

Report of the IBCA Technical Commission

First Weeks of Activity

Following my appointment as Chairman of the IBCA Technical Commission, I initially focused on reviewing the projects and initiatives previously undertaken by the Commission, with particular attention to the work initiated by our late President, Jörgen Magnusson.

Accessibility of chess software

One of the first projects I followed up was the relationship with Noctie, a company that has developed a chess platform with a strong educational focus and which had previously been identified by Jörgen as a potentially valuable tool for blind and visually impaired chess players. I re-established contact with Noctie and carried out a detailed accessibility test of the platform, focusing in particular on keyboard interaction, screen-reader feedback, board navigation, move announcements, commands and the overall user experience. The test resulted in a detailed report containing observations, recommendations and suggestions for improving the accessibility of the application for blind and visually impaired users.

I also investigated the nature of Jörgen's relationship with Noctie in relation to the IBCA. Noctie clarified that it has no formal obligations towards the IBCA arising from that relationship. At the same time, the company expressed its willingness to explore a future cooperation agreement with the IBCA, including possibilities such as discounted accounts for IBCA members.

IBCA Technical Recommendations for Accessible Chess Software (TRACS)

One of the main activities of the Commission during this initial period has been the development of the IBCA Technical Recommendations for Accessible Chess Software (TRACS). The TRACS are intended to provide developers with practical and technology-independent guidance for designing chess software that is accessible to blind and visually impaired users. The recommendations address areas such as equivalent access, feedback, consistency, information structure, interaction and feedback modalities, and user customization. The document has already received very positive feedback from the Noctie development team. Noctie has indicated that it intends to use the TRACS as a reference for improving the accessibility of its existing application and for guiding the development of future features. This first practical application of the TRACS is an encouraging indication that the recommendations can become a useful tool for promoting accessibility beyond a single application or project.

IBCA website and digital accessibility

In parallel, I have begun reviewing and monitoring the content of the official IBCA website, with particular attention to accessibility and organization of information. One of the current projects is the development of a dedicated educational section that can provide accessible chess-learning resources for blind and visually

impaired players. I am also working on converting documents currently available on the website in formats that are not fully accessible into equivalent versions that can be properly used with screen readers.

Another objective is to develop a clearer and more structured organization of the website content, making information easier to find, navigate and consult.

IBCA digital archive and communication

A further long-term objective is to significantly expand the historical and institutional content of the IBCA website. The intention is for the website to gradually become a digital historical archive of the IBCA, preserving and making accessible information about the Association's history, championships, tournaments, activities, players and achievements. At the same time, the website should become an effective showcase for the many activities carried out by the IBCA and its members. A richer and better-organized online presence can increase the visibility and recognition of the Association and help create opportunities for future partnerships, cooperation and funding.

Next steps

The work of the Technical Commission will continue along these lines, with particular emphasis on:

- further development and practical application of the TRACS;
- continued cooperation with developers of accessible chess software;
- systematic accessibility testing of relevant chess platforms and tools;
- development of accessible educational resources;
- improvement of the accessibility, structure and usability of the IBCA website;
- preservation and digitization of the IBCA's historical heritage; and the use of digital tools to strengthen the international visibility of the IBCA and its activities.

The objective is to make the Technical Commission not only a body that addresses technical issues, but also a practical instrument for innovation, accessibility, education and the digital development of the IBCA.

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