



Education

Accessibility: The Never-Ending Story

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Walking through the realm

- The Call to Adventure
Why accessibility is never really “done”
- Consulting the Oracles
WCAG, WCAG 2.2, and why standards keep evolving
- The World Is Bigger Than You Think
Real users, real context, and what’s coming with WCAG 3
- The False Ending
Where accessibility quietly breaks after launch
- The Stakes Are Higher Now
What the EU Accessibility Act changes
- The Never-Ending Story
Designing accessibility that lasts

The Call to Adventure

Why Accessibility Is Never “Done”

Compliance Is a Moment in Time



“We meet WCAG” is temporary.
Compliance describes a moment,
not a future.

Accessibility as a Finish Line

Audit

Accessibility is reviewed at a single moment in time, often late in the project, using automated tools or a checklist to see what fails right now.

Remediate

Teams address the issues identified in the audit, usually focusing on what is required to pass rather than what will hold up over time.

Ship it and Forget it!

The product launches and accessibility is treated as complete. Ongoing updates are not actively monitored for new barriers.

Tip: Accessibility should be part of the workflow, not a last-minute check.

Why That Framing Fails

Teams change

People move roles, switch projects, or leave entirely, and accessibility knowledge often leaves with them if it is not documented or shared.

Content changes

New pages, new features, and ongoing edits introduce accessibility risk long after the original audit is complete.

Technology changes

Browsers update, assistive technologies evolve, and standards shift, which can turn previously accessible patterns into barriers.

Tip: Build accessibility so it survives change, not just launch.

Accessibility Is a Story, Not a Task

Ongoing

Accessibility needs attention beyond launch as projects and content continue to change.

Iterative

Improvements happen through small updates over time, not one big effort.

Context-dependent

User needs vary based on device, environment, and situation.

Tip: Plan accessibility as ongoing work, not a one-time milestone.

Open Source Makes This Obvious

Contributors rotate

People join, change roles, or move on, and knowledge leaves with them if accessibility is not shared and documented.

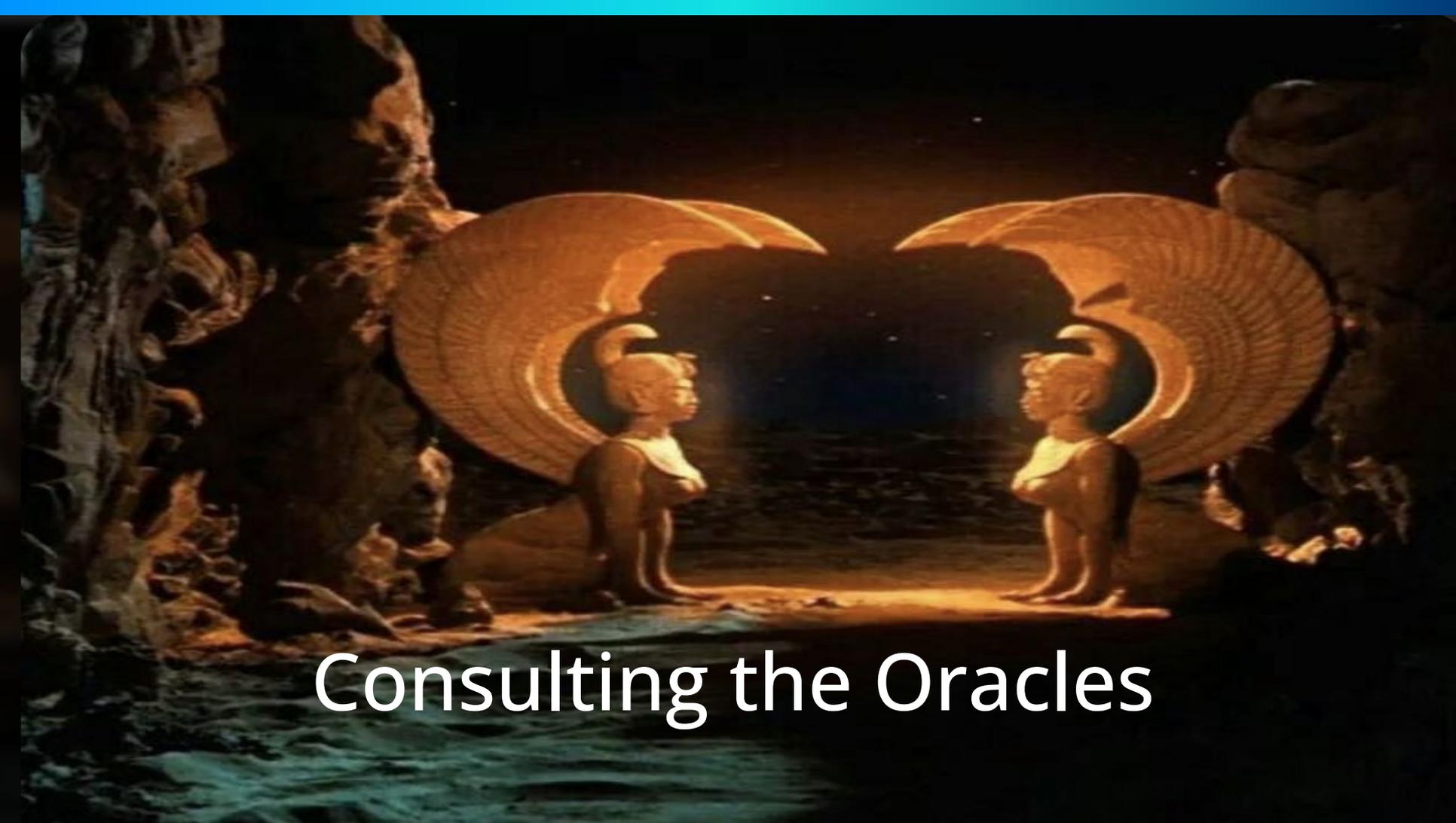
Code outlives people

Projects continue to evolve long after the original contributors are gone, carrying forward both good decisions and hidden barriers.

Sustainability

Accessibility practices need to be designed to survive turnover, updates, and long-term maintenance, not depend on individual effort.

Tip: Build accessibility into project norms so it survives changes in people and process.

A dramatic scene set in a dark, cavernous environment. Two figures, resembling oracles or deities, stand facing each other. They have large, golden, feathered wings and are wearing dark, form-fitting robes. The lighting is warm and focused on the figures, creating a sense of mystery and divine presence. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a cave or a hidden chamber. The overall mood is solemn and ancient.

Consulting the Oracles

Why Accessibility Standards Exist

Shared language, shared expectations

Standards give teams a common way to talk about accessibility across roles, tools, and projects.

Success criteria, not a guarantee

They set a baseline for what users should be able to do, regardless of who built the product.

Tip: Use standards as a starting point for conversation, not a finish line.

What Changed With WCAG 2.2

Focus visibility

Interactive elements must clearly show focus so keyboard users can see where they are on the page.

Target size

Touch targets need to be large enough to use reliably, especially on mobile or with limited dexterity.

Dragging alternatives

Actions that rely on dragging must have another way to complete them.

Accessible authentication

Login processes must work without relying on memory, puzzles, or cognitive tricks.

Redundant entry

Users should not be forced to re-enter information they have already provided.

Consistent help

Help mechanisms should be easy to find and behave predictably across the site.

WCAG 2.2: What actually changed from WCAG 2.1

Visible & Reliable Focus

- Visible & Reliable Focus
- Minimum focus size & contrast (2.4.11 AA)
- Focus can't be hidden by sticky headers or overlays (2.4.13 AA)
- Enhanced visibility options at AAA (2.4.12, 2.4.14)

Easier Interaction

- Easier Interaction (Mouse, Touch, Keyboard)
- No drag-only actions — provide simple alternatives (2.5.7 AA)
- Larger tap targets (24×24 CSS px minimum) (2.5.8 AA)

Reduced Cognitive Load

- No forced re-entry of known information (3.3.7 A)
- Help is consistent across pages (3.2.6 A)

Accessible Authentication

- Logins cannot rely only on memory or puzzles
- Must allow alternatives like password managers, copy/paste, or magic links (3.3.8 AA)

The World Is Bigger Than You Think

Real Users, Real Context, Real Variability

Disability Is Not One Thing



- Permanent
- Temporary
- Situational
- Episodic

Context Changes Needs

Device

Accessibility can vary depending on whether someone is using a phone, tablet, laptop, screen reader, keyboard, or voice input.

Environment

Lighting, noise, movement, or limited connectivity can affect how easily someone can see, hear, or interact with a site.

Fatigue

Pain, illness, or simple end-of-day exhaustion can reduce precision, focus, and tolerance for complex interactions.

Cognitive load

Stress, multitasking, or information overload can make memory-heavy or complex tasks much harder to complete.

Meet the Luck Dragons: User Agents

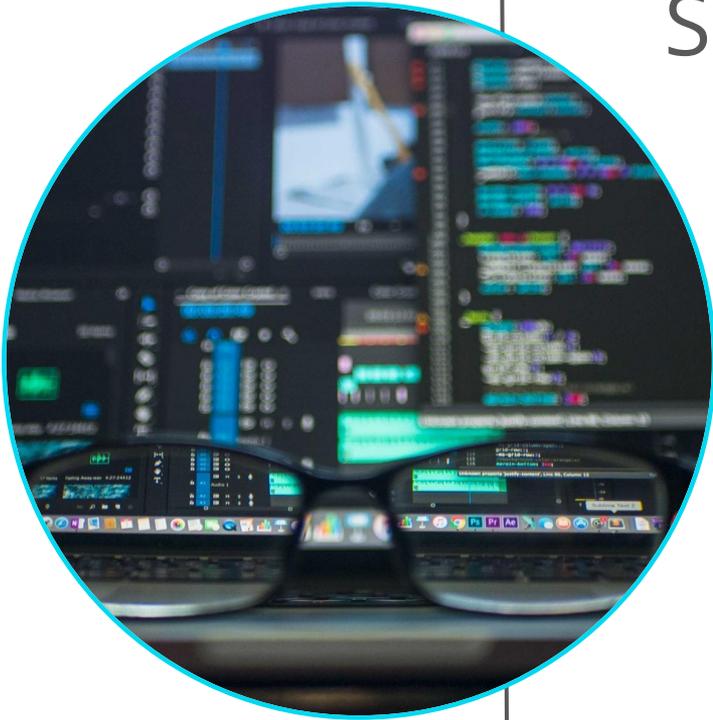
Screen Readers

Screen readers – used to listen to the content of a webpage.



Screen Magnification Software

Enlarges screen content to make it easier to read for users with a partial sight impairment.



Keyboard navigation

Create the same experience as someone using a mouse + keyboard interaction.



ZOOM

Zooming should not break content or functionality.



Virtual Reality



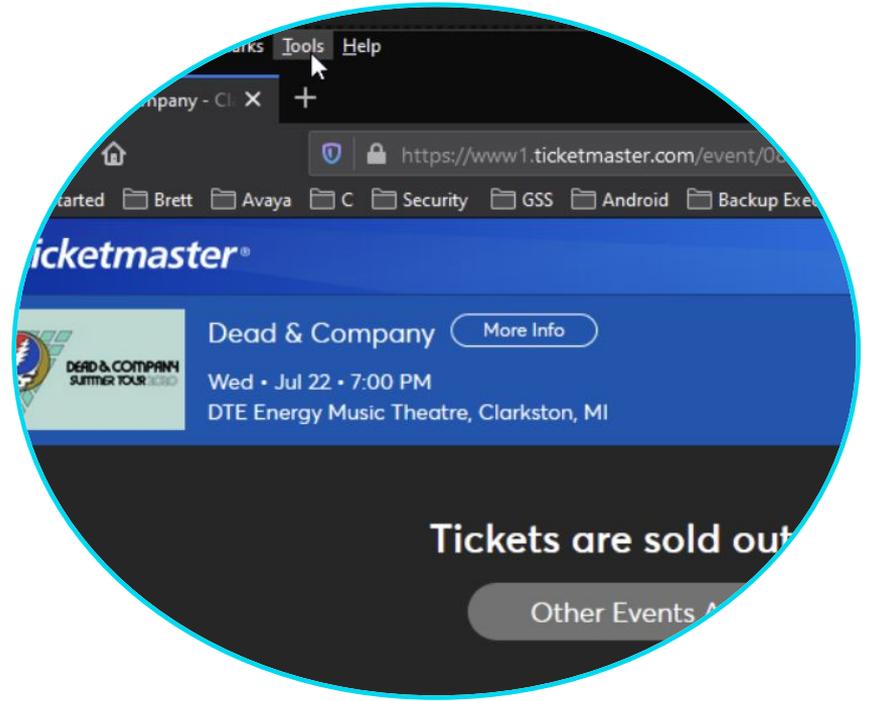
VR comes with new chances to include people with disabilities and make games more accessible.

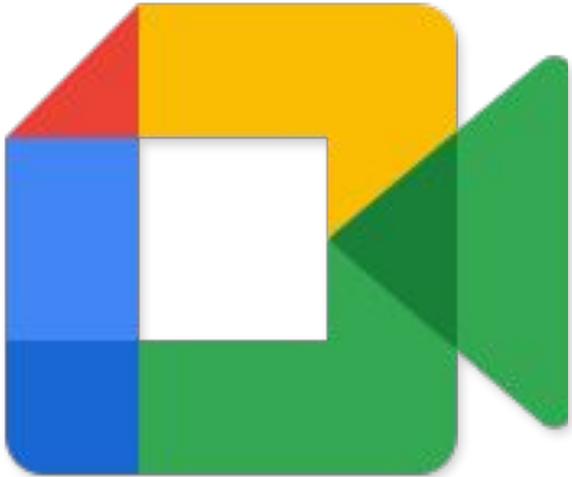
More Assistive Technologies and Adaptive Strategies

- Eye tracking
- Accelerators
- Keyboard customization
- Pop-up and animations blockers
- Refreshable braille display
- Reading assistants
- Page maps
- Alternative Input Devices

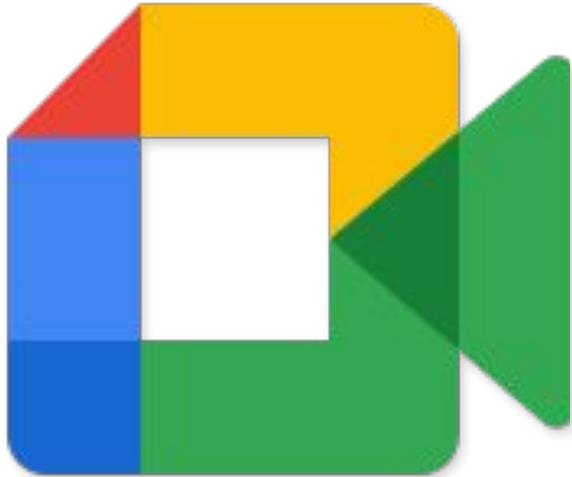
Let's roll the dice: Accessibility Is
Contextual













Vicki Walker



Deb Richardson



Lauren Pritchett



Seth Kenlon



June Spence



Ricardo Gerardi



You

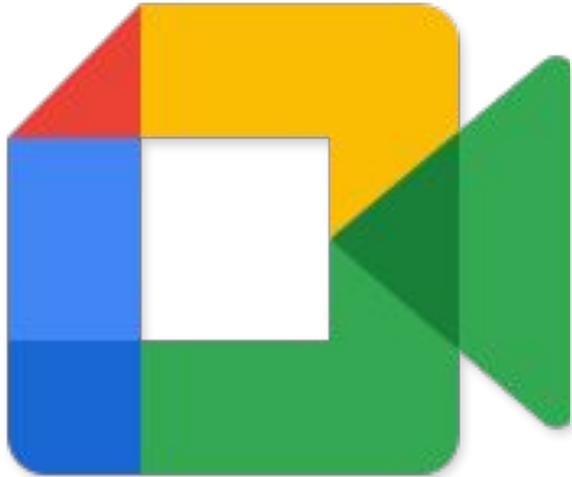


Lauren Pritchett
Hey, Seth and Ricardo.



Ricardo Gerardi
Hello.







Lauren Pritchett is presenting



Lauren Pritchett



Vicki Walker



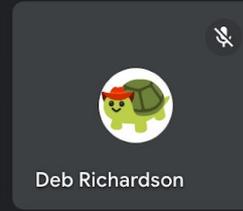
Seth Kenlon



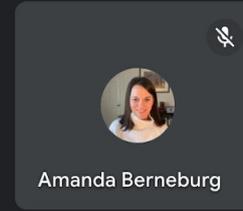
Ricardo Gerardi



June Spence



Deb Richardson



Amanda Berneburg



You



Lauren Pritchett

to yourself. On tap. Okay. Tomorrow, we have innovating and it economic downturn. Three Ways IT Leaders can break free from outdated software How to Leave with strategic clarity. IT Leadership, three ways to boost your generational IQ. That's like about the different

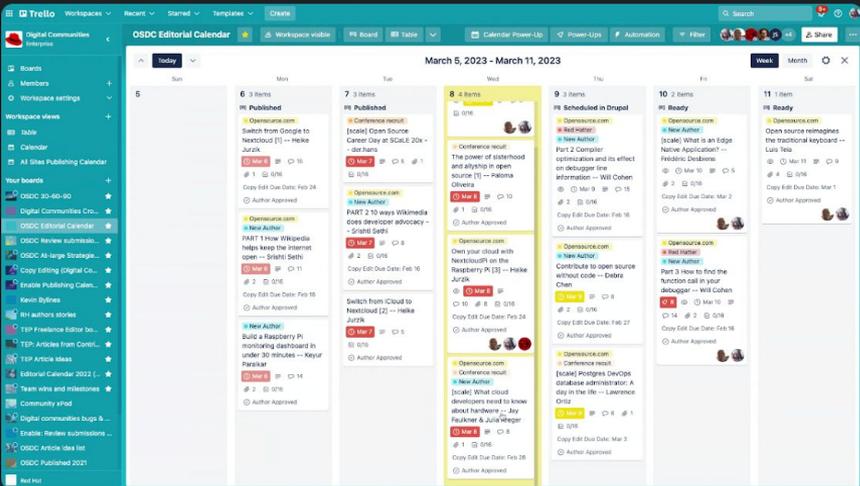


English





Lauren Pritchett is presenting



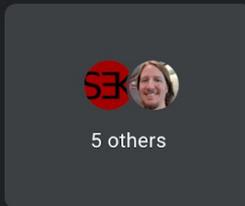
Lauren Pritchett special article. We also had this timely article about the power of Sisterhood and Allyship in open source. And then the Hike article the third one of the series. So we want to finish that out and then a scale article, we wanted to publish that ahead of



Lauren Pritchett



Vicki Walker



5 others



You

In-call messages

Messages can only be seen by people in the call and are deleted when the call ends

Lauren Pritchett 12:02 PM

https://docs.google.com/document/d/16uEmPSoAxmjfNg94gZu1hacluaw-6olkTilXr0F_S0/edit#

https://docs.google.com/document/d/16uEmPSoAxmjfNg94gZu1hacluaw-6olkTilXr0F_S0/edit#

Amanda Berneburg 12:03 PM

We are going to work on formalizing QA a bit more so that we can catch that type of thing earlier when possible.

June Spence 12:05 PM

Bless their heart

Send a message to everyone



WCAG 2.2 — What Breaks First in Real Products

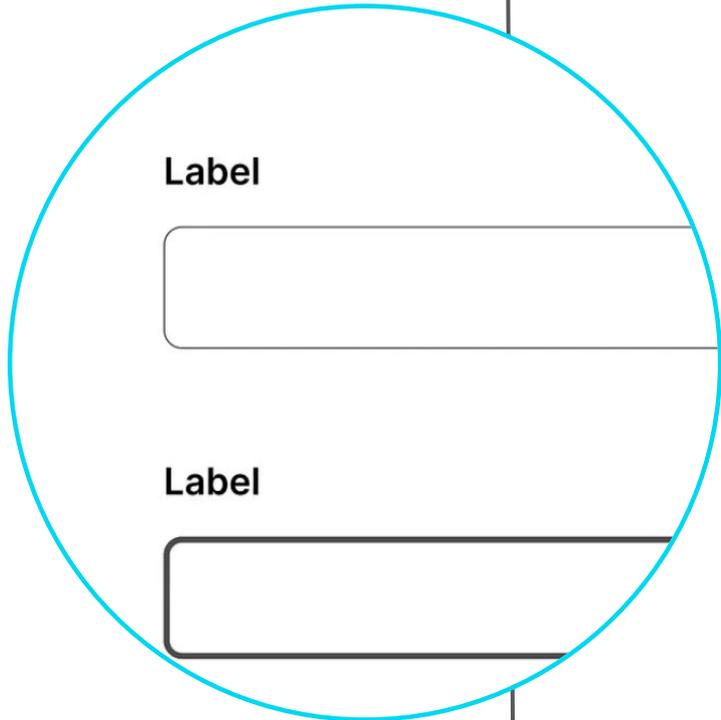
Invisible or Weak Focus States

Breaks:

- Focus rings removed for “clean UI”
- 1px outlines with poor contrast

Why It fails:

- 2.4.11 now requires minimum size and contrast, not “best effort.”



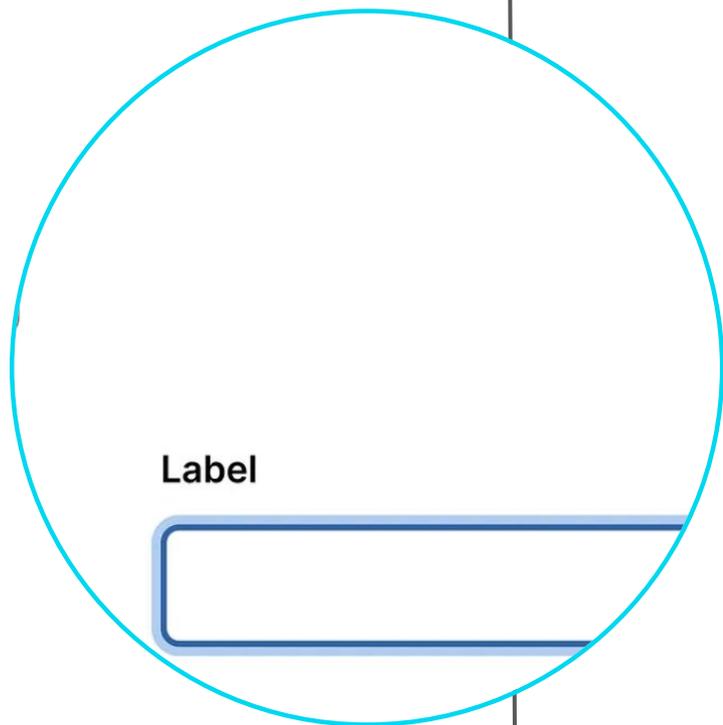
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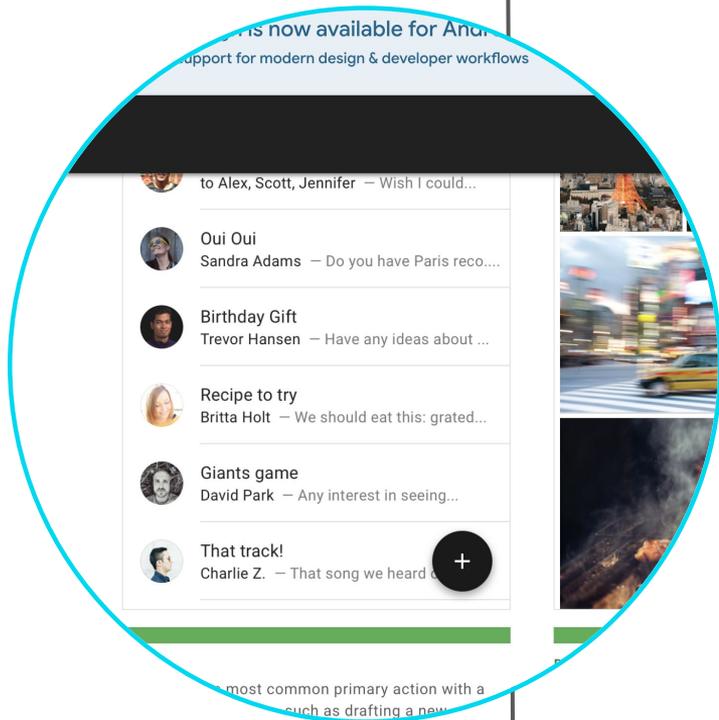
Focus Hidden by Sticky UI

Breaks:

- Focus lands behind sticky headers, cookie banners, chat widgets

Why It fails:

- 2.4.13 requires focused elements to be visible, even with overlays.



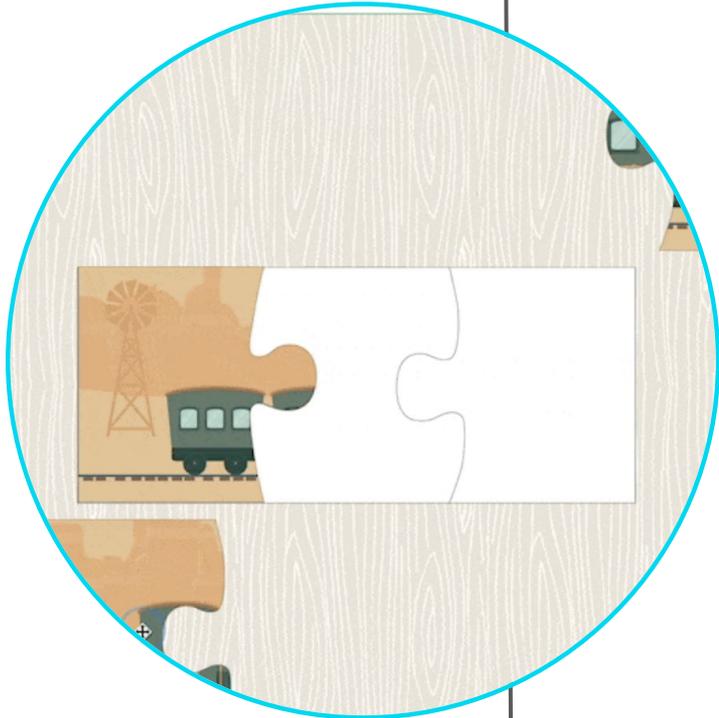
Drag-Only Interactions

Breaks:

- Reordering lists
- Kanban boards
- Sliders that only drag

Why It fails:

- 2.5.7 requires a non-drag alternative (buttons, keyboard, tap).



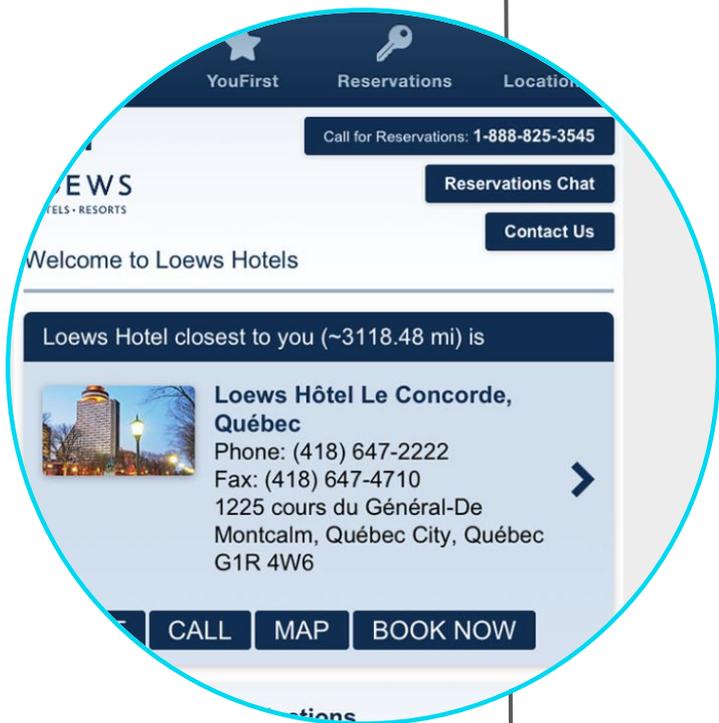
Tiny Click Targets

Breaks:

- Icon-only buttons
- Close icons
- Dense action menus

Why It fails:

- 2.5.8 introduces a 24×24 CSS px minimum for interactive targets.



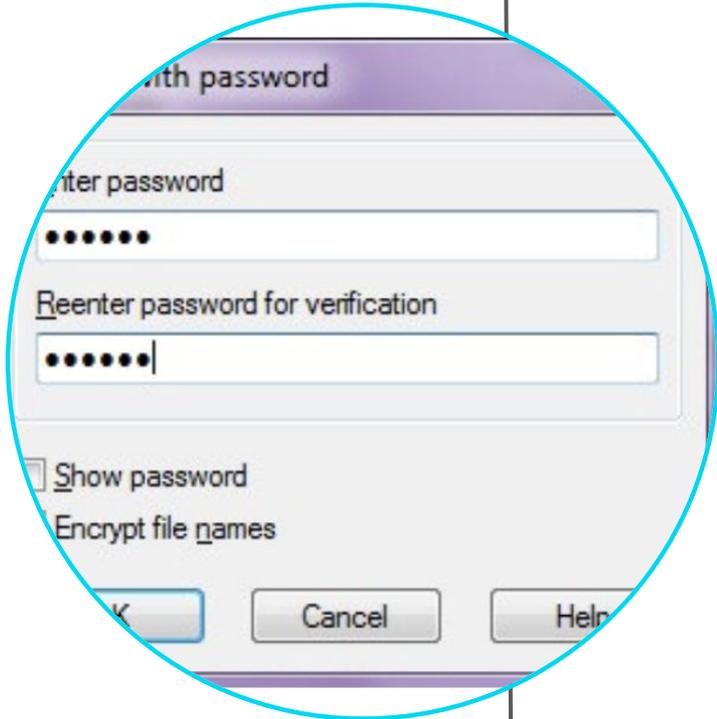
Forms That Ask Again

Breaks:

- Re-entering addresses, emails, or names
- Checkout flows after login

Why It fails:

- 3.3.7 prohibits unnecessary re-entry of known information.



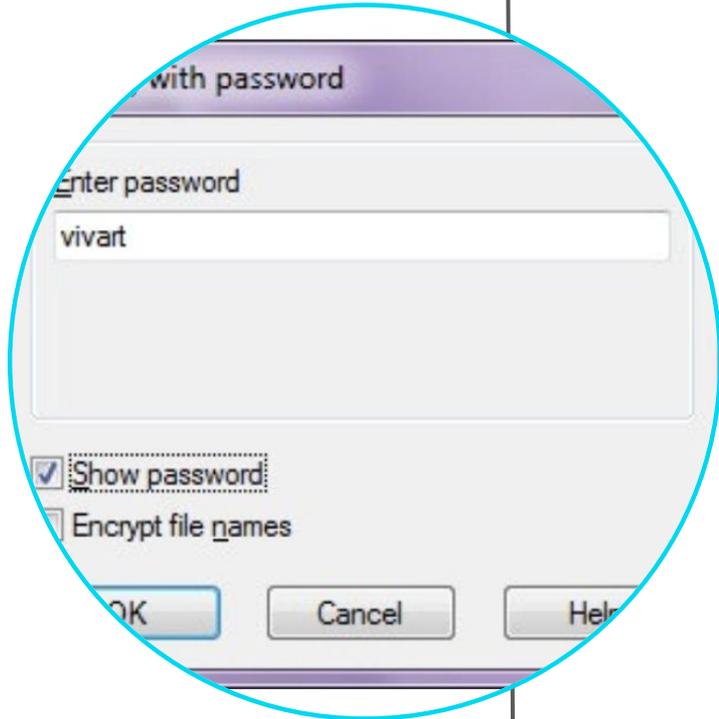
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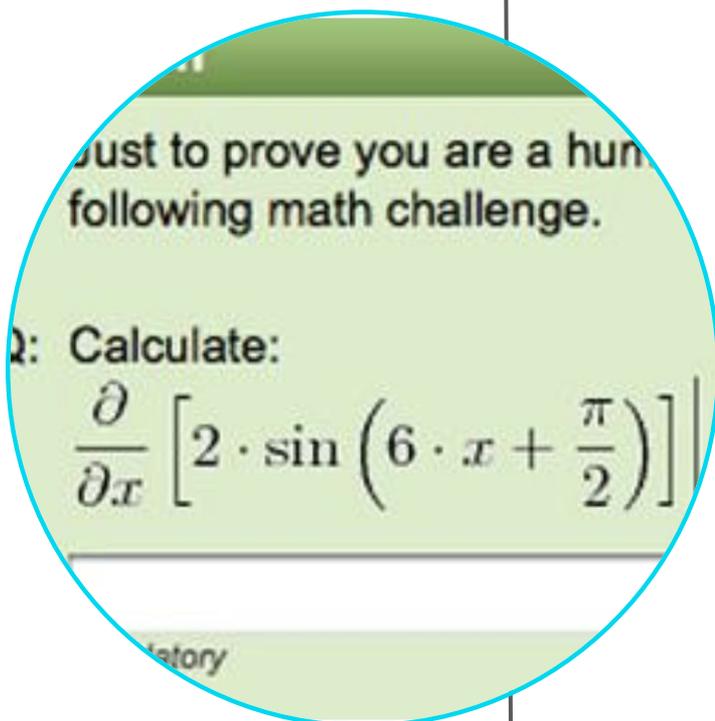
Cognitive Based Logins

Breaks:

- “Type the password you just created”
- Puzzle-based or recall-only auth

Why It fails:

- 3.3.8 disallows authentication that relies only on memory or cognition.



Just to prove you are a human,
please complete the following math challenge.

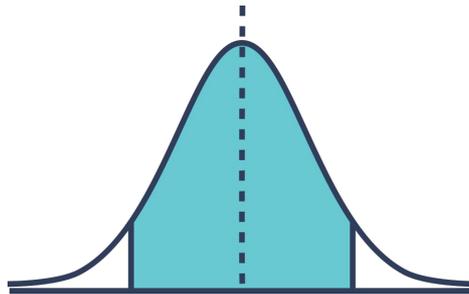
Q: Calculate:

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left[2 \cdot \sin \left(6 \cdot x + \frac{\pi}{2} \right) \right]$$

andatory

// When you call something an edge case,
you're really just defining the limits of
what you care about. //

— Eric Meyer



The Accessibility Horizon

Standards are shifting. User needs already have.

3.0 Guidelines

W3C First Public Working Draft 21 January 2021

WCAG 2.0

WCAG 2.1

WCAG 2.2

WCAG 3.0

The **W3C Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 3.0's** goal is to provide information that can be used to improve the accessibility of products on a variety of platforms.

3.0 Testing and outcomes

WCAG 3.0 tests and scores outcomes and includes technology-specific testing.

WCAG 2.0

WCAG 2.1

WCAG 2.2

WCAG 3.0

<https://www.w3.org/TR/wcag-3.0/>

WCAG 2.x vs WCAG 3.0 – Key Differences

WCAG 2.x

- ▶ Active standard
- ▶ Success criteria with binary pass/fail
- ▶ A, AA, AAA
- ▶ Web content (HTML, documents)
- ▶ Focused on code-level testing

WCAG 3.0

- ▶ In development (not finalized)
- ▶ Outcome-based with graded scoring
- ▶ Bronze, Silver, Gold (proposed)
- ▶ Web, apps, tools, emerging tech
- ▶ Includes functional + user-centered testing

WCAG 2.x vs WCAG 3.0 – Key Differences

WCAG 2.x

- ▶ Mostly visual, auditory, physical
- ▶ Accessibility = technical compliance
- ▶ Builds on earlier versions
- ▶ Accessibility by compliance

WCAG 3.0

- ▶ Cognitive, learning, emotional
- ▶ Usability, clarity, consistency, personalization
- ▶ A new model
- ▶ Accessibility as a continuum of usability and equity

A dramatic landscape photograph featuring a sunburst effect where bright light rays pierce through a thick layer of dark, heavy clouds. The scene is set over a valley of rolling hills, with dense green forests in the foreground and misty, hazy hills in the distance. The overall mood is one of hope and resilience.

THE STAKES ARE HIGHER NOW

European Accessibility Act (EAA)

The **European Accessibility Act** is an **EU directive** aimed at improving the accessibility of products and services across member states—especially for people with disabilities.

Who Must Comply?

- ▶ All businesses and organizations operating in the EU that offer covered products or services
- ▶ Microenterprises may be exempt, but public-sector and most private-sector services must comply



European Accessibility Act (EAA)

Why Was It Introduced?

- ▶ To harmonize accessibility laws across EU member states
- ▶ To reduce market fragmentation for accessible products
- ▶ To improve access for nearly 135 million people in the EU with disabilities
- ▶ To align with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

European Accessibility Act (EAA)

What Does It Apply To?

The EAA covers a wide range of products and services, including:

- ▶ Smartphones, ATMs, ticket machines, computers and operating systems
- ▶ E-commerce platforms and websites including banking services
- ▶ Telephony and emergency communication
- ▶ eBooks, eReaders, and audiovisual media services

European Accessibility Act (EAA)

What Does It Require?

- ▶ Accessible design of user interfaces and hardware
- ▶ Clear navigation and content structure
- ▶ Compatibility with assistive technologies
- ▶ Accessible documentation and customer support
- ▶ Ongoing updates and testing to maintain compliance

THE FALSE ENDING

Accessibility Never Ends (And That's the Point)

The Linear Project Myth

Design

Accessibility decisions are expected to be solved in wireframes and visual specs.

Build

Implementation focuses on matching designs, with limited iteration on accessibility.

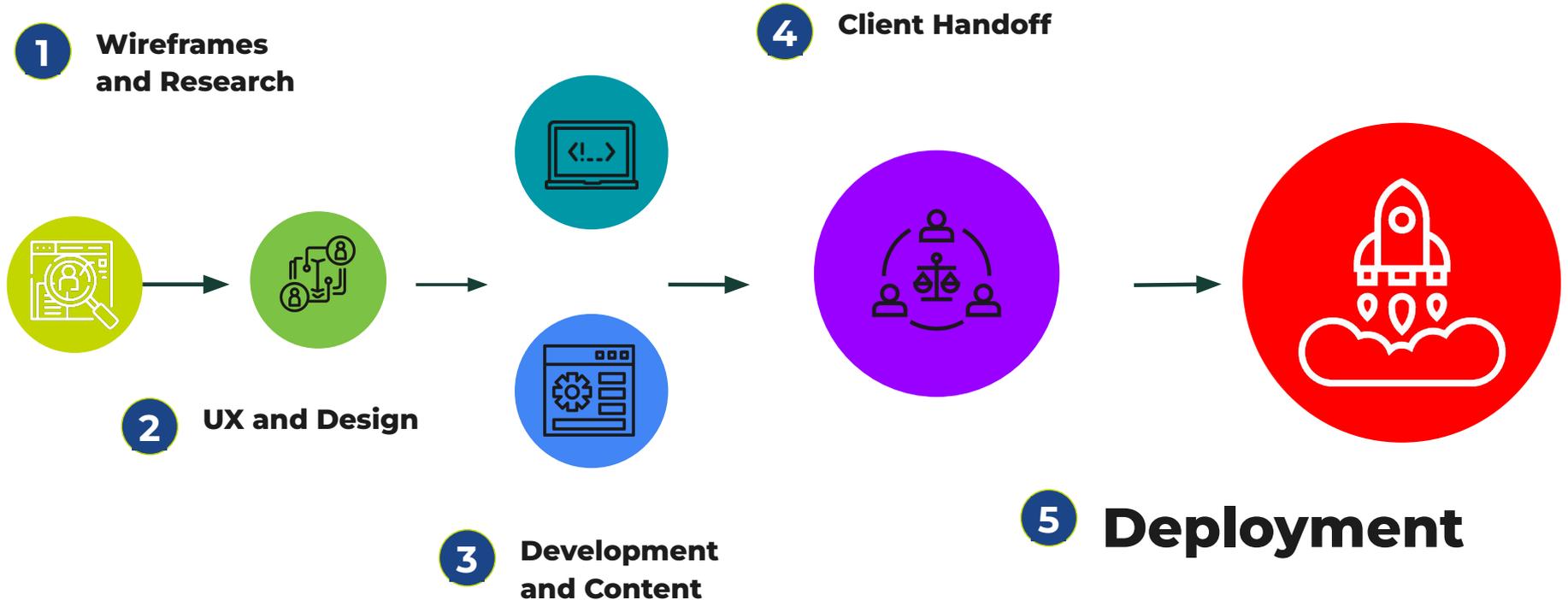
Deploy

Accessibility is validated once, often through a final audit or checklist.

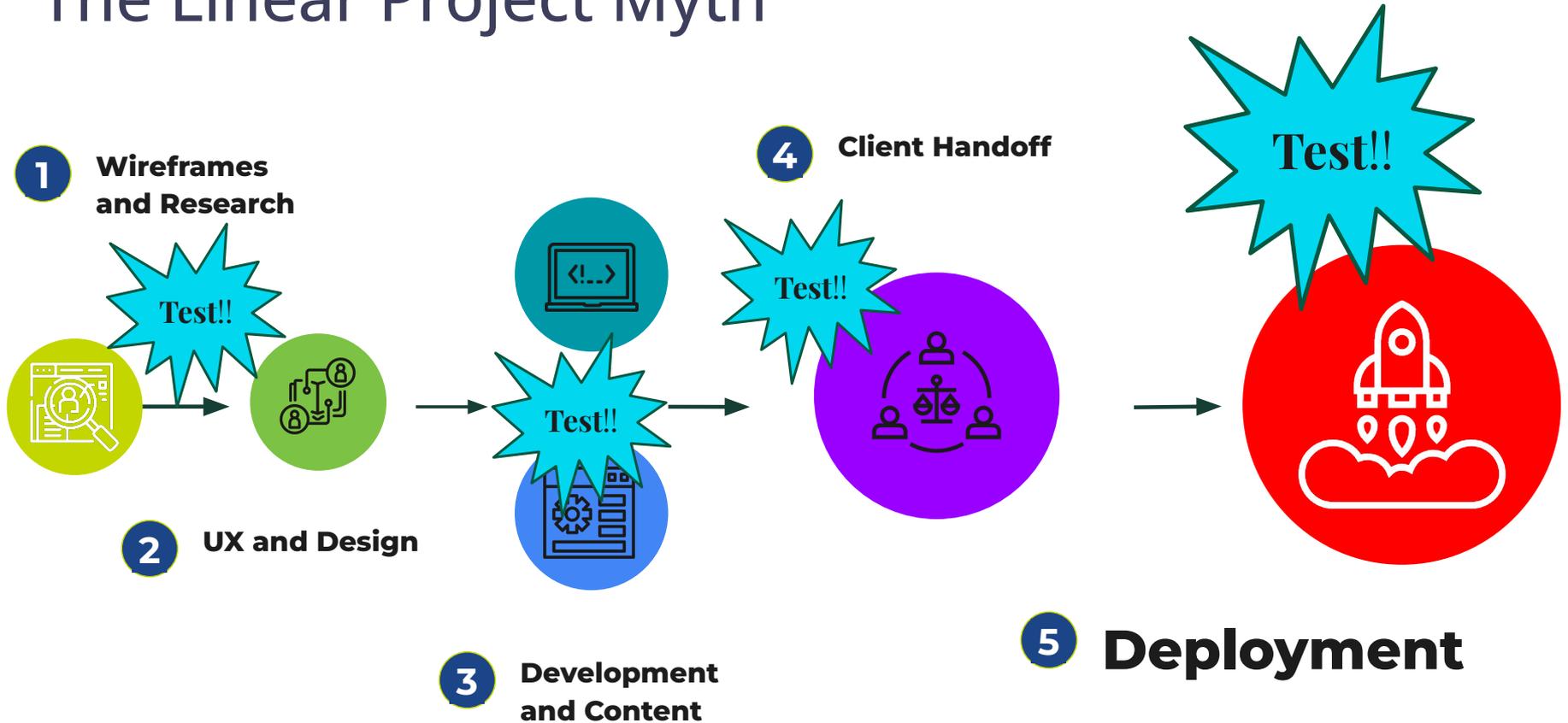
Done

The product is treated as complete, even as users, features, and standards change.

The Linear Project Myth



The Linear Project Myth



The Continuous Reality



1

Strategize

Develop in a style that allows flexible changes as guidelines evolve.

2

Implement

Create and implement the most impactful solutions, iteratively.

3

Learn & Iterate

Understand what works and what doesn't.

The Never-Ending Story

Shared Responsibility

Designers

Design choices shape readability, contrast, layout, and interaction patterns that determine whether interfaces are usable from the start.

Developers

Semantic markup, keyboard support, focus management, and ARIA implementation ensure interfaces work across devices and assistive technologies.

Editors

Content structure, headings, link clarity, and alt text determine whether information is understandable and navigable.

Stakeholders

Priorities, timelines, and acceptance criteria influence whether accessibility is treated as essential or optional.

Accessibility is a check point

WCAG sets expectations

Standards provide a shared baseline for accessibility and guide how we design, build, and evaluate digital experiences.

Laws raise stakes

Regulations like the European Accessibility Act make accessibility a legal and organizational priority, not just a best practice.

Teams keep it alive

Daily decisions, workflows, and maintenance determine whether accessibility continues to work as projects evolve.

Tip: Standards guide, laws motivate, but culture sustains accessibility.



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The Story Continues...



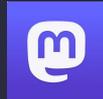
THE
LINUX
FOUNDATION

Education

Thanks!!



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[@volkswagenchick.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/volkswagenchick.bsky.social)

Resources

Free tools

- ▶ [WAVE](#)
- ▶ [aXe](#)
- ▶ [WebAim: Contrast Checker](#)
- ▶ [Testing Library - Queries Accessible to Everyone](#)
- ▶ [CSS Validation](#)
- ▶ [HTML Validation](#)
- ▶ [Readability](#)
- ▶ [The A11y Project checklist](#)

Links for additional resources

- ▶ [WAI-ARIA Authoring Practices 1.1](#)
- ▶ [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2 - Level AA Conformance](#)
- ▶ [How to Meet WCAG \(Quick Reference\)](#)
- ▶ [Web Accessibility Directive](#)
- ▶ [International Web Accessibility Laws and Guidelines](#)