

Improving access to school books for blind and visual impaired pupils

A project of the German Central Library for the Blind in Leipzig (DZB Leipzig)

Authors

Name: Dr. Thomas Kahlisch
Director of DZB Leipzig
E-Mail: thomas.kahlisch@dzb.de

Name: Julia Dobroschke
Project coordinator in DZB Leipzig
E-Mail: julia.dobroschke@dzb.de

Abstract

Motivation

DZB Leipzig is the oldest public library service for blind persons in Germany. Besides lending and selling accessible literature and products, DZB Leipzig has started various projects to support development and research in this area of accessibility. In 2010, the library worked on an ambitious venture which dealt with accessible school literature. The project was supported by the German organisation "Bundeskompetenzzentrum Barrierefreiheit".

Especially school books need to be edited fast, appropriately and well-priced. Furthermore, offering literature in different ways like braille, large print or as talking books in DAISY format (Digital Accessible Information System) is an essential condition for integrative education.

Measures

The project included two workshops. Firstly, members and partners of relevant institutions (media centres) talked about requirements of school materials which are needed for an adequate production. The outcome – a classified catalogue with facts about production requirements – provided a basis for further discussion. Secondly, both parties, partners of school book publishers and representatives of media centres, balanced ways and solution methods for a close collaboration. Thereby, the second workshop was successfully accomplished.

Now, lobby representatives, parents and teachers know which possibilities exist for working together with the publishing industry and how to maintain and ensure further activities in this essential area.

Outcomes

- An internet platform for documentation.
- A set of production requirements for accessible school materials.
- New contacts with the publishing industry for further networking and working groups.

An objective agreement with publishers and relevant institutions is intended to enable adequate supply of accessible school materials throughout Germany. With mutual understanding for the challenges in both areas, a solid basis for future steps was built.

In the presentation, the project, the result and further more activities will be covered.