

Collaborative Media Accessibility: *Actors on the Collaborative Stage*

DOI: 10.26379/IL2023001_001

Elena Di Giovanni

University of Macerata

elena.digiovanni@unimc.it

Louise Fryer

Independent Scholar

louise.e.fryer@gmail.com

Francesca Raffi

University of Macerata

f.raffi@unimc.it

Abstract

Notions of participatory accessibility (Di Giovanni 2018), universal accessibility (Wang et al. 2022), co-accessibility (Okyayuz/Kaya 2020), integrated access (Fryer/Cavallo 2022), creative media access (Romero-Fresco 2021), and access as conversation (Romero-Fresco/Dangerfield 2022; Dangerfield in this special issue) are responses to perceived shortcomings of traditional approaches to media accessibility (MA) that were, in the past, devolved to the accessibility professional. Instead, these more recent approaches lay emphasis on collaborative processes and practices. Collaborative Media Accessibility (CMA) is in part an attempt to reframe MA, in recognition of the slogan used by disability activists since the 1980s “nothing about us without us”. This introductory essay and the articles in this special issue aim to assess what these collaborative approaches have in common and how they mark a shift in approach from MA created ‘for’ a certain type of end user (most commonly a non-disabled expert creating access ‘for’ disabled audience members) to MA created ‘by’ or ‘with’ a certain type of end user. First the groundwork is laid by reconsidering definitions of MA and its aims, before considering the many actors (literal and figurative) on the participatory stage and how their inclusion affects the style of access as well as its content, delivery, and consequently the audience response. The content of the articles in this special issue is presented critically, in relation to the notions and issues raised in the sections below.