Designing for accessibility and usability - conference proceedings

Introduction
Universal Design or Design for All is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Accessible design is focused on principles of extending standard design to people with some type of performance limitation to maximize the number of potential customers who can readily use a product or service. Hence, accessible design is a subset of universal design. Terms such as design for all, barrier-free design, inclusive design, transgenerational design are used similarly but in different contexts. The term "Design for All" is more commonly used in Europe and refers to designing mainstream products and services to be accessible by as broad a range of users as possible. It can be achieved through one of three ways: a) by designing products, services and environments that are readily usable by most users without any modification; b) by making them adaptable to different users (adapting user interfaces); and c) by having standardized interfaces to be compatible with special products for people with disabilities. Barrier-free design is more commonly used in codes and standards documents, and often in reference to the removal of barriers in buildings, whether physical or sensory.
This paper deals with the context of previous three (2001, 2003 and 2005) ATIID conferences on Accessibility, ICT and Digital Inclusion, when there was the need to design, diffuse and make available proceedings that were both usable and accessible - for people with disabilities and using assistive technologies.

Objective
To present and discuss such design process and the latest version of ATIID 2005 proceedings, available in CD-ROM as well as on-line. To highlight the need for design compliance with accessibility guidelines and directives such as WCAG 1.0.

Method
Retrospective narrative of the design process of ATIID 2005 proceedings.
General assessment of compliance with major accessibility criteria.

Results and discussion
The paper presents a brief report on the proceedings` design and implementation process of an accessible information product – ATIID 2005 proceedings. Its present content was intended and made to be easy to be read, to search and to navigate its content, for novice users, expert users of internet as well as people with screen readers (blinds or vision-impaired) and deaf users but fluent in written language (Portuguese, in this case). Main barriers to make proceedings more accessible and usable - for all – are identified. They range from the difficulty of having accessibility directives and guidelines as requirements for products like proceedings (CD-ROM or online formats), to team composition for designing and testing such products beforehand, and evaluation items.

Conclusion
Technical standards and legislation must be enforced in order to have a true information society. Assistive technology is currently available to meet the needs of people with disabilities, and is essential to people with severe and complex disabilities. It is important to ensure compatibility at the interface between assistive technology and mainstream products. Consideration needs to be given to everyday products and their potential to allow the fitting of more technical aids commonly used by older persons and people with disabilities.

Key-words: universal design; design for all; web content accessibility; disabled; disability; impairment; handicap; human-computer interaction.