

Delivering accessible AI for everyone in public services

Dr Fotios Spyridonis

Policy Context: The [UK Government's AI Opportunities Action Plan](#) aims to accelerate AI adoption across public services to improve productivity and service delivery. Public bodies also have [legal responsibilities](#) to provide accessible digital services. As AI increasingly shapes how citizens access public services, current policy provides little guidance on ensuring AI-enabled services remain accessible and inclusive.

Key Findings: AI-enabled accessibility is most effective when it incorporates contextual human knowledge and recognises diverse user needs.

Policy Advice: As AI becomes increasingly embedded within public services, accessibility should be recognised as a core principle of AI governance. Accessibility guidance for AI-enabled public services should be updated, procurement and evaluation practices should be strengthened, and human-informed approaches to AI-enabled accessibility should be supported.

Research findings

- **Accessibility needs are diverse.** A [review of web accessibility barriers](#) demonstrates that accessibility is not a one-size-fits-all challenge, with different disability groups experiencing different barriers to digital services. AI-enabled public systems are not currently designed and evaluated to meet diverse accessibility needs.
- **Meaningful accessibility depends on context.** Effective accessibility is fundamentally [a communication challenge](#) rather than a content-generation challenge. Accessibility needs to communicate information that is relevant to a user's purpose, rather than simply describing what is present.
- **Human insight improves AI-generated accessibility.** Incorporating [human-curated contextual information](#) significantly improves AI-generated accessibility, highlighting the value of combining AI with human expertise when generating accessibility content.

Together, these findings suggest that accessibility should be viewed as a human-centred process that AI can support but not fully automate. As AI increasingly mediates interactions between citizens and public services, accessibility becomes a governance issue as well as a technical one.

Policy Recommendations

- **Recognise accessibility as a core principle of AI governance.** Accessibility should sit alongside fairness, accountability, transparency, privacy and safety within responsible AI frameworks to ensure AI-enabled public services remain inclusive.
- **Update accessibility guidance for AI-enabled public services.** Existing accessibility guidance should explicitly address AI-generated content and services, including image descriptions, summaries, conversational interfaces and adaptive technologies.
- **Promote human-informed AI.** Public-sector procurement should encourage AI systems that combine automation with appropriate human oversight and contextual expertise rather than relying solely on automated accessibility features.
- **Develop standards for evaluating AI-enabled accessibility.** Future standards should assess AI-generated accessibility according to user outcomes, contextual relevance and practical usefulness, rather than technical completeness alone.
- **Invest in interdisciplinary research.** Continued investment is needed to understand how AI-enabled accessibility performs across diverse populations and public-sector contexts, ensuring future policy remains evidence-based.

Work with Dr Fotios Spyridonis

[Dr Fotios Spyridonis](#) is Senior Lecturer in Computer Science at Brunel University of London. His research focuses on how emerging intelligent technologies can be designed to be accessible, inclusive, and meaningful for diverse users. His work is situated at the intersection of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Human-centred Artificial Intelligence (HCAI), accessibility, and immersive technologies.

Contact Dr Fotios Spyridonis at fotios.spyridonis@brunel.ac.uk if you would like to learn more about his research, invite him to speak to your team, or ask for advice or guidance in accessibility and human-centred AI.

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