

# The Billion-User Blind Spot: Who, What, and How of Digital Accessibility

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When is an  
accessibility issue a  
“feature request”  
versus a “bug”?

# The Who

(not  or )

# Who is impacted?

Data from [CDC Disability and Health Data System - 2022](#)

73+ million

Adults with disabilities in United States

About 28%

More than 1 in 4 people

31% registered

of Stanford students with the OAE

19% receiving services

of Stanford students



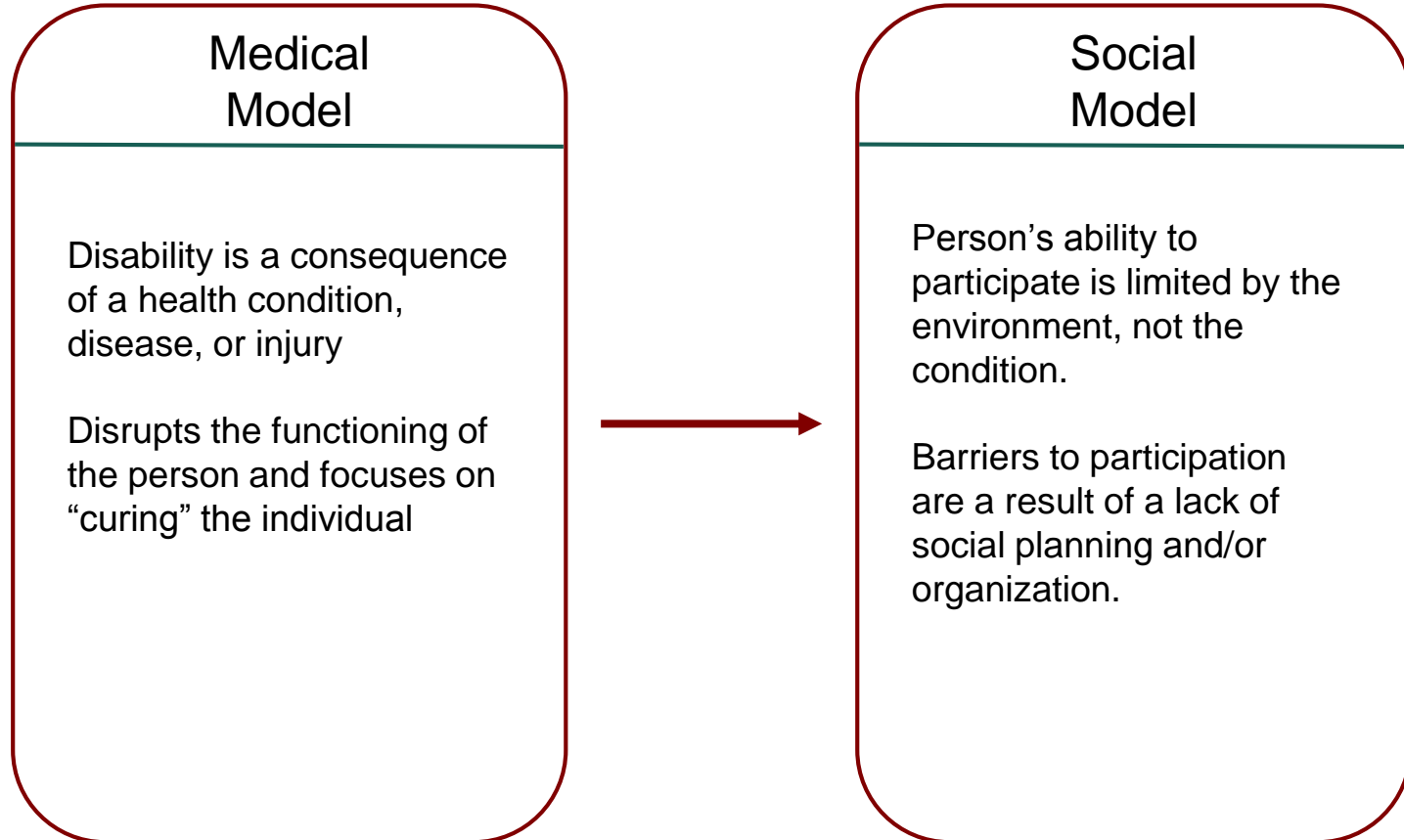
# ROI

## The “missed opportunity cost” perspective

- Again - about 1 in 4 adults
- Approximately 35% are of working age (16-64)
  - › Discretionary income was calculated at \$21 billion
  - › Greater amount compared to other minority groups
- People with disabilities are “the third largest market segment in the United States” - *from U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy*
- The “market size more than doubles when considering family members, caregivers, and others who prioritize goods and services that are inclusive of people with disabilities.”

# The What

# Change in Perspective





# Defining “Accessible”

A person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to **acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services** as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, **with substantially equivalent ease of use.**

*South Carolina Technical College System - OCR Compliance Review No. 11-11-6002*

# WCAG: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

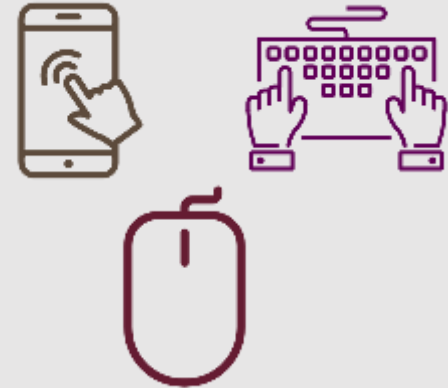
## Perceivable

- Information and user interface components are presentable to users in ways they can perceive.



## Operable

- User interface components and navigation must be operable.



From “[Accessibility Principles](#)”, W3C Web Accessibility Initiative

# WCAG: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

(cont.)

## Understandable

- Information and operation of user interface must be understandable.

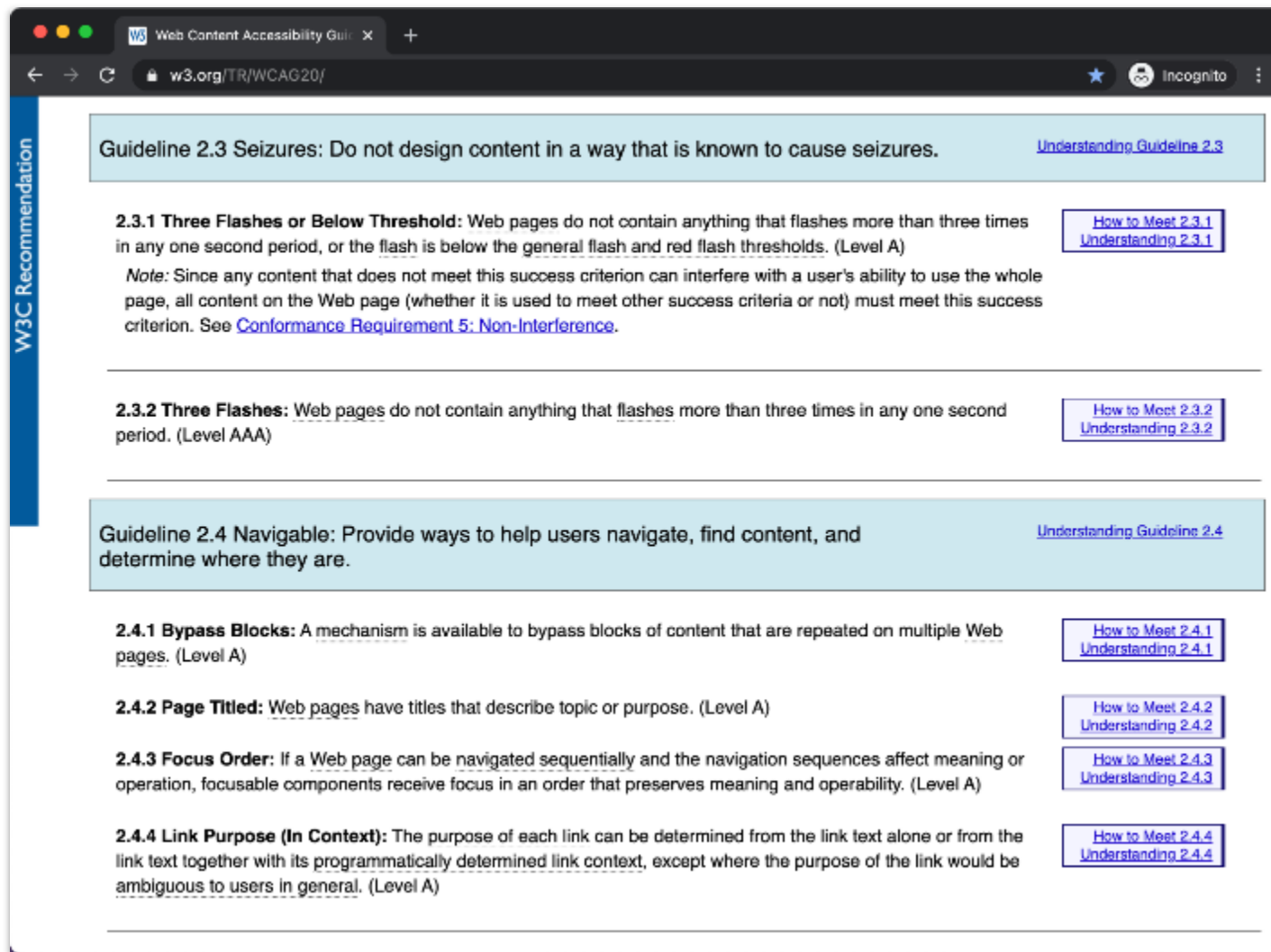


## Robust

- Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.



From “[Accessibility Principles](#)”, W3C Web Accessibility Initiative



Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0

Guideline 2.3 Seizures: Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures. [Understanding Guideline 2.3](#)

**2.3.1 Three Flashes or Below Threshold:** Web pages do not contain anything that flashes more than three times in any one second period, or the flash is below the general flash and red flash thresholds. (Level A) [How to Meet 2.3.1 Understanding 2.3.1](#)

*Note:* Since any content that does not meet this success criterion can interfere with a user's ability to use the whole page, all content on the Web page (whether it is used to meet other success criteria or not) must meet this success criterion. See [Conformance Requirement 5: Non-Interference](#).

**2.3.2 Three Flashes:** Web pages do not contain anything that flashes more than three times in any one second period. (Level AAA) [How to Meet 2.3.2 Understanding 2.3.2](#)

Guideline 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are. [Understanding Guideline 2.4](#)

**2.4.1 Bypass Blocks:** A mechanism is available to bypass blocks of content that are repeated on multiple Web pages. (Level A) [How to Meet 2.4.1 Understanding 2.4.1](#)

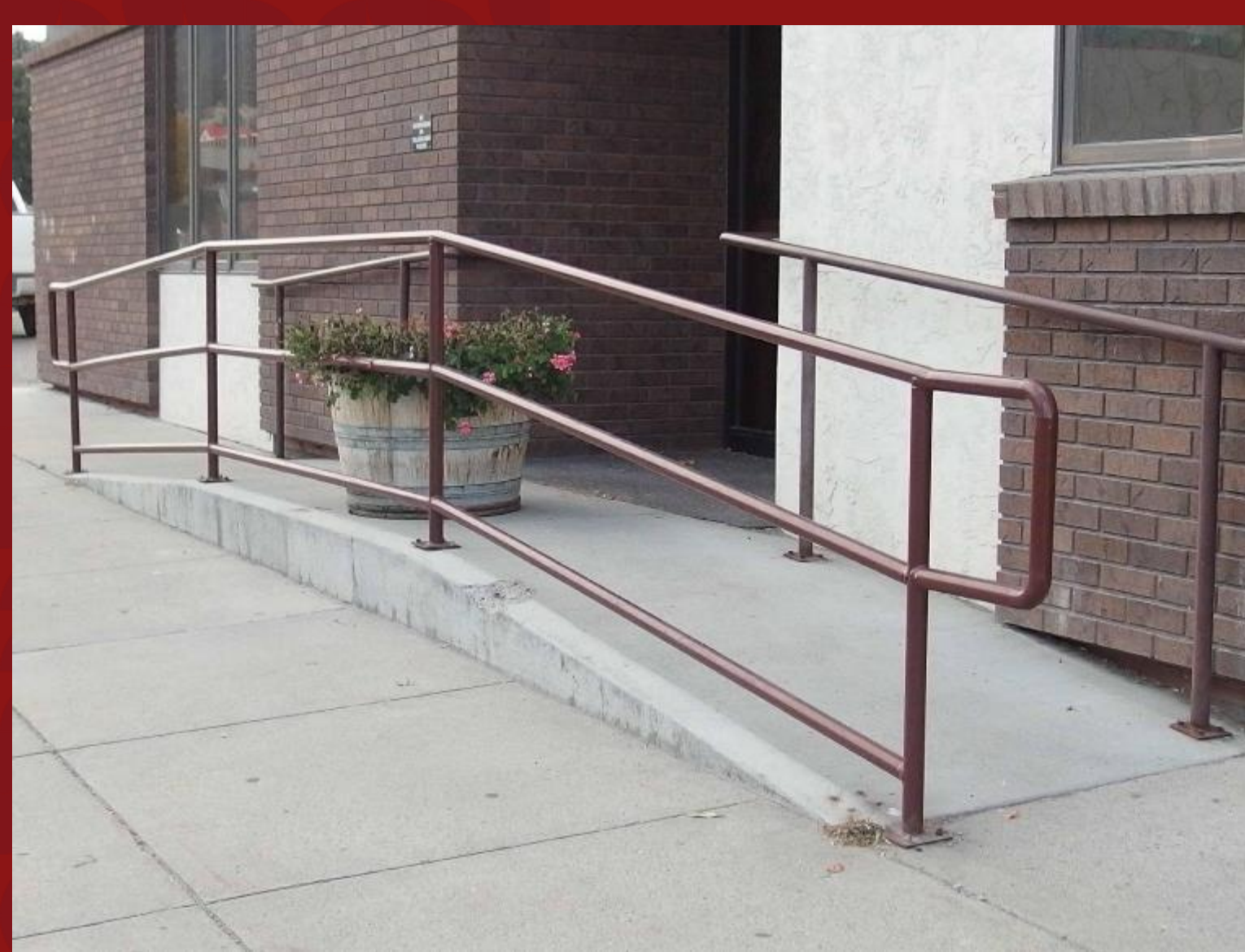
**2.4.2 Page Titled:** Web pages have titles that describe topic or purpose. (Level A) [How to Meet 2.4.2 Understanding 2.4.2](#)

**2.4.3 Focus Order:** If a Web page can be navigated sequentially and the navigation sequences affect meaning or operation, focusable components receive focus in an order that preserves meaning and operability. (Level A) [How to Meet 2.4.3 Understanding 2.4.3](#)

**2.4.4 Link Purpose (In Context):** The purpose of each link can be determined from the link text alone or from the link text together with its programmatically determined link context, except where the purpose of the link would be ambiguous to users in general. (Level A) [How to Meet 2.4.4 Understanding 2.4.4](#)

## Guidelines provide testable Success Criteria. These are:

- Measurable
- Repeatable
- “Technology agnostic”







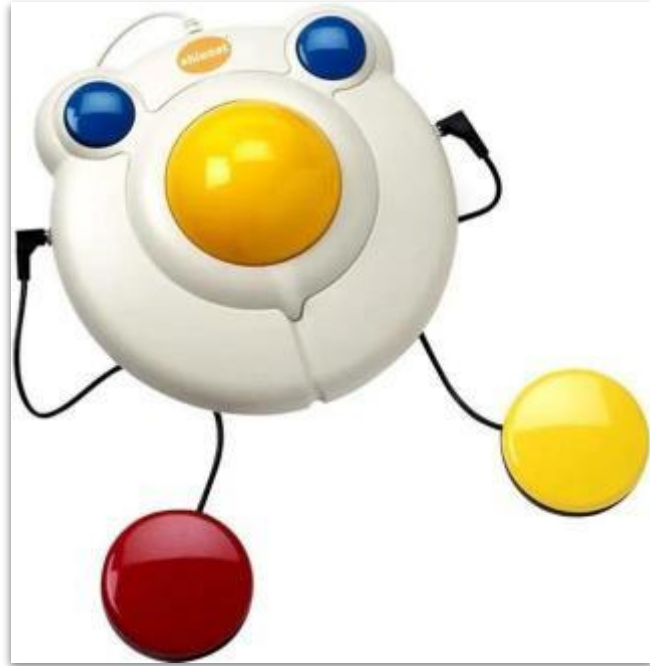




How do people with  
disabilities access  
digital content?



# Alternate keyboard and mouse options



BIGTrack 2 trackball mouse  
(with switch buttons)



CharaCorder 2  
chorded keyboard



# Screen Readers

- Windows OS
  - JAWS (\$)
  - NVDA (Free)
- Mac and iOS
  - VoiceOver (Built in)
- Android
  - Accessibility Suite (TalkBack)
- Braille Readers

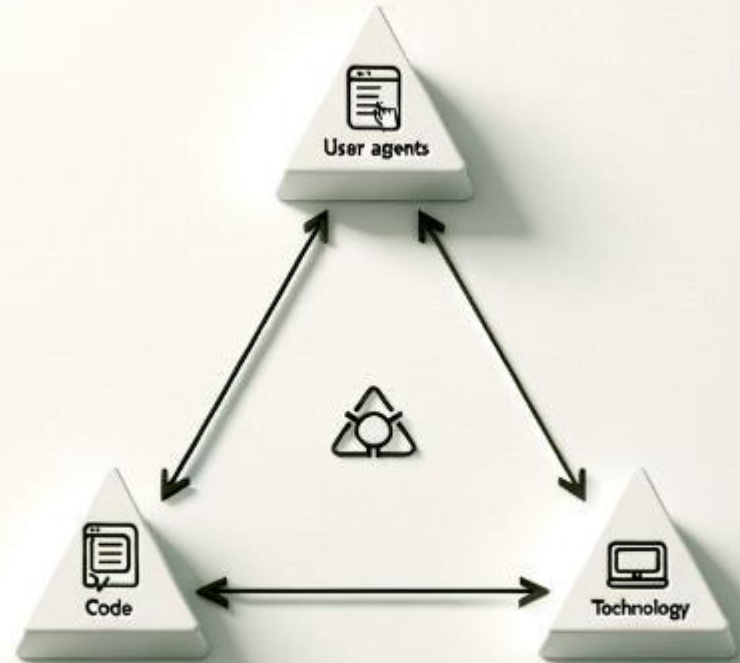


# Getting it to work

**Web browsers** must create an Accessibility Tree for assistive technologies to parse

**Assistive technologies** must be interoperable with the browser's Accessibility Tree

**Code** must be accessible by including semantic meaning and other relevant information of elements (e.g., name, role, state, description)



# HOCUS :FOCUS

Stanford | University IT

A keyboard accessibility horror game.

What a nice day to make some 🎃 pumpkin pie

LEVEL 1  
00:00.00



## Activity 1

(<https://focus.hteumeuleu.com/>)



# Activity 1 - Keyboard Accessibility

## What to do

1. Get into groups of 2 to 3
2. Go to [Hocus :Focus](#) game
3. Using only the keyboard, proceed through the various levels

## Questions

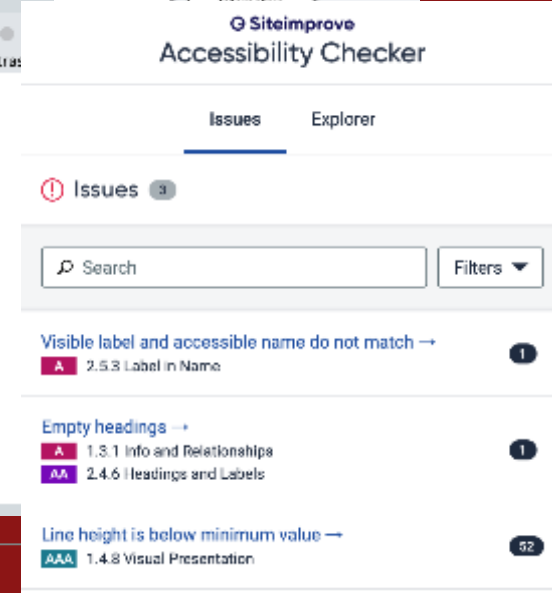
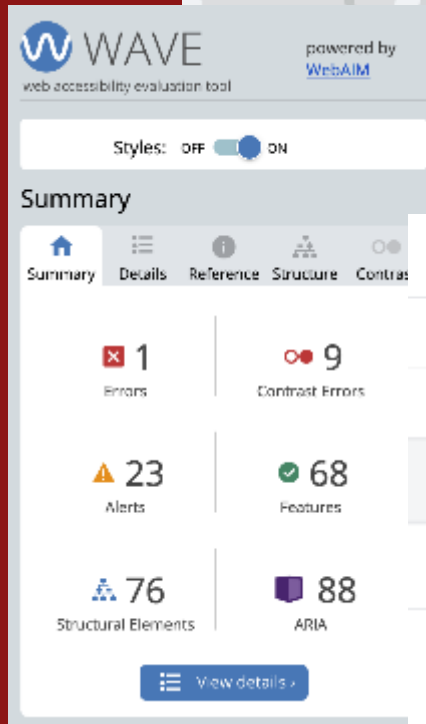
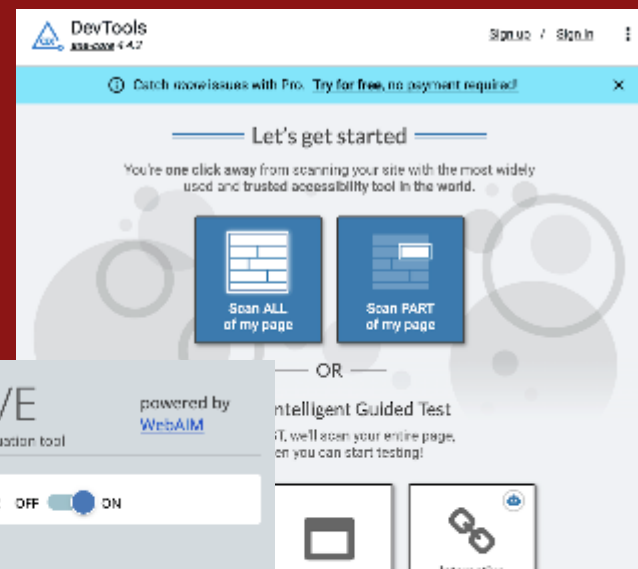
- What issues did you experience when navigating with a keyboard?
- What were some of the (intentional) failures in the design?

# How to ensure accessibility for digital content?

# Automated Testing

## Browser-based Tools

- Quick and Easy
- Catch the low-hanging programmatic errors
- Limited tests - captures approx 35% of issues.
- Potential false positives and negatives
- False sense of security





Styles: OFF ☐ ON ☒

Styles: OFF ☐ ON ☒

## Details

## Reference

      
Summary Details Reference Structure Contrast

      
Summary Details Reference Structure Contrast

### ☒ 1 Errors

☒ 1 X Empty heading



### ☒ 9 Contrast Errors

9 X Very low contrast



# Activity

*Automated testing*

# Activity 2 - Automated Testing

## What to do

1. Get into a **new group** of 2 to 3
2. Download and install one of the following tools:
  - a. [axe DevTools](#)
  - b. [WAVE](#)
  - c. [Siteimprove Accessibility Checker](#)
3. Visit at least two websites and run automated tests.

## Questions

- How many issues were identified?
- Were the results helpful?
- What “view” helped you identify the actual accessibility issue?
- How does an automated check connect to a real user's experience?

# Manual Testing

**Testing every page of a site is not realistic**

Choose representative pages or UI elements:

- Critical pathways through the site or app
- High-traffic pages
- Interactive elements

Avoid testing with a screen-reader first - they often try to “fix” accessibility issues that can still affect many other users.



# Manual Testing

## Have a workflow for conducting manual tests

- [Accessibility Quick Checks Guide](#)
- [Quick Checks - Google Doc Version](#)

## Other workflows:

- [Section 508 - Trusted Tester](#)
- [DWP Accessibility Manual](#)





How will AI tools  
impact accessibility?



# Image recognition & description



## Write an ALT text for this image

A picturesque view of three distinct residential houses on a steep incline. The buildings showcase a variety of architectural styles, with the center house painted in light blue and featuring elegant balconies. The left house is gray with a decorative facade, while the right house is cream-colored with intricate detailing. Lush greenery surrounds the properties, and the street is visible with a gentle slope. The sky is clear and blue, enhancing the vibrant appearance of the homes.



# Write an ALT text for this image in the context of parking in San Francisco

A steeply sloped street in San Francisco showcasing three distinct residential houses, emphasizing the city's unique parking challenges. The houses are varied in architectural style, with the central blue house featuring steps leading up to the front door, indicating limited parking space. The left house has a garage partially visible, while the right house's driveway is also visible but appears narrow. Lush greenery frames the homes, typical of San Francisco's hilly landscape, highlighting the need for creative parking solutions in the area.





Write an ALT text  
for this image that  
is 150 characters  
or less

Three stylish homes on a  
steep street, showcasing  
unique architectural designs  
and lush greenery  
surrounding the entrances.  
Clear blue sky above.

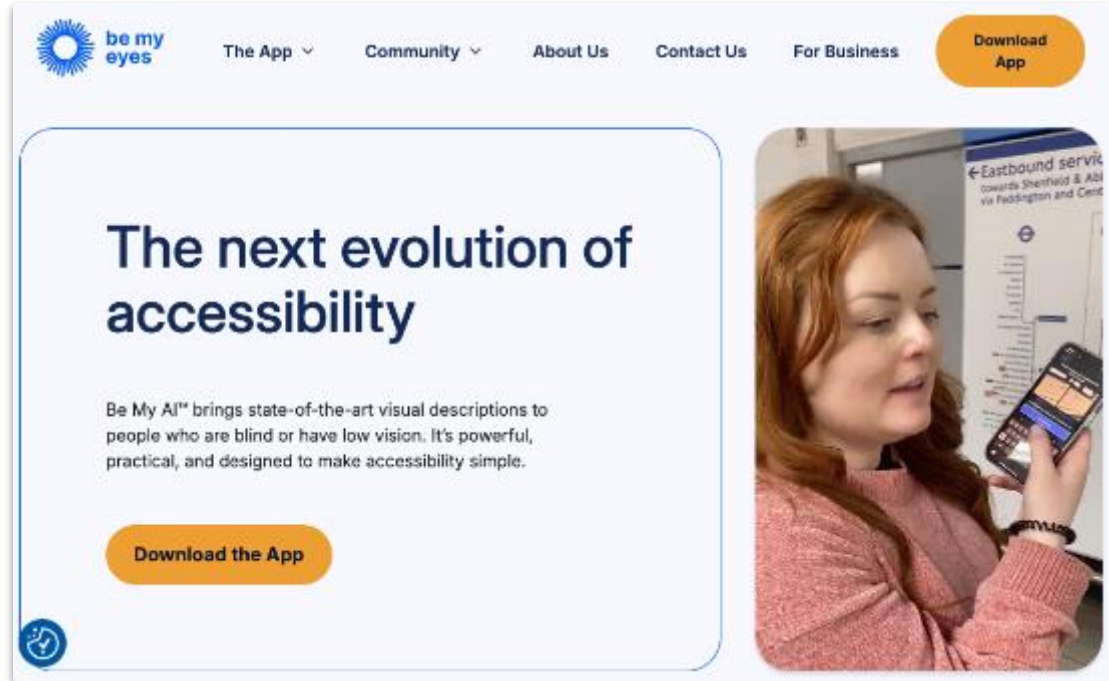
*145 Characters*



# Image recognition in real life places

Be My AI is a mobile app that uses the camera to capture images and upload that to AI-models.

This results in a short description that the user can then request further details about the image.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Be My AI website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'be my eyes' logo on the left, followed by links for 'The App', 'Community', 'About Us', 'Contact Us', and 'For Business'. A prominent orange button labeled 'Download App' is on the right. The main content area features a large heading 'The next evolution of accessibility' in a bold, dark blue font. Below this, a paragraph states: 'Be My AI™ brings state-of-the-art visual descriptions to people who are blind or have low vision. It's powerful, practical, and designed to make accessibility simple.' An orange button labeled 'Download the App' is positioned below the text. To the right of the text is a photograph of a woman with long red hair, wearing a pink sweater, looking at her smartphone. In the background of the photo, a train station sign is visible, reading '← Eastbound service towards Sheffield & Abi via Fiddington and Cent'. A small circular icon with a person and a magnifying glass is located in the bottom left corner of the main content area.

```

<!DOCTYPE html> == $0
<html lang="en"> scroll
  > <head> ... </head>
  > <body>
    > <div id="headcontainer" class="clearfix" style="background-in
    > <main id="maincontainer" class="clearfix">
      ::before
      > <article id="maincontent">
        > <h1> ... </h1>
        > <p id="breadcrumbs"> ... </p>
        > <nav role="navigation"> ... </nav>
        > <div class="section" id="intro"> ... </div>
        > <div class="section" id="sample"> ... </div>
        > <div class="section" id="errors"> ... </div>
        > <div class="section" id="complexity">
          <h2>Home Page Complexity</h2>
          > <p> ... </p>
          > <p> ... </p>
          > <p> ... </p>
          > <div class="note"> ... </div>
          > <p> ... </p>
        </div>
        > <div class="section" id="wcag"> ... </div>
        > <div class="section" id="contrast">
          <h2>Low Contrast Text</h2>

```

# Code development

# A11y LLM Eval

All Models were tested against 3 test cases. Each test case was tested 100 times. This results in **300** total samples being evaluated per model.

Model	Rank	WCAG Pass Rate*	Avg Total WCAG Failures	Avg Axe WCAG Failures	Avg Assertion WCAG Failures	Avg Best Practice Failures
GPT-5 Mini	1	31%	4.98	4.26	0.72	3.12
GPT-5	2	29%	5.94	5.37	0.57	3.15
GPT-5 Codex	3	25%	6.55	6.01	0.53	2.18
GPT-5 Nano	4	20%	4.71	4.08	0.63	2.87
Gemini 2.5 Flash	5	1%	8.54	6.86	1.68	2.97
Gemini 2.5 Flash Lite	6	1%	7.42	5.11	2.31	7.05
Grok 4 Fast Non-Reasoning	7	0%	4.70	2.44	2.26	6.87
Claude Sonnet 4.5	8	0%	6.41	3.68	2.73	8.00
DeepSeek V3.1	9	0%	6.80	4.59	2.21	3.54
Claude Haiku 4.5	10	0%	12.66	10.08	2.58	15.25



# Media content



# Video captions

Do you have captions? Are they accurate?



# Audio description

Audio description for videos (AD)



# Designing for accessibility



## Designing for Accessibility

### UK Home Office

- *Autism spectrum*
- *Screen readers*
- *Low vision*
- *Dyslexia*
- *Physical or motor disabilities*
- *Deaf or hard of hearing*
- *Anxiety*



When is an  
accessibility issue a  
“feature request”  
versus a “bug”?



# Thank You