



Feedback about User Experience Guide for Displaying Accessibility Metadata 1.0

Dear members of the Accessibility task force,

As you know, EDRLab has started studying the implementation of Accessibility UX Guidelines in France. In order to achieve this goal, we have organized in December 2021 a series of interviews and virtual workshops with a large variety of stakeholders: publishers, distributors, retailers, public and academic libraries, and of course accessibility advocates from different organizations.

In order to help these people understand the subject, we translated in French the W3C documents ([UX Guide \(fr\)](#) and [Display Techniques ONIX \(fr\)](#)) and we built an online prototype based on these documents. It covers the display of accessibility information in ebook & audiobook presentation pages, but also the UX one can expect when selecting ebooks in a catalog. We also listed as references different experiences relative to the display of accessibility metadata, from ePagine (fr), NNELS (ca), LIA (it), Benetech (us) and De Marque (ca).

So far, more than 40 people have participated in these workshops and interviews, offering a broad spectrum of views and advice. Some people were not available in December, and therefore are interviewed during January 2022.

Part of the work was to find proper translations in French of the terms defined in the UX Guide. But the discussion went further and led to interesting findings. To summarize these findings in a few words, the proposed UX was perceived both overspecialized and missing some key information and recommendations.

In the second part of this note, we'll synthesize the reactions we have gathered during the meetings. The reactions are organized into six sections, and we tried to keep them factual, so that they can be a starting point for a larger discussion about a major evolution of the W3C document. They are followed by early proposals of evolutions of the UX Guide, which go into the direction pointed by the participants.

We are aware that we are talking about a major rewriting of the UX Guide, a version 2.0, therefore we propose to set up a call, to discuss our conclusions and propose a collective evolution suitable for everyone.

For EDRLab,
Laurent Le Meur, CTO,
Gautier Chomel, publishing & accessibility expert.



Synthesis of the reactions

The proposed wording is overspecialized

Terms like “Screen reader” or “WCAG” (not speaking about “WCAG2.0-AA”) were not understood by most of the non-specialist participants of our workshops. Even people who know the meaning of those words alerted about the complexity of such vocabulary. They advocate for more casual wordings like “The textual content is sufficient for understanding” (in French, “Le contenu textuel suffit à la compréhension”) or “Fully rendered as text”.

Important books characteristics are missing in the UX Guide

Information about the format (EPUB, PDF), and applicable DRM (Adobe Adept, LCP) are important for users with print disabilities. Knowing that an ebook is *reflowable* or *fixed layout* is also crucial. Depending on the tools they use, users will or will not select some property combinations. Because such information is missing on most bookselling websites, the presence of these properties in the UX Guide seems more than adequate. File format and DRM should be placed in a generic set of properties (let’s call it *Details*). A set of properties named *Reading mode* seems appropriate for properties like *Reflowable* and *Fixed layout*.

The user experience should be more inclusive

This is the counterpart of the previous section: many properties found in ONIX, which are deemed to appear in an Accessibility section as per the UX Guide, are in fact useful for every user. For instance, the *Print-equivalent page numbering* (ONIX 196/19) is useful for everybody in a scholar or academic context. The same applies to *Table of contents* (ONIX 196/11), *Index navigation* (ONIX 196/12), *Synchronized pre-recorded audio* (ONIX 196/20), etc. A set of properties named *Functionalities* would show the universality of some accessibility features, and a set of properties named *Response to specific needs* would host properties which are not universal. Note that for *Synchronized pre-recorded audio*, the *Reading mode* set seems a better fit.

The proposed wording may generate misunderstanding

The concept of “accessibility”, which is prominent in the UX guide, has a different meaning for some actors. Some mentioned that in an academic context Accessible will be interpreted as Open Access, others said that Accessible may indicate that they can read it offline. A proposal was to define a

Another kind of issue is about the level of the indications offered by the guides. For instance the *Screen reader friendly* property is inferred from ONIX 81/10 (Text) + ONIX 196/10 (“all text is actual text” from the ONIX Guide) or schema:accessModeSufficient (“accessModes that are sufficient to understand all the intellectual content of a resource”). Depending on the interpretation of a publisher, a fixed-layout EPUB without logical reading order may be tagged with ONIX 196/10, which is a bad choice. The description of ONIX 196/10 should therefore insist on the requirement to enable the choice of a *texte-size*, font ... as stated in the ONIX specification. A requirement which eliminates most fixed-layout EPUBs to be *Screen reader friendly*.

Another example: audiobooks and ebooks are almost universally in different product categories. It is obvious that every audiobook is *Full Audio* (schema:accessModeSufficient=auditory or ONIX 196/20=SyncAudio or 81/01=Audiobook). Still, the UX Guide recommends in <https://www.w3.org/2021/09/UX-Guide-metadata-1.0/principles/#full-audio> to display this



“accessibility” metadata, which nobody will look at or filter on a bookselling website. A proposal was to remove the ONIX 81/01 mapping, so that only ebooks with additional audio get the *Full Audio* label.

Recommendations about the filtering (/ search) user experience should be detailed

In preparation of our workshops, we have built a fake search page based on the information recommended in the UX Guide. We had to make choices about many details like “is it convenient to have three facets about the specification conformity (one for each level)?”

The feedback we received is that search on bookselling and library websites is mainly faceted, meaning that a free search is followed by filtering steps based on metadata. The filtering facets must be clearly labelled, and users don't need every possible filter to be displayed because specialized properties can be inspected, before acquisition, from the information associated with the publication.

A careful selection must therefore be made by the developers of a bookselling website. The UX Guide should contain recommendations about which “accessibility” facets should be present during search, in the spirit of standardization of this part of this document.

No mapping from MARC / UNIMARC seems available

Among the participants of our workshops were people from academic publishing, for who MARC and UNIMARC are important metadata formats. XML-TEI was also cited. If the UX Guide is meant to be adopted in this world (which is impacted by the Accessibility European Directive as well), a clean mapping from these academic standards will be required.

Note: MARC21 (zone 341) and UNIMARC (zone 231i) have now ways to describe accessibility features.

Appendix: Proposed sets & wording

Our main recommendation is to rebase the UX guide on four sets of properties: **Reading mode**, **Functionalities**, **Response to specific needs** and **Hazards**, each set having both mandatory and optional properties. Recommendations on filtering facets would be part of the document. An additional *crosswalk* document would allow spotting missing information in the main metadata standards (ONIX, Schema.org, MARC, UNIMARC).

Sets of properties

Details

File format

DRM type(s)

Number of pages

Narrator (if audio is present: can indicate a human voice vs a synthetic voice)

...

Reading mode

Reflowable

Fixed layout

Fully rendered as text



Fully rendered as audio
Synchronized text and audio

Functionalities (hide if none)

Table of contents
Index navigation
Print-equivalent page numbering

Response to specifics needs

(mention *no information* provided if no information is found; ONIX 196 properties not located elsewhere are placed here)

Accessibility summary
Structured content
Logical reading order
Image descriptions
Accessible math content
Dyslexia readability
Text-to-speech hinting provided
Accessibility Conformance: (EPUB Accessibility - WCAG A / AA / AAA)
Certified By
Certifier Credential
Certifier Report

Hazards (hide if none)

Flashing
Motion simulation
Sound

Facets

A small set of properties has been extracted as a first proposal:

File format
Reflowable
Fixed layout
Fully rendered as text
Fully rendered as audio
Synchronized text and audio
Print-equivalent page numbering
EPUB Accessibility - WCAG AA conformant