03

EMPOWERING INCLUSION

Shaping the Future of Government Services for People of Determination in Dubai

WHY ACCESSIBILITY IN GOVERNMENT SERVICES IS A CHALLENGE GLOBALLY

Globally, individuals requiring accessibility accommodations face significant challenges in accessing government services due to various barriers. One major issue is the inaccessibility of digital government platforms, with 42% of these individuals reporting difficulties in navigating such websites [1]. Physical barriers, inadequate educational structures, and poverty further exacerbate these challenges, impacting their quality of life. The World Health Organisation highlights that these barriers hinder the full social and economic inclusion of individuals needing accessibility [2]. Despite efforts to improve access, disparities in financial assistance and support across countries remain, emphasising the need for more inclusive policies and infrastructure to ensure equitable access to government services.

KEY STATISTICS

In a survey,

42%

of individuals with disabilities reported difficulties in navigating government websites, highlighting significant challenges in accessing digital services.[1]

Approximately

1.3 billion

people worldwide, or 1 in 6 individuals, experience significant disabilities.[2]

Dubai 2025 budget has allocated

30%

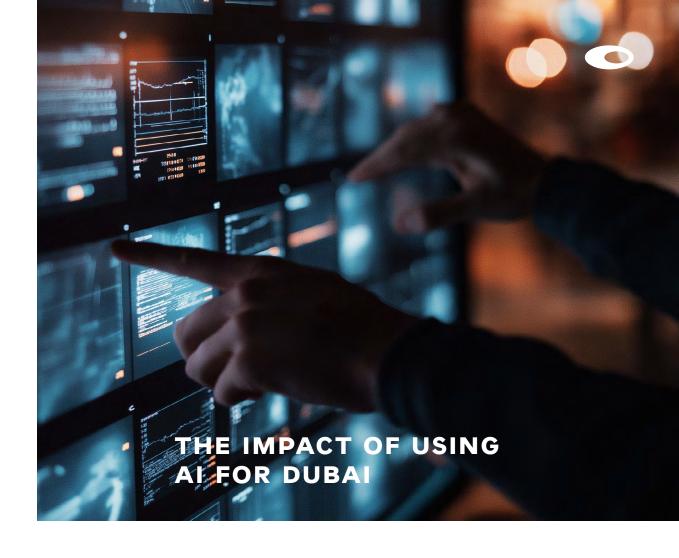of total government expenditures to the social development sector.[3]

HOW DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN DUBAI

Dubai has made significant progress in enhancing accessibility within its government services. The Dubai Universal Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan (DUASAP) was launched to achieve full accessibility, aiming for completion by 2020 [4]. **Comprehensive accessibility certification and training programs have been implemented across key sectors.** The Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) was recognised as the Best People-of-Determination-Friendly Government Entity in 2024 [5]. Despite these efforts, much work remains, and Dubai is exploring AI solutions to further advance its accessibility goals.

HOW AI WILL SOLVE
THIS CHALLENGE

AI can significantly enhance accessibility and inclusion in government services by utilising technologies such as digital avatars, sign language translation, and speech recognition. AI-generated avatars can translate spoken language into sign language in real-time, providing instant communication support for the deaf and hard of hearing communities. Additionally, conversational assistants in sign language enable more inclusive interactions by bridging communication gaps. AI-powered speech recognition can further improve citizen engagement by offering accurate and timely assistance throughout interactions with government services. These technologies collectively contribute to a more inclusive public service environment, ensuring that individuals with diverse accessibility needs can access and benefit from government services effectively.

THE IMPACT OF USING AI FOR DUBAI

Dubai's adoption of AI technology in government services is significantly enhancing accessibility and inclusion for individuals with diverse needs. The integration of AI solutions, such as digital avatars for sign language and speech recognition tools, is transforming public services to be more accessible. For instance, Dubai's smart police stations now offer 24/7 services with minimal human intervention, using AI to interpret sign language and provide transcripts for those with speech or hearing impairments. Despite these advancements, Dubai continues to explore AI's potential to address remaining accessibility challenges, ensuring a more inclusive future for all residents.

CITATIONS

[1] Deloitte Insights, "Inclusive Digital Government Services," www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/public-sector/inclusive-digital-government-services.html, accessed 2024.

[2] World Health Organisation, "Disability and Health," www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health, accessed 2024.

[3] Government of Dubai, "Debt Management Office," www.dmo.dof.gov.ae/en/news-and-publications/latest-press-releases/ruler-of-dubai-approves-dubai-government-s-general-budget-cycle-for-2025-2027, accessed 2024.

[4] Urban Agenda Platform, "Dubai Universal Accessibility Strategy," www.urbanagendaplatform.org/best-practice/dubai-universal-accessibility-strategy-and-action-plan-duasap, accessed 2024.

[5] Dubai Electricity and Water Authority, www.dewa.gov.ae/en/about-us/pod/pod-services, accessed 2024.