

Developing WCAG 3.0



Slides: <https://bit.ly/3kgOn82>

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What are W3C Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 3.0?

- Next major version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2
- Broader scope than WCAG 2.2 -- including digital publishing
- Broader number of stakeholder groups
- Guidance for more disability groups
- Research informed and data driven
- Moving the tradition of WCAG 2.0 forward
- Starts from user needs of disability groups instead of technical solutions

Some Disclaimers

- I do not represent the W3C. I am a volunteer on the WCAG3 project. I am retired and work on this project on my own time.
- The existing WCAG 2 series is great!
- If you are starting work on accessibility in your organization, use WCAG 2.
- WCAG 3.0 is under development and ***is not finished*** and is not ready for use
- Anything in the WCAG3 draft today ***is not ready*** for implementation. We have difficult structural problems to solve.

Agenda

- WCAG 3.0 Approach
- Proposed for WCAG 3.0
- What's the latest?
- Differences between WCAG 2.0 and proposed WCAG 3.0 approaches
- How to Contribute

Difficulties with Current Approach

- Who is the audience?
 - Developers? Management? End-Users? Regulators?
- Accessibility is a continuum
 - Standards compliance tends to binary
 - yes/no — true/false — pass/fail
- Testing and evaluation can be ambiguous
 - Different SME can reach different conclusions
 - Subject matter seems to have steep learning curve
- A, AA, AAA structure
 - Most legal requirements combine A and AA
 - Why clutter the baseline requirement (A and AA) with advisory best practices (AAA)?
 - Why a requirement is at A or AA is not obvious (in many cases)
 - A, AA, AAA approach resulted in more A and AA for people with some disabilities than other disabilities

WCAG 3.0 Approach

WCAG 3.0 Stakeholders

- WCAG 2.0 did not develop a stakeholder list, but is primarily oriented for developers, testers and regulators
- As a first step, the group developing WCAG 3.0 (code named “Silver”) identified 31 stakeholder groups that used accessibility standards.
- They wrote usability-oriented “job stories” of how each stakeholder group used accessibility standards.

Research Completed

- WCAG Use by UX Professionals (survey)
- WCAG Success Criteria Usability Study (survey)
- Internet of Things Accessibility (survey & interviews)
- Interviews on Conformance
- Interviews on Legacy of WCAG 2.0 Creation
- Feedback from Reimagining Accessibility Guidelines Presentations
- Web Accessibility Perceptions
- Student research on Silver research questions (9 papers)

Analysis: Structural Problem Statements

Usability

- Too Difficult to Read (and translate)
- Difficult to get started
- Ambiguity in interpreting the success criteria
- Persuading Others

Conformance Model

- Strictly Testable Constraints
- Human Testable
- Accessibility Supported
- Evolving Technology

Maintenance

- Flexibility
- Scaling
- Governance

Kicking off the Solutions: Silver Design Sprint

- 27 Industry leaders representing parts of the accessibility community: CEOs, consultants, UX professionals, developers, legal, policy, and more
- Participants came from the US, Canada, UK, Spain, India, Japan, Australia
- An experienced Agile sprint leader guided participants to find solutions to the Problem Statements
- People worked in 5 groups of 5-6 people for 2 days in San Diego, CA



Suggestions

From the Silver Design Sprint

[Draft Final Report of the Silver
Design Sprint](#)

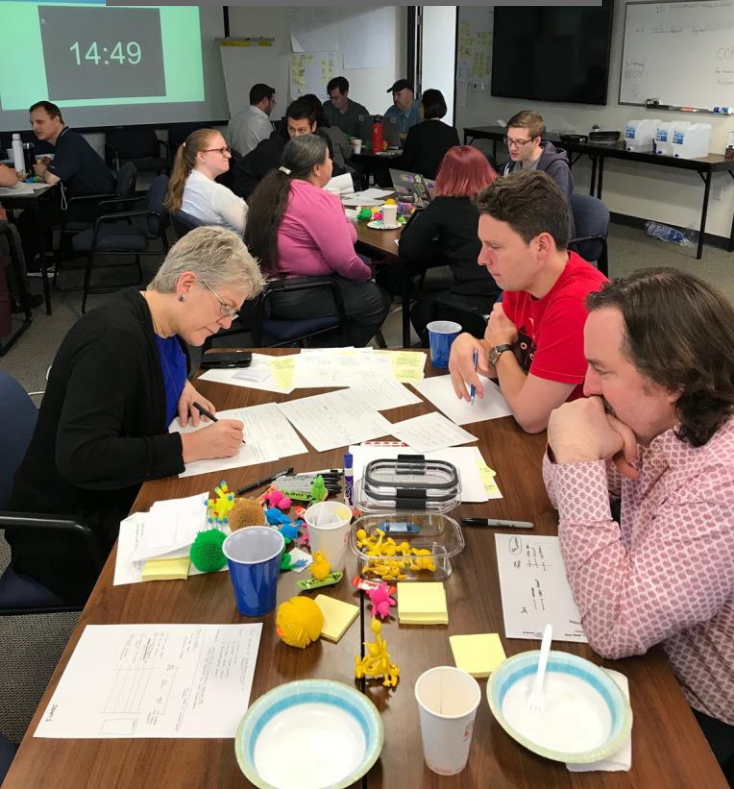


Suggestions 1/3

Usability

- Simple language
- Filtering – “database all the things” to target info
- Easier to find info
- Find info by role, by problem, by disability, and by platform
- Provide a starting point for beginners

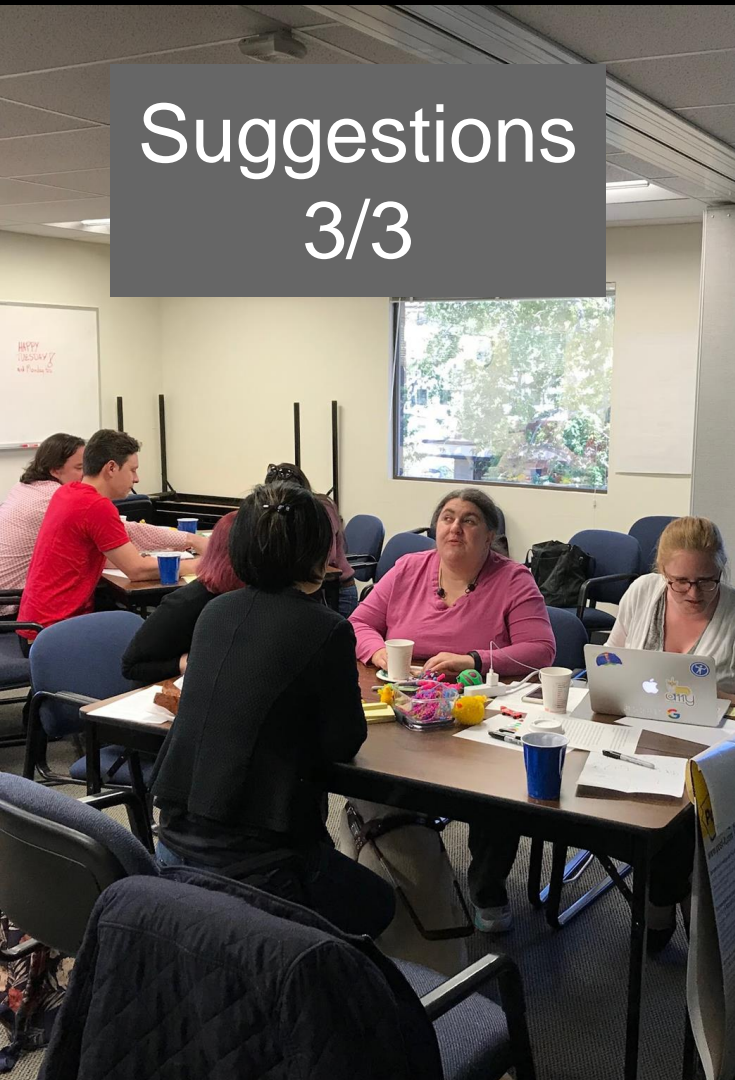
Suggestions 2/3



Conformance

- From Pass/Fail tests to also include other forms of measurement
- Rubric for testing task accomplishment
- Point and ranking system
- Accommodate dynamic or frequently updated content

Suggestions 3/3



Maintenance

- Allow experts to contribute code, tests, design patterns
- Improve spec tools to allow more people with disabilities to contribute
- Allow more public participation

Silver Requirements

- Design Principles
- Requirements

Requirements for WCAG 3.0

W3C First Public Working Draft 21 January 2021



Design Principles

Accessibility guidelines:

1. Wider range of people with disabilities
2. New measurement and conformance structure
3. Include emerging technologies.
4. Follow our own accessibility guidance
5. Be written in plain language

Guidelines process:

6. Include people with disabilities
7. Facilitate global participation and feedback
8. Data-informed and evidence-based

Requirements

- Multiple ways to measure
- Flexible structure
- Multiple ways to display
- Technology Neutral
- Attention to Readability and Usability
- Suitable for Regulatory Environment
- Motivation to do more than minimum
- Scoped for a diverse group of stakeholders

Proposed for WCAG 3.0

Improving equity between different disability groups

- Developing a more comprehensive list of functional needs of disability groups
 - WCAG 3.0 currently references a list of 50+ disability categories
 - Example: WCAG 3.0 has a more granular inclusion of different cognitive disabilities
- Developing guidelines starting with an evaluation of user needs
 - Instead of starting with the technical solutions
 - WCAG 3.0 identifies conflicting user needs
 - Example: high contrast is a barrier for some cognitive disabilities and visual impairments
- Testing any scoring proposal with the impact on different disability groups
 - WCAG 3.0 has a group focused on testing and evaluating the different proposals

Addressing Usability

- Simple Language
- Database – (still to be designed) with filtering and sorting by tags
- **How-To** for each guideline with information for beginners and project team members

How-to Example

- Get started
- Plan
- Design
- Develop
- Examples
- Resources

WCAG 3 How-Tos

Text alternatives

Clear words

Captions

Structured content

Visual contrast of text

 [WCAG 3.0 \(Silver\) Guidelines](#) (Text alternatives)



Text alternatives

Provide text alternative for non-text content.

Get Started

Plan

Design

Develop

Examples

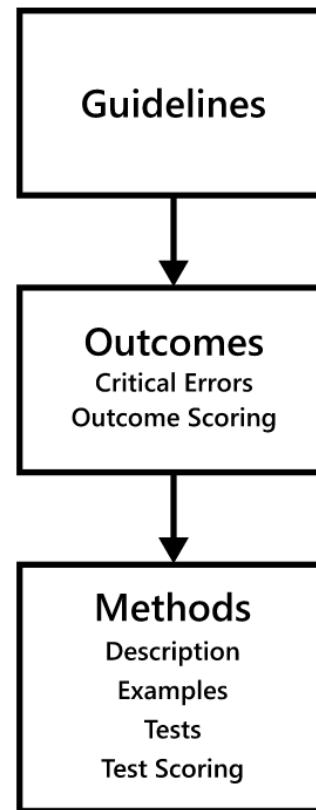
Resources

Summary



Structure for the WCAG 3.0

- **Guidelines:** high-level, plain-language version of the content for managers, policy makers, individuals who are new to accessibility
 - **How-To** sections describe the guideline
- **Outcomes:** testable criteria that include information on how to score the outcome in an optional Conformance Claim
 - Outcomes are technology neutral
- **Methods:** detailed information on how to meet the outcome, code samples, working examples, resources, as well as information about testing and scoring the method
 - Methods are technology specific



Proposed Conformance Approach

- Point Scoring System
- Option for adjectival ratings instead of only true false success criteria
- Evaluating severity in context -- minor errors don't fail, but critical errors do.

Critical Errors

- A critical error is an an accessibility problem that will stop a user from being able to complete a process (or task).
- Critical errors include:
 - Items that will stop a user from being able to complete the task if it exists anywhere on the view (examples: flashing, keyboard trap, audio with no pause)
 - Errors that when located within a process means the process cannot be completed (example: a submit button that is not in the keyboard tab order)
 - Errors that when aggregated within a view or across a process cause failure (example: a large amount of confusing, ambiguous language)

Bronze Silver Gold

Bronze Silver Gold translates better than A, AA, AAA

Bronze Silver Gold refers to the overall product, not individual guidelines

There are several approaches being proposed:

- **Currently:**
 - Bronze is generally WCAG2 AA equivalent. Required for higher levels
 - Silver is usability or a new idea - best practices (Protocols)
 - Gold is Maturity Model - organization best practices
- **Another proposal:**
 - Bronze Silver Gold are just cutoffs on the score - for example: 80%-89% is bronze, 90%-95% is Silver, and 96% and higher is Gold level.
 - No final decisions have been made. There may be more proposals.

A more complex scoring system could result in better improvements for people with disabilities without putting a regulatory burden on organizations trying to make their products accessible.

Where's the latest?

W3C Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 3.0

W3C

W3C Working Draft 08 June 2021

This version:

<https://www.w3.org/TR/2021/WD-wcag-3.0-20210608/>

Latest published version:

<https://www.w3.org/TR/wcag-3.0/>

Latest editor's draft:

<https://w3c.github.io/silver/guidelines/>

Previous version:

<https://www.w3.org/TR/2021/WD-wcag-3.0-20210121/>

New Proposals in Q3 2021

Revised Methods template to reduce ambiguity

New proposal for User Generated Content

New Explainer document

Error Prevention guideline

New Methods for Text Alternatives

What's Next?

- Revise outcomes to reduce ambiguity
- Determine the granularity of outcomes and outline how many there will be
- Protocols - giving bonus credit for implementing other standards
- Revising Paths and Processes
- Scoring
- Maturity Model
- Error Notification guideline
- Third Party Media Content
- Updated formulas for visual contrast of text

Differences between WCAG 2.0 and proposed WCAG 3.0 approaches

True/False vs. Adjective ratings

WCAG 2.0

- Clear measurement of what is passes or fails
- Fits traditional regulatory model

WCAG 3.0

- Allows inclusion of more guidance that helps more disability groups
- Accessibility is rarely binary true false – accessibility generally is a continuum
- Often accessibility features for one disability category can be a barrier for another category – different groups can benefit from different ratings
- User need driven

100% Pass Fail vs Point Scoring

WCAG 2.0

- Page-based conformance model
 - Websites (i.e., a collection of pages) is passes at 100%, or it fails
 - 100% conformance is rarely realistic
- Large dynamic sites cannot claim conformance, even if they have good accessibility

WCAG 3.0

- Point scoring gives a more nuanced view of the accessibility of a site or product
- Helps businesses to realistically claim accessibility, even if there are minor issues
- Recognizes that all software has bugs, while encouraging owners to prioritize accessibility issues over other defects

Precision vs Plain Language

WCAG 2.0

- Precise wording of success criteria
- Can be difficult to interpret or learn
- Has some ambiguity and has some inconsistent interpretation

WCAG 3.0

- Written in plain language where possible, and uses simple language summaries where technical language is needed
- Develops tests early in the guideline development cycle so ambiguity can be identified and corrected before the guideline is finalized
- Uses longer descriptions and bullet lists to describe edge cases and exemptions, instead of trying to fit requirements into one statement

How to Contribute

How to contribute to WCAG 3.0

- Review

- Review the W3C WCAG 3 landing page: www.w3.org/wai/wcag3
- Provide email or Github feedback

- Join the discussion

- Join the Silver Community Group
 - www.w3.org/community/silver
 - Start a Korean group working on an issue
- Join the Accessibility Guidelines Working Group (AG WG)
 - Requires being affiliated with W3C member organization or Invited Expert status
 - www.w3.org/groups/wg/ag

- Contact Jeanne Spellman

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