2022 Updates for WCAG 3.0

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My background

- Worked in software development for over 30 years
- Working in accessibility for 10 years
- I currently work for Oracle Corporation, and I am a member of the W3C
- I am honored and privileged to co-chair the Accessibility Guidelines Working Group of the W3C with my peers Alastair Campbell and Rachael Montgomery

Some Disclaimers

- Though I have the honor to co-chair the Accessibility Guidelines Working Group of the W3C, I do not represent the W3C. I am a volunteer on behalf of Oracle Corporation, which is a member organization of the W3C.
- The existing WCAG 2 series is great!
  - We continue to actively support WCAG 2
- If you are starting work on accessibility in your organization, use WCAG 2.
- WCAG 3.0 is under development and ***is not finished*** and is not ready for use
- Anything in the WCAG 3.0 draft today ***is not ready*** for implementation.

Agenda

- What are W3C Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 3.0?
- Jeanne Spellman's presentation last year (2021)
- Updates for WCAG 3 in 2022
- How to contribute

What are W3C Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 3.0?

- Next major version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2
- Broader in scope
- Guidance for more disability groups
- Research informed and data driven
- Moves the tradition of WCAG 2.0 forward
- Starts from user needs of disability groups instead of technical solutions

Why do standards evolve?

- Standards evolve because they do not fully meet the needs they were written to address
- Technology changes
  - Mobile, touch screens, augmented reality, virtual reality
- We learn how to write a better standard

Why do we need WCAG 3?

- Changing technology and changing needs of people with disabilities have led to the need for new guidance, a new conformance model and new approaches to testing to address content accessibility more comprehensively and flexibly.
- WCAG 3 will meet these changing needs in various ways such as (but not limited to) updating the conformance model and the various tests that can be used.

Jeanne Spellman's WCAG 3 presentation last year

- Jeanne covered the following topics last year:
  - Challenges with the current WCAG approach
  - WCAG 3 Stakeholders
  - Research completed
  - Structural challenges: Usability, Conformance Model, Maintenance
  - Proposals for the structural challenges
- Jeanne's slide deck and recorded presentation can be found in the speaker notes

Updates for WCAG 3 in 2022

Updates to WCAG 3 this past year

- [WCAG 3 Editors Draft](#)
  - Published July 7th 2022
- Combined Silver Task Force and Accessibility Guidelines Working Group
- Changed how the Accessibility Guidelines Working Group develops these guidelines
  - Introduced Maturity Levels
- Exploring Two Types of Testing
- Exploring Four Types of Methods
- Exploring Issue Severity

Maturity Levels

- Challenges were identified in our existing development processes, and we identified two important goals:
  - We wanted to get draft content out for review as early as possible to encourage public feedback.
  - We also wanted content to be reviewed and have AGWG consensus and support before presenting to the public and avoid encouraging adoption of content that was still under development.
- To meet the challenges of updating the WCAG standards, AGWG has updated how we work and how we develop content:
  - We implemented a process that we intend to satisfy both goals by implementing 5 levels of maturity.

Maturity Levels (continued)

- **Placeholder**: This content is temporary, it showcases the type of content or section to expect. Placeholder content is expected to be replaced as the content develops.
  - No feedback is needed for placeholder content.

- **Exploratory**: The working group is exploring what direction to take with this section. This content is not refined, details and definitions may be missing.
  - Feedback should be about the proposed direction.

Maturity Levels (Continued)

- **Developing**: There is rough agreement on what is needed for this section, although not all high-level concerns have been settled. Details have been filled, but are yet to be worked out.
  - Feedback should be focused on ensuring the sections are usable and reasonable in a broad sense.

- **Refining**: The working group has reach consensus on this section. It is ready for broad public review and experimental adoption.
  - Feedback should be focused on the feasibility and implementability.

Maturity Levels (Continued)

- **Mature**: Content is believed by the working group to be ready for recommendation. Feedback should be focused on edge case scenarios the working group may not have anticipated.

Maturity Levels (Continued)

- Our intent is that we can facilitate early public review of new concepts while also not encouraging premature adoption during the development of these concepts and approaches.

Two types of tests (Exploratory)

- **Computational:** Tests where **results will not vary based** on the tester or approach. Examples include testing whether certain properties exist in the content or if they match a value specified by the requirement.
- **Qualitative:** Tests that **rely on a qualitative evaluation based on existing criteria**. Test results may vary between testers who understand the criteria. Examples include evaluating the quality and applicability of certain properties of the content.

Four Possible Types of Methods (Exploratory)

- A method is detailed information on ways to meet an outcome as well as tests and scoring information.
- **Prescriptive requirements:** How to conform, and **how to test** for conformance **is predetermined**. If there is more than one option, all options are **defined by the standard**.
- **Adaptive requirements**: The testing process includes variations where the results rely on the external and/or user-specific **context in which content is being tested**. The tests are still computational or qualitative tests but the context dictates what results are expected, and which tests are relevant.

Four Possible Types of Methods (Exploratory, Continued)

- **Extensible requirements**: Requirements that rely on **selecting from multiple valid ways to measure the outcome** (for example, there are multiple accepted specifications for measuring luminance, and the testers will need to determine which is most valid for their use case).
- **Protocol-based requirements**: Using **accepted industry protocols that meet defined quality criteria** (examples include Usability and Plain Language protocols) to improve accessibility.

Example Tests & Methods: Images have text alternatives

	Computational	Qualitative
Prescriptive	Image has non-empty accessible name	● Image is decorative ● Image has text alternative and the text alternative is a sufficient replacement for image
Adaptive	● Accessible name meets style guide requirements ● Accessible name is appropriate for the human language	Text alternative is sufficient replacement for image
Extensible	Not applicable	Not applicable
Procedural	Image alt text follows guidance for ecommerce image descriptions	Image alt text follows plain language protocol

Example Tests & Methods: Text Contrast

	Computational	Qualitative
Prescriptive	Text has minimum contrast	Not applicable
Adaptive	In **high contrast mode**, 7:1, or 4.5:1 for large text, in **normal contrast mode**, 4.5:1, or 3:1 for large text, and in **low contrast mode**, between 3:1 and 7:1.	Not applicable
Extensible	Text has minimum contrast using Advanced Perception of Color Algorithm (APCA)	Not applicable
Procedural	Not applicable	Not applicable

Issue Severity (Exploratory)

- WCAG 2 conformance is all or nothing
  - Issue severity is not factored into conformance
- We are exploring including the severity of issues into conformance
- We are exploring "Test Based" and "Task Based" ways of evaluating Issue Severity

Issue Severity (Exploratory, Continued)

- **Test Based**
  - AG evaluate each test and identify ones which are (usually) critical issues.
  - Example test based critical errors:
    - An image is the only link content and has no text alternative
    - Text color is below a bare minimum threshold

Issue Severity (Exploratory, Continued)

- **Task Based**
  - Occurs after "test based"
  - Evaluates issue severity based on tasks
  - Evaluates issues within type of task to determine severity
  - Example task based critical errors:
    - Text needed for components that allow navigation have low contrast

Plans for the future of WCAG 3

Our plans for the future of WCAG 3

- More AGWG time and resources will be devoted to WCAG 3
  - WCAG 2 will continue to be supported!
- Continue exploring method and testing types
- Evaluate and refine the conformance model
- Add more guidelines to a future working draft
  - Examples include guidance error prevention, motor control, etc.

How to Contribute

How to contribute to WCAG 3.0

- Review
  - Review the W3C WCAG 3 landing page: www.w3.org/wai/wcag3
  - Provide email or Github feedback
- Join the discussion
  - Join the Silver Community Group
    - www.w3.org/community/silver
  - Join the Accessibility Guidelines Working Group
    - Requires being affiliated with W3C member organization or Invited Expert status
    - www.w3.org/groups/wg/ag
- Contact Charles Adams
  - charles.adams@oracle.com