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## Developing a Web Accessibility Business Case for Your Organization: Overview

This page is the first of five web pages covering the [social](#), [technical](#), [financial](#), and [legal and policy](#) factors in the business case for Web accessibility. Each page presents different aspects of Web accessibility along with guidance on developing a customized business case.

### Introduction

The Web is increasingly an essential resource for many aspects of life: education, employment, government, commerce, health care, recreation, social interaction, and more. The Web is used not only for receiving information, but also for providing information and interacting with society. Therefore, it is **essential that the Web be accessible in order to provide equal access and equal opportunity to people with disabilities**. Indeed, the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (2006) recognizes Web accessibility as a basic human right.

While accessibility focuses on people with disabilities, it also benefits older users, mobile device users, and other individuals, as well as organizations. Older users with age-related accessibility needs are an increasingly important customer base for most organizations, as the percentage of older users is increasing significantly. Organizations with accessible websites benefit from search engine optimization (SEO), reduced legal risk, demonstration of corporate social responsibility (CSR), and increased customer loyalty.

Organizations can realize substantial return on investment (ROI) that offset any costs of implementing Web accessibility. In order to be willing to make the initial investment, many organizations need to understand the social, technical, and financial benefits of Web accessibility, and the expected returns. The justification to commit resources to a project is often called a "business case". Business cases usually document an analysis of a project's value in meeting the organization's objectives, the cost-benefit analysis, and the expected outcomes.

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## Getting Involved with WAI

*Discover new resources for people with disabilities, policy makers, managers, and you!*

अनुवाद Translations

## Factors in a Business Case for Web Accessibility

The different aspects of the business case for Web accessibility are presented in detail in the following pages:

- [Social Factors](#) addresses the role of Web accessibility in providing equal opportunity for people with disabilities; the overlap with digital divide issues; and benefits to people *without* disabilities, including people using mobile devices, older people, people with low literacy and people not fluent in the language, people with low bandwidth connections to the Internet, people using older technologies, and new and infrequent web users.
- [Technical Factors](#) addresses interoperability, quality, reducing site development and maintenance time, reducing server load, enabling content on different configurations, and being prepared for advanced web technologies.
- [Financial Factors](#) addresses the financial benefits of increased website use, for example, from engine optimization (SEO); direct cost savings; considerations for initial costs and on-going costs; and ways to decrease costs, including [developing for accessibility and mobile together](#).
- [Legal and Policy Factors](#) addresses requirements for Web accessibility from governments and other organizations in the form of laws, policies, regulations, standards, guidelines, directives, communications, orders, or other types of documents.

To help develop a customized business case, each of these pages starts with questions to help identify how the factors apply to a specific organization.

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## Developing a Customized Business Case

An effective business case focuses on the organization's objectives and motivations. Certain aspects of the value and outcomes of Web accessibility are more important to one organization than another, based on its particular situation. For example, one organization's motivation might be to demonstrate social

responsibility by being inclusive of people with disabilities, while another organization's primary motivation might be technical quality and meeting international standards.

Just as organizations' objectives and motivations vary, so do their business cases for Web accessibility. A customized business case for a specific organization will have different content and style, and incorporate different aspects with different emphasis, focused on that particular organization.

## Examples of How Factors Differ Across Environments

Examples of different motivations that organizations have for adopting accessibility and how those can be integrated into a customized business case are provided below:

- A **corporation** might emphasize:
  - financial gains and cost savings from increased web use due to increased potential market share, search engine optimization (SEO), and increased usability
  - reducing risk of legal action, high legal expenses, and negative image
  - public relations benefits of demonstrating corporate social responsibility (CSR)
  - benefits of an inclusive workplace that supports employees with disabilities
  - increased productivity from supporting and retaining older employees and their experience
- A **government ministry or agency** might emphasize:
  - laws and policies that require public services are available to all, such as anti-discrimination legislation or information and communications technology (ICT) policy
  - demonstration of social responsibility and provision of information and services that are accessible to all citizens
  - savings from improved server performance and decreased site maintenance
  - benefits from enabling people with disabilities and older users to interact with them online instead of more costly ways
- An **educational institution** might emphasize:
  - number of students, faculty, or staff with disabilities in educational settings as a social responsibility consideration
  - benefits of Web accessibility to students with different learning styles, older computer equipment, or low bandwidth Internet connections
  - benefits to older employees who may be experiencing age-related impairments, an increasing percentage of employees as the workforce ages
  - legal or policy requirements
- A **non-governmental (non-profit) organization (NGO)** might emphasize:
  - social responsibility factors, such as the organization's commitment to human rights, including the right to information

- organization's interest in ensuring that its materials are available to all of its potential audiences
- supporting older people with age-related impairments who may be donors
- A **web design business** might emphasize:
  - competitive advantage and financial benefits of being able to meet increasing requests for accessible web design and development
  - technical benefits and long term financial benefits to clients of providing sites according to web standards
  - public relations benefits of being able to support clients' interests in demonstrating social responsibility
- A **small to medium-sized enterprise (SME)** relying on e-Commerce might emphasize:
  - positive impact on search engine optimization (SEO) from accessibility improvements
  - importance of an increasing market among people with disabilities and older people who may significantly benefit from accessible online shopping
  - increased general usability and trustworthiness of online shopping interfaces from improved accessibility
  - reduced risk of legal action and negative publicity from not complying with anti-discrimination legislation

While your business case may emphasize a few aspects, it is also important that you include other aspects. For example:

- An organization with a clear legal requirement for Web accessibility might still need a solid cost/benefit analysis to get management to commit sufficient resources for an effective Web accessibility program.
- Some commercial organizations might be more responsive to a social responsibility argument than to a standard cost/benefit analysis when committing to Web accessibility.

## **Additional Resources**

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The following resources provide additional details related to the business case for accessibility:

### [Web Accessibility for Older Users: A Literature Review](#)

Illustrates the increasing importance of older users online and the overlap between the Web accessibility requirements of older people with age-related impairments and the provisions of the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#). Includes statistics about changing demographics and the prevalence of impairment with age.

### [Web Content Accessibility and Mobile Web: Making a Web Site Accessible Both for People with Disabilities and for Mobile Devices](#)

Introduces how websites can more efficiently be designed to be accessible from a mobile device and also accessible for people with disabilities when developers understand the significant overlap between the two design goals and guidelines. Links to more detailed technical documents.

### [WAI Resources](#)

Lists the primary resources from W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), including several that provide additional information for organizations developing a business case.

Business cases are sometimes accompanied by an implementation plan describing the steps involved in making an organization's website accessible. A separate WAI resource suite, [Implementation Plan for Web Accessibility](#), provides information on initial assessment, developing organizational policies, training, selecting authoring tools, and conformance evaluation.

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