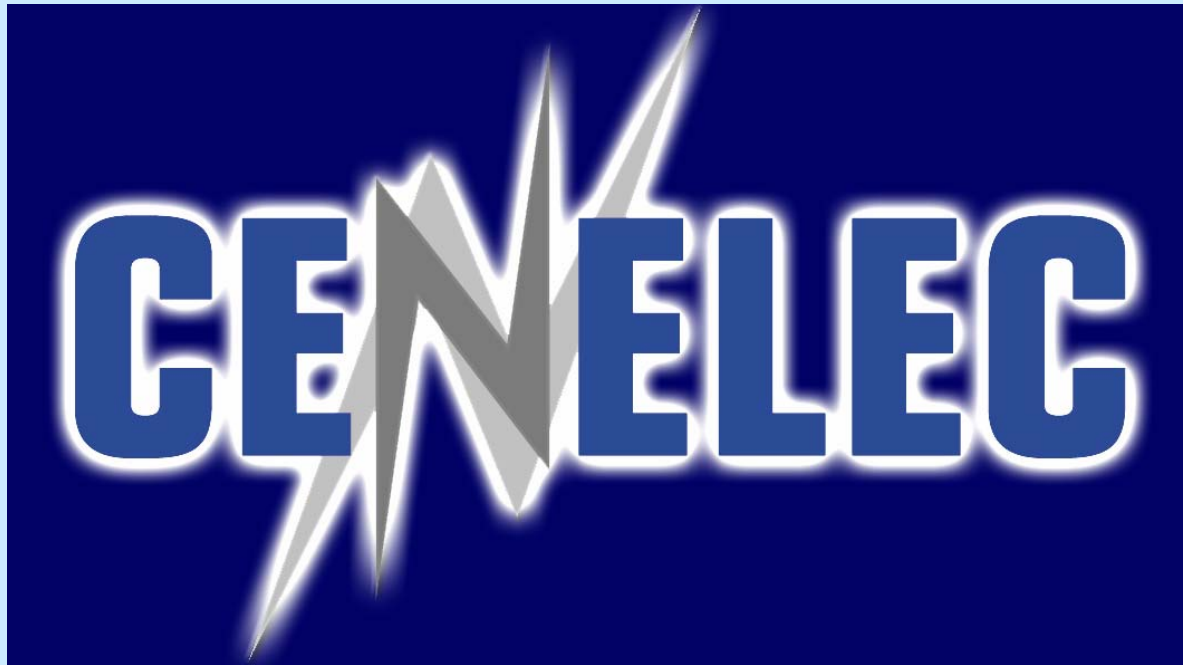- Action plans by broadcasters and manufacturers?

In ten years time?

- A single multi-media device that's truly multi modal?

- Wireless connections between devices such as Blue Tooth?

- "user chooser" displays with choice of subtitle size and speed?

- Voice driven commands?

Thank you, and apologies again from Gerry Stallard for not being here!

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