

Transcript of IBM Accessibility Facebook Expert Hour with Andi Snow-Weaver answering questions about Accessibility Standards 11/11/2010

[IBM Accessibility](#) Please join our first-ever Facebook Expert Hour on 11/11, at noon ET. Andi Snow-Weaver, IBM accessibility standards expert, will answer your accessibility standards questions. If you can't make it, please post your questions in the comments, and she'll answer them during the session, then you can review at your leisure....

Anyone can view this page, but you must be a fan to post questions, so click "Like" today. [Brian Cragun](#), [Pj Marschner Edington](#), [Felicity Spowart](#) and [8 others](#) like this.

[Dan Shire](#) With the expected huge growth of mobile phone applications in the next 3 years (predicted to be 50% of all s/w applications by 2014), what can you share about industry standards and coding standards for accessibility? Any good resources for helping designers, developers and testers?

[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) mobile platform accessibility is advancing rapidly but some gaps remain, specifically around web access. We are developing new standards in the W3C to provide device independent events that can be sent to a web application that is aria enabled that will allow applications to respond to either a touch or keyboard input mechanism. New Access For All personalization standards will also have an impact on mobile.

[Linda Smoke](#) Is there a phone number I should call in on?
[Tomas Vigas](#) likes this.

[Laura Lanham Kelley](#) No, Linda. All the Q&A will be posted right here on Facebook :)
[1 person](#) likes this

[IBM Accessibility](#) Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening!
[Brian W. F. Peaston](#) likes this.

[IBM Accessibility](#) We're very glad you've joined us for the first IBM Accessibility Expert Hour on Facebook. We're excited to be doing this today because we hope it will become a regular forum for us to discuss important accessibility topics with our FB fans and other accessibility stakeholders.
[2 people](#) like this.

[IBM Accessibility](#) Andi Snow-Weaver is the worldwide accessibility standards program manager for IBM. She'll be answering your questions about accessibility standards for the next hour.
[Laura Lanham Kelley](#) and [2 others](#) like this.

[Linda Smoke](#) Good Morning. :)

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IBM Research
Human Ability and
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[IBM Accessibility](#) So a little more about Andi. With more than 20 years of user interface and accessibility experience, she was IBM's representative to the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines working group which published the WCAG 2.0 standard in December 2008.

[3 people](#) like this.

[IBM Accessibility](#) And she was a member of the Telecommunications and Electronic Information Technology Advisory Committee (TEITAC) to the U.S. government for updating the Section 508 and 255 accessibility standards.

[IBM Accessibility](#) So let's get started. Please post your accessibility standards questions on the wall, and Andi will answer them as a comment to your post.

[Marco Maertens](#) Hi Andi. Can you clarify where things stand with the 508 update? I understand public comment closed this past summer. So, when are we likely to see a final requirement? On a more detailed level, what does harmonization with WCAG 2.0 mean? Is there going to be a divergence like between WCAG 1.0 and the original Section 508?

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) The final standard will be published sometime after that. Again, the Access Board doesn't give us a schedule but I wouldn't expect to see it before 2012.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Harmonization with WCAG 2.0 simply means having the Section 508 standards be the same as WCAG 2.0 or have WCAG 2.0 compliance accepted as Section 508 compliance.

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[Phill Jenkins](#) You can follow the US Access Board's progress on the Section 508 refresh at <http://www.access-board.gov/508.htm>

[Gail Henderson Angel](#) Why can't we start with a good UI and work from there? If I'm getting older and my eyesight isn't as good as it used to be, should I be struggling to enlarge the font all the time? System settings in operating systems that don't work with applications, and don't get me going on webpages that don't allow the frames to r...esize

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for proportionality.....

If we can get the basics right, it should be much simpler to take it the rest of the way.... and if I have some eyesight, I don't want to use JAWS, I want to read

[Margaret Escobar](#), [Dan Shire](#) and [Brian W. F. Peaston](#) like this.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Hi Gail. The WCAG 2.0 standards do have requirements for being able to enlarge text and Section 508 has requirements for supporting system display settings. So these things are addressed to varying degrees in the standards. In addition to standards, I am an advocate of involving users in your design. Including older people and those with disabilities in the design will help all of us have more usable interfaces.

[Robert Kinsman](#) Bad U/I kills. literally.

<http://www.cbc.ca/whitecoat/blog/2010/11/10/wednesday-mailbag-3/>

So much of the technology we have today cannot be used effectively because of poor U/I design, and making products accessible should help with usability.

[IBM Accessibility](#) Marco Maertens asked: Presumably a site like Amazon.com could be considered accessible even if it sells books not available in Braille or in audio format. What would you say about a site like Hulu if the videos it provides are not captioned or audio-described?

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Marco, we spent a lot of time during the development of WCAG 2.0 talking about these types of sites that host content provided by third parties but don't themselves own the content. Such sites are allowed to make a "Statement of Partial Conformance". For details, see <http://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/#conformance-claims>

[Marco Maertens](#) So whether a statement of partial conformance is acceptable or not comes down to the prevailing policy or regulation?

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Yes I think so. There are technology challenges with this too. Programs that are broadcast on television networks are required to be captioned but the captions are not included when the content is converted for publishing on a website. So we need to work out the standards and tools for this. I think WGBH in Boston is doing some work in this area.

[Marco Maertens](#) Thank you. Wrestling with these exact issues now. I'll check out WGBH.

[Suzanne Robitaille](#) Hey Marco - in the US a law just passed dealing with captions on web TV programs.

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<http://abledbody.com/profoundlyyours/2010/10/05/web-content-accessibility-law-needs-more-brawn/>

[Anushil Gupta](#) Hi Andi, its Anushil here, an MBA student here in India. I was an Extreme blue intern at IRL and worked with the India HA&AC Team under Anil Joshi. My Question is that something which the sales or BD team faces while 'selling' Accessibility solutions is a lack of quantitative data to justify the ROI for the customers. ...while there are a lot of qualitative analysis, I couldn't find any worthy industry report on Accessibility worldwide. So how do we, or Sales folks go about pitching this to the customers, as it is numbers and X millions of dollars which more often than not win their attention, Could u point out to any resources?

I also thought of carrying out a preliminary report on the same lines and am currently working on it, can use all the help I can on that.

[Bill Curtis-Davidson](#) [Anil Joshi](#), [Laura Lanham Kelley](#) and Teresa Boers and Brian F.W. Peaston like this.

[IBM Accessibility](#) @Anushil: This is Bill Curtis-Davidson, from the IBM HA&AC business development team. Here are a few resources that may be helpful:

1. W3C, "Developing a Web Accessibility Business Case for Your Organization": <http://www.w3.org/WAI/bcase/O...verview>
2. Some industry specific studies including one from Harris Interactive/Open Doors Org on ""Research Among Adults with Disabilities: Travel and Hospitality" are helpful: <http://opendoorsnfp.org/page3.html>

I usually leverage general and industry specific studies and resources and align to my specific customer wants and needs...

Hopefully this helps!

[Anushil Gupta](#) Hey Bill, Thanks a lot.

I have gone though the W3C resource, yet i must say it is again largely a qualitative resource with some case studies to build the economic and financial case.

What I am looking for and what I feel would strengthen the business case for accessibility is an industry wide report on the Accessibility segment and not a case based analysis. Any inputs on that or some feedback on how to go about making such a report if there is none?

Will go through the second link. Thanks a ton :)

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[Cindy Catella Drummond](#) Hi Andi! What advice would you give to a professional re-entering the tech field related to what is currently going on with accessibility standards and the full life cycle dev process? I need to catch up! So glad to see you all doing this!

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Cindy, assuming you were knowledgeable on accessibility standards before you left, here are some that you will want to look at....

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) WCAG 2.0 is now a W3C Recommendation. And the W3C is developing a new standard addressing rich Internet applications called WAI-ARIA.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) US Section 508 is undergoing a refresh. The government has published a first draft at www.access-board.gov.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) There is also a good resource on including people with disabilities in the design process called "Just Ask: Integrating Accessibility Throughout Design" (<http://www.uiaccess.com/JustAsk/>)

[Laura Lanham Kelley](#) Hi, Andi! Can you explain the fundamental difference between WCAG 1.0 and WCAG 2.0?

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Hey Laura. WCAG 1.0 is very specific to static HTML websites and has become outdated as websites have incorporated more and more interactivity and begun to look more like software applications. Developers trying to comply with WCAG 1.0 using newer technologies are unable to do so.

[Brian W. F. Peaston likes this.](#)

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) WCAG 2.0 is technology neutral. The requirements in the standard are stated as the outcome that is to be achieved rather than the specifics of how it must be achieved. Additional information on how you can meet WCAG 2.0 is provided in the "Understanding WCAG 2.0" reference which includes known techniques for meeting each requirement. As technologies change over time, the WCAG 2.0 standard should continue to be relevant and the additional information references can be updated with new technologies and new techniques.

[Laura Lanham Kelley](#) Oh, this helps. Thanks, Andi :)

[IBM Accessibility](#) A question from Dan Shire: With the expected huge growth of mobile phone applications in the next 3 years (predicted to be 50% of all s/w applications by

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2014), what can you share about industry standards and coding standards for accessibility? Any good resources for helping designers, developers and testers?
[Anushil Gupta](#) likes this.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Hi Dan! There aren't yet any accessibility standards specifically for mobile phone applications. For Web applications on mobile, the W3C WAI has a very good resource entitled "Web Content Accessibility and Mobile Web: Making a Web Site Accessible Both for People with Disabilities and for Mobile Devices" (<http://www.w3.org/WAI/mobile/>).

[Brian W. F. Peaston](#) likes this.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) And accessibility is often addressed in the developer guides for the various mobile phone platforms. For example:

1. Apple iPhone Developer Guidance:

<http://developer.apple.com/technologies/ios/accessibility.html>

2. Google Android Developer ...Guidance:

<http://developer.android.com/search.html?q=accessibility&t=0>

3. RIM Blackberry Accessibility Developers Guide:

<http://docs.blackberry.com/en/developers/deliverables/11936/>

[Brian W. F. Peaston](#) likes this.

[Dan Shire](#) great Andi. thanks for the reference. Canadian banks and governments are trying to get ahead of the curve and design for accessible mobile apps today, to avoid costly remediation in a year or 2.

[Al Noll](#) Excellent question, Dan. Also, keep in mind: fixing while developing is more cost effectiveness than fixing it after GA.

[Fran Hayden](#) Andi: Just checking in to this event - VERY COOL!!! My question is this - What is WAI-ARIA?

[Paul Luther](#) likes this.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Hi Fran! Thanks for coming. It stands for Web Accessibility Initiative - Accessible Rich Internet Applications.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) It's a new standard being developed in the W3C for making Web applications accessible.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) It is a way to add semantic information to UI elements that JavaScript developers create by re-purposing HTML elements.

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[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) So for example, if you take a list and make it an interactive menu, using ARIA, you can identify it programmatically as a menu and an assistive technology can tell a user it's a menu rather than a list.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) It's a standard that is needed in order for Web applications to be able to comply with WCAG 2.0.

[Fran Hayden](#) Andi - Thanks for that explanation!

[Paul Luther](#) Andi, I am really enjoying your responses to all these questions. Keep up the good work. I do have a question: Are there any accessibility standards for mobile applications?

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Hey Paul! No "standards" yet but I posted some references below in answer to Dan Shire's question below.

[Marnie Hoover](#) Hi Andi, can you tell, does ISO have any accessibility standards?

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Hi Marnie, thanks for coming. ISO does have some accessibility standards. They have a very comprehensive standard on software accessibility that is part of the 9241 ergonomic series. Specifically, it is ISO 9241 part 171

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) And we are currently working on a joint ISO-IEC standard on interoperability with assistive technology. This one will be ISO-IEC 13066. It will be a technology neutral standard describing interoperability between hardware components, software components, and between hardware and software components.

[Marnie Hoover](#) Thank you!

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) And it will have some additional parts describing the different software platform accessibility APIs such as those for Windows including IAccessible2, Linux/Unix, and Java.

[Rodrigo Januário](#) Hello Andi. First of all... Thank you so much for answering all questions... I really appreciate that. Now my question is... Are there any visually impaired person on accessibility web team? I am asking this bcoz I am also a PDW (wheeel chair user) and I always see people without disabilities creating and testing thing...s to improve our lives. I really like that, but sometimes there are challenges that only who feel the problem in his own life can identify.

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Do you know if there were any visually impaired person group who created or tested the WCAG 1.0 and 2.0?

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Hi Rodrigo! Are you asking if there were any visually impaired people on the team that created WCAG 2.0? The standard took over 8 years to complete from the time we started. During those 8 years we did have several visually impaired people participating including at least 2 as co-chairs for a time.

[Brian Cragun](#) I would add that there are at least at least three blind people working on the team at the Linux foundation on the ISO 13066 specification and associated appendices. In addition to those developing the standards, there is a larger community reviewing them, and that community has strong representation from persons with all disabilities.

[IBM Accessibility](#) Sharon Snider asked: What are the most common accessibility standards to learn if you are a novice to this area?

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Hi Sharon. That depends on the context of what you are doing. I would say that someone new to the area of IT accessibility should first learn how people with disabilities use technology.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) The W3C has a resource called "Introduction to "How People with Disabilities Use the Web" <http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/people-use-web>. At the IBM Human Ability & Accessibility Center, we have a brief article on "Understanding accessibility" ...at http://www-03.ibm.com/able/access_ibm/disability.html. For a more comprehensive document on the needs of users with disabilities, see the ISO-IEC technical report entitled "Information technology -- Accessibility considerations for people with disabilities -- Part 1: User needs summary" (29138-1).

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Once you have an idea of the needs of people with disabilities and how they use information technology, then you need to look for standards that address the type of information technology you are developing.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) For websites, look at the W3C WAI Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0: <http://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/>

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) The US government also has an accessibility standard called Section 508 that covers other types of IT in addition to websites, such

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as software, personal computers, and self-service kiosks: <http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/standards.htm>

[Phill Jenkins](#) Great question Sharon - often when I see the term "standard" I think of technical standards which Andi referenced, but the term is also used (incorrectly?) in policy settings. For example, the ADA standard is for some percent of parking spaces to be conforming when a parking lot has some minimum number of spaces, or the 'standard' may only apply to certain entities, but there is also a 'technical standard' for the exact dimensions specified for a 'van-accessible' parking space. The U.S. Dept of Justice recently asked for comments from the public on the applicability of the technical standards, but explained its "intention to regulate only . . . the websites of entities that provide goods or services that fall within the 12 categories of "public accommodations," as defined by the [ADA] statute. See http://www.ada.gov/anprm2010/web%20anprm_2010.htm

[Anushil Gupta](#) My second question. Despite 508 and all the other regulations, Accessibility is still perceived as a 'good to have' thing than an essential feature for most portals and websites, especially so outside US. Despite the progress made, Out here in India Accessibility is still very new and lesser said is better for other geographies.

What are the other legally mandatory regulations across major geographies and sectors, and how do you see it going forward from regulation to mandatory implementations worldwide?

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Hi Anushil. Most European countries have Web accessibility policies based on WCAG 1.0 and many, such as France, Italy, and Germany, are already updating the policies to WCAG 2.0. In addition, Europe is in the process of developing accessibility regulation at the EU level called Mandate 376.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Mandate 376 directs the European standards organizations to develop accessibility standards and a conformity assessment scheme

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Also, the province of Ontario Canada has a new law called the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Unlike Section 508 and many other country regulations, the AODA requires private sector organizations as well as public sector ones to make their information (including) websites accessible to people with disabilities.

[Anushil Gupta](#) likes this

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[Anushil Gupta](#) Thanks a lot Andi. This helps, along with your replies to some of the other questions posted here. :)

[Marco Maertens](#) One more question for today: Are there particular accessibility challenges for specific human languages? I'm thinking mostly from a web accessibility perspective. I've heard that WCAG 2.0 for CJK languages is problematic, but I don't understand why that should be.

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Hi Marco. Great question. Even though WCAG 2.0 is a technology neutral standard, you have to use technologies that support accessibility and are supported by assistive technologies in the language of the website

[Jeffrey Staples](#) The FCC had an Open Developer day on Monday 11/8, with Yahoo! Accessibility Specialists giving a talk on their development tools. Would IBM consider a similar event with a federal agency? Specifically I'm thinking of the Dojo toolkit and IBM WebSphere Application Server Feature Pack. I may be in a position to use these tools soon.

[IBM Accessibility](#) Jeffrey, here's the response from Andi: Hi Jeffrey! We are always interested in collaborating with any of our customers on accessibility.

[Phill Jenkins](#) Also, myself and Drew LaHart did attend the session on Monday as well.

[Jeff Kline](#) Hi, Andi! Here at Texas HHS, we have been looking at the DOJ's Advanced Notice for Public Rulemaking related to websites being considered places of public accommodation. Can you comment on what you believe the DOJ will be considering with respect to enforcement? Is certification on the table? Auditing Schemes?

[Andi Snow-Weaver](#) Hey Jeff! Thanks for coming. I don't have any insight into what the DoJ might be thinking other than the questions they are asking in the ANPRMs.

[Pj Marschner Edington](#) Hey Jeff. After talking a few months ago to the staff that put out the ANPRM, Andi is right, they are really looking for direction from the stakeholders. They are not sure what direction to go in at this point.

[Phill Jenkins](#) I think it is also important to understand when DoJ, or any US agency does a proposed regulation, that they are often required to do a regulatory assessment - a kind of economic impact study - what it would cost

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the stakeholder (e.g a federal agency in the 508 case) to implement the regulation.

[Jeff Kline](#) Thanks, Andi, PJ, and Phill. It will be interesting to watch this unfold over the next year or so.

Best regards to everyone in the HA&AC!

[Jeffrey Staples](#) The IBM Web Accessibility Checklist is a great guide to follow. The comparison of WCAG to Section 508 is helpful and the IBM guidelines provide detail on the rationale, development techniques and test techniques. Will these guidelines be updated for the Section 508 refresh?
[www-03.ibm.com/able/guidelines/web/ibm508wcag.html]

[IBM Accessibility](#) Jeffrey, here's the response from Andi: Hi Jeffrey! Thanks for the positive feedback. It's too soon to say. We like to keep our checklists up to date but we need to see the final Section 508 standard before we'll know for sure what our plans are.

[Margaret Escobar](#) Great event! Really valuable information in an easily digestible format - thanks!

[Laura Lanham Kelley](#) likes this.

[Marnie Hoover](#) Thanks for all the great information!

[IBM Accessibility](#) Well, our hour is up! This concludes our first IBM Accessibility Facebook Expert Hour. We appreciate you attending, and hope you found it helpful. We'd love to know what you thought about it, and future topics you'd find interesting.

Andi is answering the last questions, but thank you, Andi -- great job!

[Pj Marschner Edington](#) Thanks Andi. Well done!

[Laura Lanham Kelley](#) likes this.

[Dana Marlowe](#) Terrific online expert session! Andi did a fantastic job, thanks for the excellent information.

[Laura Lanham Kelley](#) likes this.