

DIGITALEUROPE



European Accessibility Requirements in Public Procurement of ICT products and services, CEN/CENELEC, 11 May 2011, Brussels.

Public procurement of accessible technologies – an industry perspective

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What I want to talk about...

- How industry develops accessible ICT for the global market.
- The Impact of procurement standards & policies.
- The Importance of uniform reporting of accessibility.
- Harmonization of accessibility standards.



Who I represent...

- **DIGITALEUROPE:** the preeminent advocacy group of the European digital economy acting on behalf of the information technology, consumer electronics and telecommunications sectors.
- **Oracle Corporation:** provides the world's most complete, open, and integrated business software and hardware systems. More than 370,000 customers—including 100 of the Fortune 100—representing a variety of sizes and industries in more than 145 countries around the globe. Several hundred government organizations run Oracle Applications. Over 450 employees actively involved in over 600 working groups in more than 100 different standards setting organizations.



Digital Europe's vision for eInclusion

- Help members of disadvantaged social groups to participate on an equal footing in the digital society.
- Increase access and making ICT and CE solutions more widely available or easier to use.
- Assist people to use ICT and CE devices and services to make their lives richer and facilitating individuals' use of ICT.



Oracle's accessibility engagement

- Section 508 work.
 - ▶ Sat on both Section 508 advisory boards: EITAAC & TEITAC.
 - ▶ Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) development (ITI).
- Accessibility standards development.
 - ▶ ISO, W3C (WCAG, PFWG), JTC1 SWG-A, OASIS.
- Government funded Accessibility R&D.
 - ▶ AEGIS & ACCESSIBLE European FP7 projects.
- Promotion of harmonization.
 - ▶ ITI, EABC, DIGITALEUROPE.
 - ▶ Dialogue with DG INFSO and DG EMPLOYMENT.
- Advocacy and awareness.
 - ▶ Center of Excellence with the Nat'l Fed of the Blind (NFB).
 - ▶ Accessibility Days

Industry Example



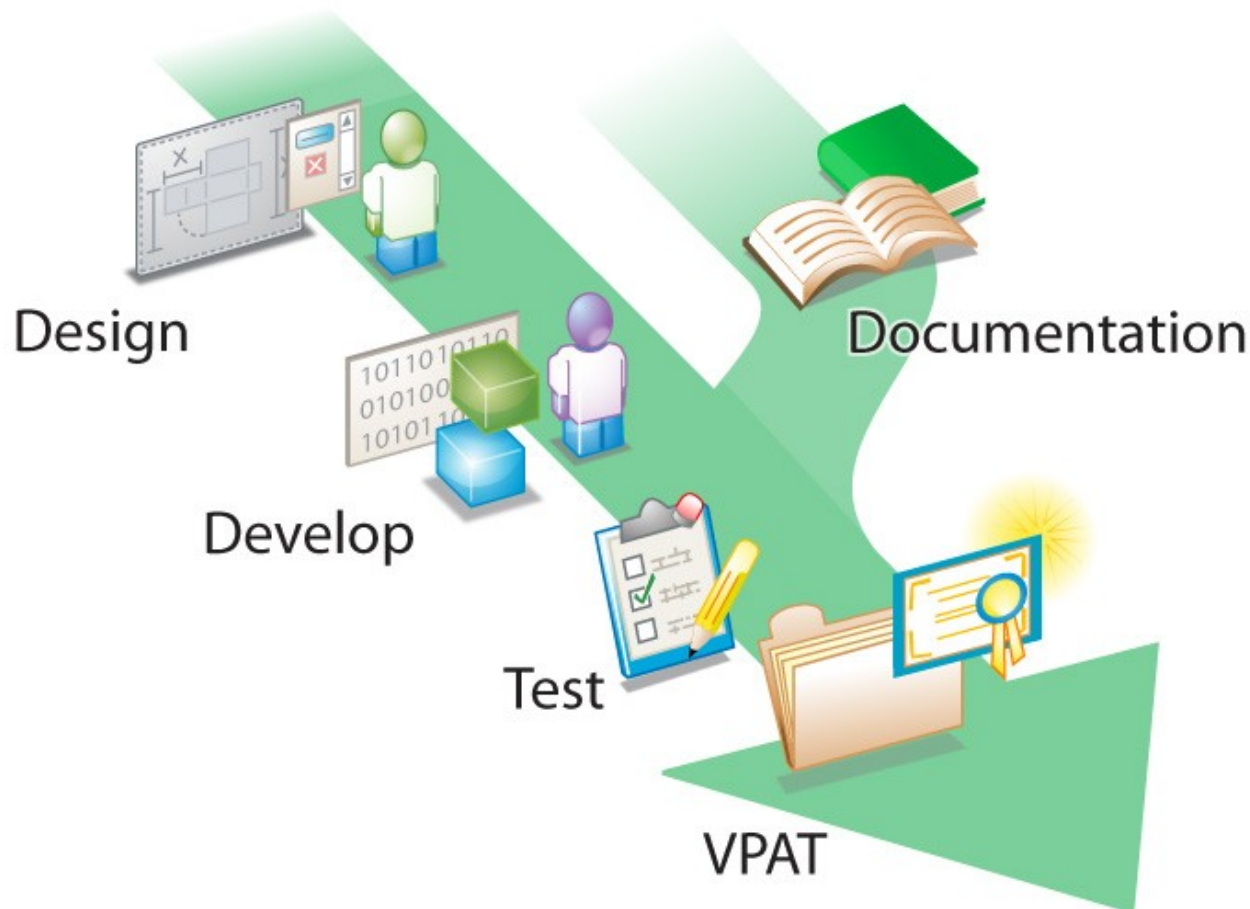
Oracle's commitment

"Oracle is committed to creating accessible technologies and products that enhance the overall workplace environment and contribute to the productivity of our employees, our customers, and our customers' customers."

- Safra Catz, President & CFO.



The accessibility development process





Accessibility is enabled by standards

- Most ICT applications based on technology stacks.
 - ▶ E.g. Java SE, JSF, Fusion, Win32, ...
- Accessibility standards aligned to procurement standards.
- Tech stacks and applications implement accessibility standards.
 - ▶ Consensus standards like WCAG 2.0.
 - ▶ Platform standards like Java Accessibility API, UIA, IAccessible2.
- We then code, test to standards.
- Our products are developed for a global market.
 - ▶ Same products sold in US, Europe, Asia, ...
 - ▶ Same products sold to Government, schools, private industry.



From standards to policy

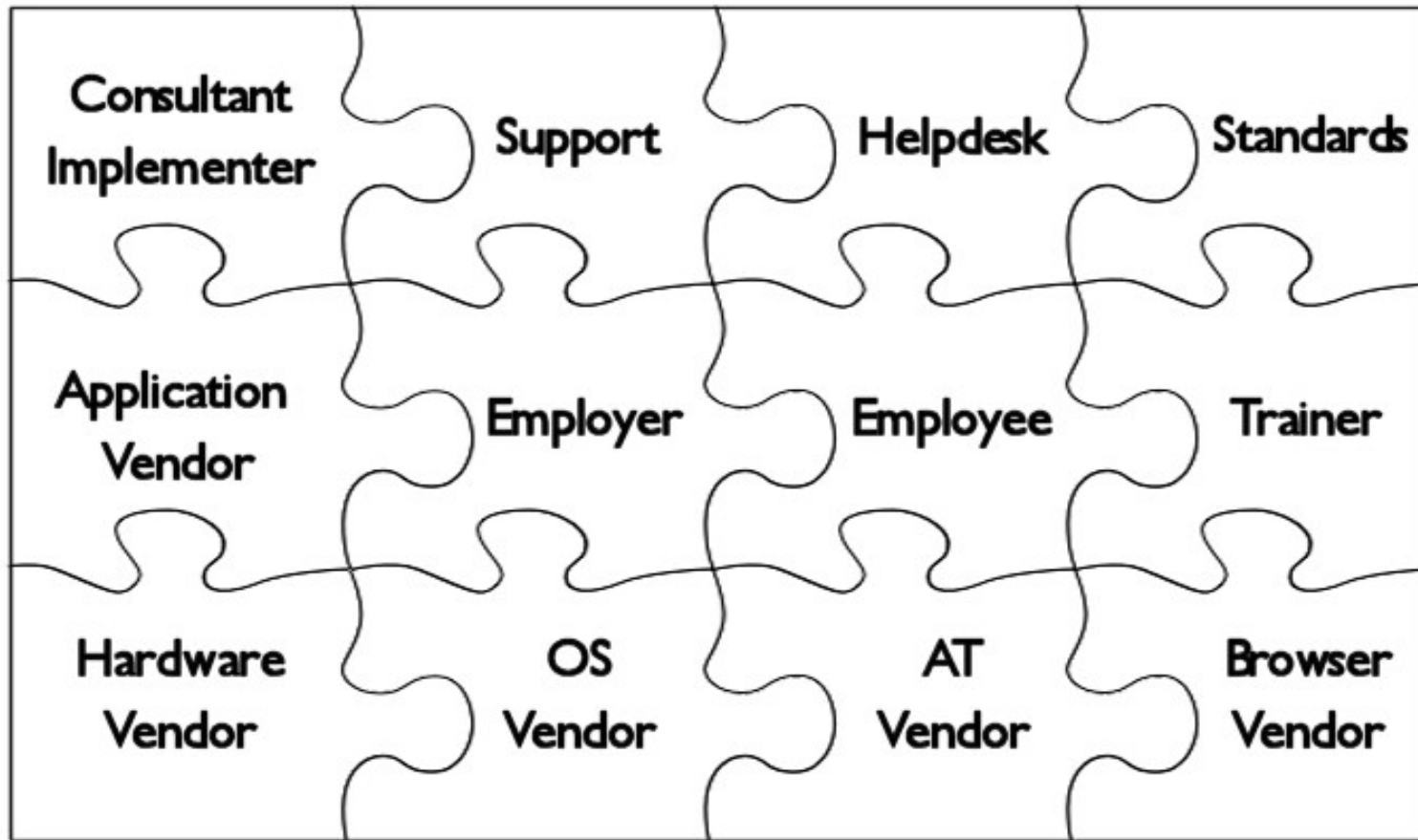
- Standards are more important today than ever. They are good for consumers, good for business and good for government.
- A good standard is not only open, but it is widely implemented by multiple vendors. Without being put to use by the majority of the market, a standard is quite meaningless.
- There is efficiency in having a single standard for each area of interoperability. However, in practice, the marketplace may embrace multiple and competing standards.



From national to European to global

- 17 European Member States have Interoperability Frameworks.
- The Digital Agenda promotes convergence, promising to increase open standards based interoperability. The European Interoperability Framework (EIF) from 2010 confirms: "The Digital Agenda can only take off if interoperability based on standards and open platforms is ensured".
- What we really need is global convergence. The forthcoming European Standardization reform is expected to open for recognition of fora/consortia specifications—which is a step in this direction.

The Ecosystem





Impact of procurement policies

- Products tracked, measured against requirements.
 - ▶ Requirements drive accessibility standards, tech stacks, and applications.
- How we report drives how we track.
 - ▶ Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) has proven to be an effective way to track and report conformance.
- Uniform reporting, uniform tracking lowers costs, speeds (accessible) product development.
- Best approach: global reporting, tracking for global products, standards, and procurement requirements.



Issues with 3rd party certification

- Accessibility achieved by multiple interdependent components work together; plus training, support, ...
- Measuring a user's success = measuring entire ecosystem.
 - ▶ User's knowledge of AT; AT's functionality & features; platform's accessibility framework; app's support for that framework; AT's use of framework; ability of enterprise to install & configure app; ...
 - ▶ Each installation may be its own ecosystem.
- Accessibility best realized by technical interoperability.
 - ▶ Industry already building this: W3C, platform API tools.
- 3rd party certification is not warranted for situations where health and safety are not at risk



Uniform reporting of accessibility

- Procurement policies and requirements drive product development, also drive accessibility standards.
- When technology neutral, policies enable industry to innovate, leading to significant accessibility improvements..
- Different requirements would hamper innovation, give rise to differing accessibility standards, increase costs
- Critical that procurement requirements be globally harmonized.
- Reporting of accessibility should recognize industry-developed accessibility standards (e.g. WCAG 2.0).



Industry is capable of measuring accessibility and supporting accessibility claims



Fuel the ecosystem's virtuous loop

- Procurement requirements help drive accessibility standards.
- Accessibility standards get adopted by tech stacks and apps.
- Tech stacks are the basis of many products.
- Products meet accessibility standards.
- Accessibility products meet procurement requirements.

If this loop is efficient, we can deliver accessible ICT globally more quickly, and at the lowest possible cost.



...align WCAG 2.0, Section 508, Mandate 376

- Recognize that today's ICT is global.
 - ▶ Avoid standards and requirements fragmentation; avoid confusion, cost, and complexity in procurement officer's job, industry's job.
- Foster regional EU innovation through continued R&D around accessibility and novel UIs.
 - ▶ Best done as a collaboration between gov, advocacy groups, and industry – cf. FP7



Harmonization

One set of accessibility standards applied globally – e.g. WCAG 2.0 – helps everyone in the ecosystem, lowers cost, speeds time to market, reduces end-user training, allows for widest range of AT...



Vendor self-certification

3rd party should not be required – adds time and cost, doesn't apply to many enterprise-class products, and requires product functionality expertise.



One conformance reporting mechanism

Not just 'pass/fail', but ability to report degree of conformance to each standard



Thank you.



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