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

Reporting

Project Information

**WAI-Guide**
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Periodic Reporting for period 2 - WAI-Guide (Authoritative Implementation Guidance and International Cooperation to Support Training, Awareness Raising, and Capacity Building)

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 objective as 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 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 setting a foundation for the future.

Objective 1: Provide authoritative implementation guidance and training

● Revised and published WCAG Supporting Documents, including:
  ○ WCAG Techniques
  ○ Understanding
  ○ ACT Rules
  ○ COGA Design Patterns
● Expanded WCAG implementation guidance, including:
  ○ WCAG 3 user needs for “XR and Emerging Technologies” and COGA Design Guide
● Published accessibility education videos covering:
  ○ Evaluating Web Accessibility
  ○ How People with Disabilities Use the Web
  ○ Diverse Abilities and Barriers
  ○ Tools and Techniques
● Published and iteratively expanded role-based WAI Curricula covering:
Objective 2: Accelerate tooling support for accessible content authoring

- Pursued exchange with authoring tool developers, vendors, product owners, and integrators, including Drupal, WordPress, Joomla, Typo3, WIX, Umbraco, and others, as well as exchange with relevant projects and activities, including We4Authors and SONAAR
- Published authoring tool vendor briefing sheets

Objective 3: Identify and address gaps in accessibility standardisation

- Published and iteratively evolving “XR Accessibility User Needs” and “RTC Accessibility User Requirements”
- Expanded and published digital accessibility user needs and use cases for Framework for Accessible Specification of Technology (FAST), Natural Language User Needs and Synchronized Media Accessibility User Requirements
- Developed interactive tool for 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 addressed some of the most pertinent gaps in current accessibility solutions, including:

- 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 project managers, executives, procurers, and educators. There is a need for continual awareness raising, training, and capacity building of all these roles.
- 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.
- 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.
- Standardisation: Technology is rapidly evolving, creating continuous need to ensure accessibility support; for example in standards relating to Virtual, Augmented, Mixed Reality, and Digital
Publishing. There is a continuous need to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are adequately addressed.

As the resources developed through WAI-Guide increase in use the following results can be expected:

● 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 were developed through the multi-stakeholder and consensus-based W3C Process. Resources are 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.