

Estadio Accesible interview with Raúl Moreno, Head of Strategic Partnerships and Projects at NaviLens

At Estadio Accesible we have been lucky enough to interview Raúl Moreno, Head of Strategic Partnerships and Project at NaviLens. NaviLens allows fans to reach the stadium independently navigating urban transport and access to their seats, especially for the blind or people with reduced vision.

MAIN MISSION

Estadio Accesible: What is the main mission of Navilens?

Raúl Moreno: NaviLens technology (navilens.com) arises from the need for people with visual disabilities to be more autonomous in spaces they do not know, and thus, achieve full and autonomous mobility without the help of third parties.

NaviLens solves this important challenge through a new accessible and universal digital signage, which allows visually impaired people to orient themselves in unfamiliar environments, reach very precisely to the signposted element and obtain accessible contextualized information, and all this only with their mobile device habitual.

Thanks to the positive feedback from people with visual disabilities and associations, NaviLens signage has been incorporated into new spaces, such as museums, theatres, customer service offices, and even in food products with Kellogg's. Launched a few months ago in collaboration with RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) an accessible cereal package.



1Source: NaviLens

Estadio Accesible: Do you employ people with disabilities? Do you have an inclusive employment policy?

Raúl Moreno: At NaviLens we need to have people with disabilities to have a solution designed by and for people with disabilities. In many cases, technology companies do not evaluate the services or products that they develop with people with disabilities until the last stage of development, and that is a common error.

All development or product must be conceived of the need to be accessible and from there grow for the rest of the users. That is why we always have people with disabilities in our teams, who evaluate and give their opinion throughout the development process until it is published.



2Source: NaviLens

NEW MARKETS

Estadio Accesible: What have you learned about the needs and services of the visually impaired after installing your NaviLens codes in metropolitan transport in Barcelona or New York?

Raúl Moreno: If we talk about public transport, we have seen how the challenges of people with disabilities are similar all over the world.

From (1) locating the exact point where the stop is, (2) receiving accessible information on passing times or incidents in the service, (3) breaking down language barriers for all users, (4) or guiding users through transport stations or public buildings and to (5) access customer service services.

By introducing NaviLens into the signage of the space, we are able to solve all these challenges with a minimum of investment, reducing maintenance costs and opening up multiple communication possibilities with all users, regardless of whether they have disabilities or not.

Experience in implementations such as Jay St Metro Tech in New York or Union Station in Los Angeles has allowed us to broaden our understanding of user needs.

Estadio Accesible: How would you apply the NaviLens codes for example in a First or Second division football stadium?

Raúl Moreno: A football stadium is a space equivalent to a subway or train station. The architecture of a station or a stadium is complex for someone who visits it for the first time or not regularly. Any user may have difficulties to find their way around and find their destination, and in the case of people with visual disabilities this problem multiplies, therefore, they are usually accompanied to carry out these routes, but this is not always possible, limiting the autonomy of these users.

NaviLens can be easily incorporated into existing signage to help all users, whether disabled or not, to find their way around a stadium and find their destination, the area where their seat is, or the area adapted for users with motor or visual disabilities, or the services, the club store or any other destination that the stadium wants to make accessible.

Therefore, to achieve a more accessible stadium with NaviLens, you only have to define those routes from the external entrances to these destinations, and from there, there is only one job left to incorporate NaviLens to that signage on the routes. All content is updated from the cloud platform, so any change in signage does not require changing the codes already installed, reducing maintenance costs.

STANDARDS OF SERVICES AND ACCESSIBILITY

Estadio Accesible: Do you take accessibility into account during the design process of your navigation services?

Raúl Moreno: As we have talked about, it is the cornerstone of all our developments, first accessibility and later inclusion for the rest of the users.

That is why NaviLens is very useful for all users, since the same NaviLens signage is useful for any user.

A football stadium is the best example, since we can feel disoriented at any time due to its size, influx, ambient sound, etc.

Estadio Accesible: How do you get feedback from users about the usability of your NaviLens codes once installed in public spaces?

Raúl Moreno: It is very important for us to be close to our users, their opinion is essential for NaviLens to continue growing and solving those small challenges that limit our autonomy.

We receive opinions electronically, or from the app itself, such as web portals that have forms to be in contact with us.

We also have the NaviLens family project, an initiative that offers visually impaired users the possibility of using more than 100 NaviLens labels in a family environment at no cost. We love reading how each family overcomes their limitations using NaviLens in a home environment or creates new use cases within their home environment. It is really enriching.

It must also be taken into account that NaviLens protects the anonymity of its users, so we do not collect any data from them without their authorization, and the only way to get to know our users is for them to contact us.

TECHNOLOGY AND SMART CITIES

Estadio Accesible: What is the biggest challenge for navigating inside train stations, around crowded areas and public venues?

Raúl Moreno: The main challenge is the dimensions of the space. A train station or a football stadium is usually large in size and with few references for the visually impaired.

Incorporating elements into these spaces helps us to have more references to be able to orient ourselves, from a visual touch routing on the ground to NaviLens in the signage itself. It is a path that all football stadiums should progressively go through.



3Source: NaviLens



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SPORTS TECH & COVID-19

Estadio Accesible: How can NaviLens technology and codes help stadium or sports facility operators in their plans to reopen to fans during the pandemic?

Raúl Moreno: As I have mentioned, NaviLens is a dynamic and universal signage. On the one hand, by making use of the NaviLens app, fans can find out information in real time contextualized to the place where they are, for example, stadium occupation, incidents, safety warnings or evacuation protocol. And at the same time, you are receiving it in your language, we break that idiomatic barrier of static signage. With NaviLens you can reach all your users regardless of the language they speak.

In addition, Guidance with Augmented Reality helps users to move agilely around the stadium without having to know it beforehand, which makes it easier to avoid bottlenecks or people wandering through the corridors looking for their seat or the exit.

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CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Estadio Accesible: What specific services do you offer that could make a professional football stadium or club safer and more accessible for fans with disabilities?

Raúl Moreno: NaviLens thinks of all users, especially people with visual disabilities. Incorporating NaviLens will provide any soccer fan with accurate, accessible and up-to-date information on their environment so that they can make the best decisions with a greater degree of autonomy.

NaviLens provides space managers with a license to use NaviLens technology and access to the NaviLens Cloud SaaS (Software as a Service) platform, as well as support services, good practices, integration with their real-time services in the event that they had them, etc.

Estadio Accesible: And more accessible to everyone?

Raúl Moreno: As we have mentioned, signage is not always understood by all users, facilitating the understanding of signage will help bring more public to the stadiums.

Estadio Accesible: What is the growth you expect for NaviLens?

Raúl Moreno: NaviLens was presented for the first time in 2017. It is a totally new product and since then we have not stopped growing. TMB (Transportes Metropolitanos de Barcelona) was the first transport operator that trusted us, and since then we have been in the United States, multiple locations in Spain, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore or Japan.

Many operators and cities are implementing NaviLens to offer a smart and accessible tourist destination to their citizens and visitors.

GROWING SEGMENT OF FOOTBALL FANS

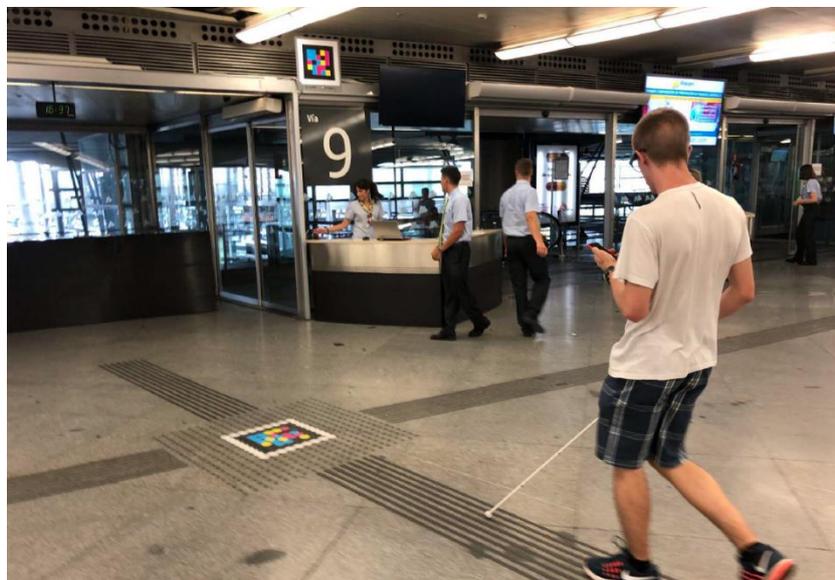
Estadio Accesible: What is your opinion on the aging soccer fan profile and its increasing special care requirements?

Raúl Moreno: Aging is something natural of any species, which gives us wisdom, but it also creates new limitations, usually motor, sensory or cognitive.

Those responsible for football clubs are aware of this aging and of the need to adapt their stadiums to this public that loves the pre-specialty of sport.

Estadio Accesible: How can NaviLens codes make Spanish football more accessible to older people?

Raúl Moreno: It plays in our favour that these users, to a great extent and progressively, will also be more digital, being used to using smartphones to receive this support or help thanks to NaviLens. They only have to point the camera at a NaviLens code and they will receive the orientation indications or basic information to feel safe.



6Source: NaviLens