Improving Accessibility in Higher Education: Lessons Learned from Finnish Networks

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Access vs. accessibility?

• Directive (EU) 2016/2102 provides people with disabilities with better access to the websites and mobile apps of public services.
Accessibility benefits everyone
New challenges for Finnish HEIs

- European and national legislation set much stricter accessibility standards
- Networks for sharing knowledge and co-operating
  - A national Higher Education development project DigiCampus (2018-2020)
What have we done?

• Testing, evaluating, gathering feedback
• Developed technical and pedagogical solutions
• Information for the pedagogical support service of the DigiCampus
• Contributed to the learning environment quality indicator
• Webinars; blog posts; hands-on training; a technically and pedagogically exemplary online training about accessibility
Lessons learned
HEIs need a clear strategy and policies for accessibility

- It is crucial to enhance transparency and active participation of students in policy-making
Accessibility applies to all staff

- Instructors, lecturers
- Accessibility specialists
- Library
- Educational development services
- Facility Services

- Communication and marketing
- IT
- HR
- Projects
- Purchasing
- Management
Do you know your students?
Case example:
Accessibility of a digital learning environment

Purchases
Technology: platform and user interface (ICT)
Content and pedagogical methods (teachers)