

STRATEGIC PATHWAYS TO BUILDING AN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE DIGITAL WORKPLACE

IDEA - Inclusive Design for Employment Access
December 6, 2024

Monica Ackermann, P.Eng. MA





WELCOME!

We are committed to providing an inclusive and accessible work environment. Please let us know if you require an accommodation.

AGENDA

Technology in the Employment Journey

Make it Accessible

Evolving Accessibility Standards

Your Strategy?

Keep Learning

BRIDGING THE GAP: REPORT ON DISABILITY INCLUSION IN CANADIAN WORKPLACES



Inclusive Design

Adopt inclusive design approaches to meet and exceed accessibility standards



Accommodation

Adopt accommodations approaches that offer employees accommodations and adjustments by default, rather than relying upon disclosure



Employee life cycle

Ensure fully inclusive environments throughout the full employee life cycle



Artificial Intelligence

Ensure that artificial intelligence (AI) and technology used in the workplace is ethical and accessible by design

TECHNOLOGY IN THE EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY

RECRUITMENT

Public Website

Applicant Tracking System

Assessment and Selection
Tools

AI Hiring Tools

ONBOARDING

Hardware

Software Image

Communication systems

Security and Authentication

E-Signature

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

HR Management Systems

Collaboration tools

Job specific applications

Information Portals

Learning Management
Systems

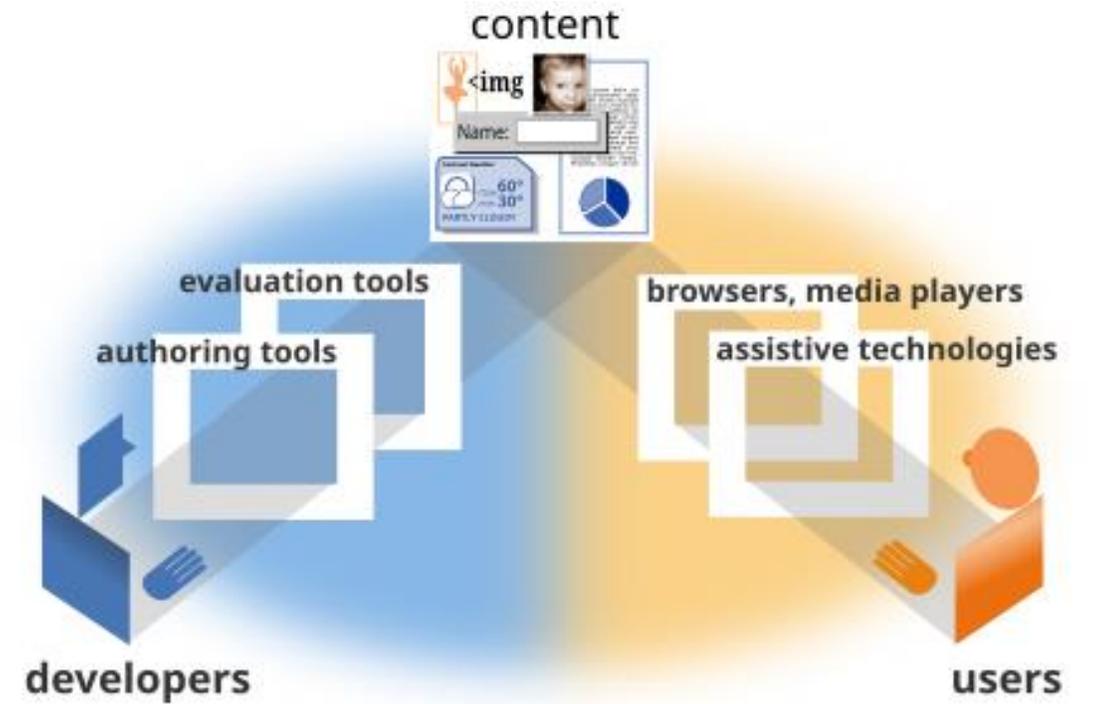
IT Support

Digital Content: e-mail, announcements, documents, forms, video and audio communication, multi-media

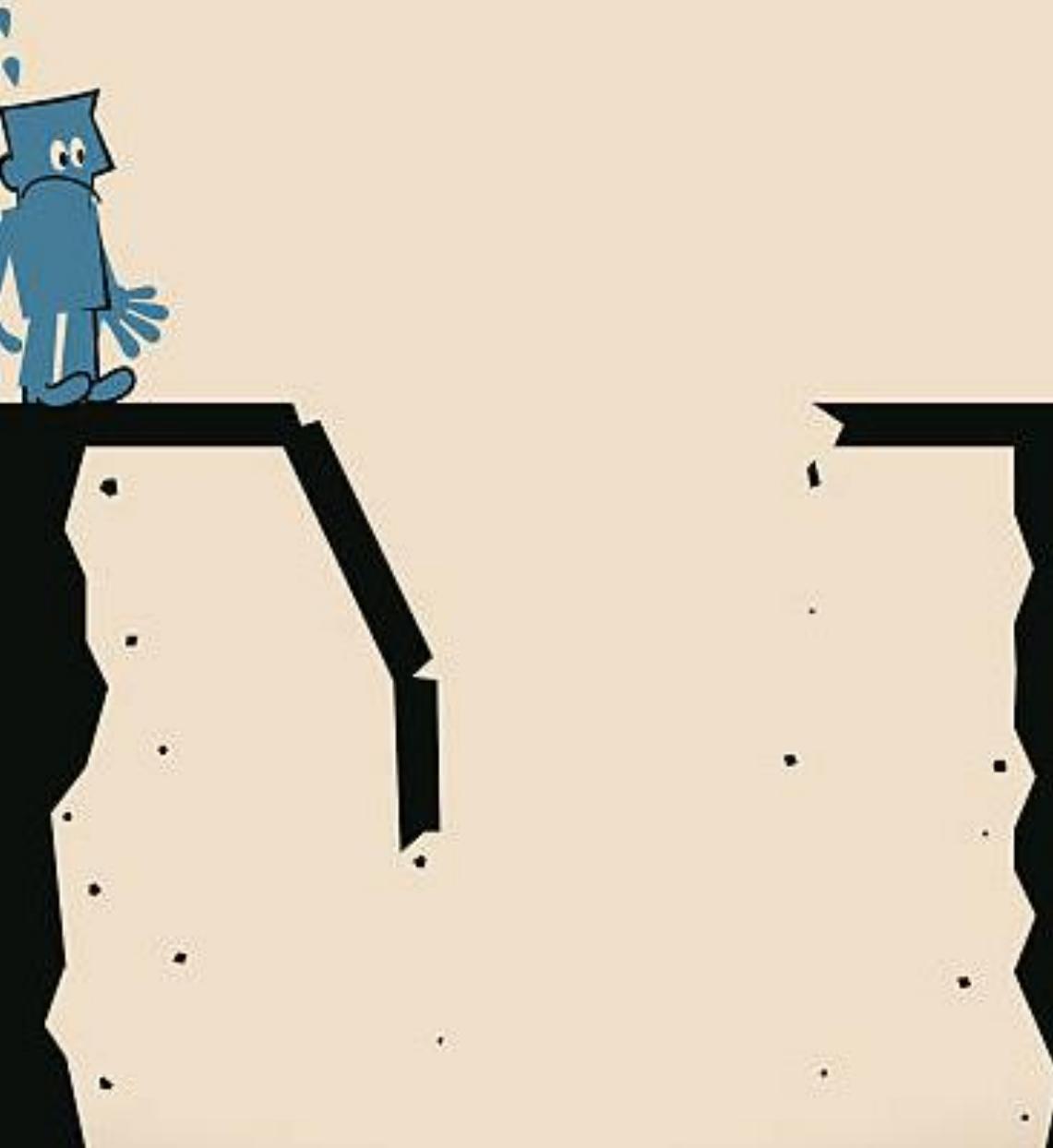
ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION



Photo Credit: [Elizabeth Woolner](#) on [Unsplash](#)



[W3C: Essential components of web accessibility](#)



STRATEGY

Employment accessibility strategy – a framework of policies and practices that establishes a vision for, and a roadmap towards, a workplace that is accessible and inclusive by design.

Note: An accessibility strategy is not limited to only accessibility-specific policies and practices, but also ensuring that all policies and practices are inclusive and barrier-free.

RECRUITMENT

Public Website

Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

Assessment and Selection Tools

AI Hiring Tools

Functional Characteristics

- Multiple, integrated systems
- Different vendors, developers, and technology owners
- Increased use of AI in recruitment, hiring, screening, interviews

Make it Accessible

- Assess, understand and communicate accessibility barriers and identified workarounds
- Clear end to end, integrated, processes for requesting and implementing accommodations
- Are your vendor products onformant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)?
- Follow best practices in Canada's [Accessible and Equitable Artificial Intelligence Systems - Technical Guide](#)

ONBOARDING

Hardware

Software Image

Communication systems

E-Signature

Security and
Authentication

Functional Characteristics

- Limited hardware options
- Pre-configured standard software image
- Enterprise-wide software licenses
- Business specific applications
- Highly secure and locked down
- Features available on consumer systems may be blocked

Make it Accessible

- Assistive technology (funded, current, sliced, tested, packaged for install)
- Leverage operating system level integrated assistive technology
- Enable customizable, transferable, personal profiles
- One size does not fit all. Build options and offer choice.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Functional Characteristics

- Third-Party applications, often customized for an organization
- Multiple systems each with different interfaces
- Legacy systems
- Authoring tools used for development
- Content creators can be anyone in the company
- IT support designed for standard technology

Make it Accessible

- Include employees with disabilities in the design, development and procurement of employee systems
- Have a mechanism for reporting accessibility issues. Find workarounds. Document them. Share them. Fix them.
- Leverage platform level accessibility capabilities
- Integrate accessibility into each step in the development process
- IT support for assistive technology users
- Create and deploy accessible templates and guides for digital content

HR Management
Systems

Collaboration tools

Job specific applications

Information Portals

Learning Management
Systems

IT Support

EMPLOYMENT ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS AND EMPLOYEE FACING TECHNOLOGY (1/2)

Jurisdiction	Accommodation	Information and Communication	Employee Facing Technology
Ontario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upon request • accommodation plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessible formats • communication supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information that is needed in order to perform the employee’s job; and • information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.
Manitoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upon request • reasonable • accommodation plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessible formats • communication supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no explicit reference
Nova Scotia (Draft)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accommodations and real-time accessibility services • as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessible formats and real-time accessibility services 	<p>Recruitment, Assessment, Selection and Onboarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Materials • Accessible Online (Recruitment) Platforms – internal and external • Accessible Online Job Postings • Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) • Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) • Enhancing Accessibility for Mandatory Documents

EMPLOYMENT ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS AND EMPLOYEE FACING TECHNOLOGY (2/2)

Jurisdiction	Accommodation	Information and Communication	Employee Facing Technology
Canada (CAN/ASC-1.1:2024 - Employment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barrier identification, removal and prevention Accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> access to information accessibility of communications 	<p>Accessibility of technology in the workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accessibility barriers are removed and prevented in current IT tools and equipment; accessibility is a priority when buying new technology; accessibility is integrated into the lifecycle management of IT solutions; accessibility features are enabled to ensure maximum usability; the organization meets the requirements of CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024 Standard; and accessibility is a priority in both internal and public IT systems. <p>Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and implement accessibility criteria to support its accessibility objectives when selecting any new Human Resource Information System. review and assess any existing Human Resource Information System using the identified accessibility criteria to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to employment for workers with disabilities. <p>Applicant Tracking Systems and Artificial Intelligence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> screening is based on bona fide job requirements take steps to prove their systems are not discriminatory,

CREATE YOUR STRATEGY FOR AN ACCESSIBLE DIGITAL WORKPLACE

Nothing about us, without us.

Current State Analysis

- Ask your employees
- Inventory and prioritize
- Assess accessibility of software and associated processes
- Identify accountabilities
- Plan to fix

Employee Enterprise Technology Standards

- User-centred inclusive design
- Assistive technology offerings
- Adopt technical accessibility standards (EN301-549)
- Integrate accessibility into IT policy and practices
- Employee IT Help and support

Procurement

- Include functional and technical accessibility criteria in RFP's and contracts
- Identify potential barriers and develop remediation roadmap
- Engage vendor accessibility teams
- Participate in industry forums

Training and awareness

- Educate and inform employees about assistive technology, accommodation and disability related productivity tools
- Continuous learning and skills upgrading for assistive technology users
- Build accessibility expertise and capabilities across IT roles

RESOURCES

ICT Standards

Accessible Standards Canada

- [CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024 - Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services \(EN 301 549:2021, IDT\)](#)
- [CAN-ASC-6.2 Accessible and Equitable Artificial Intelligence Systems](#)

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#)

Employment Accessibility Standards

- Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110191>
- Manitoba: <https://accessible.canada.ca/creating-accessibility-standards/canasc-112024-employment>
- Nova Scotia: <https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/employment-committee/>
- Canada: <https://accessible.canada.ca/creating-accessibility-standards/canasc-112024-employment>

Procurement

Procure Access: Accessible Procurement Toolkit:
<https://disabilityin.org/what-we-do/procure-access/>

Inclusive Employment Technology

- Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology (PEAT)
<https://www.peatworks.org/>
- [W3C How people with disabilities use the web](#)
- Apple Accessibility: <https://www.apple.com/accessibility/>
- Microsoft Accessible Products and Technology:
<https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/accessibility/accessible-technology-products>

THANK YOU

Monica Ackermann, P.Eng. MA

Accessibility Consultant

monica.ackermann@outlook.com