

ICT Accessibility Trends in Japan

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Statistics for older persons and persons with disabilities

2010 Whitepaper on Persons with Disabilities
2010 Whitepaper on the Aging Society

- Between the age of 65 and 74 is 15.30million
Over 75 years of age is 13.71million
 - Population ratio in total is 22.7%
 - Predicted to rise to 25.2% by 2013 and 33.7% by 2035
- Children/persons with disabilities is 3.66 million
 - Population ratio is 2.9%
 - The reason why the figure is low in Japan is the strict criteria for certification as a disabled person
 - There are consequently many “disabled persons who are not certified as disabled” in Japan

Consequence of the population distribution

- Policies that treat older persons and persons with disabilities as a single demographic, that encompass a greater number of people, are being promoted in many fields in Japan
- E.g., establishment of JIS Standards
 - JIS X8341 Series “Guidelines for older persons and persons with disabilities – Information and communications equipment, software and services”
 - Common guidelines (2004) / Information processing equipment (2004) / Web content (2004) / Telecommunications equipment (2005) / Office equipment (2006)

Although JIS standards have been established...

- ...why is the Japanese market flooded with inaccessible or unusable information and communications equipment/services?
 - Inadequacies frequently occur even in government office and municipal websites for which accessibility became mandatory under the “e-Japan Strategy”
 - The “Basic Guidelines for Information Systems related Government Procurement” published in 2007 only requests a sentence mentioning accessibility in call for tender

ICT Policy Task Force for a Global Era

- The Minister of Internal Affairs and Communication (Kazuhiro Haraguchi) organized his Task Force to develop future ICT policies
- The Task Force inaugurated in October 2009

Minister's thoughts: Basic approach of Task Force

- ICT constitutes infrastructure for freedom of speech and establishment of democracy
- Like the sun shining equally upon all people, with a people-centric focus, it is necessary to secure the right to communications for all people
- Working towards the realization of such a society, it is the goal of this task force to study the nature of future ICT policies

Minister's thoughts: Basic approach of Task Force

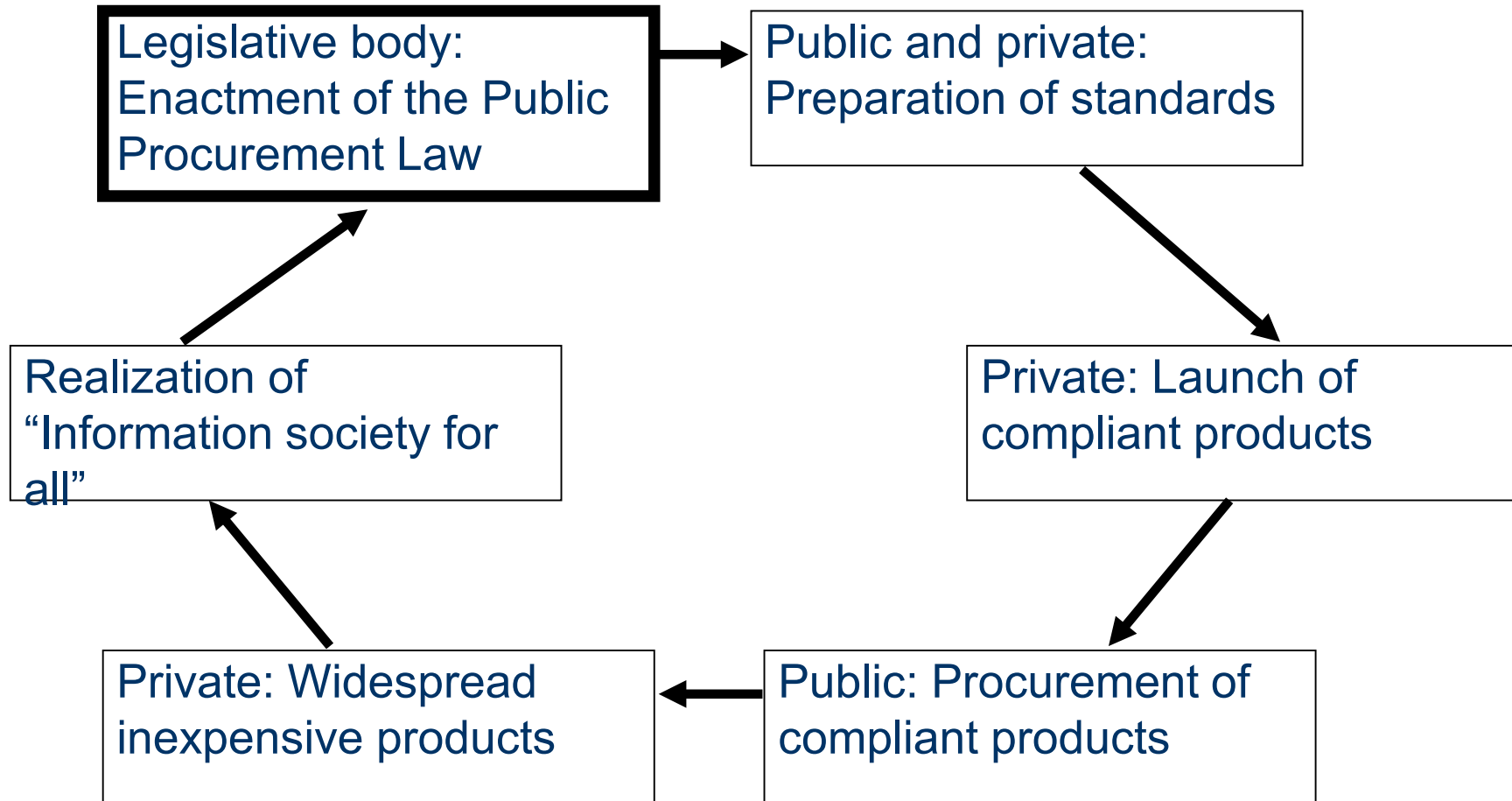
- It is necessary to contribute both domestically and internationally to finding solutions to economic and social issues through the effective utilization of ICT
- Keeping this approach in mind, the task force will undertake studies on
 - review of past competition policy
 - ways to address environmental changes in the telecommunications market
 - increasing the international competitiveness of the ICT industry
 - contributing to solutions for global-scale issues

Study items for Study Group for Global-Scale Issues

- Effective utilization of ICT in various fields in order to realize people-centric ICT policies
- Utilization of Japan's outstanding ICT in overcoming the regional and global issues faced by all countries throughout the world
- Studies into measures aiming for improvements in information literacy and the promotion of effective ICT utilization by persons with disabilities, from the perspective of securing equal communications rights for all people

Assertions made by Hajime Yamada

Comprehensive policy loop to create an inclusive “society for all”



Final Report: Building societies that incorporate considerations for older persons and persons with disabilities

(December 2010)

- Information accessibility improvement: In order to prepare an environment that allows anyone, including older persons and person with disabilities, easy use of ICT equipment and services, and to secure citizens' communications rights, information accessibility considerations are essential and it is important to deploy diverse measures to improve accessibility

Development of information “barrier free” environments (December 2010)

- In order to develop information “barrier free” environments that can be utilized by anyone, including older persons and persons with disabilities, the ministry moves toward the establishment of mandatory requirements through further improvements in the accessibility of public organization websites and by understanding and evaluating the status of approaches to secure accessibility in public procurement

Headquarters for the Promotion of Disabled Persons System Reform

(Inaugurated in December 2009)

- “Regarding basic direction” (June 2010)
- Information access/communication security
 - For information provision to be conducted in a manner that takes disability characteristic into consideration, the relevant ministries will work together and, taking technological and economic feasibility into account, will study the nature of necessary environment development with the participation of disabled persons, and conclusions derived from these studies will be drawn during 2012

Web is the focal point of improvement

- Web is becoming the foundation for a variety of information services
- Although web content is updated daily and accessibility may be less than perfect at times, this is a “living” structure that will be improved through corrections while the provision of information is continuously maintained

Does JIS X8341-3:2010 “Web content” make improvements possible?

- Technology independence of JIS X8341-3 makes design difficult and provision of corresponding technological information is necessary
- The Web Accessibility Infrastructure Committee, in the Info-communication Access Council, provides technological information
 - Explanation of JIS X8341-3:2010
 - Accessibility-Supported (AS) information
 - Test files required when creating AS information ...

Other requirements in addition to technological information: For public sites

- With the agency head holding overall responsibility, how basic policy should be presented within the agency?
- What a person in charge of operations, who is out of touch with technological details, should be mindful of when placing orders with vendors?
- Is it not enough to just say “Comply with JIS”?
- What are the points to keep in mind for day-to-day operations and what actions should be taken?

Action taken for public sites

- Revision work on the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication's "Public Site for Everyone" operational model (2005 version) has commenced (Inaugurated in September 2010)
- Presentation of approaches for web accessibility improvement that should be taken by local governments, etc. as PDCA cycles
- P: Plan, D: Do, C: Check and A: Action

“Public Site for Everyone” operational model revision points – Conformance criteria

- Explicit target conformance criteria is provided
- Websites, etc. that are already being provided
 - Development and publication of “Web accessibility policies” by end FY2012
 - Conformity with JIS X 8341-3:2010 Class A by end FY2013 (with publication of test results)
 - Conformity with JIS X 8341-3:2010 Class AA by end FY2014 (with publication of test results)

“Public Site for Everyone” operational model revision points – Status confirmation and setting goals

- Understanding web accessibility policies
- Understanding current status
- Development of web accessibility policies
- Publication of web accessibility policies

“Public Site for Everyone” operational model revision points – Approach to achieving goals

- Approach for day-to-day page creation/updating
 - Quick check before publication of every page
 - Gathering of user opinion
- Approach for operation
 - Creation and updating of guidelines
 - Personnel training
 - Quick check of the total pages periodically, e.g. every two/three months
 - User evaluation
- Approach for renewal

“Public Site for Everyone” operational model revision points – JIS based tests

- Test implementation
- Announcement of compliance status based on test results

“Public Site for Everyone” operational model revision points – On-going testing and improvement

- Approach for quality maintenance/improvement
 - Guideline updates
 - Personnel training
 - Periodic web accessibility tests
 - User evaluation
- Re-setting of goals (web accessibility policies)
- Periodic implementation of tests

Establishment of the Japan Web Accessibility Consortium (JWAC)

- Web already constitutes infrastructure for social living
- Web is an important livelihood tool that performs a great role in improving the daily lives of older persons and persons with disabilities, increasing opportunities for social participation and providing employment support
- Web that conform to domestic standards are still few
- Organizations and businesses, that agree on the philosophy that web should be easy to use for all people regardless of different standpoints, such as web utilization, production, provision, etc. undertake activities with the same goals

Projects undertaken by the consortium (JWAC)

- Projects that maintain and improve quality levels of web accessibility in Japan
- Educational projects to popularize web accessibility
- Research studies for the further improvement of web accessibility
- Projects to build collaborative/cooperative relationships with related organizations and bodies
- Projects that are needed for the achievement of consortium goals