Changing the way you think and work

Agile accessibility audits in the product lifecycle

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Elle Waters

Accessibility Product Management, Adobe
Unreasonable optimist

John Piotrowski

Engagement Manager, Deque
Silver lining specialist

A little about Adobe audits

Adobe audits (almost) always include:

- **Standards:** WCAG 2.1, Level A & AA, EN 301 549, Section 508
- **Scope:** Representative sample of page views and components
- **Method:** Automated testing, manual testing, and task flow analysis

Other things to note:

- We conduct internal testing during the product life cycle.
- We partner with a handful of expert accessibility vendors.
- We always have room to improve.

The necessary components of a standard audit

☑ Stakeholder engagement

☑ Scoping

☑ Budget

☑ Procurement

☑ Groundwork

☑ Kickoff

☑ Testing

☑ Report delivery

⚠ **WARNING**

It never goes like this...

Deque's research findings on automated testing

Over 95% of issues not detected via automated testing arose from the following 12 WCAG success criteria:

- Over 2,000 audits
- Over 13,000 pages
- Almost 300,000 issues

1. 1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum)
2. 4.1.2 Name, Role, Value
3. 4.1.1 Parsing
4. 1.3.1 Info and Relationships
5. 1.1.1 Non-text Content
6. 2.4.3 Focus Order
7. 2.1.1 Keyboard
8. 1.4.1 Use of Color
9. 2.4.7 Focus Visible
10. 1.4.4 Resize Text
11. 1.3.2 Meaningful Sequence
12. 3.3.2 Labels or Instructions

57%

+ automated testing

90%

Adobe's estimate

https://deque.com/coverage-report/

Chapter 1: The first audit

PRODUCT INFO AND AUDIT SCOPE

- Adobe Experience Manager – Assets (two versions of the same product)
- Legacy product with new features, not as templated, different frameworks
- Brings up the question "What is representative?"

CONTEXT
Previously audited in 2019, used this as a basis for scope for 2021's audit

PRIMARY STRATEGY
Leverage "hybrid testing" to more efficiently test two versions of same product

Chapter 1: Timeline of events

April 2021
Kickoff with a stakeholder surprise

May 2021
Access challenges

June 2021
Testing begins

July 2021
Testing begins on second version

August 2021
Audit complete

Chapter 1: The outcome

NEW PRODUCT TEAM
WHO DIS?

Chapter 1: Agile lessons

PREPARE FOR BLOCKERS.
Get scoping work done earlier.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IS VITAL.
Find better ways to involve stakeholders in the audit process.

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Chapter 2: The second audit

PRODUCT INFO AND AUDIT SCOPE

- Adobe Journey Optimizer
- Brand new product that leverages Adobe's Spectrum design system
- Highly engaged stakeholders and team

STRATEGY
- **KEEP:** Continue leveraging "hybrid testing"
- **IMPROVE:** Start scoping earlier with product stakeholders
- **ADD:** Begin testing when ready (using a prioritized list) not when scoping is complete
- **ADD:** Consulting hours for follow-up validation

Chapter 2: Timeline of events

May 2021
Scoping begins

June 2021
Kickoff
Scoping, but make it agile

July 2021
Platform access

July 2021
Batch testing begins

August 2021
Audit complete

Chapter 2: The outcome

Fun fact: This team was so engaged and fired up about accessibility that they're independently discussing accessibility in their regular team communications!

Chapter 2: Agile lessons

INCREASED STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IMPROVES VALUE.
Find even more ways to deepen stakeholder involvement, not fewer!

SHARED OWNERSHIP INCREASES VELOCITY.
Collaborative scoping allowed us to remove blockers earlier (ex. JIRA).

AGILE APPLIES TO THE BUSINESS PROCESS, NOT JUST THE SDLC.
Decouple more unrelated activities to accelerate the audit process.

Chapter 3: The third audit

PRODUCT INFO AND AUDIT SCOPE

- Adobe Experience Manager – Sites (two versions of the same product)
- Massive, existing product, also uses multiple frameworks
- Brings up the question again "What is representative?"

STRATEGY
- **KEEP:** Continue leveraging "hybrid testing" to more efficiently test two versions
- **IMPROVE:** Deepen stakeholder engagement earlier in the process
- **KEEP:** JIRA scoping for greater transparency and collaboration
- **IMPROVE:** Start scoping (even) earlier with stakeholders
- **KEEP:** Consulting hours for follow-up validation

Chapter 3: Timeline of events

August 2021

Product walkthrough with stakeholders and Deque

Access for Deque

September 2021

Engagement contract finalized

Scope confirmed

Testing begins!

Kickoff

Audit complete!

Chapter 3: The outcome

Chapter 3: Agile lessons

INCREASED ENGAGEMENT EQUALS INCREASED VELOCITY.
The Deque PM joined the Product walkthrough during SOW creation.
Let's find ways to do more of that!

QUESTION THE ESTABLISHED PROCESS... FOR
Does scoping really depend on budget in an agile audit?

Chapter 4: The fourth audit

PRODUCT INFO AND AUDIT SCOPE

- Adobe Experience Platform (flagship product)
- One version, but it's a really big product
- All roads lead to Experience Platform with Digital Experience products

STRATEGY
- **KEEP:** Continue leveraging "hybrid testing" for efficient auditing
- **KEEP:** Provide Deque early access (scoping, groundwork, JIRA)
- **IMPROVE:** Engage primary product stakeholder as an equal partner
- **IMPROVE:** Decouple scoping entirely from procurement process
- **KEEP:** Consulting hours for follow-up validation
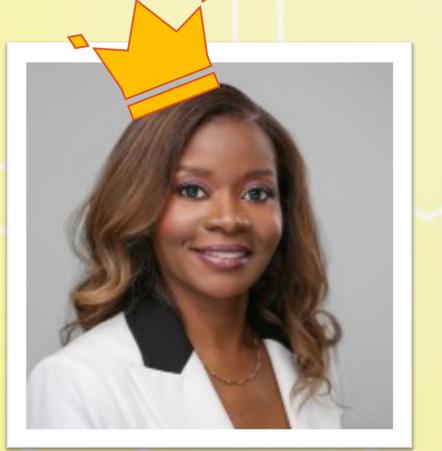
Chapter 4: Timeline of events

November 2021
- Product walkthrough with stakeholders and Deque
- Access provided to Deque
- Initial scoping complete
- Engagement contract finalized

December 2021
- Kickoff
- Testing begins!
- Scope iteratively finalized
- Audit complete!

Your stakeholder, the accessibility champion!

Annie Houston
Senior UX Product Management, Adobe
Dedicated accessibility advocate

Chapter 4: Agile lessons

WHAT YOU THINK IS A DEPENDENCY MIGHT NOT ACTUALLY BE ONE.
By decoupling budget from scope, we were able to move much faster and make decisions based on priority and value throughout the audit.

COMMUNICATE IN THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR TEAM – AGILE.
The more we aligned our audit process to a product team's typical way of working, the more engagement we got and the better the project outcome.

SMALL FAILURES RETURN HUGE VALUE IF YOU'RE WILLING TO LEARN.
By experimenting with all these separate pieces of an audit process, we have well-informed questions to answer in future audits.

Next things

- What is "representative" in this product?

- Teaching by audit, in batches

- Shifting left with automated testing

Bee agile…

- Focus on the common goal.
- Work in small, independent maneuvers.
- Where it adds value, act in collaboration with the hive.
- If a process works and it can be repeated, do so.
- Prioritize communication.
- Swarm occasionally as needed.
- Expect change as a part of the process.
- Plan to adapt.

Questions?

And if you want to talk further...

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Thank you!