Proposal for Standardization of Well-Known URL for Accessibility

What is Well-Known URL?

A well-known URL is a path prefix that starts with /.well-known/. They are implemented so that requests to the servers for well-known information are available at consistent locations across servers.

One of the well-known path is *security.txt* which is meant to allow security researchers to easily report security vulnerabilities. The standard prescribes a text file called "security.txt" in the /.well-known/ location providing contact information (Email, CSN, Service Now ticket etc.) for reporting security issues.

/.well-known/security.txt is already implemented by many leading organizations like:

1) SAP → https://www.sap.com/.well-known/security.txt

2) Google → https://www.google.com/.well-known/security.txt

3) Amazon → https://www.amazon.com/.well-known/security.txt

The well-known URL is governed by IETF RFC-8615 . The corresponding IANA registry lists all the Well-Known URLs. It is interesting to note that W3C is change controller for many of these well-known URLs.

What we want to propose as standard?

Accessibility (a11y) is one of the key requirements in today's digital world. It is even mandated by law via Section 508, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) etc.

The entire domain of accessibility is quite mature with W3C prescribing well defined guidelines (WCAG 2.0, 2.1 etc) and also well-defined tests to evaluate the conformance level of products / websites (AA / AAA conformance etc.).

Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) is also necessary part of the WCAG conformance process. When an organization or website claims conformance to a specific level of WCAG (such as WCAG 2.0 or WCAG 2.1), they are expected to provide an Accessibility Conformance Report that details their conformance claims, evaluation methodology, and the level of compliance achieved for end users. It is typically created as part of the accessibility evaluation and certification process.

Further even there are variety of specialized tools (like screen-reader) available in market to help in making the products / website more accessible for everyone.

But we see a gap that there is no consistent location where a user may get all the accessibility related details. Hence, we want to propose a well-known url - */.well-known/a11y.html* to provide a consistent location for all accessibility related information.

We want to propose to have following information at */.well-known/a11y.html*

Information	Example	Description
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Guidelines	2.1	The WCAG Guidelines which the website / product confirms to.
Conformance level	AA	Conformance level of the website / product against the specified WCAG Guidelines.
ACR Reports	<Link to Location where ACR is stored>	Link to the location where all the ACR documents are stored
Contact for Help	<Email-address or link to Service Now, BCP etc.>	An email address or Link to some ticketing system (Eg. ServiceNow, BCP etc) where the user can report any accessibility related bugs / issues / suggestions etc.
Test Matrix	i) JAWS with Windows ii) VoiceOver with Mac	Generally, the project is tested against a combination of accessibility tool (screen-reader) and Operating System. Such information can also be provided in the proposed well-known URL
Accessibility Help Documentation	<Link to help section mentioning about accessibility>	At times, some special shortcuts are used for key navigations. These kinds of details are generally maintained in specific section (like dedicated Keyboard shortcut section of Help). Any such dedicated help page for accessibility can also be linked to proposed well-known URL page

Attached is sample a11y.html file:

a11y.html

How we see the standardization process

We propose the Accessibility Education and Outreach Working Group (EOWG) discusses our proposal and potentially shares the output of our discussion with IETF and recommends they include it as part of IETF RFC-8615 (RFC for well-known URLs).

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