

# Publishing Accessibility Action Group Accessibility Survey 2022

## OVERVIEW

PAAG ran a survey across the publishing ecosystem in spring of 2022. The results gave important insights into the current state of accessibility in UK publishing, as well as the state of readiness and planning for the regulatory and technical changes coming down the line.

1. Of 21 respondents, 62% came from representatives of publishers themselves, with 29% answering from publishing/technology vendors (e.g. conversion houses, typesetters, developers), and a little under 5% each from aggregators and funding bodies.
2. Only 52% of respondents represented organisations currently holding membership of the UK Publishers Association Accessibility Action Group.
3. Just 57% of respondent organisations currently have customer-focused accessibility statements on their websites
4. 81% of respondents indicated that increased adoption of accessibility practices at their organisation would be driven by legal changes. 76% cited customer demand, and 57% cited vendor requirements.
5. Just 19% had them fully implemented and integrated into their workflows, and only 38% of respondents reported that their organisation’s accessibility adoption programmes were currently in-progress.
6. The greatest programme-level hurdles to accessibility work were given as staffing resources (42%), in-house technical expertise (31%), financial resources, senior management buy-in and the workflow problem of sourcing image descriptions across titles (26% each). The biggest technical challenges reported were accessibility metadata and image description (57% each).
7. Only 42.9% are currently adhering to the [EPUB Accessibility 1.0/A11Y](https://www.w3.org/Submission/epub-a11y/) specifications
8. 55% of respondents reported that 10% or less of the content they publish that would benefit from image description is currently described (15% were not publishers)
9. 62% of respondent organisations had either teams or individuals specifically advocating for accessibility in-house.
10. Almost 90% of respondents polled reported that they would like to see online learning modules and training developed in this space

## Question 1. What type of organization do you represent?



## Question 2. Is your organisation a member of the UK Publishing Accessibility Action Group?



## Question 3. Does your website provide a customer-focused accessibility statement about your publications?



## Question 4. What would drive your adoption of increased accessible publishing practices?



## Question 5. What status are your organisation’s accessibility plans at?



## Question 6. What are the greatest hurdles to your accessibility work? Select up to 3.



## Question 7. What types of content are you publishing in digital formats?



## Question 8. What sort of accessibility metadata, if any, are you utilising, at least on some content?



## Question 9. Which technical measures are proving the biggest challenges to implement?



## Question 10. Are you adhering to the EPUB Accessibility 1.0 Specification as part of your digital workflow?



## Question 11. Are you adhering to the PDF/Universal Accessibility Specification as part of your digital workflow?



## Question 12. What tools and solutions are you using in your workflow?



## Question 13. Approximately what percentage of your frontlist digital publications use the above tools and solutions?



## Question 14. If you're using any other manual accessibility validation processes, please specify here. Otherwise, skip this question.

The 3 responses were as follows.

1. eBooks are checked for completion and existence of alt text manually, but we have plans to validate this automatically in future.
2. Manual audits using Accessibility tools.
3. Content reading order checking using JAWS, N V D A, etc., manually.

## Question 15. Do you provide image descriptions (where required) within your frontlist content?



## Question 16. Of your organisation's publications that would benefit from image description, what proportion are currently described?



## Question 17. Do you have an in-house advocate for accessibility?



## Question 18. If you provide training in accessibility for in-house staff, please specify here. Otherwise, skip this question.

The 7 responses were as follows.

1. Internal introductory course open to all staff.
2. Yes, we hired a senior Director of Accessibility to set up a staff training program.
3. Yes.
4. No.
5. Yes, we have International Association of Accessibility Professionals certified trainer to train our team.
6. Internally developed.
7. Planning arranging image description creation training for representatives for Editorial divisions.

## Question 19. Are there any accessibility related resources which you would like to see developed? Tick as many that apply.



## Question 20. Would you like to leave any further comments?

The 4 responses were as follows.

1. Accessibility can be implemented across all titles, but it really does take investment of time and money. If the UK government were able to offer grants like other countries do (e.g., Italy), then publishers would be in a much better position. It competes with other areas of the business, such as the rising cost of paper and manufacturing, investment in new products and salary increases to cover inflation/cost of living. More needs to be said about the benefits and reasons to encourage more investment on a large scale.
2. We have daily conversations about digital accessibility with our clients, often beginning and ending with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Accessibility means WCAG conformance. We rely on these agreed-upon standards to guide testing, design, and remediation work. Straive is taking an end user-centred approach to producing digital content and services. In doing so, we offer an approach to digital accessibility that emphasizes people and process. They consider the practical implications of adopting this approach, and they explore why accessibility is an integral part of good design, rather than an add-on. Straive is actually including people with disabilities in testing, design, and remediation.
3. A big challenge we face is where the creation of accessible image descriptions and video transcripts should sit in our workflow - is it with the author, the editors or with typesetters.
4. We are one of the top accessibility service provider using AI enabled technology, and GCA compliance Benetech certified company.

## Appendix 1: Image descriptions

### Question 1. What type of organization do you represent?

**DESCRIPTION**

A doughnut chart visualises the respondent’s type of organization. There were 21 responses to the question and the percentage results are as follows, from highest to lowest.

1. Publisher, 14 respondents, 76.2 per cent.
2. Publishing Technology Vendor, 6 respondents, 28.6 per cent.
3. Aggregator, 1 respondent, 4.8 per cent.
4. Funder, 1 respondent, 4.8 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 2. Is your organisation a member of the UK Publishing Accessibility Action Group?

**DESCRIPTION**

A doughnut chart illustrates the respondent’s membership of the Publishing Accessibility Action Group. There were 21 responses to the question and the percentage results, for values Yes or No, are as follows.

1. Yes, 11 responses, 52.4 per cent.
2. No, 10 responses, 47.6 per cent.

For publishers only, the results from 13 respondents were as follows.

1. Yes, 9 responses, 69 per cent.
2. No, 4 responses, 31 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 3. Does your website provide a customer-focused accessibility statement about your publications?

**DESCRIPTION**

A doughnut compares the responses to the question, Does your website provide a customer-focused accessibility statement about your publications? There were 21 responses to the question and the percentage results, for values Yes or No, are as follows.

1. Yes, 12 responses, 57.1 per cent.
2. No, 9 responses, 42.9 per cent.

For publishers only, the results from 13 respondents were as follows.

1. Yes, 8 responses, 62 per cent.
2. No, 5 responses, 38 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 4. What would drive your adoption of increased accessible publishing practices?

**DESCRIPTION**

A horizontal bar chart compares the responses to the question, What would drive your adoption of increased accessible publishing practices? There were 21 responses to the question and each respondent could provide multiple answers. The 6 answers, in total and percentage share, are presented in the following list, from highest to lowest.

1. Legal changes on a national level. 17 responses, 81 per cent.
2. Accessible content required by customers. 16 responses, 76.2 per cent.
3. Accessible content required by vendors. 12 responses, 57.1 per cent.
4. Ease of implementation. 1 response, 4.8 per cent.
5. To provide technical support to global content in any sector, making all types of content format accessible to all. 1 response, 4.8 per cent.
6. Funding conditions. 1 response, 4.8 per cent.

For publishers only, the results were as follows.

1. Accessible content required by customers. 11 responses, 85 per cent.
2. Legal changes on a national level. 10 responses, 77 per cent.
3. Accessible content required by vendors. 7 responses, 54 per cent.
4. Ease of implementation. 1 response, 8 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 5. What status are your organisation’s accessibility plans at?

**DESCRIPTION:**

A horizontal bar chart compares the responses to the question, What status are your organisation’s accessibility plans at? There were 21 responses to the question and the 6 results are presented as follows, from highest to lowest.

1. In progress. 8 responses, 38.1 per cent.
2. Fully integrated into workflow. 4 responses, 19 per cent.
3. Pre-action, planning phase. 3 responses, 14.3 per cent.
4. Early action. 3 responses, 14.3 per cent.
5. Near complete. 0 responses, 0 per cent.
6. Not applicable. 1 response, 14.3 per cent.

For publishers only, the 4 results were as follows.

1. In progress. 8 responses, 62 per cent.
2. Early Action. 3 responses, 23 per cent.
3. Pre-action, planning phase. 1 response, 8 per cent.
4. Not applicable. 1 response, 8 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 6. What are the greatest hurdles to your accessibility work? Select up to 3.

**DESCRIPTION**

A treemap compares the responses to the question, What are the greatest hurdles to your accessibility work? There were 19 responses to the question and each respondent could provide up to 3 responses. The 13 answers, in total and percentage share, are presented in the following list, from highest to lowest.

1. Staffing resources, 8 responses, 42.1 per cent.
2. In-house technical expertise, 6 responses, 31.6 per cent.
3. Image description, 6 responses, 31.6 per cent.
4. Getting buy in from senior management, 5 responses, 26.3 per cent.
5. Financial resources, 5 responses, 26.3 per cent.
6. Lack of available external advice and guidance, 4 responses, 21.1 per cent.
7. Working with third parties who may have different approaches, 4 responses, 21.1 per cent.
8. Legal considerations (e.g., European Accessibility Act), 3 responses, 15.8 per cent.
9. Video description / integration, 3 responses, 15.8 per cent.
10. Struggles with technical aspects, 3 responses, 15.8 per cent.
11. Lack of available external / third-party services, 2 responses, 10.5 per cent.
12. Historical PDF articles problematic to retrospectively amend. 1 response, 5.3 per cent.
13. Lack of software tools and features, 1 response, 5.3 per cent.

For publishers only, the 10 results were as follows.

1. Staffing resources, 6 responses, 37.5 per cent.
2. Image description, 5 responses, 31.25 per cent.
3. Financial resources, 4 responses, 25 per cent.
4. Buy in from senior management , 4 responses, 25 per cent.
5. In house technical expertise, 4 responses, 25 per cent.
6. Video description, 3 responses, 18.75 per cent.
7. Legal considerations, 2 responses, 12.5 per cent.
8. Struggles with technical aspects, 2 responses, 12.5 per cent.
9. Lack of available external advice and guidance, 2 responses, 12.5 per cent.
10. Backlist PDF content, 1 response, 6.25 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 7. What types of content are you publishing in digital formats?

**DESCRIPTION**

A horizontal bar chart compares the responses to the question, What types of content are you publishing in digital formats? There were 21 responses to the question. The 7 answers, in total and percentage share, are presented in the following list, from highest to lowest.

1. Monochrome text only, 8 responses, 38.1 per cent.
2. Text with simple graphics, 15 responses, 71.4 per cent.
3. Text with complex graphics or diagrams, 16, 76.2 per cent.
4. Text with rich content, e.g., interactive content, 12 responses, 57.1 per cent.
5. Interactive eBooks and magazines, 1 response, 4.8 per cent.
6. All of the above, 1 response, 4.8 per cent.
7. Video content, 1 response, 4.8 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 8. What sort of accessibility metadata, if any, are you utilising, at least on some content?

**DESCRIPTION**

A doughnut chart compares the responses to the question, What sort of accessibility metadata, if any, are you utilising, at least on some content? There were 21 responses to the question and the 4 categories are presented in the following list, from highest to lowest.

1. None, but planning to, 9 responses, 42.9 per cent.
2. Schema within EPUB files, 8 responses, 38.1 per cent.
3. ONIX code list 196, 3 responses, 14.3 per cent.
4. None, with no current plans, 1 response, 4.8 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 9. Which technical measures are proving the biggest challenges to implement?

**DESCRIPTION**

A doughnut chart compares the responses to the question, Which technical measures are proving the biggest challenges to implement? There were 21 responses to the question and each respondent could provide multiple answers. The 8 answers, in total and percentage share, are presented in the following list, from highest to lowest.

1. Accessibility metadata, including ONIX and Schema, 12 responses, 57.1 per cent.
2. Image description, 12 responses, 57.1 per cent.
3. PDF accessibility, 7 responses, 33.3 per cent.
4. Accessible EPUB 3, 4 responses, 19 per cent.
5. Semantic markup structure, 3 responses, 14.3 per cent.
6. None, 3 responses, 14.3 per cent.
7. Don’t know, 2, 9.6 per cent.
8. Reading order for complex spreads, 1 response, 4.8 per cent.

For publishers only, the 5 results were as follows.

1. Image description, 10 responses, 77 per cent.
2. Accessibility metadata, 9 responses, 69 per cent.
3. PDF accessibility, 5 responses, 38 per cent.
4. Accessible EPUB3, 2 responses, 15 per cent.
5. I don't know, 1 response, 8 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 10. Are you adhering to the EPUB Accessibility 1.0 Specification as part of your digital workflow?

**DESCRIPTION**

A doughnut chart compares the responses to the question, Are you adhering to the EPUB Accessibility 1.0 Specification as part of your digital workflow? There were 21 responses to the question and the 3 categories are presented in the following list, from highest to lowest.

1. Yes, 9 responses, 42.9 per cent.
2. No, 4 responses, 19 per cent.
3. Don’t know, 8 responses, 38.1 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 11. Are you adhering to the PDF/Universal Accessibility Specification as part of your digital workflow?

**DESCRIPTION**

A pie chart compares the responses to the question, Are you adhering to the PDF/Universal Accessibility Specification as part of your digital workflow? There were 21 responses to the question and the 3 categories are presented in the following list, from highest to lowest.

1. Yes, 8 responses, 38.1 per cent.
2. No, 8 responses, 38.1 per cent.
3. Don’t know, 5 responses, 23.8 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 12. What tools and solutions are you using in your workflow?

**DESCRIPTION**

A horizontal bar chart compares the responses to the question, What tools and solutions are you using in your workflow? There were 19 responses to the question and each respondent could provide multiple answers. The 12 answers, in total and percentage share, are presented in the following list, from highest to lowest.

1. EPUB Check, 13 responses, 68.4 per cent.
2. InDesign, 11 responses, 57.9 per cent.
3. Ace by DAISY, command line version, 6, 31.6 per cent.
4. Ace by DAISY, G U I desktop version, 6, 31.6 per cent.
5. SMART, 3 responses, 15.8 per cent.
6. Global Certified Accessible, 5 responses, 26.3 per cent.
7. PAC 3, 5 responses, 26.3 per cent.
8. Adobe Acrobat Accessibility Checker, 2 responses, 10.5 per cent.
9. Bespoke validation tool built to match WCAG A and double A, 1 response, 5.3 per cent.
10. Pagina EPUB Checker, 1 response, 5.3 per cent.
11. CircularFLO, Vellum, 1 response, 5.3 per cent.
12. Don't know, 1 response, 5.3 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 13. Approximately what percentage of your frontlist digital publications use the above tools and solutions?

**DESCRIPTION**

A vertical bar chart compares the responses to the question, Approximately what percentage of your frontlist digital publications use the above tools and solutions? There were 20 responses to the question and the 6 categories are presented in the following list.

1. Zero to 10 per cent of frontlist, 7 responses, 35 per cent.
2. 11 to 25 per cent of frontlist, 2 responses, 10 per cent.
3. 26 to 50 per cent of frontlist, 1 response, 5 per cent.
4. 51 to 75 per cent of frontlist, 3 responses, 15 per cent.
5. 76 to 90 per cent of frontlist, 1 response, 5 per cent.
6. 91 to 100 per cent of frontlist, 6 responses, 30 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 14. If you're using any other manual accessibility validation processes, please specify here.

**DESCRIPTION**

The 3 responses were as follows.

1. eBooks are checked for completion and existence of alt text manually, but we have plans to validate this automatically in future.
2. Manual audits using Accessibility tools.
3. Content reading order checking using JAWS, N V D A, etc., manually.

### Question 15. Do you provide image descriptions (where required) within your frontlist content?

**DESCRIPTION**

A horizontal bar chart compares the responses to the question, Do you provide image descriptions, where required, within your frontlist content? There were 21 responses to the question and each respondent could provide multiple answers. The 7 answers, in total and percentage share, are presented in the following list, from highest to lowest.

1. Planning to include within the next 12 months, 8 responses, 38.1 per cent.
2. Yes, our authors supply them, 7 responses, 33.3 per cent.
3. Yes, we create them in-house, 3 responses, 14.3 per cent.
4. Yes, we outsource to a third party provider, 3 responses, 14.3 per cent.
5. No, we do not create them due to cost, 2 responses, 9.5 per cent.
6. No, we do not create image descriptions due to the complexity of our content, 1 response, 4.8 per cent.
7. No, we do not create image descriptions due to a lack of demand from customers, 1 response, 4.8 per cent.

For publishers only, the 7 results were as follows.

1. Yes, our authors supply them, 6 responses, 46 per cent.
2. Planning to include within the next 12 months, 6 responses, 46 per cent.
3. Yes, we outsource to a third party provider, 2 responses, 15 per cent.
4. Yes, we create them in-house, 1 response, 8 per cent.
5. No, we do not create image descriptions due to a lack of demand from customers, 1 response, 8 per cent.
6. No, we do not create them due to cost, 1 response, 8 per cent.
7. No, we do not create image descriptions due to the complexity of our content, 1 response, 8 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 16. Of your organisation's publications that would benefit from image description, what proportion are currently described?

**DESCRIPTION**

A horizontal bar chart compares the responses to the question, Of your organisation's publications that would benefit from image description, what proportion are currently described? There were 20 responses to the question and the 7 categories are presented in the following list.

1. Zero to 10 per cent of publications, 11 responses, 55 per cent.
2. 11 to 25 per cent of publications, 1 response, 5 per cent.
3. 26 to 50 per cent of publications, 1 response, 5 per cent.
4. 51 to 75 per cent of publications, 4 responses, 20 per cent.
5. 76 to 90 per cent of publications, 0 responses, 0 per cent.
6. 91 to 100 per cent of publications, 0 responses, 0 per cent.
7. Not applicable, 3 responses, 15 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 17. Do you have an in-house advocate for accessibility?

**DESCRIPTION**

A doughnut chart compares the responses to the question, Do you have an in-house advocate for accessibility? There were 21 responses to the question and the 3 categories are presented in the following list, from highest to lowest.

1. Yes, we have a person dedicated to this role, 8 responses, 38.1 per cent.
2. Yes, we have a team, 8 responses, 38.1 per cent.
3. No, we manage this on an ad-hoc basis, 5 responses, 23.8 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 18. If you provide training in accessibility for in-house staff, please specify here.

**DESCRIPITION**

The 7 responses were as follows.

1. Internal introductory course open to all staff.
2. Yes, we hired a senior Director of Accessibility to set up a staff training program.
3. Yes.
4. No.
5. Yes, we have International Association of Accessibility Professionals certified trainer to train our team.
6. Internally developed.
7. Planning arranging image description creation training for representatives for Editorial divisions.

### Question 19. Are there any accessibility related resources which you would like to see developed?

**DESCRIPTION**

A horizontal bar chart compares the responses to the question, Are there any accessibility related resources which you would like to see developed? There were 19 responses to the question and each respondent could provide multiple answers. The 7 answers, in total and percentage share, are presented in the following list, from highest to lowest.

1. Online learning modules and training. 17 responses, 89.5 per cent.
2. Video resources. 13 responses, 68.4 per cent.
3. Webinars. 13 responses, 68.4 per cent.
4. Offline training packs. 10 responses, 52.6 per cent.
5. Expert consultancy availability. 10 responses, 52.6 per cent.
6. Reference resources. 10 responses, 52.6 per cent.
7. Support for internal advocacy needs. 5 responses, 26.3 per cent.

Description ends.

### Question 20. Would you like to leave any further comments?

**DESCRIPTION**

The 4 responses were as follows.

1. Accessibility can be implemented across all titles, but it really does take investment of time and money. If the UK government were able to offer grants like other countries do (e.g., Italy), then publishers would be in a much better position. It competes with other areas of the business, such as the rising cost of paper and manufacturing, investment in new products and salary increases to cover inflation/cost of living. More needs to be said about the benefits and reasons to encourage more investment on a large scale.
2. We have daily conversations about digital accessibility with our clients, often beginning and ending with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Accessibility means WCAG conformance. We rely on these agreed-upon standards to guide testing, design, and remediation work. Straive is taking an end user-centred approach to producing digital content and services. In doing so, we offer an approach to digital accessibility that emphasizes people and process. They consider the practical implications of adopting this approach, and they explore why accessibility is an integral part of good design, rather than an add-on. Straive is actually including people with disabilities in testing, design, and remediation.
3. A big challenge we face is where the creation of accessible image descriptions and video transcripts should sit in our workflow - is it with the author, the editors or with typesetters.
4. We are one of the top accessibility service provider using AI enabled technology, and GCA compliance Benetech certified company