



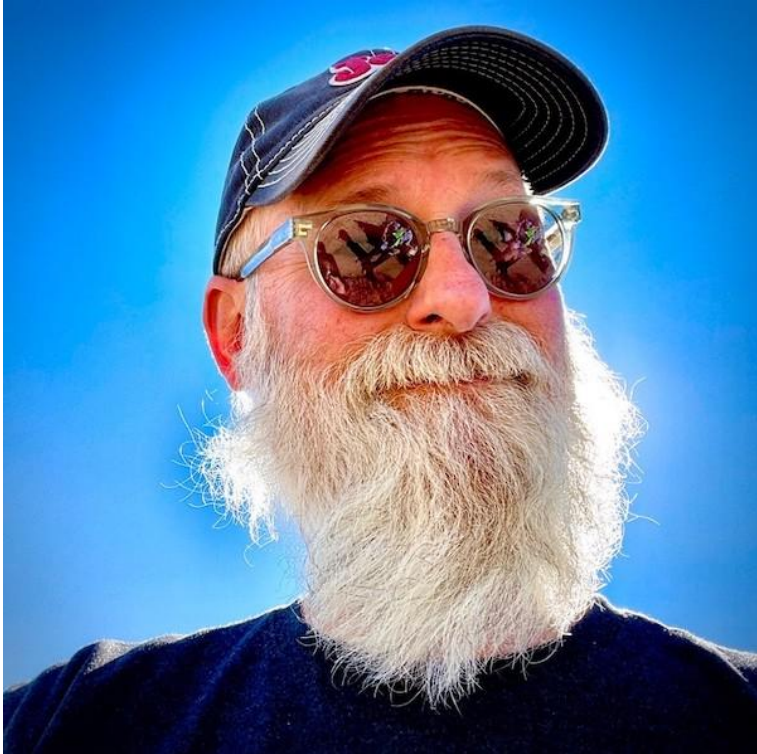
Accessibility Maturity Models: What, Why & How

Portland Accessibility and User Experience Meetup

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Thanks for being here. I'm Andrew.



Co-founder of Assistiv Labs

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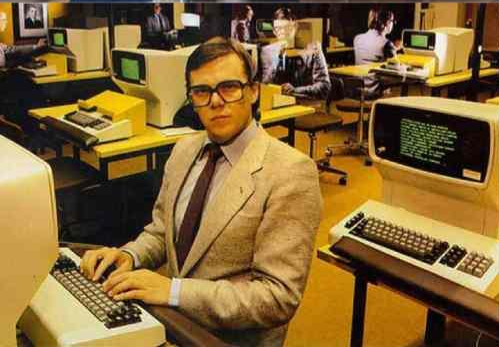
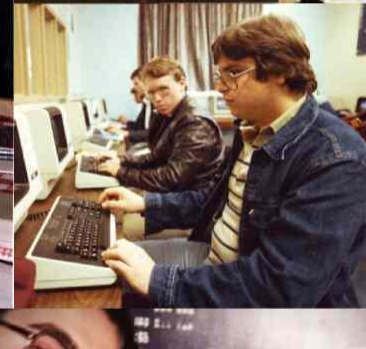
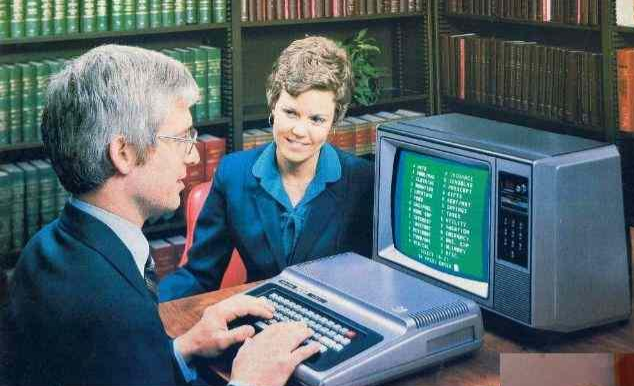
Found on the socials @segdeha

A glass bottle lying on its side, containing a miniature model of a three-masted sailing ship with white sails and a red hull. The ship is set on a sea of blue and white paint, representing waves. The bottle's neck is wrapped with a thick, light-brown rope. The text "What is an Accessibility Maturity Model?" is overlaid in the center of the bottle in a white box with black text.

What is an Accessibility Maturity Model?

Where did accessibility maturity models originate?

Spawn of Capability Maturity Model (CMM), invented in the 1980s by the DOD as a way to figure out why contractors were delivering software late and over budget.



What do we mean by “maturity” in this context?

“The term ‘maturity’ relates to the degree of formality and optimization of processes, from *ad hoc* practices, to formally defined steps, to managed result metrics, to active optimization of the processes.”

– [Wikipedia](#)

What is a “maturity model,” exactly?

Maturity models define “a set of structured levels that describe how well the behaviors, practices and processes of an organization can reliably and sustainably produce required outcomes.”

– [Wikipedia](#)

How are maturity models structured?

Dimensions measured vary by domain

States for each dimension

1. Initial
2. Repeatable
3. Defined
4. Managed/capable
5. Optimizing/efficient

What maturity models exist for accessibility?

[W3C Accessibility Maturity Model](#)

Microsoft [Accessibility Evolution Model](#)

Level Access [DAMM™](#)

AbilityNet [DAMM](#)

What's the status of the W3C model?

Group Draft Note

Free to use

Limited [guidance for implementation](#)

What dimensions are covered by the W3C model?

- Communications
- Knowledge and Skills
- Support
- ICT (Information & Communication Technology) Development Life Cycle
- Personnel
- Procurement
- Culture

How are dimensions assessed?

“Each dimensional outcome has a range of suggested **proof points**, which includes any evidence or necessary measures that can be used to determine the maturity of each dimension. Progress towards achieving maturity is attained by creating the proof points described for each dimension.”

– [W3C](#)

What's an example of proof points?

ICT Development Lifecycle

- Design
- Development
- **User Experience**
- Quality Review Through Release
- ICT Development Training

What's an example of proof points?

ICT Development Lifecycle: UX

- User research includes disabilities
 - All research asks participants to anonymously identify whether or not they have a disability, and if so, what type of disability/ies
- User research focusing only on disabilities is performed

What stages are described by the W3C model?

1. Inactive (Initial)
2. Launch (Repeatable)
3. Integrate (Defined + Managed/capable)
4. Optimize (Optimizing/efficient)

How does the W3C model compare to the others?

W3C

- Communications
- Knowledge and Skills
- Support
- ICT Development Life Cycle
- Personnel
- Procurement
- Culture

Level Access

- Governance, risk management, & compliance
- Communications
- Policy & standards
- Legal
- Fiscal management
- Development lifecycle
- Testing & validation
- Support & documentation
- Procurement
- Training
- Human Resources

AbilityNet

- Vision
- Leadership
- Processes
- Capability
- Procurement

A magnifying glass with a black handle and a silver rim is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the image. The lens is clear and reflects the blue background. The background is a solid light blue color with a subtle, repeating geometric pattern of interlocking triangles. A white rectangular text box is centered horizontally across the middle of the image, containing the main text.

**Why complete an Accessibility
Maturity Model assessment?**

How can maturity models help?

Provide common language

Identify areas for improvement

Measure progress

What are the limitations of maturity models?

Time-consuming & expensive

Difficult to measure progress

Difficult to maintain momentum

Change is hard

What's the difference between this & conformance testing?

“Conformance testing provides information about the level of accessibility conformance of a particular product.

Maturity modeling provides information about the ability of an organization to produce accessible products over the long term.”

– [W3C](#)

A close-up photograph of several small green seedlings in terracotta pots. The seedlings are in various stages of growth, with some showing two leaves and others just starting to emerge. The pots are arranged in rows, and the background is softly blurred. A white text box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text "How do I start an assessment?".

How do I start an assessment?

How do I choose which model to use?

Standards body sanctioned → W3C

Simplicity versus granularity →

AbilityNet ... W3C ... Level Access

Cost/ability to self-serve → AbilityNet

Is my org ready to take this on?

The irony is that you need to be at a certain level of organizational maturity to get buy-in to do an assessment.

Or do you?

How do you rally people to the cause?

Define what you hope to accomplish:

- In what ways will the assessment inform company decisions?
- Is support in place to operationalize your findings?
- What's the scope of the assessment you want to complete?

Who needs to be involved?

The W3C lists [32 roles](#) within an organization who should give input to an accessibility maturity assessment.

Better just to start if waiting until all 32 roles are covered means you never do.

Seems like a lot of time and effort. Will it be worth it?

Changing an organization's culture is work that is slow and hard. You'll find quick wins in some areas and other places where the pace and scope never feel like enough.

Is it worth it? What's the alternative?



You can do it!

Photo credits

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Selfie on slide 2 by [me](#)

Ship in a bottle photo on slide 3 by [Crissy Jarvis](#) on [Unsplash](#)

'80s programmers mosaic photos on slide 5 via [DuckDuckGo](#)

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Ugly Windows sweater photo on slide 27 by [Windows](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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Welcome

Select an assistive technology to get started.

Assistive technology	Version	Browser	Browser version
NVDA	2023.2 (latest)	Firefox (recomm	117 (latest)

AssistivTunnel (optional): Disabled

Test localhost, internal staging servers, behind VPNs, firewalls, and intranets. [Learn how to get started with AssistivTunnel.](#)

▼ Show Mac to PC keyboard settings

Internally, the **CAPS LOCK** key works differently on Macs, which causes issues for PC screen readers that use it as a modifier key. Please choose an alternative.

- Remap left **SHIFT** + **OPTION** to **INSERT**, which is an alternate modifier key used by most screen readers
- Make **CAPS LOCK** sticky. When **CAPS LOCK** is on, it will be held down on the remote PC until it's turned off again

Want to help us improve? [Submit a user feedback form!](#)

Start testing

To claim your free *forever* Freelancer account, sign up for an account at assistivlabs.com/sign-up then email Andrew at andrew@assistivlabs.com and I'll get you set up.

Limited to the first 50 people who email me referring to this Meetup.

I promise not to try to upsell you! 😄