More tools for students with disabilities

Over last semester, the University developed a number of tools to support distance learning and education for students with varying levels of disability.

Improvements for browsing and adaption of the tests and materials to a range of special formats are some of the initiatives that the UOC has started up in order to make learning and training a process that is accessible to anyone. These initiatives form part of an accessibility programme that the University has started to develop. One of the results of this programme has been the version of the Virtual Campus that incorporates a design and architecture aimed at aiding browsing by people with disabilities.

Another of the initiatives is the adaptation of the assessment tests that have to be sat in person and the conversion of all the UOC's teaching materials to audio, video, e-book and HTML formats so that students can decide how and when they want to study, regardless of their particular situation.

Producing the materials in more versatile formats; ie allowing the same content generated by the University to be adapted to a range of different formats can aid learning for those with visual impairments for example. Thus, the digital material that one student may read as HTML can be easily translated into Braille or, indeed, into Daisy, which offers an indexed audio file that is very easy to browse.

Another of the new developments is that the Daisy audio format also has a version for accessible mobile devices. Likewise, the UOC has set up an accessibility laboratory to carry out user tests with students with visual impairments so as to obtain recommendations on how to design specific virtual environments for this group of users.