ATIS4all thematic network is a three years research project funded by the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) of the European Commission (EC) working to establish an open, collaborative portal offering reliable information on ICT-based ATs, inclusive solutions and R&D initiatives in this field and fostering online discussion, exchange of knowledge and expertise, and sharing of information among their different portal user members.

The project is carried out by a consortium led by Technosite, and composed by a set of partners selected on the basis of excellence criteria, and proven track record in the assistive technology field in national and European research arenas; their recognition as leaders representing different kinds of key actors of the whole European market of AT ICT value chain; their national or international prestige in the provision of portals or information services for people with disabilities; their track record of open software research and development in the field of inclusive solutions; their frequent participation at expert meetings, workshops and relevant international scientific and professional events; and as organisations with the necessary influence to introduce significant improvements in the current status of these areas or to establish new trends and technological concepts.

ATIS4all is working in collaboration with ETNA Thematic Network to set up a reference online portal, that will provide registered members with functions to get information from an specific ICT-based AT product through a search engine in distributed databases, as well as the possibility of expressing and receiving opinion and experience on ICT-based ATs products and services through a 'community'. ATIS4all network works on the design and set up of this 'community' area of the portal where three main sections have been considered: a market place, an R&D community and a key actors section (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Set of features of the future portal including the search engine, the community and the ATIS4all and ETNA websites
(Source: Self-produced).

The Market place and R&D community will provide online meeting points for portal users and key actors interested in interacting, providing, and accessing relevant information in the field of ICT ATs, inclusive solutions and related services, as well as R&D and cutting edge technologies applied to them. In this sense, an initial list of top quality sources of information for each type of content for both communities will be selected.

The key actors section will include search functionalities to find organisations and professionals that are relevant in the field of ICT AT. Moreover, inside the community, the user will not only find a simple list of contents. The goal is to add value to this information, thus resulting in a more enriching user experience. Collaborative web 2.0 applications and tools and personalised user profiling utilities will be used to add value to the information provided by the portal. Some of those tools have already been identified in the first stage of the project, such as the application for users' ratings and comments on AT products.

The following Figure 2 summarises the composition of elements inside the global community that is composed by: the key actors section and the market place and R&D communities themselves. The latter sections will contain a list of top quality information sources, as well as the web 2.0 applications and tools, including the application for user's ratings and comments.

Figure 2 conceptual map of the community model
(source: Self-produced).

The project started in January 2011 and when finished it is expected to provide a reference and collaborative portal and a reference community that will lead to:

- Making reliable information available on ICT-based ATs, inclusive solutions and related services more transparent, accessible and easily available to all the key actors in general.
- Overcoming fragmentation in AT and accessibility markets, thus helping users to benefit from huge market potential, facilitating the development and the release to the market of ATs based on open software and other cutting-edge trends.
- Augmenting the mutual knowledge of the key actors in the chain value of ATs and accessibility products (from research centres to the end-users), which will improve the outcomes of the R&D initiatives and the final products.
- Facilitating the establishment of professional relationships among organisations along the whole chain value of AT ICTs, inclusive solutions, and related services.

Along the first year, ATIS4all has completed the activities of Work Package 1 (WP1) and Work Package 2 (WP2). Four additional Work Packages will be completed along the two remaining years of the funded period.

The main objectives achieved during the first year of ATIS4all project concerning to the two Work Packages active during this period are presented below:

Concerning WP1 objectives:

- The establishment of an ATIS4all Thematic Network website.
- The development of handbook to manage and better coordinate the partners' work.
- The identification and consensus on the topics to be covered in the Market place and the R&D community, as well as the elaboration of a map of information needs.
- The identification of the key actors to be involved in ATIS4all and in the future portal.
- The elaboration of a dissemination strategy for the network.
- The technical analysis of the existing EASTIN portal and related databases to develop a demo on how the application for users' ratings and comments will work.

Concerning to WP2 objectives:

- The gathering and analysis of the information for the 'Market place' and 'R&D community'.
- The development of a demo for user rating and commenting on AT products delivered by EASTIN search engine. This action has been performed in collaboration with ETNA Consortium.

At the very beginning of ATIS4all network activity, one of the first priorities was to stimulate our activity within the ePractice portal, in order to release the thematic network among the online community:"eAccessibility practice, policy, monitoring and impact"[1]. In parallel, the project website and the knowledge management system were developed in order to support the dissemination of project activities and to establish an efficient mechanism to share information among the network partners and supporters. Namely, the collaborative tools for partners and supporters are: the website private area, the wiki tool, and certain mailing lists. This task encompassed the common visual identity of ATIS4all and ETNA thematic networks, which included the website, templates and leaflet design. Figure 3 depicts the ATIS4all website.

[1] http://www.epractice.eu/community/eaccessibility

Figure 3 ATIS4all website
(Source: Self-produced)

The Thematic Network Handbook was written to define the work guidelines. The handbook has two main functions. Firstly, it acts as a reference source for all consortium members covering many of the day-to-day activities and providing links to further information where required. Secondly, it aims to standardise various elements of the project, such as project reports, deliverables and files, and naming conventions, through the use of agreed procedures, and templates where relevant.

One of the most relevant activities carried out in WP1 has been the dissemination and exploitation plan. Communication and dissemination strategies are essential and have a significant impact in all the Work Packages of the project. That is why partners should ideally keep these in mind and align their work (e.g. drafting their deliverables, attending conferences, etc.) according to the communication strategy. The help of all partners is also needed in order to communicate and disseminate the project and its results successfully, to manage stakeholders and to create a positive reputation for the network and the ATIS4all Consortium. The Dissemination and Exploitation Committee (DEC) is concerned with the daily execution of these action plans, their close monitoring and report of the outcomes.

The main objective of WP1 is to establish the foundations of ATIS4ll. With that purpose in mind, a subject heading classification of the ATIS4all Community has been categorised with the contents of the Market Place and R&D, as well as the identification of potential key actors.

Moreover, a technical analysis of the EASTIN portal has been carried out, encompassing details of its functionality and the way these combined searches are performed.

WP2 has been focused on the identification and selection of relevant types of content that should be addressed in the Market place and R&D communities respectively (Figure 4). An initial set of contents for both areas of the community has been selected, and a first set of around two hundred of relevant sources of information based on web resources has been identified.

Figure 4 Selection of relevant type of contents that should be covered by "Market place" and "R&D" community
(Source: Self-produced)

Additionally, a prototype for user ratings and comments has been developed in WP2 and integrated within the existing EASTIN portal provided by ETNA. The main objective of this prototype is to provide a demonstrator of the user ratings and comments application, using the search engine provided by EASTIN in order to evaluate its

usability, and obtain expert feedback to improve the final version that will be developed for the future collaborative portal. This first prototype has been tested and evaluated by all the partners within ATIS4all Consortium. As a result, a list of further modifications and improvements has been delivered.

Other important tasks developed during WP2 focus on the dissemination and sustainability of the project outcomes. Within this scope, specific dissemination actions related to the main dissemination indicators took place, among them: the involvement of partners and supporters in ePractice Portal by means of the announcement of ATIS4all events and other relevant publications, the participation of key actors and supporters in meetings or public events, the promotion of the project website activity by means of regular publications (events, news or public deliverables), as well as other dissemination activities performed on additional dissemination channels.

Figure 5 Second ATIS4all workshop 8-9th September in Prague
(Source: Self-produced)

During the WP1 and WP2 period, the leader set up four conference calls, two in each Work Package, and two face-to-face meetings including: two Consortium Executive Board meetings, the Foundations of ATIS4all, and the compilation and categorisation workshops (see Figure 5). Dissemination is indeed one of the key aspects of the network. In February 2012, the network website has received more than 7000 visits. Moreover, the partners are working on having a higher rotation rate of news and events, and enhancing the project presence in social networks and other online channels.

Future work will focus on the correct development of Work Package 3 (WP3). While continuing with the information gathering started in previous Work Packages, in WP3 the consortium will identify, plan and design the tools and applications for the self-management of the 'Market place' and 'R&D community' sections. Web 2.0 applications will be identified to suit with the type of content included in the market place and R&D

portal sections. Moreover, the dissemination strategy will be redesigned and reinforced during year two.

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