



By [Joe Welinske](#)

Joe Welinske is our ConveyUX program manager and accessibility director. At Blink, Joe is charged with bringing innovation and training about supporting disabilities to every client project. He has taught accessibility at the University of Washington and is the co-organizer of the [Seattle Area Accessibility & Inclusion Design](#) meetup. Joe holds the Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC) credential from the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP). In 2020, Joe was appointed Secretary to the King County Metro's Access Paratransit Advisory Committee (APAC).

See below for Joe's thoughts on the new [guidelines](#) proposed by the [W3C Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\)](#). To read more about Joe's insights on accessibility, check out this interview: [Accessibility in the UX Industry and at Blink](#).

What is the web accessibility initiative and what does it do?

The Web Accessibility Initiative has been fostering inclusive design in the digital world for over 20 years. The new work is a needed expansion of recommendations to support the wide array of processes, technologies, and platforms that are used to generate and host content. Where the [current version \(2.0,2.1\)](#) provides foundational guidelines for what makes great, usable, accessible web content, version 3 aims to bolster the support for how we create and deliver that content.

What are the revised guidelines?

The version 3 recommendation is a supplement to version 2.0/2.1, not a replacement. One of the key enhancements is the attention to education and training. The way guidelines are described and presented has a lot to do with how easy or difficult it is for practitioners to learn how to implement them.

Another important piece is increased support for how guidelines connect to the physical world of screen readers, authoring tools, and operating systems. It is one thing to know what a best practice is, but it is another to be able to implement it so it works with the technology that delivers it.

What is the impact?

A final, and exciting, new area of focus is design. This latest initiative recognizes the value of evidence-driven design that is based on research studies using participants from a spectrum of abilities. This helps ensure that the recommendations match the practical realities for those with physical challenges. Applying usability principles to the WAI brings it into alignment with the progressive, user-centered approach that is responsible for today's most successful digital products and services.