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Government Accessibility Standards and WCAG 2.0

posted by Mark Rogers on 11月 13, 2012 |

Accessibility | Web Standards

This posting summarizes some detailed research into the state of government accessibility standards around the world, as of November 2012. Usually these evolve fairly slowly, although the recent Jodhan vs. Attorney General of Canada case may change that (governments don't like being successfully sued by their citizens).

In general, these standards apply to government agency websites (and not commercial web sites) with the exception of Australia where commercial sites are also required to comply. Other countries have disability discrimination laws which cover websites, but these don't specify the technical standards required to comply with the law.

This table shows government accessibility standards, and relevant legislation, in 17 territories:

Comparison of accessibility standards in 11 countries

Country	Standard	Legislation	Applies To
Australia	WCAG 2 AA	[Disability Discrimination Act](#)	All government *and* non-government websites [should comply](#) with WCAG 2 AA by end of 2013
Canada	WCAG 2 AA	Human Rights Act 1977	Common Look and Feel 2.0 required WCAG 1 up till July 2011 for all government websites. The Jodhan vs. Attorney General of Canada ruling requires the Canadian government to update the guidelines to WCAG 2, and this was implemented as the [Standard on Web Accessibility](#) on Aug 1, 2011.
EU	WCAG 1 AA	European Parliament Resolution	Required for all EU commission

	(2002) 0325*		websites - see [EUROPA - Web accessibility policy](#). Progress towards WCAG 2 is being done by the [Mandate M 376](#) working group which started work in 2006.
France	[RGAA](#) 2.2.1 (based on WCAG 2)	[Law No 2005-102, Article 47](#)	Required for all French central government websites by May 2011. All other French public websites (public services, towns, public research, etc) are required to comply by May 2012.
Germany	[BITV 2](#) (based on WCAG 2)	Federal Disabled Equalization Law (BGG)	[BITV 2 came into force on Sept 22, 2011](#), and is required for all government websites. It is based on WCAG 2, but

			not identical.
Hong Kong	WCAG 2 AA		WCAG 2 AA became the standard for [GovHK websites](#) in March 2012.
India	[Guidelines for Indian Government Websites](#) (based on WCAG 2 A)		WCAG 2 Level A became the standard for Indian government websites in February 2009.
Ireland	WCAG 1 AA	[The Disability Act 2005](#)	All government websites - [Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information Provided by Public Bodies](#)
Italy	Technical Rules of Law 4/2004 (based on WCAG 1 AA)	Law No. 4/2004 ("Stanca" Law)	Required for all government websites
Japan	[JIS X 8341](#) (based on WCAG 2)		Based on WCAG 2 with provisions made for the Japanese language and input systems.

			Required for all local and central government websites. Commercial websites are also encouraged to use it.
Netherlands	WCAG 1 A		Government websites must comply with the government web guidelines, which include WCAG 1 A. There are no requirements for non-government websites.
New Zealand	WCAG 2 AA	[Human Rights Amendment Act 2001](#)	[Web Accessibility Standard 1.0](#) (WCAG 2 AA with some exceptions) required for all government web sites.
Norway		[LOV 2008-06-20 nr 42: Lov om forbud mot diskriminering på grunn av nedsatt](#)	The law requires all websites to be universally designed. There's an

		[funksjonsevne](#)	[ongoing consultation](#) on whether to apply a technical requirements of WCAG 2 at level AA (with the exception of 1.2.3, 1.2.4 and 1.2.5 which apply to timed media)
Ontario	[AODA](#) (WCAG 2 AA)		Required for all new Ontario government websites by January 2012, and existing government websites by January 2016.
Quebec	SGQRI 008 (based on WCAG 2)	[Standards sur l'accessibilité du Web](#)	Custom made standard based on WCAG 2.0 with specifics covering websites, downloadable documents and multimedia.
Spain	UNE 139803:2004 (based on WCAG 1 AA)	Law 34/2002, Law 51/2003	Required for all government websites. No

			mandatory requirements on non-government websites.
United Kingdom	WCAG 1 AA or WCAG 2 AA	Equality Act 2010	The COI standard for inclusive websites requires WCAG 1 AA or WCAG 2 AA for all UK government web sites. Other UK websites need to comply with the Equality Act and provide equal access, but this doesn't specify technical standards (although complying with at least WCAG 1 A or 2 A demonstrates that accessibility issues have been considered).
USA	Section 508 (subset of WCAG 1 with a few additions)	Section 508 of Rehabilitation Act	US federal agencies' websites must comply with Section

508 guidelines. These are currently being updated and will incorporate WCAG 2 AA - but the update has been subject to continual delays through 2013 and 2014.

* Irony Alert: the European resolution insists web site documents should be clear and simple, but kicks off with 22 paragraphs of incomprehensible bureaucratic text. Here's an example:

> whereas the internet as a part of society is an instrument for society as a whole, so it is fundamental that technologically neutral access to public information is offered for all groups in society...

The key takeaway from this research: adoption of WCAG 2 is progressing steadily and becoming increasingly important:

The governments of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan and New Zealand have already adopted WCAG 2.

UK government sites must comply with either WCAG 1 AA or WCAG 2 AA.

In the US, Section 508 is being refreshed to harmonize with WCAG 2.

The European Commission is investigating a move to WCAG 2 as a European government standard, but this is complicated by competing national standards in Germany (BITV) and Italy.

Edit: originally published November 2010, updated July 2014.

tags: [Section 508](), [WCAG2]()   [Comment]() »

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评论 (11)   -

Patrick Portejoie
十二月 11. 2010 02:59

Hi,
your France information is not correct. AccessiWeb was used as referential before the law was officially applicable but when the government worked on the document for the last step to put the law in place, they decided to build a new referential called R.G.A.A. (for General Accessibility Referential for Administration) which is at version number 2.2.1. This referential is based also on WCAG 2.0.
[references.modernisation.gouv.fr/rgaa-accessibilite]()
Hope this helps.
Patrick

[Mark Rogers]()
十二月 12. 2010 01:04

Hi Patrick
Thanks for the information on RGAA - much appreciated -

I've updated the blog posting.
Mark

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dj elblag 🇺🇸
一月 18. 2011 00:31

Great info thanks for useful post! I am waiting for more...

Philippe Vayssière 🇫🇷
十一月 4. 2011 23:03

Hi,
for France, by may 2012 all public websites (public services, towns, public research, etc) should comply with RGAA. They have 3 years from may 2009 to comply while government websites had only 2 years to do so.

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wypracowania 🇺🇸
十一月 6. 2011 05:16

It's hard to find knowledgeable people on this topic, but you sound like you know what you're talking about! Thanks

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Yann Goupil 🇫🇷
十一月 7. 2011 16:31

There is SGQRI 008 in Quebec (Canada) :
www.tresor.gouv.qc.ca/.../

This page (in french) presents the 3 web accessibility standards which are mandatory guidelines from 2011 may

10 in government services of Quebec.

Mark Rogers

十一月 7. 2011 22:07

Philippe and Yann - thanks for the information. I've added information about Quebec and Ontario.

wypracowania

十一月 7. 2011 22:58

good article

Aaron Leventhal

十一月 9. 2011 18:43

These are requirements only for government websites.

Is there a similar, up-to-date resource listing the applicability (and dates) of WCAG for other websites?

That would be very useful! Thank you.

Mark R

十一月 9. 2011 20:49

Aaron: I think the list is pretty short - the only country I know of that mandates a technical standard for non-government websites is Australia (WCAG 2).

Some countries have disability discrimination laws

requiring that non-government websites are accessible, but I've not see any laws that specify the exact technical standards that should be used.

mega magnum
四月 25. 2012 15:44

Great article !

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