Reimagining Digital Accessibility: From Compliance to Collective Responsibility at King's Digital Lab

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BACKGROUND

Our digital accessibility approach started as a compliance task and shifted to a collaborative, sustainable practice embedded across our Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC). Developed through years of iteration and feedback, the process supports team-wide participation, aligning inclusive practices with team dynamics and project phases. We aim to foster accessible outputs through methods that are practical, scalable, and inclusive.

EVOLVING PRACTICE

Earlier Challenges		Current approach
Compliance focused Emphasis on compliance alone.	→	**Balanced goals** Focus on compliance and usability.
Siloed work Limited collaboration, unclear misaligned responsibilities and workload.	→	**Team-driven** Open dialogue, equitable distribution, and clear responsibilities aligned with role expertise.
Hard-to-use resources Reliance on complex, official guidance.	→	**Practical tools** Comprehensive and clear internal documentation.
Knowledge gaps Inconsistent understanding, limited support.	→	**Collective learning** Shared knowledge, active support, ongoing feedback.
Inconsistent results Binary "All or nothing" delivery with variable quality.	→	**Sustainable outcomes** Tailored, consistent outputs that reflect project context and capacity.

IMPACT

Increased Process Visibility & Accountability
Digital Accessibility is now considered from the start of projects, with regular tracking through team-wide check-ins and shared task ownership, improving transparency and follow-through.

Stronger Team Dynamics & Fairer Workload Distribution
Clearer expectations around roles and responsibilities have streamlined collaboration and created a more balanced workload across the team.

Knowledge Growth & Consistent Outcomes
Holistic support for accessibility has elevated team expertise, leading to better targeted issues, fewer gaps, and more consistent, sustainable outputs.

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

1 Lead
2 Collaborate
3 Consult

Analyst A
Ensure accurate level of accessibility in requirements, process and deliverables

Engineer E
Code and test with WCAG accessibility standards

UI/UX Designer U
Design accessible interfaces (contrast, layout)

Project Partners PP
Identify accessibility considerations for users and requirements, ensure content is accessible

Project Manager PM
Plan accessibility in timelines, ensure accessibility is tracked and reviewed

Sysadmin S
Support infrastructure that enables accessible content and tools

MoSCoW REQUIREMENTS

How we prioritise the digital accessibility requirement for a project.

	Must (M)	**Should** (S)	**Could** (C)	**Won't** (W)
More than 5 users (e.g. Public resource)	✓	✓	✓	×
Using only own platforms or stacks	✓	✓	×	×
Basic components	✓	×	×	×
	Meet **WCAG A/AA criteria** for the **majority** of components (few/none will not meet) by performing accessibility assessments during evolutionary development and **producing a public accessibility statement** and update it at each major release.	Meet **WCAG A/AA criteria** for **some** components (some might not meet) by performing accessibility assessments during evolutionary development and **producing a public accessibility statement** and update it at each major release.	Integrate **WCAG A criteria** for **some** components by performing essential accessibility assessments into the evolving solution and **producing a public accessibility statement** and update it at each major release.	Integrate **WCAG A criteria** for **some** components by performing essential accessibility assessments into the evolving solution but **not producing a public accessibility statement.** But **scoping still needed.**

RESOURCES

Contact us if you would like to collaborate, download our process or share your feedback.

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ACCESSIBILTY STEPS