# Inclusive by Design Webinar – unpacking the new Equal Access Digital Guidelines – Q&A

We have compiled all the questions that were asked during the live session of the webinar, including from the chat and Q&A function. Sarah Pulis from Intopia has provided answers below, including some useful links.

If you have any more questions, you can contact Intopia via a number of ways listed on their website: [Home - Intopia](https://intopia.digital/)

1. Did you use tools to assess the accessibility of the final document? For example, avoiding long sentences and aiming for a reading level of 7?

**Response**: We aimed to make the document as easy to read as possible, while still meeting the publication requirements of the Australian Human Rights Commission.

1. I'm surprised not to see accessible publishing guidelines such as Roundtable Clear print Guidelines.

**Response**: Because the Guidelines on equal access to digital goods and services focus on digital, and the Guidelines for Producing Clear Print focus on printed materials, we did not include the latter in our list of standards and guidelines. Instead, we included some language and digital publishing guidance documents in the [Additional Guidance](https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/chapter-3-standards-and-guidelines-digital-accessibility#TOC7) section.

1. Besides screen reader tools, what other accessibility testing tools do you recommend for government organisations that need to meet WCAG 2.1?
   1. Could you please send a list of these in the follow-up email too?

**Response**: There are many tools available for accessibility testing, and the best choice depends on your specific requirements and budget. As such, I don’t have a single list of tools that would suit every organisation.

It’s important to remember that automated accessibility tools can only address a portion of accessibility standards. Human review and usability testing are essential to fully understand and address accessibility issues.

Some common free tools people use are:

* **axe DevTools:** Created by Deque, this powerful tool integrates directly into your browser's developer tools (like Chrome DevTools). It provides a detailed list of accessibility issues, categorizes them by severity, and offers guidance on how to fix them.
* **ARC Toolkit:** Developed by TPGi, this extension gives you a granular look at accessibility issues by analysing the page's code and DOM structure.
* **Lighthouse:** Built directly into Google Chrome's Developer Tools (under the "Lighthouse" tab). It runs a comprehensive audit of the page and generates a report with an accessibility score from 0-100. It's excellent for getting a high-level overview and identifying clear violations.
* **Accessibility Insights for Web:** A robust extension from Microsoft that offers two main features: "FastPass" runs a quick automated check for common issues in under a minute. The "Assessment" feature provides a more thorough, step-by-step guided process to help you manually verify many WCAG criteria, complete with instructions on how to test and record findings.
* **Colour Contrast Analyser (CCA):** A free desktop application from TPGi that lets you use an eyedropper tool to select any colours on your screen and instantly see their contrast ratio. It's incredibly useful for checking text on images, gradients, and other non-standard elements. This is just one a many colour contrast tools.

1. How can you address culture that addresses guidelines as a ceiling rather than floor?

**Response:** This will likely sound like an obvious answer, but the key to this is to reframe what accessibility is and how it can be achieved.

* **Build the business case:** Show leadership the difference between meeting accessibility standards and achieving true inclusion. This change is likely going to have to come from the top down.
* **Leverage existing practices:** If your organisation already values user research with people without disabilities, use this to argue for extending research to people with disabilities.
* **Take progressive steps:** For example, if 1 in 5 Australians have a disability, then aiming for 1 in 5 participants in user research or usability testing to have a disability is a reasonable step forward. While this may not be the final goal, it increases representation and allows more people to see the value of inclusive research in practice.
* **Shift the narrative:** Frame accessibility around user needs rather than “disability.” For instance, making information easy to read and understand can benefit those who have language or learning disabilities, people for whom English is a second language, or just people who are time poor or tired.

1. Thoughts on orgs and businesses that just add an accessibility 'widget' and think that’s enough?

**Response:** This is certainly a challenge, although I am happy to say it is less prevalent in Australian compared with some other countries.

There are a few reasons organisations choose to use overlays.

* **Lack of awareness:** Many simply don’t know any better. Overlay companies are very good at selling their products, often promising a quick path to compliance. When I come across an organisation using an overlay, one of the first things I do is share the [Overlay Fact Sheet](https://overlayfactsheet.com/en/) to explain the risks and limitations. Most don’t understand what true digital access and inclusion really is.
* **Perception of a quick fix:** Overlays are often seen as an easy, low-effort solution, especially by organisations that lack the internal expertise or resources to embed accessibility into their processes. However, this approach rarely delivers meaningful outcomes and can even introduce new barriers.

In our consulting work, we focus on meeting organisations where they are—providing practical, achievable advice that helps them take real steps forward without feeling overwhelmed. This approach reduces the risk of accessibility being put in the “too hard basket” or overlays being seen as a more attractive alternative to the slower but more sustainable path of building accessibility into everyday practice.

1. I've been keen to learn more about what accessibility technology has been designed for data science/data analysis. Do you know of anything I could look into?

**Reponse:** When you mention data science or data analysis, I assume you’re referring to data visualisation.

You might find these resources useful:

* Swift Charts | Apple Developer Documentation
* [10 Guidelines for DataViz Accessibility – Highcharts Blog](https://www.highcharts.com/blog/tutorials/10-guidelines-for-dataviz-accessibility/)

One point I always emphasize in data visualization is understanding what the user is trying to learn from the data. Designing visuals with that goal in mind and only focusing on the data that is needed makes them far more effective and accessible.

1. When government organisations are procuring services from providers (e.g. having a design studio produce a document OR a web studio develop a website), is there guidance around who is responsible for ensuring the accessibility of the end output?

**Response:** First, government organisations need to make sure accessibility requirements are clearly written into procurement and contracts. Vendors are then responsible for meeting those requirements.

* I would also note that accessibility requirements can be more than just conformance with accessibility standards. For example, federal government departments would need to meet the requirements of the Digital Service Standard and the Digital Inclusion Standard, both of which require user research.
* Second, it’s up to the organisation - government or otherwise - to confirm that the requirements have actually been met. This part can be challenging, as many organisations don’t have the skills or knowledge to properly assess accessibility.
* Some non-government organisations we work with address this by asking digital agencies to provide a third-party audit as proof of meeting standards. You might want to check out the [Accessible ICT Procurement guide for higher education](https://www.caudit.edu.au/accessible-it-procurement/guide/) which we worked on with ADCET, but the advice can apply to any organisation.