

Summer, 2017 Member Newsletter

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Evolving Accessibility Guidelines

by
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First, a refresher. In 1999, the [Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\)](#) of the [World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\)](#) completed the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 1.0](#), a set of guidelines for making web content more accessible to people with disabilities. Nine years later, in 2008, the [WCAG Working Group](#) within WAI completed [WCAG 2.0](#), an update to WCAG designed for better testability and to apply to a broader range of technologies (though finished before the full explosion of smartphones would bring on a completely new set of interactions). Ten years later (next year), in 2018, the newly renamed Accessibility Guidelines Working Group (AG WG) will publish WCAG 2.1, currently in progress. The Working Group has published the [First Public Working Draft of WCAG 2.1](#), which includes work from the [Cognitive Accessibility Task Force](#), the [Low Vision Accessibility Task Force](#), and the [Mobile Accessibility Task Force](#).

The Accessibility Guidelines Working Group also has another Task Force, working in parallel, doing the advance research on what will inform the next major version of WCAG, with an overall objective to expand the scope beyond web content and to rethink the very structure of accessibility guidelines. With mobile apps running web content within their native content, the definitions of and lines between user agent and authoring and content have all blurred. New platforms have sprung up with entirely spoken interfaces (such as self-driving cars) or virtual and augmented reality (NY Times 360 app).

Because this next version will likely expand in scope beyond web content, the name “WCAG” will likely change to reflect this, so the Working Group has dubbed the project “Silver” in order to have something sensible to use as a reference when discussing it. The name comes from what happens when you remove the “WC” specificity from “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines”, leaving only AG, also known as the chemical symbol for the element, silver.

The [Silver Task Force](#) has a set of goals around the

content of the guidelines: make them easier to use, reference, and understand; expand the scope beyond web content; make them inclusive of more disabilities, more perspectives, and more technologies; and ultimately, make them more useful for more people.

The Task Force also has a set of goals around the structure of the guidelines: base the guidelines on evidence and data, broadly communicate the efforts via more inclusive communication paths, have clear project milestones, involve more stakeholders, and make the guidelines easier to maintain and update.

Last fall, the overall Accessibility Guidelines Working Group agreed upon and started an overall [design plan for Silver](#), a plan oriented toward long-term flexibility to design Silver and write the requirements, with an emphasis on participatory design. The design follows the following route:

1. **Phase 1:** Discovery—Understand needs, identify opportunities (You are here)
 - a. User research (stakeholder map, surveys, interviews, self-reporting)
 - b. Background research (secondary research, analysis, literature review)
2. **Phase 2:** Interpretation—Transform data into insights
 - a. Synthesis (personas, case studies, user stories)
 - b. Analysis (inventory and grouping)
 - c. Communication (reporting)
3. **Phase 3:** Ideation—Build insights and opportunities into possibilities
 - a. Concept generation (participatory design)
 - b. Choosing (select concepts for prototyping)
4. **Phase 4:** Experimentation—Make possibilities tangible and testable and choose an approach
 - a. Prototyping (create options)
 - b. User research (user journeys, desirability testing)
 - c. Refinement (refine options)
 - d. Choosing (Silver requirements document)
5. **Phase 5:** Production and Evolution—Create Silver and adapt over time
 - a. Resourcing (staffing, editors, meetings)
 - b. Management (charter, milestones, policies)
 - c. Production (guided crowdsourcing to develop Silver)
 - d. Maintenance and evolution (ongoing revision and improvement)

[The design plan's timeline](#) calls for a full year of research. Rather than immediately jumping in and devising new guidelines, we have many questions to answer about what is needed moving forward. With so much having changed over the last decade, and even more in the last two since the definition of the structure of WCAG, a lot may need changing and adding.



Stakeholder map includes designers, developers, QA professionals; accessibility experts and accessibility officers; disability organizations; lawyers and policymakers; browser, OS platform, and hardware; and assistive technology developers. At the center of the stakeholder map are people with disabilities.

In the discovery phase, currently underway, the research covers user research (surveys, interviews, self reporting studies, etc.) and background research (secondary research, WCAG analysis, WCAG adaptation analysis, literature reviews, etc.). The Task Force has established working relationships with researchers around the world to partner in this research and analysis (but certainly welcomes more!), and will build prototypes of guidelines structures and update models, in addition to the content itself, based on the results.

The following are few of [the research questions](#) raised:

- How might we make accessibility guidelines easier to use?
- How might accessibility guidelines address more types of disabilities?
- How might we make conforming with guidelines more straightforward?
- How might we make the process of keeping accessibility guidelines current achievable and timely?
- How do we scope accessibility guidelines? (Web content, native, platforms, hardware, where do you stop?)

One of those questions in particular speaks more directly to the process of maintaining guidelines: "How might we make the process of keeping accessibility guidelines current achievable and timely?" Given the history of WCAG's updates following a decade-ish-long cadence, the Working Group has a strong desire to improve the process around the guidelines, not just the guidelines themselves. The [timeline for the process](#) (estimated and subject to change) outlines aggressive goals: First Public Working Draft in 2018, and completion in 2020.

With all of this happening, especially in parallel with WCAG 2.1 and with our emphasis on including more varied perspectives, the Silver Task Force needs your input and help! We have several ways you can participate:

- [Email the Silver Task Force](#)
- Join [W3C Silver community group](#) - contribute without the time commitment of joining a W3C working group and without needing W3C membership.
- Join the [Silver Task Force](#) - requires joining a working group and W3C membership, so a little more involved, but decidedly welcome!

Guidelines help us to create more accessible content, applications, platforms, and innovations, across our ever-expanding-and-evolving industry. We hope you will join with us in advancing this important work!

2017 U.S. Web Design Contest

We held our 14th annual national web design competition in Louisville, KY (US) as part of the SkillsUSA national conference. Roughly 70 competitors from 28 states (secondary) and 7 states (post-secondary) competed. The event itself was held in the Kentucky Exposition Center (with all contests, we took up a combined space exceeding 20 football fields of floor space).

Representatives from Canada, Russia, and the United Kingdom were also present. As we have done for many years, we interviewed competitors on site (akin to an actual job interview) and reviewed their process to developing websites (and how they planned

to meet the business needs of the client described in the work order). The majority of judging was done off site (by practicing web professionals).



Team being interviewed by Web Professionals. This team also brought their ASL interpreter.

Prior competitions have been inspiring events and this year was no exception. We are seeing a gradual improvement in the knowledge, skills and abilities that competitors bring each year.

We also took the opportunity to train competitors on current industry “best practices” regarding user centered design and the overall web design process. We believe it is critical to help set standards and confirm web design educational pathways include what is happening in the industry today. This is why we hold this national contest every year. It is also why we reach out to those running state competitions so we have a common approach. The fact that we are seeing improvement from year to year means our message is getting through (to students and those who teach these topics).



Training provided by Web Professionals on user centered design and web design process.

Every year, there is a palpable sense of excitement on the competition floor as teams of two test their knowledge and skills against other teams. In order to compete, teams must have won first place in their respective state or region.

Our efforts are also important to employers. We are helping competitors understand the knowledge, skills, and abilities employers look for in applicants these days. Those who conduct the onsite interviews of teams are the same individuals who hire web professionals. They asked many of the same questions one would anticipate in an actual interview. This means competitors had a chance to experience an actual professional job interview (many for their first time). They should be better prepared when they are actually seeking employment in the field.

We are helping competitors better understand what is expected of them in the workforce, but we are also helping industry by raising the bar so those competing are better prepared when they enter the workforce in this dynamic and rapidly changing field. We are also helping them better understand what tools and skills employers look for when hiring.



Providing feedback and addressing questions from competitors during web design contest.

First place for secondary was awarded to the team from Vermont. Both winners also hold Certified Web Designer Associate certificates from Web Professionals (and have been certified for several months). This confirms they know what they are doing.

First place for post-secondary was awarded to the team from Florida. We reached out to Matthew Vreman (part of the winning team from Florida) and asked him why he participated in this competition.

"As soon as I heard about it, I wanted to compete! I wanted to challenge myself and also measure my Web Design knowledge and skill against that of the top students in similar programs from around the state and country."



We also asked what advice he would provide to those thinking of competing next year.

"In regards to the contest itself: study hard, know what you are doing, and know the correct way of doing it! Also, the contest doesn't just test

your coding or design skill, but also abilities such as interviewing, and explaining your design/thought process, so be sure that you are expanding your knowledge beyond simply coding or designing. If you aren't sure whether or not you should compete or not, do it! This is a great opportunity to show off your skills and also match yourself against other students from across the state and country. It is an amazing experience, and definitely one you will never forget."

Judges' general comments were posted on our <https://webdesigncontest.org> site.

Many thanks to all the Web Professionals who helped make this competition a reality. We are already thinking of improvements for our 2018 national competition.

We also want to give a big shout out to all who helped with our competition. Steve, Sam, David, and Jonathan were on-site and did an amazing job of helping me coordinate the competitions. Shari Tripp, Brandy Thatcher, and James Munger and others spent hours analyzing the work of the competitors. I mention these 3 judging super stars as they have been judges for multiple years and always step up to the challenge (even though it means a couple of very long nights for them - and they all have day jobs). We appreciate your efforts immensely.



Our on-site team of web professionals (from left to right): Sam Shurling, Steve Waddell, David Jackson, Mark DuBois and Jonathan Worent.

We also spent some time working with our US competitor for WorldSkills (that competition will happen in October in Abu Dhabi).



U.S. WorldSkills web design competitor, Riley Johnson and coach/mentor, Mark DuBois reviewing training progress for WorldSkills in October, 2017.

Every year, we ask members of our Web Professional community to help us review our competition rubric; serve as judges (we do all the judging remotely), and help in many related tasks. If you are reading this, what do you plan to do to help us next year? As a member supported and all volunteer organization, we can always use your help.

Web Design at Illinois School for the Deaf

Web Professionals (via our [School of Web](#) initiative) and [CTeLearning](#) recently partnered to offer our web design curriculum to the [Illinois School for the Deaf](#) (Jacksonville). Beginning with the Fall, 2017 semester, students will be learning the fundamentals of web design (with a focus on HTML5, CSS-3 and related technologies). Students will be exposed to industry best practices, will work on business websites, and will have an opportunity to earn an associate or apprentice certificate in web design at the comple-



tion of their studies.

Since our materials are closed captioned and transcripts are readily available via the course materials, we could easily make these materials available.

For those who are not familiar with the Illinois School for the Deaf, here is some background information provided by Ms. Carolyn Eilering, Director Admissions and Records.

"The Illinois School for the Deaf (ISD) is located in the central part of the state, in Jacksonville, Illinois. For the past 178 years, the school has offered both residential programming for students who live more than 25 miles from Jacksonville and day programming for students who live in, or are within, 25 miles of Jacksonville. Our longevity speaks not just of history but also of a school that is dynamic and evolving so as to provide deaf and hard of hearing

students with the best and most up-to-date education."

"ISD offers programming on campus for students age 3-21, as well as offering an outreach option for infants and toddlers, age 0-3. The programming at ISD offers a language and cultural environment that challenges students with curricula designed to fit their needs, faculty and staff trained in deaf education and deaf culture, as well as inclusion with a peer group of students who share similar communication and socialization challenges. Residential and day students are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of sports and extracurricular activities that help them become well-rounded and productive adults. Many members of our staff and faculty are deaf or hard of hearing, providing adult role models of success for the real world challenges students will face."

"Students at ISD are given respect and support for their choices whether they embrace American Sign Language (ASL), spoken language, use of hearing aids, or cochlear implants. We have excellent professionals on staff to handle almost any challenge a student may present, including: speech therapy, occupational and physical therapists, social workers, school psychologists, nurses, mental health professionals and audiologists, including a trained cochlear implant specialist. We utilize research based programs such as Direct Instruction in reading, language and math to enhance our already strong curriculum. A variety of instructional tools, such as Cued Speech, and advanced technologies such as SmartBoards and iPads are available to enhance learning."

"ISD continues to be a leader in the field of the deaf education state and nation-wide."

Lana Shea nicely summarized the implications. "I am thrilled with the prospect that our students will have the opportunity to earn certification in Web Design by accessing these online modules. The course content is richer than a typical coding course as it includes the thought process that precedes the design process as well as sustainability issues after the fact. I like that our students will be encouraged to begin an online resume to showcase their talents, includ-

ing their early mistakes and what they learned from them. And, it's quite impressive that the students can be paired with real clients through [CTeLearning](#) to get valuable real-world experience. I'm excited to see student reactions to the course this fall."

Per Mark DuBois (Web Professionals) "member support is what makes these opportunities possible."

What it means to be a web professional

by
Irene Namer

As a web professional, I truly enjoy networking with many small businesses, boutiques, nonprofits, and cafes that inspire me to help promote and showcase their products or services to a broader audience internationally through e-commerce.



Web designing, marketing, branding and creating a platform for e-commerce is absolutely a true passion of mine for over 5 years. I definitely tailor the website to my client's preferences and add a touch of creativity through branding logos, business cards, and company advertising materials.

I envision earning a Bachelor of Medicine with a Information Technology minor down the road. Currently I hold over 200 award certificates, some of them have been awarded from The Linux Academy, Norton Security, Microsoft, Google and Adobe. Currently I'm also a member of the HTML Writer's Guild, Berkshire IEEE, International Women in Technology, The National Association of Professional Women, International Web Association, and continuously look for ways to improve my education and go further towards achieving my goals in the technology field.

Some of the websites I have made mainly consist

of templates that involve C+, HTML, Javascript, and CSS. An example of my services involve updating many eBay and Amazon websites as a hobby for seniors to help de-clutter their lives and put the gross money they earn to better use for their own selves or family. I'm currently in the process of renovating a website for The National Association of High School Scholars online newspaper website called "The Scholars Herald".

I am absolutely very honored tremendously for the warm welcome into the World Organization of Webmasters and delighted to meet more fellow members. Mr. DuBois has been absolutely very courteous by inspiring me to learn more behind this wonderful nonprofit organization and achieve more goals being a web professional. Recently I became an apprentice e-commerce manager and earned a certification.

Once again, it is absolutely my definite pleasure to be a new member and looking to hear from everyone!

Member Discounts

Template Monster is offering a **15% discount** on all products purchased at <http://templatemonster.com> for Web Professionals through the end of summer, 2017. Please use the discount code **webprofessionals** when purchasing.

Members of Web Professionals also receive a free **.design** top level domain via our ICANN registrar portal. Details on the final page of this newsletter (or visit: <https://webprofessionals.design> to sign up). This is free to members for the first year. Afterwards, the rates are competitive with other ICANN registrars.

Colophon

This document was created using Adobe InDesign CC 2017. Font used throughout is Myriad Pro.

Web Professionals overview

Webprofessionals.org aka World Organization of Webmasters is an all volunteer professional association dedicated to the support of individuals and organizations that create, manage or market Web sites. The organization provides education as well as certification, technical, employment and member advantage services to thousands of aspiring and practicing Web professionals worldwide. We are always on the lookout for members who are willing to take a leadership role in our organization. We can't do all our work without you.

For more information, visit <http://www.WebProfessionals.org>.

Social media

You can find us on:

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/webprofessionals>

Slack - <https://4WebProfessionals.slack.com>

Twitter - [@WebProMinute](https://twitter.com/WebProMinute)

More photos - national web design contest



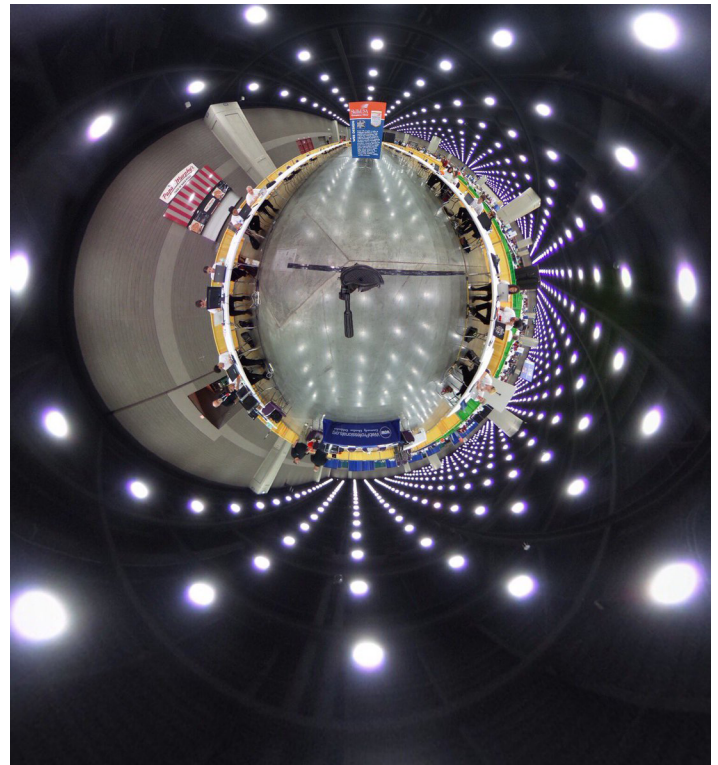
Teams setting up for our national web design competition.



Competition and concentration are intense during our national web design competition.



Each team discussed their process for web site creation during our national web design competition.



Tiny planet image using Theta 360 at our national web design competition. Additional 360 images linked below.

More Ricoh Theta 360 views of contests

[Some competitors](#) at our national web design contest (360 view linked)

[Secondary competition](#) (national web design contest)

[Debriefing post-secondary competitors](#)

www.YourName.design



WebProfessionals.org and domain registrar Porkbun.com are excited to announce a new partnership. As a member of **WebProfessionals.org**, you're now entitled to a **free .design domain name** at our very own domain registration site, **www.WebProfessionals.design!**

.design is a branding revolution. If you're still using a .com web domain and your old Gmail address, you're missing an opportunity to ensure that your personal branding is as innovative and professional as your design skills! Go to www.WebProfessionals.design to grab your free .design and take advantage of these other great benefits:



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Whether you need to connect your new domain name to an existing site, or you want to start one from scratch, we offer a variety of no-hassle solutions to get you up and running quickly.



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Why settle for your old Gmail or Yahoo email address when you can opt for some professional edge by using an email that aligns perfectly with your domain name?



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We're a registry who believes in internet security for all. While most registrars rely on this as part of their revenue, we're just hoping you grow to love our service.



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