Web Accessibility: Why Standards Harmonization Matters

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Web Accessibility: Why Standards Harmonization Matters

- W3C and WAI
- Web Accessibility Guidelines
- Web Accessibility Harmonization/Fragmentation
- Participation & Resources
- Resources
World Wide Web Consortium
World Wide Web Consortium (WAI)

- International, primarily industry, vendor-neutral consortium
- Develops core standards for Web
- Five main domains/divisions of technical work
  - one of these is the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)
- In-house accessibility focus:
  - enables getting accessibility right at the design stage
Web Accessibility Addresses Cross-disability needs:

- **Visual**
  - described graphics or video
  - well marked-up tables or frames, dynamic content
  - keyboard support, screen reader compatibility

- **Hearing**
  - captioning for audio, supplemental illustration

- **Physical, Speech**
  - keyboard or single-switch support; alternatives for speech input

- **Cognitive, Neurological**
  - consistent navigation, appropriate language level
  - illustration; no flickering or strobing designs

- **Older Web users**
  - sometimes combinations of needs, but miss “disability” solutions
Complementary Aspects of Web Accessibility
WCAG 2.0

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0

- WCAG 2.0 Candidate Recommendation
  - April 2008: stable draft
- Implementation testing
  - in diverse Web sites and applications
- Evaluate conformance
- Adjust at-risk items
Establishing WCAG 2.0 as a Convergence Target

- Improvements over WCAG 1.0
  - more precisely testable
  - technology-neutral
  - fewer constraints for developers
  - improved accessibility support

- Structure
  - 4 principles, 12 guidelines
  - ~60 normative, testable success criteria
  - 3 levels
WCAG 2.0 Supporting Materials Promote Harmonization and Implementation

- **Techniques for WCAG 2.0**
  - sufficient, additional, common failures, test procedures
  - “additional techniques” layer invites innovation
- **How to Meet WCAG 2.0**
  - customizable developers’ reference
- **Understanding WCAG 2.0**
  - intent, examples, resources, techniques, key terms
WCAG 2.0 Completion Steps

Timelines can be a fragmentation driver...

- Public Working Drafts (done)
- Last Call Working Drafts (done)
- Candidate Recommendation (current)
- Proposed Recommendation (3Q 2008?)
- W3C Recommendation (4Q 2008?)
  - completed Web standard
  - authorized W3C translations
ATAG 2.0

Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines 2.0

- ATAG 2.0 Working Draft
- Accessibility of authoring interface
- Production of accessible content
- Covers all kinds of authoring tools
  - HTML editors
  - content management systems
  - blogging & wiki software
UAAG 2.0

User Agent Accessibility Guidelines 2.0

- **UAAG 2.0 First Public Working Draft**
- Browsers, media players
- Updating technologies covered
- Better address specific problems
  - interoperability with assistive technology
  - support for rich media
WAI-ARIA

- Accessible Rich Internet Applications
- Making dynamic Web content accessible
  - Ajax, DHTML, other dynamic technologies
  - accessibility of widgets, navigation, drag & drop...
- WAI-ARIA
  - Overview, Primer, Best Practices, FAQ
- Nearing Last Call Working Draft
Accessibility & Mobile Web

- **Relationship between Mobile Web, WCAG 1.0, 2.0**
  - cross-mapping of provisions
- **Shared user experiences**
  - people with disabilities & mobile Web users
- **Promotes appropriate cross-referencing of standards**
Currently – Significant Fragmentation

- Many organizations, governments re-creating wheel
- Sub-setting conformance levels
- Tweaking meaning of provisions
- Combining with usability
- Fragments market for authoring & evaluation tool developers
- Difficult for international & multi-sector organizations to track requirements
Benefits of Harmonization

- Standards harmonization accelerates Web accessibility by
  - providing unified market for authoring and evaluation tools
  - eliminating conflicting requirements on developers
  - creating consistent user expectations
  - enabling shared training and evaluation resources
Extensive Liaison Activities

- Ensure process is open to all stakeholders
- Promote extensive public review, comment, testing
- Monitor parallel activities across many organizations
  - JTC1 Special Working Group on Accessibility
- Promote awareness of need for harmonized standards
- Advise regarding regulatory development
- Provide mechanism for authorized translations
- Promote broad participation in W3C/WAI work
Resources

- www.w3.org/WAI/
- WAI guidelines
- Introducing, managing, evaluating accessibility
- WAI Working Groups, about WAI
- Translations of WAI documents