Procurement & vendors

Practical tips for digital accessibility teams

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Accessible products and services

Organization: _____

Supplier/vendor: _____

Digital product/service: _____

Be ready

SME!

Subject matter expertise

- understands the goal.

- accessibility experience.

- as-needed or full-time.

- adapt procurement process.

- evaluate vendor claims.

- validate deliverable & variances.

- don't rely on the vendor to do it all.

A requirement, not a feature

- a commitment: we buy accessible solutions.

- not a feature postponed to a later release.

- a policy, but part of culture.

- diversity is the new normal.

- senior leaders back it up in words & actions.

- what happens when requirements not met?

Testable standards

Accessibility standards

- e.g WCAG 2.0 Level AA but there are others.

- testable.

- web, mobile, documentation, kiosk.

- consider regulatory requirements.

- recognized standards best with vendors.

Procurement people

Procurement & purchasers

- add to any existing process for buying.

- remind purchasers value in considering accessibility *before* the vendor engagement.

- don't automatically disqualify based on vendor reporting nonconformance, or reward false claims.

- position effort to help meet requirements and not to 'ask for' or enforce accessibility.

Engage

Requests: RFP, RFI, RFQ

Requests for products & services

- communicate requirements & standards.

- how vendor meets or intends to meet them?

- vendor or product accessibility statements.

- send a questionnaire.

What to ask?

- statements, policy, "VPAT" or questionnaire

- accessibility test process & tools

- identify gaps

- product roadmap for accessibility

- specific questions to determine level

Evaluating responses

Making sense of responses

- Gaps can be good news: transparency and maturity

- Full conformance claims can be bad news: inaccurate, or worse.

- 'aims to meet', or 'follows' a standard. Fine, but does it meet or

  conform

- vendors may claim conformance without testing

- follow-ups:

  - names of automated test tools & assistive technology (AT).

  - experience of testers

- validate *claim* with a quick review (not testing the whole *product* here).

- COTS (Commercial off-the-shelf) product vs. custom solution.

Contracts

Get it in writing

- supplier commitments to:

  - *"conform to WCAG 2.0 at Level AA"* (or another standard).

  - test for conformance prior to delivery.

- avoid untestable statements:

  - *"application must be accessible"*

  - "*must be ADA-compliant*"

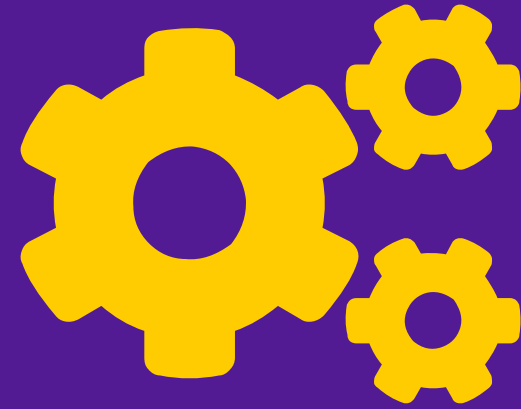- Master Service Agreement (MSA) covers any future interfaces too.

- Statement of Work (SOW) or Project Change Request (PCR).

- Partially or non-conforming solutions:

  - product roadmaps and/or target dates.

Deliver

We're in this together

- meet periodically with the vendor.

- most vendors very appreciative & open to collaboration.

- define the 'support baseline' for testing
  - combinations of browser, assistive technology, OS, devices.

- approach to bugs in OS or Assistive Technology (AT).

Testing

Who will test for accessibility?

- ✦ vendor does accessibility testing, if skilled.

- ✦ or vendor hires qualified 3rd party to do it.

- ✦ purchaser then validates deliverable.

- ✦ expect to find issues even when the vendor claims thorough testing performed.

★★★★☆

👍 *Tolerance*

Assessing impact of variances

- a tolerance for non-conformance

- prioritization of issues

- agreed course of action for postponed issues

- dealing with quirks, bugs or limited support in
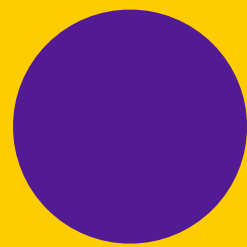
  OS & assistive technology

Not there yet

What if the deliverable is not accessible?

- define *ahead of time* what happens when a project doesn't meet requirements.

- exception approval process.

- don't figure out *process* in days before launch.

An accessible product
& ready for the next!

Resources

More info

✦**The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design: IT Procurement Toolkit**

  http://universaldesign.ie/Technology-ICT/IT-Procurement-Toolkit/

✦**Jeff Kline: Throwing Your Organization's Money Away Or Why Must Your Organization Pay to Test Accessibility of IT Products and Services It Purchases?**

  https://jeffklinesstrategicitaccessibilityblog.wordpress.com/2017/09/05/throwing-your-organizations-money-away-or-why-must-your/

✦**National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO): Accessibility in IT Procurement**

  https://www.nascio.org/pdaa

✦**G3ICT: Core issues in creating effective public procurement policies**

  http://www.e-accessibilitytoolkit.org/toolkit/public_procurement/core_issues_in_effective_public_procurement

✦**G3ICT: Buy ICT for All**

  http://buyict4all.org/

✦**EU Mandate 376: Managing accessibility in the public procurement of ICT**

  http://mandate376.standards.eu/