

## Coverage Report

### 'Don't let regulation come in the way of innovation'

*Experts at the roundtable on Digital Accessibility, hosted by IIM Bangalore, say accessibility should be in the DNA of products and argue for forward-looking regulation to drive inclusion*

**December 21, 2016**

#### Online:

Date	Publication	Headline
<b>Online</b>		
December 21, 2016	The Hindu Business Line	<a href="#">Digital accessibility helps diverse users: participants at IIM-B meet</a>
December 21, 2016	The Telegraph	<a href="#">Don't Let Regulation Come in the Way of Innovation</a>
December 21, 2016	Core Sector Communique	<a href="#">Don't let regulation come in the way of innovation</a>
December 21, 2016	Biz News	<a href="#">'Don't let regulation come in the way of innovation'</a>
December 21, 2016	Scoop It	<a href="#">'Don't let regulation come in the way of innovation'</a>
December 21, 2016	Estrade	<a href="#">Don't Let Regulation Come in the Way of Innovation</a>
December 21, 2016	Job Page	<a href="#">Don't let regulation come in the way of innovation</a>
December 21, 2016	Pocket News Alert	<a href="#">'Don't let regulation come in the way of innovation'</a>

#### Print:

Date	Publication	Headline
<b>Print</b>		
December 21, 2016	The Hindu Business Line	Digital accessibility helps diverse users: participants at IIM-B meet

## Digital accessibility helps diverse users: participants at IIM-B meet

### OUR BUREAU

Bangalore, December 20

There is a need for diverse groups in the country to work on ensuring inclusion, which in turn will ensure the success of digital accessibility policies and programmes.

At a roundtable on 'Digital Accessibility' hosted by IIM-Bangalore, Professor Mukta Kulkarni, Mphasis Chair for Digital Accessibility and Inclusion at the institution, said digital accessibility can allow for productivity and inclusion through participation in educational, economic and political spheres.

However, such accessibility is beneficial for everyone, and not just one sub-group, she said. For example, she described how captioned video, which helps us to follow a movie via subtitles in noisy places, was actually created for people with hearing impairments.

The roundtable was attended by key players in the disability accessibility ecosystem, including founders of disability employment agencies, lead accessibility officers from the private sector, and disability policy and advocacy specialists.

### Cash and card

Rakesh Paladugula, founder, Maxability, and Accessibility Engineer at Adobe, focused on the effects of demonetisation on persons with disability. "Persons with disability can neither use cash for their needs nor the web and mobile applications due to poor accessibility. Applications such as Paytm, Mobikwik, have not thought about the needs of customers with disabilities. There are similar problems with POS terminals which are going to be market drivers in the retail space," he said.

Making a business case for



investment in accessibility, Mohan Sundaram, Trustee and Board Member, Association of People with Disability, said: "There is enough evidence to show that innovation for the disabled makes the product far more valuable and productive for the able-bodied." Hence, the crying need for corporates to hire people with disability in

design departments and testing teams. "Hire as part of a strategy to enhance value; don't hire PWDs to tick a box, to make up the numbers for compliance," he added.

Remarking that regulations often come in the way of innovation, Ashutosh Chadha, Group Director, Government Affairs and Public Policy - Microsoft India, ar-

gued that policy has to be forward looking.

### Mandatory criterion

"Policy must promote public procurement standards and align them with global standards such as WCAG 2.0 AA for web content and services and policy must straddle campaigns such as Make in India, Start-up India and Digital India to crowd-source ideas and take them to market so that more and more new products with accessibility are developed," he said.

"We have to have a clear roadmap for implementing digital accessibility, which goes in tandem with the national development agenda; otherwise policy initiatives will remain on paper without tangible benefits to persons with disability. Accessibility needs to be prioritised. In emerging Digital India, an inability to use technology will

have drastic consequences to the economic and social independence of a person," observed Nirmita Narasimhan, Policy Director, Centre for Internet and Society, India.

Dr. Meenu Bhambhani, VP & Head - CSR, Mphasis, said: "There is a need of thought leadership in this space and hence the investment in partnership with IIM-B to focus on research that will build a strong business case for accessibility in systems, services and products."

Cristopher Broyles, Mphasis Chief Accessibility Officer, through a video message, said: "We're looking to our partners and other companies to help develop cross-vertical approaches to ensure greater employment success by individuals with disability and to help organisations enhance their capabilities to reach a broader spectrum of customers."