# Future of Accessibility Work for Publishing in W3C

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## Introduction

Accessibility became high priority in EPUB 3 standards due to consistent commitment of IDPF board and publishing community, which resulted in development of EPUB 3 into one of the most accessible E-publishing standard. After the combination of IDPF with W3C we need to ensure that emphasis on accessibility is maintained and should be reinforced where ever possible.

Therefore, the document outlines the accessibility work that we need to take forward in W3C publishing working group, community group and business group.

## Main Work Items to analyze

1. W3C Note: Digital Publishing and Accessibility in W3C Documents.
2. Develop EPUB Accessibility Conformance & Discovery specifications (Version 1.1).
3. Ensure robust accessibility for the standards that will be developed by the publishing working group.

### 1. W3C Note: Digital Publishing and Accessibility in W3C Documents

<http://www.w3.org/TR/dpub-accessibility/>

The note identifies the gaps between the accessibility requirement of publishing industry and WCAG 2.0. The work on the note is complete and it is already released. There is no further work required on the document, and the document will act as a reference for planning the further accessibility work for publishing.

### 2. EPUB Accessibility Conformance & Discovery Standard

<http://www.idpf.org/epub/a11y/>

The 1st version of the standard (ver 1.0) was released by IDPF in Jan 2017. The specification is applicable to all the versions of EPUB 3 standards. In order to provide consistent support to EPUB 3 based eco systems, the next version of the standard (version 1.1) should be released in early 2018.

The main question is about the W3C group in which this development will take place. Either it should be EPUB 3 Community Group or the Publishing Working Group. Some important inputs received from the group members are as follows:

* EPUB Accessibility Conformance & discovery standard 1.0 is for EPUB 3 eco system, so it should be the part of the Community Group.
* Accessibility specifications are of high importance for legal mandates, so it should go through rec track in Working Group.
* Development in Working Group will be complex because version 1.0 of the standard was not developed under rec track of W3C and it can get stuck in IPR issues, on the other hand the development in Community Group will be free from significant IPR issues.
* The publishing working group is developing the next generation standards for EPUB, and the work on EPUB 3 based accessibility specifications will be out of sync with the overall objective of the working group.

#### Recommendations

* The development of next version of EPUB 3 Conformance & Discovery standard should take place in the EPUB 3 Community Group.
* To address the valid concerns of lower significance of deliverables of community groups, the accessibility specifications should become ISO standard and should be aggressively promoted by The Publishing Business Group.

This is the best way to address the accessibility needs of the current EPUB 3 eco system.

### 3. Ensure robust accessibility for the standards developed by the publishing working group

Important points to consider:

* The high priority assigned to accessibility in EPUB 3 standards should continue to the future development of publishing standards.
* EPUB Accessibility Conformance & Discovery standard is based on EPUB 3 eco system but its principles are fully applicable to WP and EPUB 4.
* The ideal way to move forward accessibility requirements of publishing industry in W3C is to incorporate all the requirements in WCAG. But the major issue on this path is mismatch of timelines. The publishing working group deliverables is expected to have shorter turnaround time than WCAG 2.1/3.0 and it is important that all deliverables of publishing working group should accompany the accessibility guidelines applicable to them.

#### Recommendations

* To overcome the challenge of mismatch of timelines with WCAG, the publishing working group should develop accessibility specifications (preferably normative specs if feasible) for the accessibility requirements specific to publishing.
* The accessibility specifications should accompany the rec track deliverables of publishing working group and should also provide a pipeline of requirements for WCAG 2.1/3.0.
* The accessibility specification should incorporate the principles of EPUB 3 based Accessibility Conformance & Discovery specifications to leverage on past research done this topic.
* The accessibility specifications development in the publishing working group and EPUB 3 community group should be closely coordinated.

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