Fezzant

Making Cybersecurity Accessible and Inclusive

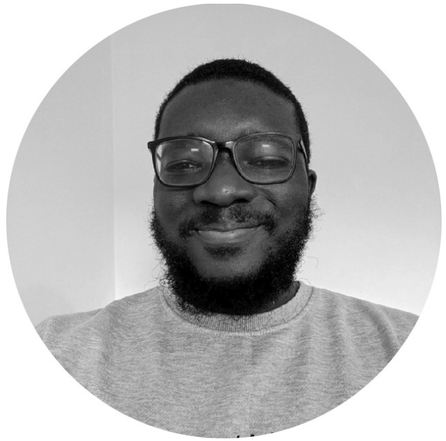
The Fallacy of Balance: Challenging the Notion of Security and Accessibility as Opposing Objectives

Axe -con 2025

Aliyu Yisa and Faith Obafemi

axe-con 2025

About Us



Aliyu Yisa

CEO

- Cybersecurity professional with a background in software engineering
- CyBlack Co - Founder
- MSc in Cybersecurity from the Univertity af Sallord.
- Advisory Board Member, The Cyber Helpline

About Us

Faith Obafemi

Cyber Accessibility Officer

- Lawyer and Tech Policy Analyst.
- Cyber Accessibility Officer at Fezzant.
- LLM in International Technology Law from Vrije University Amsterdam.
- 2024 AWITAI Fellow (UNESCO & UM6P Morocco)
- 2022 TechWomen Fellow.

Why are we here?

- The misconception of "balance" between accessibility and security.
- Why this talk matters for both accessibility and cybersecurity professionals.
- What you'll learn:
  - How lack of accessibility harms security.
  - How to integrate accessibility into cybersecurity practices.
  - Tips for collaboration between accessibility and security teams.

Our Core Argument

Accessibility and security are not opposing forces,

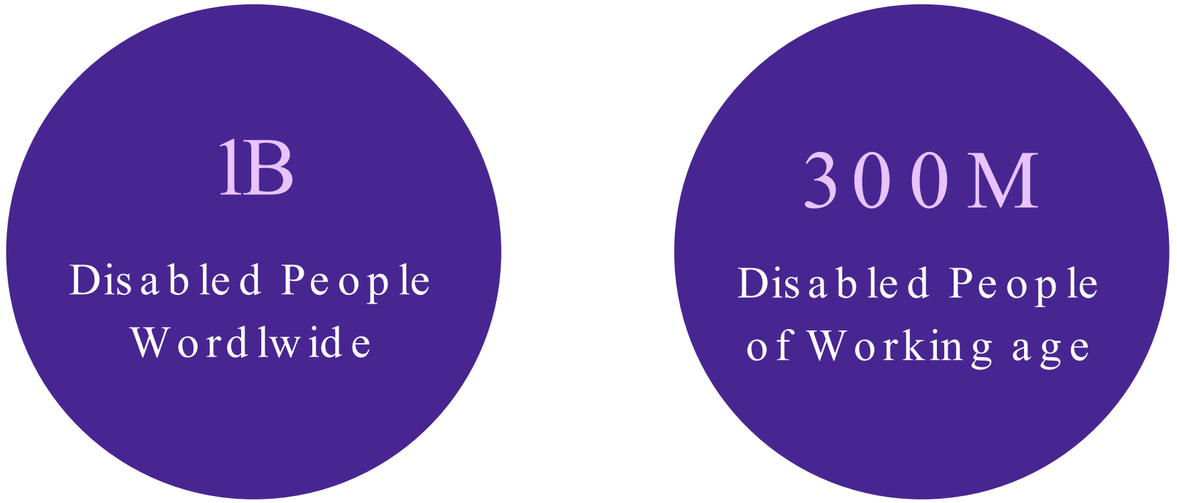
but interdependent.

What is Accessibility?

Accessibility is the functional gap between a user’s intention and the outcome.

...designing systems, technologies, and physical and digital spaces that are inclusive and usable by everyone

Did You Know?

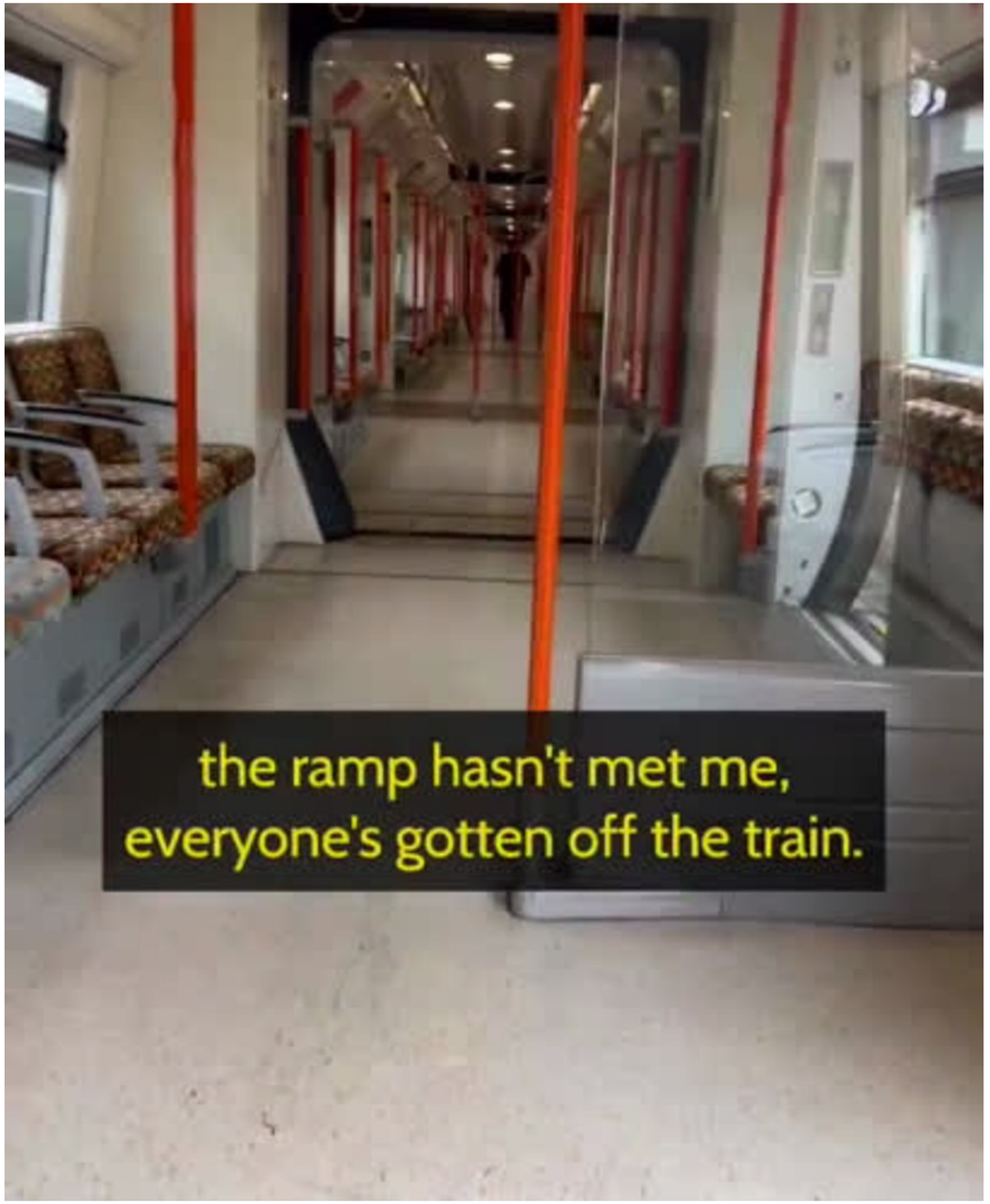


1 in 6 people are disabled.

Are we doing a good job to ensure they are secure?

What is Security?

NIST defines security as ensuring confidentiality, integrity, and **availability** of systems and information to authorised users while protecting against threats or unauthorized access.


the ramp hasn't met me,
everyone's gotten off the train.

How Accessibility and Security Are Connected

- Accessibility ensures that everyone, regardless of ability, can use systems effectively.
- Security ensures that people can access systems, live and work safely online.
- When systems are inaccessible, users are forced to find workarounds, which can compromise security.

Examples:

- Inaccessible authentication methods force users to share credentials, increasing security risks.
- Poorly designed forms can lead to data exposure for users with disabilities.

How Lack of Accessibility Hurts Security

Authentication Barriers

- Logins
- Multi -Factor Authentication (MFA):
  - Visual -based MFA (e.g., QR codes, facial recognition)
  - Lack of alternative MFA methods forces users to share credentials or avoid MFA altogether.
- CAPTCHA

2. Inaccessible Sensitive Forms

- Poor User Experience
- Privacy Risks:

How Lack of Accessibility Hurts Security (2)

Security Awareness and Training

- Inaccessible Training Materials:
- Lack of Inclusive Policies:

Workarounds and Human Error

- Forced Workarounds:
  - Users with disabilities may bypass security measures (e.g., disabling MFA, sharing passwords) to complete tasks, creating vulnerabilities.
- Increased Human Error:
  - Inaccessible systems increase the likelihood of mistakes, such as clicking on phishing links or entering sensitive data incorrectly.

Achieving Accessible Security

I’m a Security Professional, What Can I Do?

Cybersecurity teams can take proactive steps to ensure their systems are accessible and secure.

- Engage with Users: Understand diverse needs through user testing and feedback.
- Offer Alternative Authentication: Provide multiple secure login methods (e.g., SMS, email, tokens).
- Make Security Training Accessible: Use captions, transcripts, and simple language.
- Ensure Compatibility: Test security tools with assistive technologies.
- Audit Regularly: Conduct accessibility audits of security features.

I’m in Accessibility, What Can I Do?

Accessibility professionals can use security as a lever to prioritize accessibility fixes.

- Frame Accessibility as a Security Issue: Show how inaccessible systems create vulnerabilities.
- Collaborate Early: Involve security teams in the design phase to ensure accessibility is built in.
- Provide Training: Educate security teams on the importance of accessibility.
- Share Success Stories: Highlight how accessible systems improve security outcomes.

I’m A Cybersecurity Vendor, What Can I do?

Accessibility by Design

- Build accessibility into the development process of all cybersecurity tools and platforms.
- Ensure compatibility with assistive technologies like screen readers, voice recognition, and keyboard navigation.

Create Accessible User Interfaces:

- Design dashboards, tools, and platforms with high contrast, resizable text, and clear navigation.
- Ensure all interactive elements (e.g., buttons, forms) are keyboard -navigable and screen -reader -friendly.

I’m A Cybersecurity Vendor, What Can I do? (2)

Engage and Test Regularly:

- Get feedback from disabled users/customers.
- Include accessibility in end -to -end and pipeline testing.

Engage with Accessibility Experts:

- Partner with accessibility professionals to review your products and provide feedback.
- Use their insights to continuously improve the accessibility of your tools and platforms.

Ensure Accessible Error Handling:

- Provide clear, accessible error messages and instructions for users.
- Avoid timeouts or provide options to extend them for users who need more time.

Accessibility Laws and Standards

Some Existing Laws:

- ADA (U.S.): a law that protects the rights of people with disabilities.
- UK Equality Act: legally protects people from discrimination.
- WCAG: Global standard for digital accessibility, widely adopted

European Accessibility Act (EAA):

- Sets accessibility requirements for products and services in the EU.
- Applies to any company selling in the EU market.
- Enforcement starts in June 2025

1. Why It Matters:
   - Legal Risks: Non-compliance can lead to fines, lawsuits, and exclusion from key markets.
   - Business Opportunities
   - Ethical Responsibility

Remember, accessibility is becoming a major concern in the cyber industry. It’s not a question of "if" but "when."

What will you be doing differently from today?

Write down your key takeaways from today

Write down things you can start doing now, as a stakeholder or even an end user

Thank You!

QUESTIONS?

hello@fezzant.com

www.fezzant.com

Insta and Twitter:@ FezzantHQ

Linkedin : Fezzant