Authoritative Implementation Guidance and International Cooperation to Support Training, Awareness Raising, and Capacity Building

Reporting

Project Information

WAI-Guide
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Project website

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Ongoing project

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Periodic Reporting for period 1 - WAI-Guide (Authoritative Implementation Guidance and International Cooperation to Support Training, Awareness Raising, and Capacity Building)

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Summary of the context and overall objectives of the project

WAI-Guide, Authoritative Implementation Guidance and International Cooperation to Support Training, Awareness Raising, and Capacity Building, drives sustainable impact for more scalable and
affordable digital accessibility solutions.

WAI-Guide aims to:

• Provide authoritative implementation guidance and training, thereby growing capacities of available accessibility experts;
• Accelerate tooling support for accessible content authoring, thereby making it more cost efficient to create accessible content;
• Identify and address gaps in accessibility standardisation, thereby increasing the coverage of digital accessibility requirements.

WAI-Guide achieves these objectives by conducting its work as an integral part of the vendor-neutral environment of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). WAI-Guide draws together key expertise from industry, end-user representation, public bodies, research, and other fields, to develop core accessibility solutions that are internationally consensed and recognised as authoritative references. WAI-Guide develops open, royalty-free resources for a variety of audiences, each having a role in digital accessibility. This includes accessibility instructors and educators, consultancies and service providers; vendors, developers, and integrators of authoring tools and content management systems; and designers, developers, procurers, project managers, and others involved throughout accessibility implementation.

WAI-Guide comes at an opportune time to support implementation of the European Directive on Web Accessibility. It strengthens the Digital Single Market and supports its alignment with current global standards on digital accessibility, while also setting an effective foundation for the future.

Work performed from the beginning of the project to the end of the period covered by the report and main results achieved so far

Objective 1: Provide authoritative implementation guidance and training
• Initiated revision of WCAG Supporting Documents, including:
  o WCAG Techniques, Failures, Understanding, ACT Rules, and COGA Design Patterns
• Expanded WCAG implementation guidance, including:
  o WCAG 3 user needs for “XR and Emerging Technologies” and COGA Design Guide
• Published first set of videos on web accessibility evaluation
• Published and iteratively expanded role-based WAI Curricula

Objective 2: Accelerate tooling support for accessible content authoring
• Pursued active exchange with a variety of authoring tool developers, vendors, product owners, and integrators, including from Drupal, WordPress, Joomla, Typo3, WIX, Umbraco, and others, as well as exchange with relevant projects and activities, including We4Authors and SONAAR
• Developed requirements analysis for different types of industry-specific guidance
• Developed and published stand-alone “ATAG Report Tool” to address current community need
• Drafted and iteratively evolving “List of Authoring Tools with Accessibility Support”

Objective 3: Identify and iteratively evolving “List of Authoring Tools with Accessibility Support”
• Published and iteratively evolving “XR Accessibility User Needs” and “RTC Accessibility User Requirements”, and drafted “Web of Things (WoT) Accessibility Use Cases” for discussion
• Developed interactive tool for Framework for Accessible Specification of Technologies (FAST)
• Contributed to WCAG 3 (“Silver”) sub-groups immersive environments and functional needs
Coordinated with European Standards Organisations (ESOs) to ensure continued alignment with EN 301 549, and coordinated with other standards organisations, such as ISO, on XR accessibility

Progress beyond the state of the art and expected potential impact (including the socio-economic impact and the wider societal implications of the project so far)

WAI-Guide will address some of the most pertinent gaps in current accessibility solutions, including:

- Gaps in education and training: The majority of accessibility barriers can be attributed to a lack of awareness, skills, and knowledge. Such lack is not only widespread among designers and developers, but also among project managers and executives, procurers, and educators. There is a need for continual awareness raising, training, and capacity building of all these roles.
- Gaps in authoring tool support: The majority of digital content is generated using authoring tools, such as content management systems (CMS) and code editors, by non-technical authors. Authoring tools have a primary role in guiding and supporting authors in creating accessible content. Yet, to date, only few authoring tools provide the necessary support for accessibility.
- Gaps in implementation guidance: Authoritative implementation guidance and well-vetted best practices are critical in ensuring consistent, high-quality tooling and training. Currently, there are divergent interpretations of WCAG accessibility requirements embedded in different tools and training efforts, which lead to conflicting implementations, gaps, and wasted efforts.
- Gaps in standardisation: Technology is rapidly evolving, creating a continuous need to ensure accessibility support; for example in standards relating to the Internet of Things (IoT), Virtual, Augmented, Mixed Reality, and Digital Publishing. At the same time, there is a continuous need to better address people with disabilities whose needs are currently less adequately addressed.

Specifically, WAI-Guide is expected to have the following results:

- Support Implementation of the Web Accessibility Directive:
  - Well-vetted and high-quality training resources and accessibility curricula, to support different EU Member States in implementing specific measures for awareness raising, training, and capacity building, in line with Articles 7(4) and 7(5) of the Web Accessibility Directive. This is achieved through D1.3 D1.4 D1.7 and D1.8.
  - Authoritative technical implementation guidance with improved coverage for current and emerging technologies and accessibility standards. This is achieved through D1.1 D1.2 and D3.1.
  - Support implementation of paragraph §48 of the Web Accessibility Directive, for the EU Member States, in close cooperation with the EC to “promote the use of authoring tools that allow better implementation of the web accessibility requirements”. This is achieved through D2.1 D2.2 D2.3 D2.5 and D2.6.
- Enhanced Cooperation between Various Stakeholders:
  - Resources are developed through the multi-stakeholder and consensus-based W3C Process. Resources are also developed using collaboration tools that are open to the public, and with public consultations to promote broader engagement and involvement beyond the working group participants.
- Scalable and More Affordable Accessibility Solutions:
  - Project resources are freely available and open source, to support open and royalty-free uptake. This includes the accessibility curricula (D1.7 D1.8) and training materials (D1.3 D1.4).
Promotion of accessible authoring tools, to accelerate the development and maintenance of accessible websites and mobile apps. This is achieved through D2.2 D2.3 D2.5 and D2.6.

• Recognition of the Inclusive Digital Single Market:

• Inclusion of user needs throughout the development of digital technology standards, to help avoid the creation of barriers, which would in turn contribute to fragmentation of accessibility (D3.1).

• Contribute to common understanding of the accessibility requirements and pursue coordination and harmonisation of accessibility standards, such as between the global standards from W3C and the European standard EN 301 549.

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