Russ Weakley

Accessibility Specialist, trainer and Design System Manager

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About me

I'm an Accessibility Specialist and Design System Manager with over 30 years of experience across design, front-end development, accessibility, and training

I've worked with major organisations in the banking and insurance sectors, helping to build, test, and scale accessible design systems and digital experiences that meet WCAG and usability standards. My expertise spans accessibility strategy and governance, inclusive design research, and organisational accessibility maturity.

I have extensive experience working with people with disabilities through focus groups, interviews, and user testing — ensuring that accessibility is grounded in lived experience rather than checklists.

At a strategic level, I help organisations embed accessibility at scale, develop sustainable design system frameworks, and create learning programs that build capability across roles and teams.

Core focus areas:

1. Accessibility leadership – Accessibility strategy, governance, compliance, testing, and organisational maturity.
2. Accessibility education and capability development – Planning and leading organisation-wide learning strategies, including course design, scripting, production, and evaluation.
3. Design system development – Strategy, architecture, accessibility integration, and front-end implementation.
4. UX/UI design – Inclusive research, user testing, and design of meaningful digital experiences for all users.

Professional Experience

Head of Inclusive Training - Intopia

Nov 2021 – Present | 4 years

As Head of Inclusive Training, I lead the strategy, planning, and delivery of Intopia's accessibility education ecosystem. My role spans strategic planning, content creation, and cross-format delivery, ensuring our courses meet the evolving needs of teams building inclusive digital products.

Key responsibilities:

- Oversee the full training lifecycle – from concept and curriculum design to scripting, recording, and production.
- Collaborate with instructional, design, and technical teams to create engaging, high-impact learning experiences.
- Lead development across different delivery formats including instructor-led and eLearning.
- Partner with organisations to define and implement accessibility training strategies, embedding knowledge and capability across roles and teams.

Accessibility Principal - IAG (Insurance Australia Group)

Feb 2021 – Nov 2021 | 10 months

Led accessibility strategy, awareness, compliance, and training programs to help IAG teams deliver accessible digital products and customer experiences.

Design System Principal - IAG (Insurance Australia Group)

Mar 2018 – Jan 2021 | 2 years 11 months

Defined the vision and direction for IAG's design system (Chroma), ensuring accessibility, consistency, and scalability across digital products.

UX Designer / UI Developer - Ambiata

Dec 2015 – Mar 2018 | 2 years 4 months

Developed a design system and component library for new web applications. Responsibilities included HTML/SCSS pattern library development, UI and UX design, and accessibility integration throughout the design and build process.

UX Designer / UI Developer - WhistleOut

Feb 2015 – Dec 2015 | 11 months

Built a responsive pattern library using OOCSS, Atomic CSS, BEM, and LESS. Responsible for design systemisation, HTML/CSS/LESS framework development, and improving design consistency across sites.

UX/UI Designer and Accessibility Specialist - Max Design

Jan 1990 – Feb 2015 | 25 years 2 months

Founded and managed Max Design, a Sydney-based web development business specialising in accessibility, UX, and UI design. Clients included Sensis, Microsoft Australia, Sydney Morning Herald, Amnesty International Australia, and Reed Publishing. Delivered accessible, standards-compliant websites and led training on web standards and accessibility best practices.

UX/UI Designer and Accessibility Specialist - Australian Museum

Jan 1998 – Dec 2014 | 17 years

Led design and development of all museum websites and web applications, focusing on accessibility, UX, and front-end pattern library development.

Web Manager - Australian Museum

Mar 2005 – Jan 2006 | 11 months

Managed all museum web projects, supervising a team of 3 full-time staff and several contractors.

Design Studio Manager - Australian Museum

Jan 1993 – Jan 1997 | 4 years 1 month

Managed graphic and exhibition design for the museum. Supervised 4 designers and delivered exhibition and print materials across departments.

Exhibition and Graphic Designer - Australian Museum

Jan 1985 – Jan 1992 | 7 years 1 month

Designed marketing and exhibition materials including signage, brochures, reports, and educational content. Responsible for visual design, layout, and production of exhibition graphics and interpretive materials.

UI Developer and Accessibility Specialist - Fiserv

2013 – 2014 | 1 year

Provided accessibility advice and support for pattern implementation across a large banking application. Developed HTML/CSS pattern libraries aligned with WCAG standards.

Skills

Accessibility

- Accessibility strategy, governance, and policy development
- Accessibility testing and remediation (manual and automated)
- Accessibility acceptance criteria and QA integration
- Organisational accessibility maturity assessment and improvement
- Experience collaborating directly with people with disabilities in research and testing

Design

- UX and UI design for accessible digital products
- Inclusive research and user testing with diverse participants
- Pattern library design and documentation
- Prototyping, information architecture, and interaction design

Design systems

- Design system architecture, component standards, and documentation
- Accessibility strategy and testing within design systems
- Governance models for scalable, multi-brand systems

Development

- Front-end development (HTML, CSS, SCSS) and design-to-code workflows

Training and education

- Accessibility course design, scripting, and production
- Learning strategy and curriculum planning for organisations
- Training facilitation (online, self-paced, and instructor-led formats)
- Building organisational accessibility capability through education programs