Shift Left: Use Accessibility To Improve Your Project Bottom Line

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All on the Same Page: Definitions and Background
What Kinds of Disabilities?

• Born with them (congenital)
• Develop at some point (acquired)
• Happen for a period of time (temporary)

• Hearing
• Vision
• Speaking
• Moving
• Thinking
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, As Amended

State of Minnesota Digital Accessibility Law

State of Minnesota Accessibility Standard
Which Kind of Digital Accessibility?

Accommodation  Usability  Digital Accessibility Success Criteria
Acquiring IT

• Buy and use “as is”
• Buy and customize
• Build
• Vendor customizes or builds
Purchase/Procurement Process

- Request for Proposals (RFP)
- Contract (Components, Language)
- Custom off the Shelf (COTS)
- Licensing

- Professional/Technical Services
  - Staff Augmentation
  - Provider of Content, Assets or Services
  - Training Provider (sometimes online)
Ideally

• Totally inclusive process/environment
• All team members have digital accessibility skills
• Roles and responsibilities in project are clearly defined
• Checks and balances throughout the process
But in Reality...

• Some inclusion
• Varying digital accessibility skills
• Professionals playing multiple roles due to many reasons
• Uncertainty where responsibility lies
• Accessibility checking typically occurs at end of project

...leading and advocacy required in every role
All Project Participants Matter

• Stakeholders
• Usability Testers
• Business/IT Governance Committee
• End Users
• What is an accessibility champion: A person who fights or argues for digital accessibility or on behalf of someone else

• Until the ideal is reality?

Carpe diem!
Return On Investment (ROI)

The 1-10-100 Rule

– used to qualify the hidden costs of poor design and quality

(The 1-10-100 rule is a quality management concept developed by G. Loabovitz and Y. Chang that is used to quantify the hidden costs of poor quality.)

$1 \quad $10 \quad $100
Before the Formal Project Life Cycle?

- High Level Project Idea
- Considered? Priority?
- Project Plan Clarified
- Budget? Timelines?
- Formal Project Life Cycle Begins
Everyone has a role...

- Project Manager
- [Business Owner]
- Business Analyst
- Digital Accessibility Specialist
- Design
- Developer
- Quality Assurance
• Implementing accessibility is not only a concern for developers, but for the whole team

• People who are knowledgeable about accessibility need to work together throughout the project life cycle

• Including accessibility at the start in the establishment of the technical specifications is necessary

• Choosing accessible technologies makes the process much more inherently accessible
Ensuring optimization of the production chain:

• Review steps of web development life cycle and ensure accessibility is included

• Make sure everyone understands their role and responsibilities for accessibility

• At every milestone verify accessibility has been checked

• Identify technology platforms and tools, ensure their accessibility limitations have been identified
• Plan a budget and schedule to include accessibility testing within the development cycle and before production release

In cases where resources or skills are not available within the team:

• Budget for contracted testing accessibility

• Budget for training and/or hiring in order to develop accessibility knowledge and skills noting that training is required for:
  • Content providers
  • Designers
  • Developers
Business Owner

• Focus on ensuring business-side needs are met
• Involvement may vary
• Team member with awareness of specific business-side considerations
• Varying levels of experience with the project life cycle and vocabulary/concepts
When content providers understand the requirements for accessible content, they play a vital role in ensuring that web pages contain information which is well structured with heading levels, links are clearly defined, tables are used for data and not presentation, captions or transcripts are provided for videos or audio recordings, error messages can easily be detected and interpreted.
Business Analyst (BA)

- Business Analyst can be an important Digital Accessibility Advocate through their IT project role.
In drafting the technical specifications, the criteria for an accessible product will need to be documented in some or all of the following areas:

- Software specifications
- Design specifications
- Functional design specifications
- User acceptance criteria
International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA) Body of Knowledge (BABOK) governs the Business Analysis Discipline.

BABOK instructs:
- Analyzing your project Stakeholder to help plan Stakeholder engagement and managing business requirements.

Digital Accessibility requires:
- Works with team to collaborate on and communicate Digital Accessibility requirements.
Designer responsibilities related to accessibility include:

- graphic and user interface design of web pages and applications

Include accessibility at the start, when establishing the technical specifications:

- colors
- font sizes
- interface design
Mockups - Top 10 Things to Catch in Wireframes

- Tap/click target size
- Complex interactions
- Linear flow issues
- Keyboard issues
- Proximity related issues

- Naming/labeling of controls
- Complex form field labeling
- Error messaging strategy
- Using color alone to convey meaning
- Overly complex language

Deque
Accessibility Specialist

- Reviews wireframe and ensures accessibility requirements are well defined
- Manually tests templates and key pages for accessibility (keyboard only and screen reader)
• The development stage can make or break the accessibility of a project. A good development workflow with a focus on accessibility will address accessibility issues immediately.

• There is no single correct development cycle and can vary based on the feature being implemented, the environments available for testing (including desktop and mobile devices), and other factors.

• Utilizing well developed business requirements, annotated wireframes, the online Application and Website Style Guide and code repositories is important during the development stage.

• It is vital to test iterations of the product during the development phase – both automatic and manual.
Accessibility testing is no different from the other types of testing required for:

• quality assurance,

• testing the experience and usability,

• business requirements implementation and

• when ensuring the developers followed the proper guidelines and requirements.
QA use automatic and manual accessibility testing techniques (i.e. keyboard only).

- Use WCAG 2.0/2.1 guidelines
- Section 508
In the project sign-off, include the acknowledgment for accessibility conformance.

Celebrate this as an achievement with the team and in the project launch!

Document the lessons learned in implementing accessibility. This can be a very useful source of information in the post project phase and for future projects.
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- Tips on digital accessibility
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Resources and Citations

• Minnesota’s Office of Accessibility website
• Deque
• WebAIM Million
Thank you

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