

## Visits4u online Module on Information and Wayfinding - Transcript

### Opening:

Welcome to this Visits4U training course. This module is on Information and Wayfinding, it has been designed by the Centre for Accessible Environments.

The Visits4U project was an 18 month programme of capacity building in inclusive tourism.

The project was co funded by the COSME programme of the European Union. COSME stands for Competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises.

### Slide 2:

In this module we will look at visual information including text and symbols, Tactile information, and Technology for wayfinding and finish with further sources of information

### Slide 4:

Visual and Text information is very important to everyone. This includes everything from the symbol on a toilet door, a hazard warning A stand on a wet floor, to written notices and signage. Visual information is particularly helpful for:

- People who are hard of hearing or have profound hearing loss. (There are significant numbers of people with hearing loss to find out more, have a look later at our module on Deaf awareness).
- People with a different native or first language who may not be able to interpret the speech fast enough, or perhaps
- Someone with a speech impediment or impairment who may not feel comfortable asking for help/directions
- Also people with a range of learning difficulties or disabilities including the inability to retain information for long such as a

condition affecting memory

- Plus people who find navigation and orientation difficult,

All will rely more on signs and information in text form alongside spoken directions.

## Slide 5

To maximise readability, and be understood by the widest possible audience, text information needs to be:

- Size- Large enough for most people to read
- Reading distance - Space around the information to gain close access ... or large enough to read from a distance if not.
- Light levels - Sufficient lighting to read it - the lower the lighting, the higher contrast and larger the print needed
- Accessible formats needed? It should ideally be made available in alternative accessible formats - this may include large print or electronically, and sometimes in audio, tactile, or Braille

## Slide 6:

Key design considerations when developing new literature, notices or signs should include:

- Size of text as just mentioned, this needs to be appropriate for the item. A sign that needs to be read from a distance will have a much larger text than an instruction on a door, or a piece of literature you can hold in your hand.
- Avoid block capitals - block capitals are much harder to read. No one would ever produce a book or report entirely in block capitals, as it would be so hard and slow to read, equally we do not have road signs in block capitals for the same reason. A mixture of initial capital letter and then lower case or even all lower case lettering gives a shape that is faster to read. This is particularly so for people with low vision, people with low literacy or language skills, or with a

learning difference such as dyslexia.

- Avoid use of italics and underlining - both of these make the shape of the words harder to distinguish.
- Avoid serif fonts, that is fonts that are ornate or have extra tails and finishing strokes. A plain text style is always better to enable people to read the information easily and faster.
- A sign that has a background finish that contrasts well with the wall it is placed upon, will be much easier to notice -

typically aim for a minimum of 30 points between a sign and the background surface it will be seen against, and 65-70 LRV points difference between the text and the background of the sign.

- Try not to put text on top of images as this will make it harder to read. A plain background is always best.

### Slide 7:

The principles of good accessible signage are not hard once you know about them, but many signs are simply designed to have the ost minimum impact on their environment which actually means they do not work well as a wayfinding aid. For wall signs in particular, it is very helpful to reduce visual clutter around the sign, so that the sign will stand out.

Always use clear language where possible. This is particularly important on safety notices and signs where it is important for everyone to fully understand the message.

Always use clear arrows, which should be positioned on the left for straight ahead and for turning left and on the right for turning right.

Tactile information should always be added to signs or plaques where it is possible to get close enough to touch them. More on this in a moment.

### Slide 8:

Here are a few symbols as examples. Not the differences in the toilet signs, as comical as the lower sign might be, it should not be used in practice - signs need to be quickly understood so always use well known

symbols where possible

### Slide 9:

Visually contrasting and a matt finish is always clearer

The image here shows how a notice or sign can be fixed too high, and offer no contrast from the background it is seen against.

The image on the right illustrates just how difficult a shiny sign can be to read in sunlight - it is always helpful for all information to be on a matt finish. Using shiny finishes, whether that is a shiny laminate to a gloss or metal surface, will make the sign impossible to read at times.

### Slide 10:

*Live text information* is extremely helpful especially when circumstances are changing such as a delayed event, transport timetables and ‘running commentaries’ on activities.

- Pen and paper
- SMS text to mobile
- Auto text
- Textphones and Text relay (TRS) and Video relay (VRS) services

Pre-planned options include:

- Palantypist
- Sub titles or Captioning
- Stagertext

Learn more about these and hearing enhancement systems for people with hearing loss in our module on Deaf Awareness and our associated factsheets.

### **Slide 11:**

Tactile information is a useful addition to a clear sign or information. Typically this will include embossed text and symbols and Braille.

For hand held materials such as drawing plans, information can be printed on swell paper with a specialist printer and materials, however, it is also possible to make your own tactile drawings or plans using bumpy labels, Velcro and other tactile materials. Don't forget everyday items you could potentially use like cutting out foam board to layer a plan, or using pieces of felt, sponge or Velcro, or even string adhered to the surface. In the UK it is possible to purchase a tactimark pen.

When providing a tactile map, a tactile surface on the ground in front is helpful so that blind people can detect this underfoot and find their way to the tactile information.

### **Slide 13:**

Technology is always being updated and there are a number of recent initiatives which help with wayfinding and navigation.

For example smart watches and phones now have satellite navigation systems built in as a standard option.

Wayfindr is a beacon based audio information system for people with sight loss- check out the wayfindr website now.

### **Slide 14:**

PhotoRoute provides easy-to-follow photographic journeys in website, mobile, print and embeddable formats. It helps people with disabilities or speaking English as a second language. and helps people to navigate much more easily without worrying about getting lost.

PhotoRoute is based around inclusion to give people confidence to travel. It is a photo-based map application from Enabled City, and will help any visitor, including those who find steps and stairs a challenge (parents with

buggies, tourists with luggage and people with disabilities) enjoy their visits. PhotoRoute provides step-free options along with geo-located pictures (taken from the walkers perspective) with written directions that pin-point a user's location then guides them along their journey.

Most routes start and end at main transport links such as underground or transport infrastructure, while some journeys are designed to be circular, enabling the user to dip in and out of the routes.

Check out the photoroute website for more details.

### **Slide 15.**

The last section will look at steps you can take straight away.

### **Slide 16.**

Put into practice what you have learned from this module, do a walk around and check your spaces. You can then commission a comprehensive audit, if need be, to give you an idea of how accessible your spaces are - be sure to use a qualified professional.

Make your website more user friendly by looking at things like good colour contrast, size of text and clear information on any access provisions you have regarding your facilities and services. It's important that you don't make assumptions on the needs of a potential guest.

Train your staff - Attitude is everything. A happy customer will tell a friend, an unhappy one will tell the world.

See what other hotels and businesses around you are doing; make use of these practices and use them as reference points.

Work with disability organisations to increase your understanding and awareness of the needs of people with different types of disabilities. This links to training your staff.

It is good to know what you are doing right and where you can improve so always ask for customer feedback.

### Slide 17.

You have now completed this module.

You can find useful documents on the project website, please follow the link provided on this slide:

<http://www.visits4u.eu/visits4u-access-guide/>

Also remember, this is part of a series of three modules and these are currently available on project website:

<http://www.visits4u.eu/online-course/>

### Slide 18.

Thank you and good luck on your journey!

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