

Issues using W3C Tools and Processes

IRC

Lisa: why do we call it IRC and not chat.

The terms are relay hard to remember - yet another language to learn

Mike: I guess IRC says which of the very many chat systems we are using. I only noticed today that the meeting agendas explain to the novice that we use two essential services (WebEx and IRC) working in parallel to be able to interact, provide links and and record what takes place (i.e. the roles of WebEx and IRC). Maybe this should be made clear earlier in the calling notice.

Jim_S: The IRC is good for managing the speaker queue and keeping an eye on the minutes and discussions (especially if you aren't familiar with the voices of the people on the call). The one addition I would like to see is a tab where all of the commands are listed. I had to learn the commands by watching what others did and I'm sure that I only know a handful of the commands.

E.A. ditto to Jim's comments

Thaddeus: No concerns

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Steve: No concerns

Jan: +1 to Jim's comments

GitHub

Lisa: strange terms used for things like: push, fork etc. It requires learning a new language....

Also a lot of people people can not read HTML

The processes are not clear or intuitive or even well documented for people who are not programers, making them impossible for non programmers

When editing an issue or trying to add a comment if i right click, I often end up going somewhere new. What I am trying to do is correct my spelling but - I right click on a spelling mistake (underlined in red in my system) and find myself in a new window with some new function and I have no idea what happened.

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Mary Jo: I can never remember the right process and terms for updating files and creating new files and how to make them visible to the owner to accept the changes so they are visible by all. I feel like I need to write myself a set of instructions for the way that the group wants to operate. I don't use GitHub that often, so have to relearn it every time I go to use it.

Mike Pluke: I've never used GitHub and resent having to learn a completely new way of thinking just to do something simple like create/edit/make available a simply formatted text document.

Renaldo Bernard: Github seems to be for developers and though I have dabbled, I am not a developer. Yes, it may be easier for the W3C process if we produce our output this way but I am not convinced the pros outweigh the cons here. There must be a more accommodating and inclusive platform that "[brings together people from industry, disability organizations, government, and research labs from around the world](#)" (i.e., developers, non-developers, researchers and people with disabilities) to effectively participate in this process.

John Kirkwood: It seems to be an antiquated and complicated way to do file management especially in the realm of real time collaboration tools (such as google docs). And, history is not lost in these tools and can be rolled back in time. Github is intimidating and the loss/overwriting of work/files seems too easy.

E.A. I agree with John Kirkwood and having tried to use Github and followed instructions one still sees mistakes occurring and actions failing - this means it takes longer and makes one less likely to try again when pushed for time. I need to spend time learning the process when items that I am dealing with are not so important.

E.A. Trying to find the changes that have been made to SCs once they have been pushed through the pull request. The system does not appear to have a simple revisions process that allows one to see SCs that are being managed by someone else or perhaps I have not found the way to find the revisions.

Jim_S: there needs to be better control over editing code. As an SC manager I was unable to edit the code myself (there was no edit button) which would have allowed me to tidy up the formatting and do some housekeeping. I also find it strange that there isn't a WYSIWYG HTML editor. While I can edit native HTML, I have better things to do with my time. A series of macros covering the basic activities would lessen the learning overhead associated with the tool

Thaddeus: In general I really like this tool but understand both the learning curve and barriers to people with disabilities. With that said I think we are not using GitHub to its full potential. There are features that can help make the tool easier to use while also helping with productivity and communication. I would suggest analysis, implementation and documentation regarding the best way to utilize GitHub within the context of WCAG and the various Task Forces. As GitHub is currently well vetted through the development community I think it would be appropriate to provide feedback to GitHub on making the tool more accessible, encouraging diversity of abilities in the engineering field.

Steve: while I'm personally comfortable with GitHub and git, I feel it is not suitable for cog; it is complex and has a steep learning curve. Worse, the workflow is obscured and the UI not

simple. Plus we are working on source code not directly editing the actual content; there is no preview! It seems to me the wcag workflow is, or should be straightforward and might be better implemented with a tool that uses GitHub under the covers, or something else entirely, eg manual process with shared docs.

How about Trello? There is a github powerup that might allow us to track low level details but with the Kanban style overview

Jan: +1 to Renaldo's comment. This process should be inclusive and I am hearing that even people who are familiar with GitHub are frustrated. Once comments have been made on an issue that may address parts of the SC outline that are not included in a pull request, such as benefits or testing techniques, a person has to read through all of the comments to see anything that has been said about those sections and to determine whether or not concerns voiced have been resolved. There is no way to "rewrite" the entire issue into a final proposal with all of the comments incorporated so that people can easily track where a concern was raised and then resolved. Additionally, as a newbie to GitHub, I have experienced some rather frustrating interface issues that I personally do not know how to resolve. The most frustrating is when I am trying to review a pull request in the survey. If the pull request has enough edits to require vertical scrolling, I then cannot access the horizontal scroll at the bottom to read the text that does not wrap. The horizontal scroll should be present on the screen at all times, but it's not. I have to scroll down to find the horizontal scroll and then try to scroll back up. It is impossible to read text like this. I realize that there may be an easy fix to this, but I cannot intuitively tell how to make the pull requests wrap so that the horizontal scroll is not necessary. While I very much want to be able to help, the learning curve to be involved in this process has made me feel like I am incapable and should not be a part of this effort.

The wiki

Renaldo Bernard: I have easily used wikis in the past but our particular implementation is immensely confusing and frustrating. However, this could be due to me not taking an hour or so to sit and re-read something that explains it all.

Lisa: people can not use the wiki mark up. It is a new language to learn!

EA: I can copy and paste mark up language in wikis and correct errors much more quickly than I can in github but that is a personal preference. I find a wiki easier to read and can see revisions etc.

Thaddeus: No concerns

Steve: no concerns. Wikis have a simple markup and flow

Jan: No concerns

WebEX

John Rochford: I have been prevented from joining calls because I cannot get through WebEx's inaccessible CAPTCHA. Seriously?

John Kirkwood: seeing indication of who is talking is helpful (also, especially for scribe)

Lisa: I can never remember the password. I have a few webex meetings so my password application can not save a password for them. Can we have either an alternative log in ?

E.A. I have several windows open when we work on WebEX - the email with numbers, saved password in Chrome and address for coga IRC channel! It works better for me than the old call that I had to pay for via Skype.

Jim_S: I'm a big fan of WebEX :)

Thaddeus: No concerns

Jan: No concerns

Steve: it never quite seems to work 1st time for me and is slow to start. I'm on Windows. Otherwise it's OK as we only use basic conference facilities with chat etc in IRC. Seeing the speaker is a boost

Emails and the email list

Renaldo Bernard: There must be a better way.

John Rochford: I agree with Renaldo, but is there a better technology that is accessible too?

John Kirkwood: I agree with Renaldo but I do think there are client side tools/email managers that can help a bit if integrated into participant's processes. But it's heavy/clunky at best.

E.A. I really have failed to cope in the last month with all the emails as I have so many at this time of year from work and project reports etc. The sheer quantity of comments on both lists has made me hit the delete button when I know I should be making comments.

Jim_S: If I had been smart I would have created a dedicated email address to use for this rather than trash my work email. I know it's a bit dated, but I wonder if there is an accessible threaded message board?

Thaddeus: Very hard to sort through actionable items that need attention vs. Other topics such as dissatisfaction with x.

Steve: OK for general discussions but there may be better places for specifics - like attached to an issue.

Jan: The quantity of email is overwhelming and difficult to wade through what needs to be addressed.

Tracking conversations and resolutions

Lisa: I cannot track conversations across multiple places . I also need a way to identify key stuff - like the current proposal , without reading though a lot of other things to find it. Otherwise I am talking about a different, old proposal.

EA. Yes Lisa this is a real problem - keeping threads in a sensible order and managing the important points as opposed to those that may not be necessary to a particular process.

Jim_S: all conversation should take place in a single environment. GitHub would be good for this if you could make sure that the email notifications only contained a link to the discussion in GitHub - this would stop parallel conversations on topics developing.

Jan: +1 to Jim's comment

Thaddeus: See my comment on Emails

Steve: is "all over the place" literally and metaphorically :(Conversations are split over channels and there is no clear 'master'. Makes it almost impossible to query the project archives so is a barrier to newcomers as well as ourselves.

Voting

E.A. There are times when I really cannot track back to what I am meant to be voting on and a classic one was the really important point Lisa made about user testing - there was statement hidden in the general text and I was querying it, but did not feel I could comment because it was part of the process. Somehow really important consensus moments need to happen in a different way.

Jim_S: Is it possible to vote on a subset of the items and then come back and complete the voting on the items skipped? This may actually be possible but I've never tried as I don't want to mess the vote up. It is important to understand an SC and follow the discussions that have taken place if I am to make an informed vote and this is time consuming. Doing 5 or 6 SC at a time takes a significant amount of time. I suppose I could record my results elsewhere and just fill in the form when I have completed all of the SC on the list

Thaddeus: A more formal polling application for all voting may be useful.

Steve: agree with above. If this includes the new surveys - they seem to be duplicating the decision process

Jan: +1 to Jim's comment

Other

John Kirkwood: real time collaboration tools have evolved greatly (Google docs etc) and these can be of benefit timeliness of submittals with faster editorial cycles

Lisa: I am very uncomfortable with expecting people to ask someone else for help them as an accommodation. People should be able to participate independently if at all possible.

E.A. I felt very embarrassed having to ask for help when I knew I could probably have coped but I would not have achieved the task in the allotted time.

E.A. Having a mentor, guide, leader pushing and cajoling makes all the difference and if a system of support could be on offer where expertise was known in advance I think we could have achieved tasks more easily for example an expert for tight SC wording, those who can code, Lisa with WCAG /code /coga etc knowledge and some of us with disability know how. Maybe have groups with these skills on hand at different times in the process.

Jim_S: +1 on both of E.A.'s comments.

Thaddeus: I hope we are building a culture, within the Working Group and Task Force where no member feels embarrassed to ask for help. I am glad to provide help in areas of which I have knowledge.

Steve: +1 to culture and asking for help. I also think self-directed onboarding is almost impossible as things stand (I had a tough job learning how to be a SC manager). We need this to attract more people. The process should help us easily do the real work of COGA/WCAG, not get in the way as it does right now

Also lisa's workload is greatly multiplied as she answers questions about process, takes on steps for others, asks WCAG for clarifications etc etc. I'd like to see lisa being able to concentrate on COGA work, not the process. Massive thanks again to Lisa for taking this all on so graciously!

Jan: +1 to Lisa's comment about working independently - I don't mind asking for help because all of this is new to me, but when you are trying to coordinate that help across time zones and around work schedules, it impedes efficiency. By the time you're able to get help, deadlines may have passed. I have learned that I have to take additional time to write out everything in

detail so that when I am able to connect with someone for help, I can remember exactly what the issue was so that I can explain it properly. Also, it would be nice not to have to burden Lisa with questions, but when I have sent questions to the WCAG chairs, I find them to be just as buried in emails as everyone else and often unable to respond to questions in a timely manner. I am not faulting them for anything because I completely understand that they too are volunteers and that they are receiving far more email about all of this than I am. I just think that it illustrates how overwhelming the communication system is for everyone. If we are under strict deadlines, we need a better system to facilitate and streamline the work.