

Shared Glossary

Guidance on writing glossary entries

- If there is an existing definition for the term, use that as a starting point and review accordingly. Remember that the definitions in WCAG 2.x have gone through multiple rounds of review.
 - NOTE: EN 301 549 and other international standards often need to use terms as defined by other standards in their organizations.
- Glossary entries should be written so that they can be substituted directly for the term in the sentences in which they are used - and the sentence should make grammatical and semantic sense (even if they are overly long and wordy with the definition in place).
- Consider whether your definition explains the term and doesn't introduce more terms that need to be defined.
- Everything important, including limitations, needs to be in the definition. Notes can only explain what the definition is or give examples. Notes can never limit, expand, quantify, or provide exceptions to the definition.
- Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler. (A. Einstein)

Shared Glossary

Please add things in A-Z order.

Accessibility supported (tentative from [Inputs](#))

Supported by in at least 2 major free browsers on the 2 most used computer operating systems and the 2 most used mobile operating systems and/or available in assistive technologies used by 80% cumulatively of the AT users on each operating system for each type of AT used

Note: See accessibility support set

Accessibility support set

set of user agents and assistive technologies that are considered sufficient for establishing that something is accessibility supported

Editor's Note 1

The AGWG is considering defining and mainsta default set of user agents and assistive technologies that they use when validating guidelines.

Accessibility support sets may vary based on language, region, or situation.

If you are not using the default accessibility set, the conformance report should indicate what set is being used.

May 2025 definition

Which user-agents and assistive technologies you test with. WCAG3 provides a default.

Dec 2024 definition

The group of user agents and assistive technologies you test with.

Anti-pattern

An unintentional (without intent) design or implementation that often leads to a general decline in usability. (Poor UX, poor design, or both.)

Assistive technology (as used in this document)

Hardware and/or software that acts as a [user agent](#), or along with a mainstream user agent, to provide functionality to meet the requirements of users with disabilities that go beyond those offered by mainstream user agents

NOTE 1

Functionality provided by assistive technology includes alternative presentations (e.g., as synthesized speech or magnified content), alternative input methods (e.g., voice), additional navigation or orientation mechanisms, and content transformations (e.g., to make tables more accessible).

NOTE 2

Assistive technologies often communicate data and messages with mainstream user agents by using and monitoring APIs.

NOTE 3

The distinction between mainstream user agents and assistive technologies is not absolute. Many mainstream user agents provide some features to assist individuals with disabilities. The basic difference is that mainstream user agents target broad and diverse audiences that usually include people with and without disabilities. Assistive

technologies target narrowly defined populations of users with specific disabilities. The assistance provided by an assistive technology is more specific to the needs of its target users.

NOTE 4

The mainstream user agent may provide important functionality to assistive technologies like retrieving web content from program objects or parsing markup into identifiable bundles.

EXAMPLE

Some example assistive technologies in the context of this document include the following:

- screen magnifiers, and other visual reading assistants, which are used by people with visual, perceptual and physical print disabilities to change text font, size, spacing, color, synchronization with speech, etc. in order to improve the visual readability of rendered text and images;
- screen readers, which are used by people who are blind to read textual information through synthesized speech or braille;
- text-to-speech software, which is used by some people with cognitive, language, and learning disabilities to convert text into synthetic speech;
- speech recognition software, which may be used by people who have some physical disabilities;
- alternative keyboards, which are used by people with certain physical disabilities to simulate the keyboard (including alternate keyboards that use head pointers, single switches, sip/puff and other special input devices.);
- alternative pointing devices, which are used by people with certain physical disabilities to simulate mouse pointing and button activations.

Blocks of text

Continuous text with multiple sentences that is not separated by structural elements such as table cells, list items, or regions.

Captions (from [Image and Media](#))

written text that is offered as part of the audiovisual content, to provide a visual presentation of the spoken words of the content as well as other elements of the soundtrack

NOTE

Captions are also called subtitles in some countries. When they are provided for people who have disabilities they include equivalents for text and are sometimes called “subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing”.

NOTE

When captions are provided for language translation (i.e. they captions are a different language than the audio) and do not contain equivalents for non-speech sounds, the more appropriate term would be “subtitles”.

NOTE

Closed captions (or subtitles) refers to captions that are not always shown but can be shown or hidden by the player. Open captions refers to captions that are embedded directly in the video image and cannot be turned off or hidden (except perhaps in the future with AI). There are also captions that are not embedded in the image (i.e. they can be turned on or off) but are not presented as text but as an image of text.

NOTE

Because closed captions are text they can often (but not always) be adjusted for size, font, color, location, background and more by players with such features.

Change of viewport within a page/view (from [Inputs](#))

Change of content/context that causes the users keyboard navigation point to change where they have the option to move back out of the new content/context.

EXAMPLES

Modal dialog

NOTE 1

“within a page/view is part of this term because - if the new viewport/content/context is within the same page/view going back etc. would be under the control of the author. If moving to another page/view - perhaps on a different site - the current

author would not have control and this would be a requirement on the user agent (browser)

NOTE 2

This is different from [Change of Context in WCAG 2.x](#) major changes that, if made without user awareness, can disorient users who are not able to view the entire page simultaneously

Closed system

Information technology that prevents users from easily attaching or installing assistive technologies. For example, kiosk, calculator, vending machines, etc.

Complex pointer input

Any pointer input other than a [single pointer](#) input.

EXAMPLES

Multipoint clicking, dragging (single or multipoint), gestures (single or multipoint), pinching, path-based gestures, timing based gestures, double clicking.

Content

Information and sensory experience to be communicated to the user by an interface, including code or markup that defines the content's structure, presentation, and interactions.

Component (from [views doc](#))

A grouping of [interactive elements](#) for a distinct function.

Deceptive Pattern (from [Deceptive Patterns Outcomes](#))

A deliberate anti-pattern designed to confuse or deceive a user, used to aim or force a user down a particular path or to trap attention in a way that redirects or focuses on a goal that the user either doesn't want or need, or may be harmful to them.

Default direction of text (from [Adjustable layouts](#))

Default orientation (from [Adjustable layouts](#))

A single orientation that a [platform](#) uses to view [content](#) by default.

EXAMPLES

Web browsers do not have a default orientation for content.

A mobile phone platform may default to portrait orientation. The home screen and provided apps only work in portrait.

Diverse set of users

{NOT USED NORMATIVELY SO DOES NOT / SHOULD NOT BE DEFINED.
(Can't be used normatively since there is no "definitive" or objective definition of "diverse set of users". Defining it would imply that such a definition was "definitive" or objective definition. Instead just use more words where this phrase would be used to give the gist of what is meant. }
TODO

Down-Event

A platform event that occurs when the trigger stimulus of a pointer is depressed

The down-event may have different names on different platforms, such as "touchstart" or "mousedown".

Essential exception

Exception because there is no way to carry out the function without doing it this way or fundamentally changing the functionality.

Examples: 1) Content that must fail since it is an example of failure or a test sample to be used testing a tool. 2) Real-time based exceptions such as a) purchasing items in limited supply, b) a dutch auction where the price keeps dropping until the first person hits they BUY button, c) controlling a drone in flight.

d) submitting a proposal by deadline. 3) no undo exceptions such as purchasing things in an auction, 3)

Gesture (as used in this document it is restricted to input gesture)

A motion made by the body or a body part used to communicate to technology.

Extraneous cognitive load

Processes that takes up mental resources, but doesn't actually help users understand the content.

Interactive element (tentative from [Inputs](#))

Element that a user can act on

OR

A part of the interface that responds to user input and can have a programmatically determinable name (from [views doc](#))

EXAMPLES

Buttons, controls, input fields

NOTE

In contrast to [non-interactive elements](#). For example, headings or paragraphs.

NOTE 2: Interactive elements and interactive groups are types of interactive components.

Keyboard focus

the point in the content where any keyboard actions would take effect

Note: Examples are 1) the keyboard focus on a control where an activate action like a spacebar would take effect or 2) the place in an input field where a typed character would be inserted

Keyboard Interface

API (application programming interface) where software gets ‘keystrokes’ from

Note: “keystrokes that are passed to the software from the “keyboard interface” may come from a wide variety of sources including but not limited to a scanning program (e.g. Stephen Hawking’s), from sip-and-puff morse code software, speech recognition software, AI of all sorts, as well as other keyboard substitutes or special keyboards.

Mechanism

A process or technique for achieving a result

Note 1

The mechanism may be explicitly provided in the content, or may be relied upon to be provided by either the platform or by user agents, including assistive technologies.

Note 2

The mechanism needs to meet all success criteria for the conformance level claimed.

Navigated sequentially

Navigated in the order defined for advancing focus (from one element to the next) using a keyboard interface.

Non-interactive element (tentative from [Inputs](#))

Element that a user perceives but cannot act on
OR

A part of the interface that does not respond to user input and does not include sub-parts (from [views doc](#))

EXAMPLES

Paragraphs, images, etc.

NOTE

In contrast to [Interactive element](#)

Non-web software

Software that does not meet the definition of web content.

Path-based gesture

VERSION 1

gesture that depends on the path of the pointer input and not just its endpoints.

NOTE: Path based gesture includes both time dependent and non-time dependent path-based gestures.

VERSION 2

an interaction where not just the endpoints matter, but how the pointer moves between these points”.

NOTE: Path based gesture includes both time dependent and non-time dependent path-based gestures.

(Based on Intent Document) - and better than above since it includes concept of timing which the note implies but is not in the definition above -- so the note is illegal if we use the definition above) SEE ALSO VERSION 3 that also solves this problem and another.

From [Understanding 2.5.1 Intent](#): A path-based gesture involves an interaction where not just the endpoints matter, but how the pointer moves between these points. [This definition does not follow convention for glossary terms.]

VERSION 3

gesture where the output is not determined only by the endpoints, but where the the pointer-movement path and/or timing also impacts or determines the output

NOTE: Path based gesture includes both time dependent and non-time dependent path-based gestures.

Easier to read and does not require defining other terms or phrases like “matters” or “how the pointer moves”.

Platform (needed in [Adjustable Layouts](#), and inspired by [EN 301 page 21](#))

Software, or collection of layers of software, that lay below the subject software and provide services to the subject software and that allows the subject software to be isolated from the hardware, drivers, and other software below..

NOTE: Platform software both makes it easier for subject software to run on different hardware, and provides the subject software with many services (e.g. functions, utilities, libraries) that make the subject software easier to write, keep updated, and work more uniformly with other subject software.

NOTE

A particular software component might play the role of a platform in some situations and a client in others. For example a browser is a platform for the content of the page but it also relies on the operating system below it.

NOTE

The platform is the context in which the [product](#) exists.

EXAMPLES

- A web-browser is a platform as it provides software services to HTML and JavaScript based software.
- An operating system provides software services to applications.
- An e-reader is a platform that provides software services to e-books.

Pointer

A hardware-agnostic representation of input devices that can target a specific coordinate (or set of coordinates) on a screen.

<https://www.w3.org/TR/pointerevents/#dfn-pointer>

Pointer focus

the point in the content where any pointer actions would take effect

Private and sensitive information

Private and sensitive information such as, but not limited to:

- Racial or ethnic origin
- Personally identifiable information
- Biometric information
- Medical and health information
- Gender identification
- Financial information

Process

May 2025 definition

series of [user interface contexts](#) and associated user actions, that are required to complete an activity, often in a certain order, and where the entire activity is [under the control of the provider](#) regardless of the technologies used or whether it spans different sites or domains.

Dec 2024 definition

sequence of steps that need to be completed to accomplish an activity or task from beginning to end.

Product (/Claim scope?) *x*

VERSION 1

set of [user interface contexts](#) selected to be part of a conformance claim. Where a user interface context is part of a [process](#), all the user interface contexts in the process must be included.

VERSION 2 (Current [WCAG 3 draft](#), used in [Text Appearance](#))

testing scope that is a combination of all items, views, and task flows that comprise the web site, set of web pages, web app, etc.

NOTE

The context for the product would be the [platform](#).

Programmatically determinable

VERSION 1 WCAG 3 definition

The meaning of the content and all its important attributes can be determined by software functionality that is accessibility supported.

VERSION 2 WCAG 2.2 definition

Determined by software from author-supplied data provided in a way that different user agents, including assistive technologies, can extract and present this information to users in different modalities

Example 1

Determined in a markup language from elements and attributes that are accessed directly by commonly available user agents

Example 2

Determined from technology-specific data structures in a non-markup language and exposed to assistive technology via an accessibility API that is supported by commonly available assistive technology.

Example 3

Determined by AI that is accessibility supported. That is, by AI that is in every browser and assistive technology that is in the accessibility supported list.

Purely decorative (from [Text Appearance](#))

content that, if removed, does not affect the meaning or functionality of the page

Section (from [2.2 definition](#))

A self-contained portion of content that deals with one or more related topics or thoughts.

NOTE

A section may consist of one or more paragraphs and include graphics, tables, lists and sub-sections.

Simple pointer input (from Inputs)

Input event that involves only a single “click” event or a “button down” and “button up” pair of events with no movement between.

NOTE

Examples of things that are ***not*** simple pointer actions include double clicks, dragging motions, gestures, and any use of multipoint input or gestures, and the simultaneous use of a mouse and keyboard.

NOTE

Simple pointer input is not the same as just using a [single pointer](#). It is more restrictive and does not include double clicking, dragging, etc. as noted above.

Single pointer (from [WCAG 2.2](#))

An input modality that only targets a single point on the page/screen/ui-context at a time – such as a mouse, single finger on a touch screen, or stylus.

NOTE

Single pointer interactions include clicks, double clicks, taps, dragging motions, and single-finger swipe gestures. In contrast, multipoint interactions involve the use of two or more pointers at the same time, such as two-finger interactions on a touchscreen, or the simultaneous use of a mouse and stylus.

NOTE 2: Single pointer input is in contrast to multipoint input such as two, three or more fingers or pointers touching the surface, or gesturing in the air, at the same time.

NOTE

Activation is usually by click or tap but can also be by programmatic simulation of a click or tap or other similar simple activation.

Standard keyboard navigation-operation technique

Keyboard navigation-operation technique that is the same across most or all applications and platforms and can therefore be relied upon by users who need to navigate and operate content by keyboard alone

Note: A sufficient listing of common keyboard navigation techniques for use by authors can be found in the [WCAG Standard Common Keyboard Navigation-operation Techniques List](#)

Standard keyboard navigation-operation keys

Keys that are present or typeable on most standard keyboards are

- **TAB,**
- **ESC,**
- **RETURN,**
- **SPACEBAR,**
- **SHIFT*,**
- **CTRL*,**
- **ALT/OPTION*,**
- **COMMAND/WINDOW/SUPER*,**
- **and Alpha-numeric if combined with modifier key (marked with * above or in Jump mode)**

See [WCAG Standard Keyboard Navigation-operation Keys](#)

Technology

A [mechanism](#) for encoding instructions to be rendered, played or executed by [user agents](#).

Note 1

As used in these guidelines "web technology" and the word "technology" (when used alone) both refer to web content technologies.

Note 2

Web content technologies may include markup languages, data formats, or programming languages that authors may use alone or in combination to create end-user experiences.

Example

Some common examples of web content technologies include HTML, CSS, SVG, PNG, PDF, and JavaScript.

Text (from [WCAG 2](#))

sequence of characters that can be programmatically determined, where the sequence is expressing something in human language

NOTE: Images of text did not used to be programmatically determinable. But AI additions to operating systems now allow copying and pasting of text directly from pictures. When this capability is fully accessibility supported (i.e. supported by all browsers and AT in the accessibility supported list) then pictures of text will become programmatically determinable as long as the picture of the text can be shown to be clear enough to be programmatically determinable by the browsers and AT in the accessibility supported list.

EXAMPLE

An image of a chart is described in text in the paragraph after the chart. The short text alternative for the chart indicates that a description follows.

TODO Note about AAC????

Two-dimensional content (from [Adjustable layouts](#))

VERSION 1:

content whose arrangement spatially or logically involves 2 dimensions and where the location the the 2 dimensions conveys meaning.

VERSION 2

content that has elements arranged in 2 dimensions where the location of the elements as in the two dimensions conveys meaning

EXAMPLES

Data tables, electronic program guide, canvases of presentational content (e.g. slides), interfaces with multiple palettes or panels that act on content (e.g.

programming interfaces).

Under the control of the provider

where the provider is able to influence the content and its functionality

NOTE: this could be by directly creating the content themselves or by having influence by means of financial or other reward or removal of reward to the author of the content

NOTE: Some (non-exhaustive) examples include- the provider purchases the content for the site, the provider contracts with or pays for content on the site and has discretion for what is posted.

Up-event

A platform event that occurs when the trigger stimulus of a pointer is released

The up-event may have different names on different platforms, such as "touchend" or "mouseup".

User agent

VERSION 1

Any software that retrieves and presents web content for users

VERSION 2

Any software that retrieves, presentes, and facilitates interacting with web content

EXAMPLES

Web browsers, media players, plug-ins, and other programs — including [assistive technologies](#) — that help in retrieving, rendering, and interacting with external content.

User interface context

A user interface with a specific layout and associated components. If more than X% of the associated [components](#) are changed, it is a new user interface context.

User manipulable text (from [Text Appearance](#))

Text that the user can adjust.

NOTE: This could include, but is not limited to, changing:

- Line, word or letter spacing
- Color
- Line length — being able to control width of block of text
- Typographic alignment — justified, flushed right/left, centered
- Wrapping
- Columns — number of columns in one-dimensional content
- Margins
- Underlining, italics, bold
- Font face, size, width
- Capitalization — all caps, small caps, alternating case
- End of line hyphenation
- Links

Viewport (from [Adjustable Layouts](#))

Object in which the [platform](#) presents content.

NOTE: The author has no control of the viewport and almost always has no idea what is presented in a viewport (e.g. what is on screen) because it is provided by the platform. On browsers the hardware platform is isolated from the content.

NOTE

Content can be presented through one or more viewports. Viewports include windows, frames, loudspeakers, and virtual magnifying glasses. A viewport may contain another viewport. For example, nested frames. Interface components created by the user agent such as prompts, menus, and alerts are not viewports.

EXAMPLE 1

For a webpage author, the viewport is the HTML viewport.

EXAMPLE 2

For an application developer, the viewport is the window.

Web Page

<the standard definition from WCAG 2>