

The eBook accessibility audit

Ben Watson, University of Kent

Talk blurb

- Background to the eBook accessibility audit
- Story of disability and library professionals coming together to crowdsource a solution to a universal problem
- Audit outputs as a way to measure basic accessibility functionality and guide platform improvement across the sector
- The [eBook accessibility audit](#) introduces benchmark for accessibility in eBook platforms:
 - meaningful minimum standard for mainstream platforms.
 - 'translation' of technical standards into plain English that relate to reader's everyday experiences.
 - raise awareness of inherent accessibility potential of eBooks.

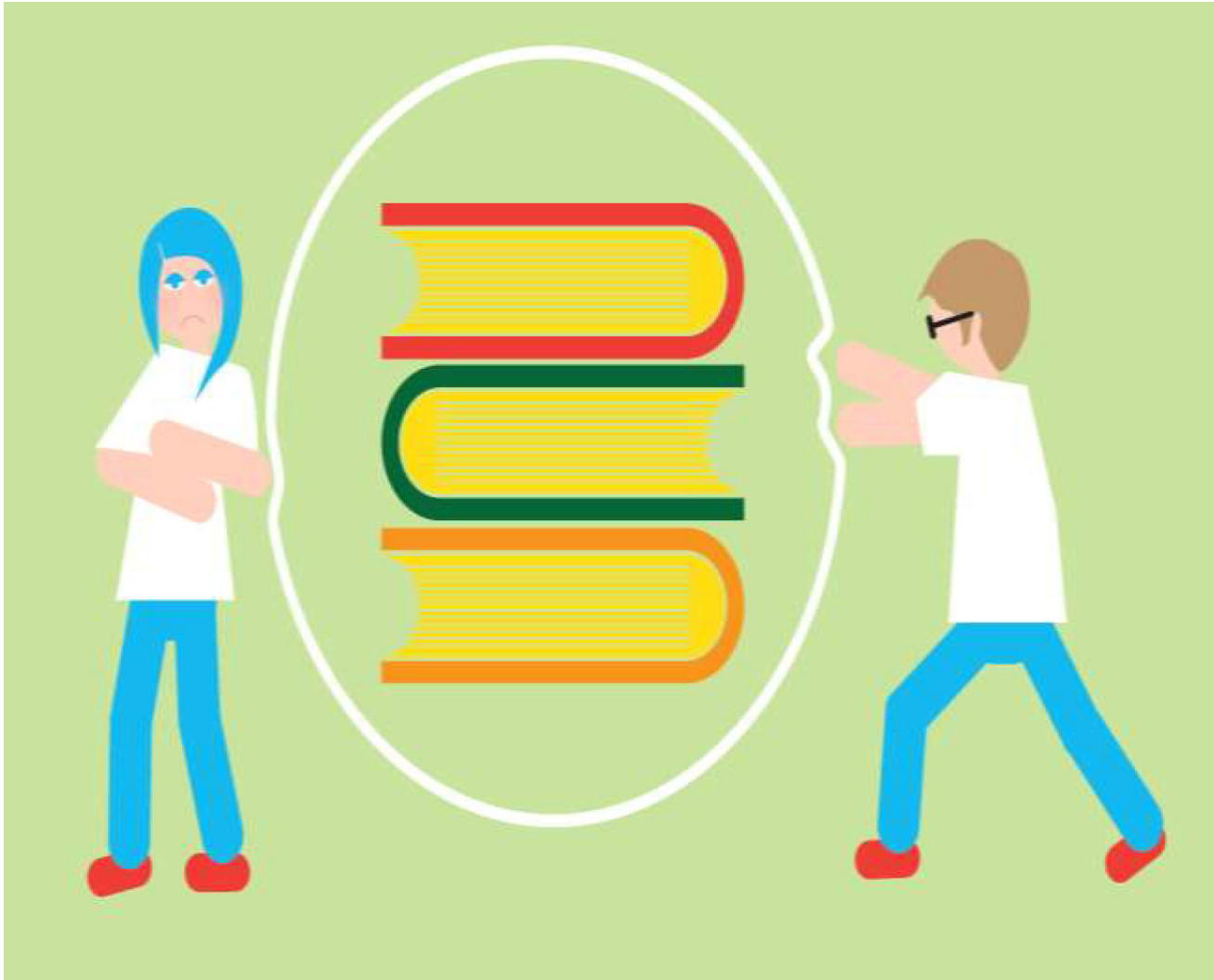
People i.

- **Jisc** - Alistair McNaught is an accessibility and inclusion specialist with a long engagement in the Publishers Association Accessibility Action Group.
- **Leeds Beckett University** - Sue Smith, Vicky Dobson and Jamie Phillips bring library expertise, direct experience with disabled students, project management skills and expertise in Excel spreadsheets.
- **Manchester Metropolitan University** - Gopal Dutta is a library specialist with links to procurement projects.

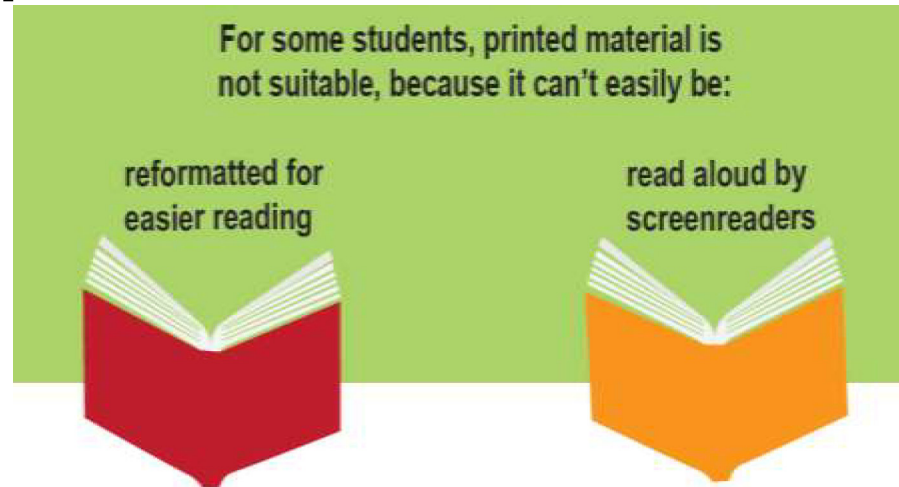
People ii.

- **University of Kent** - Ben Watson is from a library background but now manages an institution-wide accessibility project for the university.
- **University of Liverpool** - Jane Cooke is Head of Content, Collections and Discovery at the University of Liverpool.
- **York St John University** - Ruth MacMullen is a Copyright and Licences Officer with a special interest in disability issues. Ruth set up the LIS-Accessibility JiscMail list.

Why did we do it?



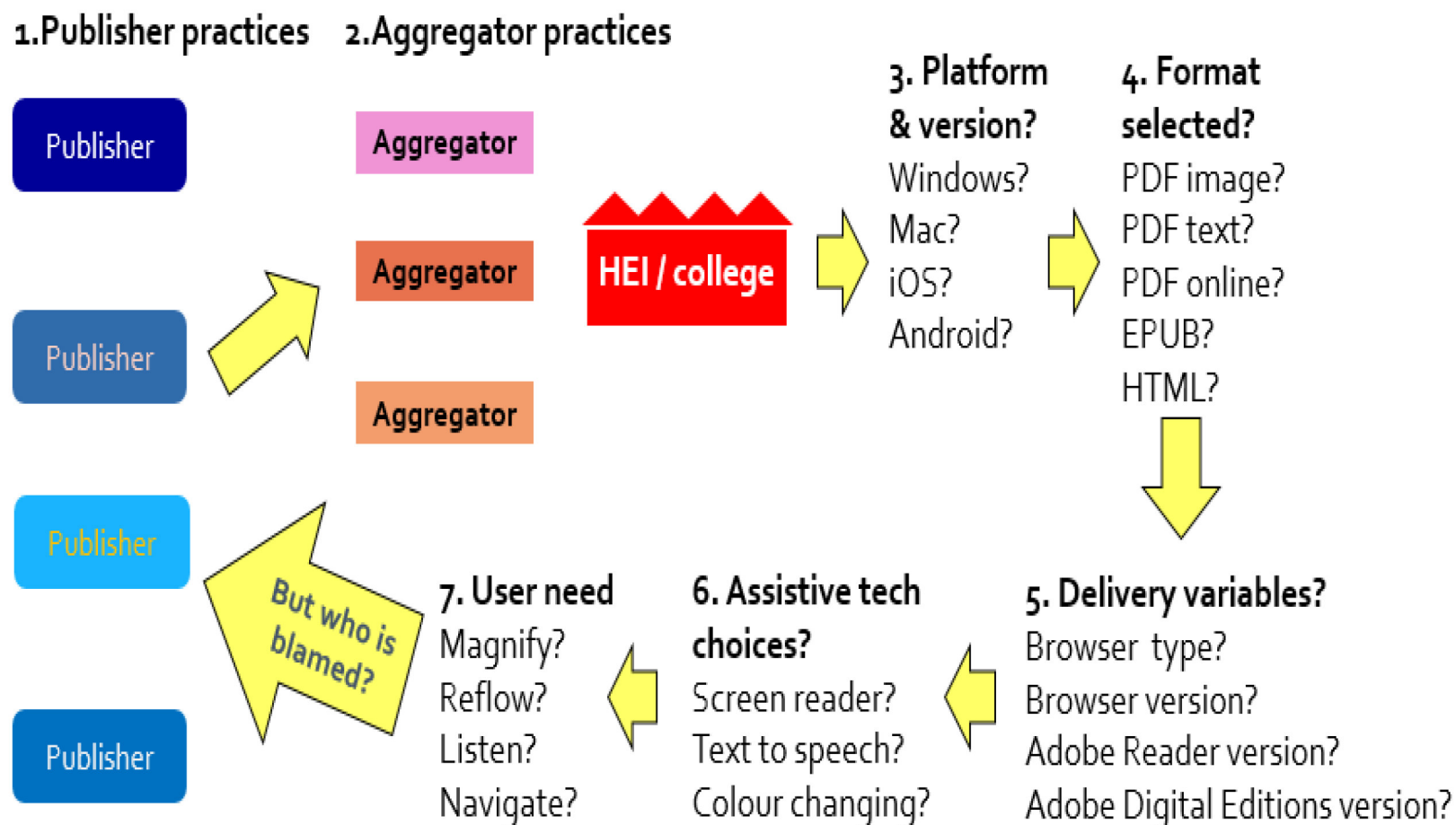
Electronic books should be the answer



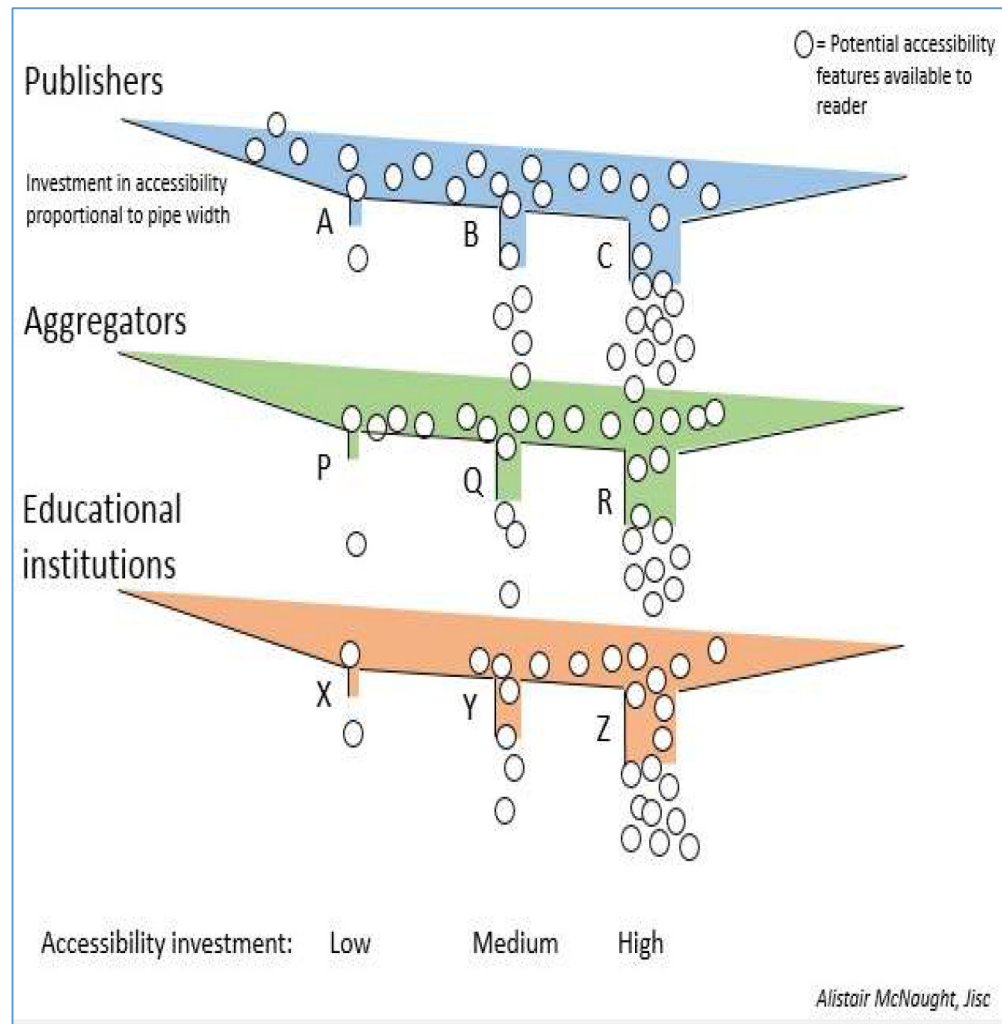
E-books and e-journals overcome access barriers



Where does the problem lie?



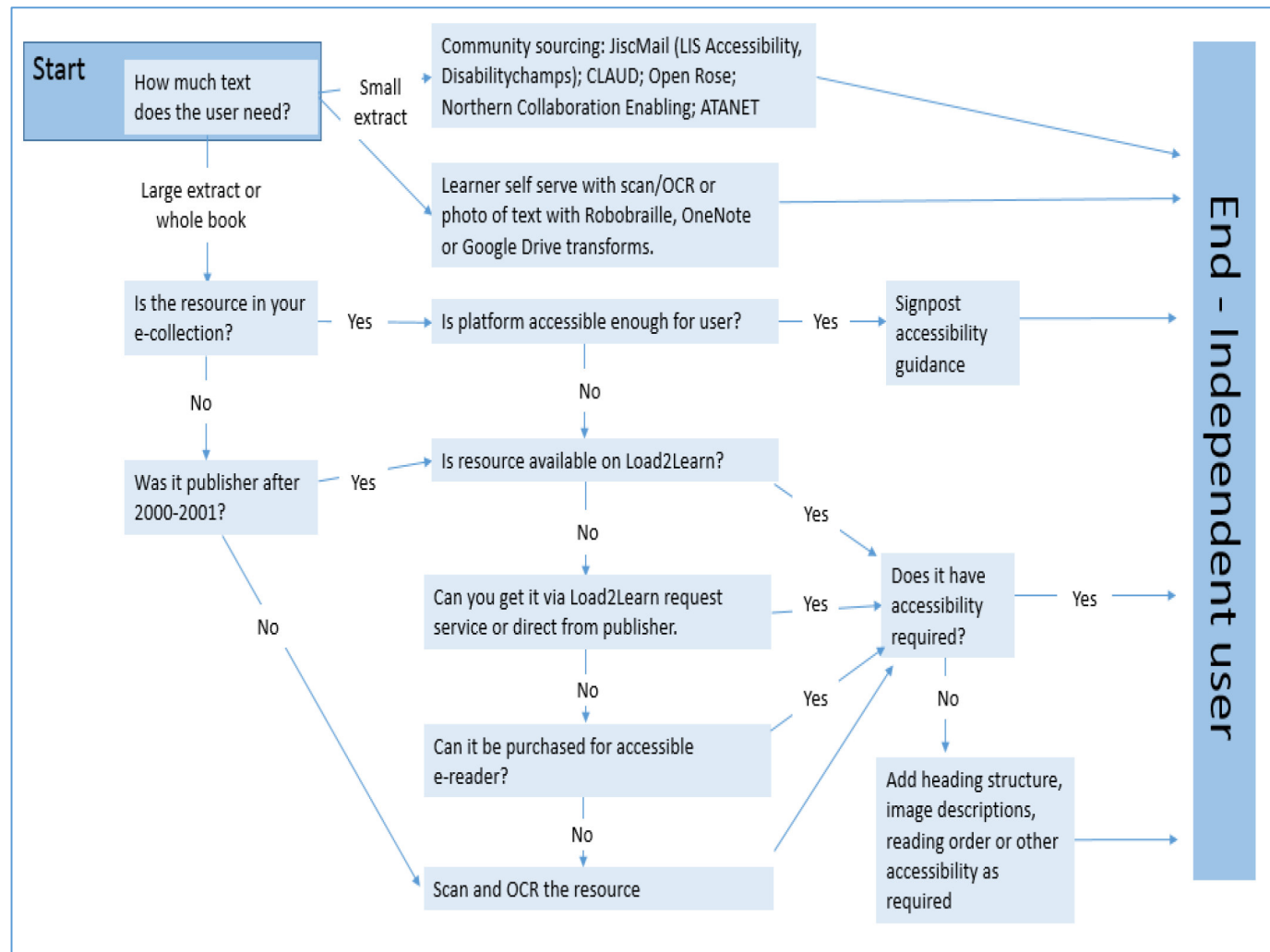
eBook accessibility ‘attrition’



Motivation

- It's the right thing to do...
- Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) imperative
- Don't we pay for this anyway?
 - If an electronically **accessible** resource cannot be found, a catalogue of interventions is required to deliver an alternative format.
 - Obtaining materials in alternative formats is costly and time-consuming - estimated £0.96 per page!

Alternative formats: the catalogue of interventions?



Process

- [The LIS-Accessibility mailing list.](#)
- Pre-survey questionnaire to identify most frequently used platforms.
- Sign up to audit platforms - crowd-sourced data.
- [eBook Accessibility Audit Form.](#)
 - user experience study easily checked by non-specialists (such as text display, navigation, text to speech, image description, accessibility guidance).
- Clear guidance for [doing the audit](#) and [understanding the data](#).
- Crunch the data.
- [Publish the findings.](#)

Publisher involvement

- Universities and suppliers have the same goal - more students reading more books more independently.
- Publishers Association Accessibility Action Group invited to contribute at all stages:
 - ensure balanced, non-partisan advice
- Sage invited to every key meeting to represent publishers:
 - “exciting opportunity to highlight the significant accessibility investments the industry has made over recent years. Considerable strides have been made to improve and support accessibility throughout the sector and this valuable initiative will allow us to continue to learn and develop together.”

Testing

- The testing was done by 33 universities and 5 suppliers (suppliers were invited to audit their own platforms).
- In total 44 platforms were tested, covering 65 publishers with nearly 280 eBooks tested.

The benefits:

- Academics can prioritise accessible publishers and platforms.
- Suppliers - focus on strengths and improving weaknesses.
 - 'audit trail' to identify 'accessibility attrition' in supply chain
- Libraries, publishers, aggregators have common language for constructive conversations.
- Increased awareness of eBook accessibility benefits for library and disability support staff.
- [Resource by which readers can identify eBook platforms](#) which most closely meet their specific needs.

A common language with publishers



Askews & Holts VleBooks Platform accessibility features

1. Which formats does the platform provide? – [HTML](#), [PDF download](#)/[EPUB3](#)
2. What hardware can be used on the platform? – [Windows PC](#) / [MAC](#) / [Tablet Ipad](#) / [Tablet Android](#) / [Tablet Windows](#)/ [Smartphone iPhone](#) / [Smartphone Android](#) / [Smartphone Windows](#).
3. Which browsers can be used? – [Chrome](#) / [Safari](#) / [Internet Explorer](#) / [Firefox](#)
4. Software used to view downloaded PDF's – [Adobe Digital Editions](#)

Individual platform feedback reports

Ebook audit 2016

The e-book accessibility audit

Using this site

About us

The process - confidence & caveats

Fair and transparent - context and conclusions

Key elements of eBook accessibility

Download key files

▼ Using the data - overview

Dashboard (Avg)

Dashboard (Raw)

Graphic

Advanced

Individual Platform Feedback Reports

Future opportunities

Individual Platform Feedback Reports



Using the data collected during the audit the following reports have been produced for each Platform. The reports begin with an explanation of their content.

Please read these reports in the full recognition that

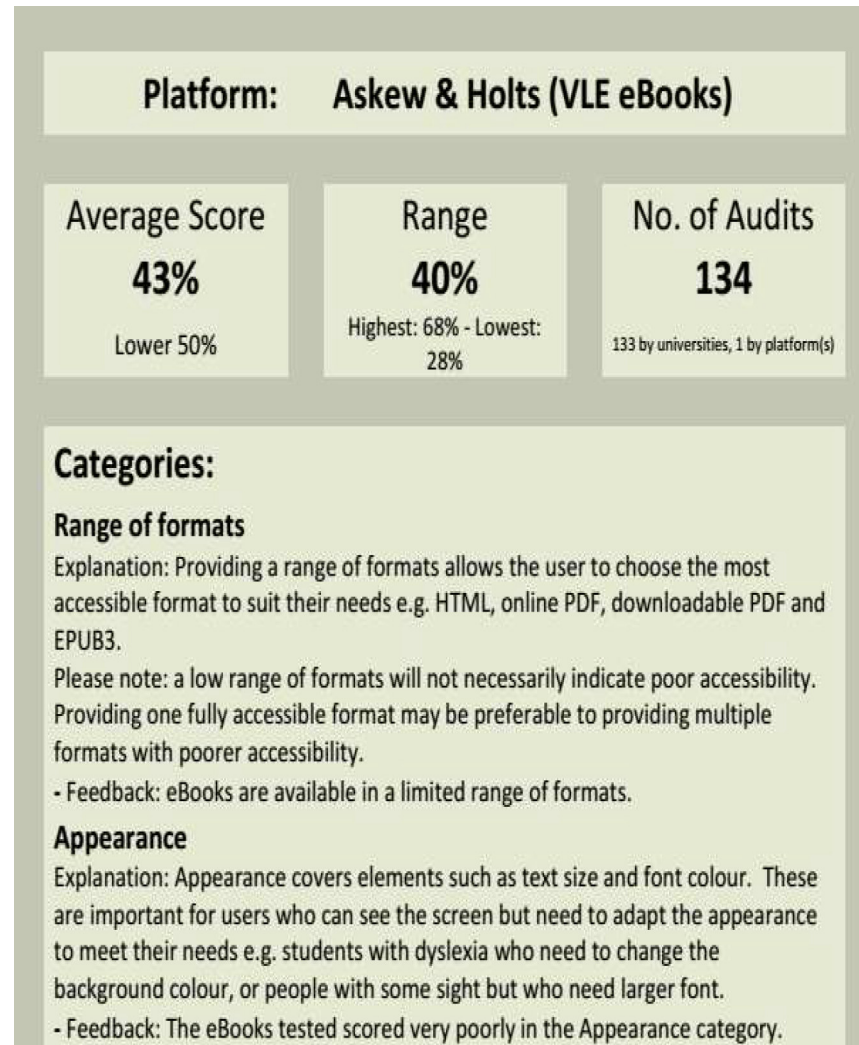
(i) the data on which they are drawn is crowd-sourced so the quality assurance processes are difficult to guarantee and

(ii) the sample size varies significantly - 40% of platform scores were based on a single sample. This data is provided in the reports.

For guidance on effective and constructive use of these reports see the Jisc blog post on [The e-book accessibility audit – use and abuse](#)

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Individual platform feedback reports example



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Future opportunities

Training and support

Updates and activities

Key elements of eBook accessibility

Below are the criteria used to audit the eBooks along with an explanation of why each of them is important for accessibility.

Criteria	Statement
Range of formats	
HTML	HTML: eBooks in HTML format for reading online. HTML text is usually accessible to text-to-speech and screen reading software. It can usually be copied and pasted, increasing usability. The option to read eBooks online without having to download them makes it quicker and more straightforward to access them and to browse through the content of different titles. It is also useful for people who cannot open downloaded files on their device.
PDF online	PDF online: eBooks as PDF documents for reading online. eBooks formatted as PDF files can be similar in appearance and layout to a print book, which some people prefer over reading HTML text. The option to read eBooks online without having to download them makes it quicker and more straightforward to access them and to browse through the content of different titles.

The future

- Regional purchasing consortia using the accessibility data as part of procurement process:
 - market advantages to accessibility.
 - making it cost-effective for suppliers to make the necessary investments.
- Critical mass of awareness university context:
 - 33 out of 130 UK universities took part
 - follow-up survey staff showed significant increase in accessibility awareness, [changed skill levels, confidence, and empathy with disabled learners](#)
 - Widespread agreement that eBook accessibility should influence library procurement.
 - Over 90% first time testers felt 'better equipped to advise disabled readers'.

Links and contact

The site

- [eBook accessibility audit \(UK Higher Education\)](#)

Contact us

- ebookaudithelp@gmail.com