

Accessibility audit and testing

G-Cloud 15

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Accessibility audit and testing

Our content and customer experience services reach from behavioural insight and inclusivity strategy, through human-centred service design, to digital experience platform strategy and out into digital, creative, content and UX design and delivery. CDS' comprehensive suite of customer experience services deliver compelling, intuitive and accessible user journeys, improving engagement and supporting the effortless delivery of digital services to our clients' customer bases.

Our multidisciplinary agile teams, user research specialists, design studio and accessibility teams provide digital experience platform strategy and implementation, behavioural insight, research and analysis, accessibility and inclusivity strategy definition and implementation, audience engagement/UX services, content strategy and content creation and communications planning and delivery.

We work with trusted open-source and low-code partners to define, architect and build engaging front ends with minimal cost and effortless maintenance, and our content strategists provide clear, concise copy with robust information architectures, keeping our customers' content fresh and accurate.

CDS' content and customer experience services include:

- Accessibility consultancy, training, workshops and support
- Accessibility training: creating PDFs and HTML from source files
- Accessibility training in PDF remediation using Adobe Acrobat
- Accessibility audit and accessibility testing
- Inclusivity consultancy, user testing and research services
- Content strategy, measurement and optimisation services
- Content strategy and design consultancy
- Content design, strategy and editorial services
- Content design for digital channels
- Content production cloud solutions
- Web editing and proofing and content services
- Discovery research and design
- Experience and service optimisation
- Service design and strategy
- User journey mapping and analysis
- Design system and DesignOps
- User experience design consultancy
- Digital experience platform (DXP) design and performance.

Our user-centred approach aligns with the GDS Standard and supports users with a range of digital literacy/skills and accessibility needs.

Case study

Skills for Care required an accessibility evaluation of their Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS) digital service. The service needed to meet the Government Service Standard and Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations.

The scope of the accessibility evaluation included a WCAG compliance audit and assistive technology user testing with people with a range of disabilities and accessibility needs.

The solution

To understand the service and users' needs, CDS accessibility experts undertook a preliminary review of the digital service, analysing relevant data and user research and working with the product owners to understand functionality, user journeys, and content types.

The team identified a representative sample of pages to include in the audit and a priority testing scope for key content and user journeys with the highest potential accessibility barriers. This ensured the review of crucial content for service users while meeting budget constraints.

For each page in the audit sample, CDS experts focused on WCAG compliance and adherence to Government Digital Service standards to thoroughly test the design, content, and code against the applicable WCAG 2.1 AA criteria.

The team also conducted testing to evaluate compatibility with common assistive technologies (e.g., mobile and desktop screen readers, voice recognition software, display adaptations, and mobile displays). The natural interaction testing included a broad range of users: people with different auditory, cognitive, learning, neurological, physical, speech, and visual disabilities. The findings were outlined in an accessibility audit report alongside effective technical solutions.

The result

Skills for Care received a meaningful, actionable report for the business that enabled them to secure further funding for broader testing. It included an executive summary of key findings, priorities, next steps, recommendations, and detailed results against WCAG standards.

CDS led on-site workshops with the design and development teams to present and discuss findings, scope, and next steps, including solution implementation advice. CDS also worked closely with senior stakeholders in a collaborative show-and-tell session that helped explain the impact of issues on different disabled users, address questions and concerns, discuss remedial options, and prioritise issues based on the impact and cost of implementation.

Following remedial work by the developer to fix the issues raised, the team re-tested to confirm the resolution. Finally, CDS drafted an accessibility statement for the ASC-WDS service, meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Service overview

Our accessibility consultancy supports users with accessibility needs (including people using assistive technologies like screen readers) and assisted digital users. Our inclusivity consultancy, audit, user testing and research make information accessible, available and inclusive, and support clients to align with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.2 Level AA) and GDS Service Standard.

Features and benefits

Features

- Accessibility audit and testing to WCAG A, AA, AAA conformance
- Uses manual and automated accessibility testing tools
- Follows international industry best practice and methodology
- Adheres to GDS Service Manual and Service Standard recommendations
- Comprehensive cross browser and device accessibility testing
- Uses modern assistive technology testing
- Optional accessibility user testing with disabled users
- In-depth accessibility audit report with realistic technical solutions
- Assessment of disproportionate burden

Benefits

- Accessibility audits and accessibility testing remove barriers that exclude users
- Meets international accessibility guidelines WCAG 2.2 AA
- Provides an accessible and effective user experience
- Delivers accessible communications that work for all users
- Meets public sector accessibility requirements and WCAG compliance
- Offers an accessible and inclusive user experience
- Minimises legal risk of discrimination
- Makes content accessible in events of environmental or situational impairment

Our approach

Accessibility audit

To help clients identify potential accessibility issues, we conduct an accessibility audit and evaluate against WCAG 2.2 AA compliance criteria. An accessibility audit provides an expert review of digital service and includes:

- Review any existing user research
- Audit report documentation with overview of any accessibility issues
- Summary of overall level of WCAG 2.2 Level AA compliance
- Detailed page-by-page analysis
- Specific information about each WCAG 2.2 Level AA failure
- Implementation and code examples for corrective action
- Advice on best practices and recommendations
- Advice on 'disproportionate burden'
- Information for Accessibility Statements.

We audit web content in accordance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Evaluation Methodology (WCAG-EM) and follow the approaches outlined in the GDS Service Manual, Technology Code of Practice and The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Our consultants audit samples in accordance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Evaluation Methodology (WCAG-EM). Each page template or component is tested in all responsive states (mobile/tablet/desktop) against the WCAG 2.2 Level AA success criteria.

We use a combination of automated and manual testing tools and techniques, as well as assistive technologies including screen readers, screen magnification tools and speech recognition software where appropriate.

Following the audit, we produce a report documenting the findings and the work required to address the areas of non-compliance. The report will indicate the priority of issues and provide design and technical recommendations for corrective action for the site to achieve the required standard.

Accessibility user testing

We recommend clients conduct user research with people with disabilities for more in-depth accessibility and usability testing, and with people of various ages, nationalities/first languages, culture, socioeconomic backgrounds, education (reading level) etc.

To complement an accessibility audit, CDS can test clients' websites or services with people with a range of accessibility needs including people with auditory, cognitive, neurological, physical, speech and visual impairments or disabilities. Observing and interviewing people using a range of devices, adaptations and assistive technologies provides an invaluable insight into users' accessibility needs and the accessibility barriers they face. CDS also provides access to user research test labs to test and monitor user behaviour.

Accessibility wireframe and design review

We assess wireframes and designs on the same WCAG success criteria as an accessibility audit and take a holistic view to assess the overall accessibility and usability of user journeys and UI components. We can advise on accessible design best practice, WCAG conformance, implementation and interaction considerations to make sure clients consider accessibility at the start of every project, and test designs once implemented to ensure the guidance has been implemented effectively.

Accessibility statements

All new public sector websites need to meet accessibility standards and publish an accessibility statement in accordance with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

CDS can advise on the development of an accessibility statement and communicate the level of accessibility across the site or app. In conjunction with an audit, we can ensure that the statement details any accessibility barriers and informs users of alternative routes to access.

Business continuity and disaster recovery plans

CDS is committed to minimising and managing its exposure to disruption to the business and the services provided to our customers. This encompasses robust systems and processes necessary to maintain continuity of service and operations.

CDS maintains a comprehensive Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery (BCDR) plan, certified to **ISO 23001**, that defines clear roles, responsibilities, processes, and procedures for assessing and responding to disruptions to ensure continuity during disruptions. **Our plan is tested annually with lessons learned incorporated into plan improvements.**

Our Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) is underpinned by regular business impact assessments and threat and risk analyses, and annual tests to ensure all contingencies remain effective, current, and fit for purpose.

Onboarding and offboarding

Onboarding

CDS provides a tailored onboarding pathway, based on clients' individual requirements.

Onboarding is a collaborative process, through which we fully understand our clients' short-, medium- and long-term goals, and plan our service accordingly, to deliver best value and appropriate resourcing, governance, communication and planning.

Our multi-disciplinary agile teams will work with project stakeholders to understand the client and project needs and requirements.

We will define and capture ways of working, including definitions of 'ready' and 'done', and identify acceptance criteria for each sprint, underpinned by modern test practices and OKRs.

Offboarding

Upon starting the engagement, CDS will provide an exit plan for client approval. This will cover matters such as knowledge transfer and documentation, roll-off schedules, data and asset transfer, intellectual property and removal of access / permissions and return of devices / equipment.

Ownership of data contained in any solution belongs to and rests with the client; as the service is decommissioned, raw data will be transferred to the client. CDS is certified to ISO 27001 for data security and will always adhere to these standards – including data removal and destruction.

Training

As well as continual 'on the job' knowledge transfer to upskill client teams, CDS can provide formal, comprehensive training for administrators and users prior to handover and go live designed to support successful change management, ensure smooth implementation and embed solutions that are integral to business operations.

Our training also builds internal technical capability, empowering teams to become self-sufficient and reduce the long-term cost of change.

In most cases, we adopt a 'train-the-trainer' model, delivered through a blend of on-site and remote sessions. This is supported by comprehensive training materials and easy-to-follow digital end-user guides, written for non-technical audiences and compliant with WCAG 2.2 accessibility guidelines.

Service constraints

Ordering and invoicing

We recommend contacting CDS before placing an order via G Cloud 15, to confirm and agree scope, scale, SLAs, KPIs, outcomes, etc. We will be pleased to support clients to define statements of work that reflect their requirements.

Invoices are issued monthly in arrears, with payment terms of 30 days.

Pricing

Timescales and costs vary, depending on several factors; we recommend a preliminary review to provide a firm cost.

Please refer to our pricing document and rate card.

Industry standards

CDS delivers all its services to internationally recognised standards. CDS is accredited to the following standards:

- ISO 9001 Quality Management System.
- ISO 27001 Information Security Management.
- ISO 20000 IT Service Management and IASME certified.
- ISO 14001 Environmental Management.
- BSI 1008 Electronic Information.
- ISO 22301 Security and Resilience (Business Continuity).
- ISO 45001 Health and Safety Management.
- ISO 10008 Evidential Weight and Legal Admissibility of Electronic Information.
- ISO 50001 Energy Management Standard.
- Cyber Essentials Plus.
- IASME certified.
- ITIL compliant service desk.
- PlanetMark Sustainability.

We comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR regulations.

Contact details

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