Advancing Accessibility:
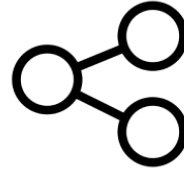
Building Inclusive Organizations

by John Walker

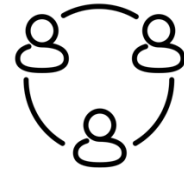WALKER | ACCESSIBILITY

6 Pillars of Accessibility

A strategic framework to raise awareness, drive engagement, and integrate accessibility into every aspect of an organization.
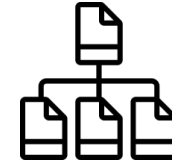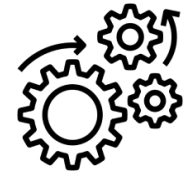
Expand Awareness

Foster empathy

Engage with Customers

Embed Strategy

Enable Process

Measure Effects

A11y Task Force

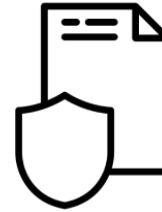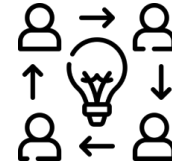Establish a cross-functional team to extend the six pillars across an organization.
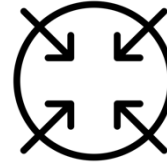
Align a11y initiatives with strategic goals

Conduct accessibility audits

Create and Manage Policies

Provide Training and Tools

Create and Evaluate Metrics

Future Plans and Innovation

2025 Strategic Goals
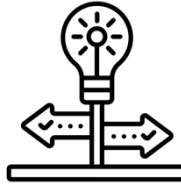
Define a Holistic Approach

Assign Responsibilities
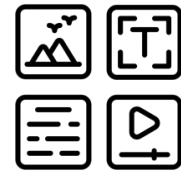
Embed into All Channels
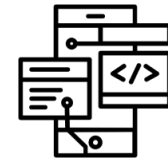
Integrate into Development Cycle

2025 A11y Initiatives

COMMITMENT TO PERFORM

Establish and integrate accessibility within the design and development cycle.

ABILITY TO PERFORM

Provide necessary resources, training, and expertise.

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED

Define roles and procedures; establish an accessibility task force.

MEASUREMENT & ANALYSIS

Develop methods to assess the effectiveness and progress of work efforts.

VERIFY IMPLEMENTATION

Ensure that both new work and remediation efforts comply with established processes.

Accessibility Maturity Model (AMM) Levels

Reacting
Disciplined processes
Individual projects

Monitoring
Operational, predictable processes
Best practices and inclusive design

1   2   3   4   5

Initial
No processes or procedures

Putting out fires

Defining
Standardized, consistent
processes
Organization-wide approach

Innovating
New initiatives
Innovative solutions

AMM Stages

Initial   **Reacting**   **Defining**   **Monitoring**   **Innovating**

1   2   3   4   5

GETTING STARTED

Focus areas:
- Motivation
- Vision, Strategy, and Engagement
- Responsibility
- Investments
- Audits
- Customer Focus

BUILDING MOMENTUM

Focus areas:
- Standards, Policies, and Practices
- Assessments, Benchmarking, and KPIs
- Capabilities
- Governance
- Training, Support, and Tools
- People and Culture
- Procurement

INNOVATING

Focus areas:
- Product Development Lifecycle
- Measurement of ROI
- Innovation

Assessment Methods

Perform an organizational assessment to establish your maturity model using a priority scoring matrix.
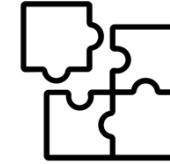
Assess how effectively accessibility is integrated into key areas like IT governance and procurement; this is essential for improving maturity.

Utilize AMM as a self-assessment tool to evaluate accessibility levels, which can provide a clear view of current performance and guide future improvements.

Assessment Method #1

Formal review and stakeholder engagement

STARTING POINT FOR ACCESSIBILITY MATURITY

Many organizations use this approach to assess and improve IT accessibility.

CHAMPION IDENTIFICATION

Key individuals across the organization are educated on accessibility and the AMM framework.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Champions evaluate specific AMM elements (e.g., procurement) and provide ratings on accessibility maturity.

LARGE ORGANIZATION CONSIDERATIONS

Multiple champions may be required in each area, using either an average score or separate AMM instances.

ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES

This approach provides diverse insights for accuracy but can be time-consuming, taking weeks to complete.

Assessment Method #2

Committee review

COMMITTEE-BASED ASSESSMENT

Unlike individual reviews, this approach involves a discussion-based evaluation by a cross-functional committee.

DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

IT, Governance, Sourcing, Design, and HR members collaborate to assess accessibility maturity.

CONSENSUS SCORING

The group collectively determines scores for each checkpoint area through conversation.

TIME CONSIDERATIONS

Initial setup may take time, but once established, reviews typically last 30 minutes to two hours.

KEY BENEFIT

Provides a more balanced and impartial assessment, though it may take some time initially.

Assessment Method #3

Subject Matter
Expert (SME) review

SME-LED REVIEW

Conducted by dedicated IT accessibility teams with a comprehensive understanding of accessibility maturity.

EFFICIENT ASSESSMENT

SMEs can quickly evaluate accessibility levels and identify focus areas, typically within two hours.

AVOIDING GROUP BIAS

Private scoring is recommended to prevent influence or bias from team agendas.

POTENTIAL RISKS

Teams may unintentionally steer results based on their own priorities.

KEY ADVANTAGE

SMEs have deep insights into accessibility challenges and can effectively highlight critical areas for improvement.

General Tips

BE HONEST IN SCORING

Avoid overestimating your accessibility maturity; accuracy provides a clearer picture.

FLEXIBLE SCORING

Use half points if your organization doesn't fit neatly into one category.

TRACK PROGRESS REGULARLY

Assess at least annually to measure improvements over time.

BENCHMARK AGAINST OTHERS

Compare your scores with Business Disability Forum Technology Taskforce averages.

SET REALISTIC GOALS

Focus on improving 2–3 areas rather than trying to enhance all at once for better impact.

Priority Scoring Matrix Example

An objective framework for scoring accessibility issues
and prioritizing development efforts

	User Type	Product or App	Severity	Customer Impact	WCAG Level	Confidence	Effort
6 points	Enterprise	Name	Critical	Purchase flow	A	—	—
3 points	International	Name	High	Most users	AA	High	Low
2 points	Country-specific	Name	Medium	Many users	—	Medium	Medium
1 point	Test-specific	Name	Low	Few users	—	Low	High