level access

The Sixth Annual

State of Digital Accessibility Report

2024 – 2025

In collaboration with

G3ict The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs

IAAP International Association of Accessibility Professionals

VansonBourne

Forewords

Foreword from Level Access

By Ian Lowe,
Chief Marketing Officer,
Level Access

For many organizations today, the question is no longer whether to prioritize digital accessibility, but how to implement it effectively for lasting success.

Amid tightening global regulations, the rapid velocity of private litigation in the U.S., and positive brand implications, most enterprise organizations are aware that digital accessibility is not only a moral obligation, but a legal and business imperative. But achieving long-term success, particularly at scale, can be a complex process—and organizations need the right resources and processes to deliver on their commitment to inclusion and compliance.

The findings from our Sixth Annual State of Digital Accessibility Report underscore the fact that modern organizations understand the importance of digital accessibility. More than 80% of respondents say their organization has an accessibility policy, and more than 60% plan to maintain or increase their accessibility budget in the coming year.

Still, many organizations are struggling to sustain accessibility across their digital portfolios and balance accessibility with competing priorities. They need a clear roadmap for digital accessibility that is sustainable, efficient, and scalable.

I believe the insights from this report will inform that roadmap.

Based on a survey of more than 1,400 professionals, most from enterprise organizations, this 2024 report provides the richest insight yet on the pillars of a mature accessibility program. Our research explores how factors—including governance, executive support, training, and proactivity—provide the foundation for impactful, ongoing digital accessibility practices. And we unpack the role that rapidly advancing technologies, like automated remediation and artificial intelligence (AI), are playing in teams' evolving approaches to accessibility.

For the first time, we've also expanded our survey to include perspective from more than 500 decision makers at enterprise organizations from the United Kingdom (U.K.) and countries within the European Union (EU). With the deadline for European Accessibility Act (EAA) compliance rapidly approaching, this data allows us to better understand the adoption and implementation of digital accessibility across the European market.

As you navigate this report, I hope you not only strengthen your understanding of effective digital accessibility strategies, but also encounter new insights that may reshape your organization's program. Ultimately, I hope you come away better equipped to contribute to an inclusive digital world.

IAAP
International Association of Accessibility Professionals

G3ict
The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs

By Christopher M. Lee, PhD, CEO, Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict)

Forewords

Foreword from G3ict and IAAP

We stand at a pivotal moment in the evolution of digital accessibility. According to the Sixth Annual State of Digital Accessibility Report, businesses continue to prioritize accessible digital experiences, showing sustained progress in organizational accessibility, and many are embracing AI tools to improve inclusion.

Whether this progress reflects a more profound recognition that access to the digital world is a fundamental human right, or whether it's being driven by legal entanglements remains unclear. But what is evident is that, as businesses increasingly adopt inclusive design practices and integrate innovative technologies, they open doors to millions of additional users and uphold their responsibility to provide equitable access.

This year's data also shows that now, more than ever, organizations are seeking AI and automated tools to accelerate progress. As technology continues to evolve, it is our responsibility as champions to embrace this evolution while ensuring we don't sacrifice quality—or ethical principles—as we aim to drive efficiency. We must be thoughtful in how we integrate AI and automation, aligning with ethical solution providers and keeping real users' experiences at the forefront of our efforts. Our latest research also underscores the need for human involvement to achieve lasting accessibility success: While technology can accelerate, technology alone will not replace what only trained experts can accomplish.

IAAP, a division of G3ict, is dedicated to this ethical cause, offering accessibility professional certifications to support organizations' inclusion needs. In 2024, we introduced the Disability Inclusion & Accessibility (DI&A) Program, a set of recommended criteria designed, maintained, and vetted by a disability steering committee to address the organizational needs around inclusion maturity.

As we look to the future, this expertise will become increasingly important. The deadline for compliance with the EAA in 2025 will provide the accessibility community with a significant new opportunity. This Act will necessitate an army of trained, certified accessibility professionals to tackle various challenges, including the added complexity introduced by the EAA. It's a time of growth and development for the accessibility field.

It's only through our collective efforts that we can shape a digital landscape that is both inclusive and transformative. Together, united in accessibility, we can make a significant difference in promoting digital inclusion and ethical practices.

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Glossary

Clarifying definitions for terms that appear frequently in the discussion of our findings:

Digital accessibility:

The practice of ensuring a digital experience, like a website, mobile app, software product, or platform, is accessible for people with disabilities and works with assistive technologies (like screen readers).

User experience:

The overall experience of a person using a product such as a website or computer application, especially in terms of how easy or enjoyable it is to use.

Digital accessibility policy:

A documented commitment to digital accessibility, disseminated within an organization, which may include budget allocation, dedicated team resources, training procedures, and a system of measurement. A digital accessibility policy should not be confused with an accessibility statement, a public-facing declaration of an organization's commitment to digital accessibility.

Accessibility maturity:

The relative development of an organization's accessibility program. Maturity may be determined based on several factors, including the presence of a governance framework, executive support for accessibility, the implementation of accessibility training, and how proactively accessibility is incorporated into the digital experience creation life cycle.

Accessibility governance:

A framework for overseeing and managing accessibility across an organization. For the purposes of the analysis in this report, governance is assessed through the presence of three core elements: an accessibility policy, a dedicated accessibility budget, and an accountable party.

Automated remediation:

Technology that automatically finds common accessibility issues and addresses them for the end user. This technology is not presently capable of finding and addressing all accessibility issues. Automated remediation tools are different from user personalization tools, which allow users to customize user interface elements like color contrast and font size.

Introduction

Globally, the digital accessibility landscape is in a period of rapid transformation. With digital technology now deeply embedded in the fabric of modern society, regulatory authorities in the U.S. and internationally are doubling down on protecting people with disabilities' right to access digital products and services. Many organizations are scrambling to keep up with new mandates, such as the EAA and the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) rulemaking under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Meanwhile, the rise of new technologies, such as generative AI, has both increased the complexity of the digital world, and equipped teams with more advanced tools for managing the accessibility of digital content.

In our Sixth Annual State of Digital Accessibility Report, we aim to shed light on how organizations around the globe are approaching online inclusion in this dynamic environment. We surveyed more than 1,400 professionals working across sectors and industries about the tools and strategies they're using to create and maintain accessible digital experiences.

Like our 2023 report, our 2024 report focuses primarily on digital accessibility practices at enterprise organizations. However, for the first time since this report's inception, our respondents spanned both the U.S. and European markets, uncovering insight on the nuances of digital accessibility in the U.K. and EU.

Our 2024 report also takes a deeper dive into the adoption of core pillars of accessibility program maturity, such as governance, training, and executive support. By exploring the implementation and impact of these practices, we can better understand how they contribute not only to the success of digital accessibility programs, but to broader business outcomes such as improved user experience, reduced legal risk, and bottom-line revenue.

We believe our findings provide the most comprehensive overview yet of how organizations are navigating digital accessibility today, and the best practices that will shape effective programs tomorrow.

01

Key findings

Key findings

Adoption of digital accessibility is growing.

More than 80% of respondents to our 2024 survey say their organization has a digital accessibility policy, up from 72% in 2023. Additionally, 83% of respondents say they have a dedicated digital accessibility budget, and more than 60% plan to maintain or increase their budget in the year ahead.

Digital accessibility is increasingly a requirement in business-to-business (B2B) digital product procurement.

Nearly three quarters (74%) of all surveyed respondents say accessibility is a requirement most or all of the time when their organization purchases digital products, a jump from 58% the previous year.

Organizations struggle to manage portfolio-wide digital accessibility.

Respondents are most likely to rank managing accessibility across multiple digital assets as the number one challenge facing their digital accessibility programs, and they have inconsistent confidence in the accessibility of different digital assets.

While organizations are aware of the EAA, they may not have a sufficient sense of urgency

Overall, 73% of respondents say the EAA applies to their organization, but a smaller number (55%) say they have begun taking action to ensure compliance. With enforcement beginning in June 2025 for any organization that has customers in the EU, this gap between awareness and action may indicate some organizations are insufficiently prepared to meet the compliance deadline.

Three key elements drive success for accessibility programs: policy, budget, and accountability.

Respondents at organizations with an accessibility policy, dedicated budget, and accountable party—pillars of strong program governance—are 75% more likely to say executives are “highly supportive” of digital accessibility than those with some, but not all, of these elements. They’re also nearly 20% more likely to say digital accessibility has helped mitigate legal risk, and more than 70% more likely to say digital accessibility improved revenue.

Proactive accessibility pays off.

Respondents at organizations that start addressing accessibility before development begins are more likely than those who wait until after digital experiences are live to say accessibility has contributed to improvements across a range of key business priorities, including user experience, customer acquisition, and brand reputation.

Organizations are embracing automation to drive efficiency.

Organizations today must manage accessibility across increasingly complex digital portfolios and amid tightening regulations—and many are optimistic about leveraging automation to help meet these increased demands. Nearly 90% of respondents say automated remediation technology, technology that automatically finds and addresses common accessibility errors (but not all issues) for the end user, “has already or could improve” the efficiency of their digital accessibility programs.

02

Methodology

Methodology

Level Access commissioned independent market research specialist Vanson Bourne to undertake the quantitative research upon which this report is based. A total of 1,403 professionals were surveyed during July and August 2024.

Respondents work at organizations of all sizes, across sectors and industries. A notable 37% of respondents hold top-level management roles (e.g., C-level positions), and 41% occupy senior management roles. While respondents occupy a range of functional roles—from design and development to marketing and legal counsel—all respondents have some level of involvement in digital experience creation or strategy.

More than half (58%) of respondents work at organizations based in the U.S. Another 39% work at organizations based in Europe, with the majority of these responses coming from France, Germany, Italy, and the U.K. We also received a small number of responses from individuals employed in various regions and countries around the globe, including Canada, Australia, and India.

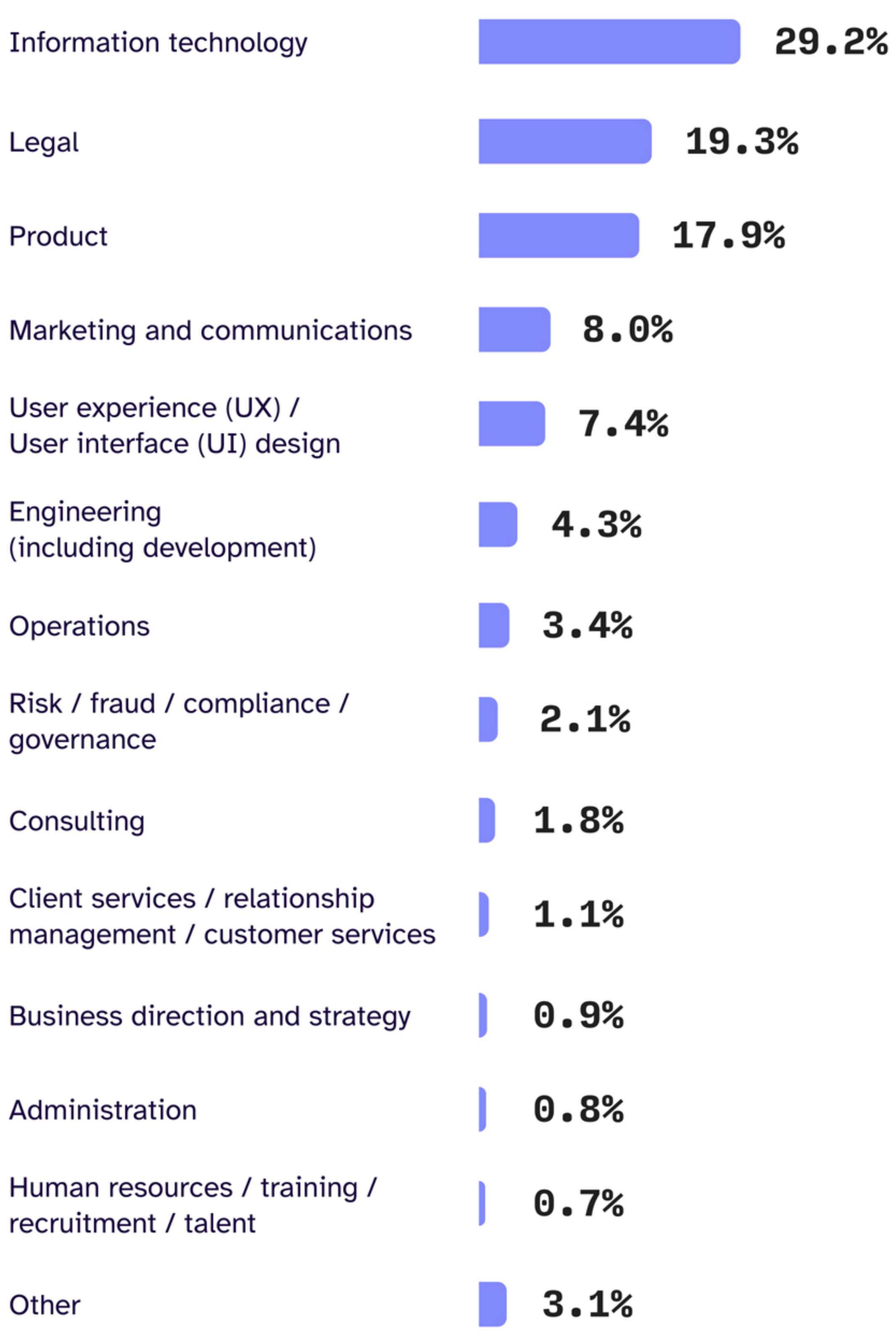
Throughout the report, we've made references to our research from 2023. This data is based on data from 1,033 professionals, primarily from the U.S., surveyed during July and August 2023. Similarly to respondents to our 2024 survey, respondents to our 2023 survey worked at organizations of varied sizes and across industries, and all had some involvement in digital experience creation or strategy at their organizations.

VansonBourne

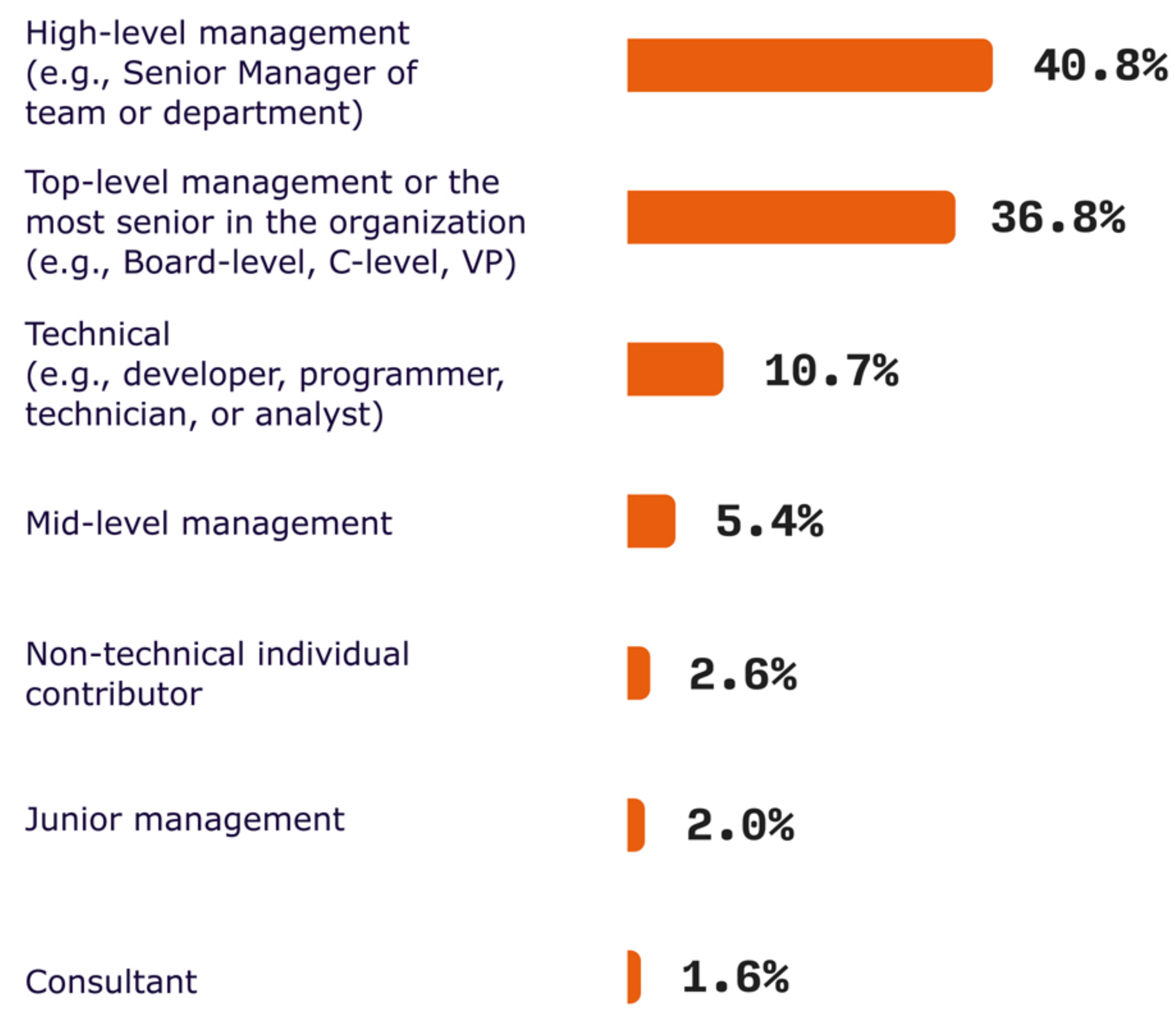
All percentage figures cited in this report are rounded. As a result, when percentage figures for the responses to some questions are combined, the sum may vary from 100% by one to two tenths of a percentage point.

About our respondents

Respondent department

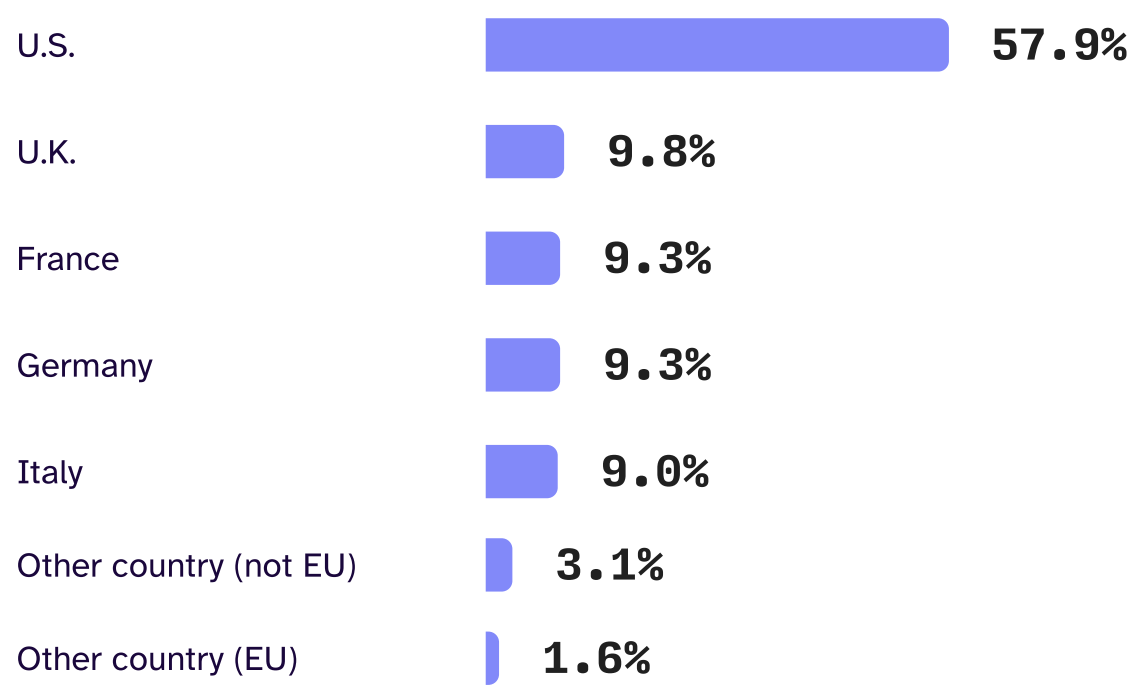


Respondent position

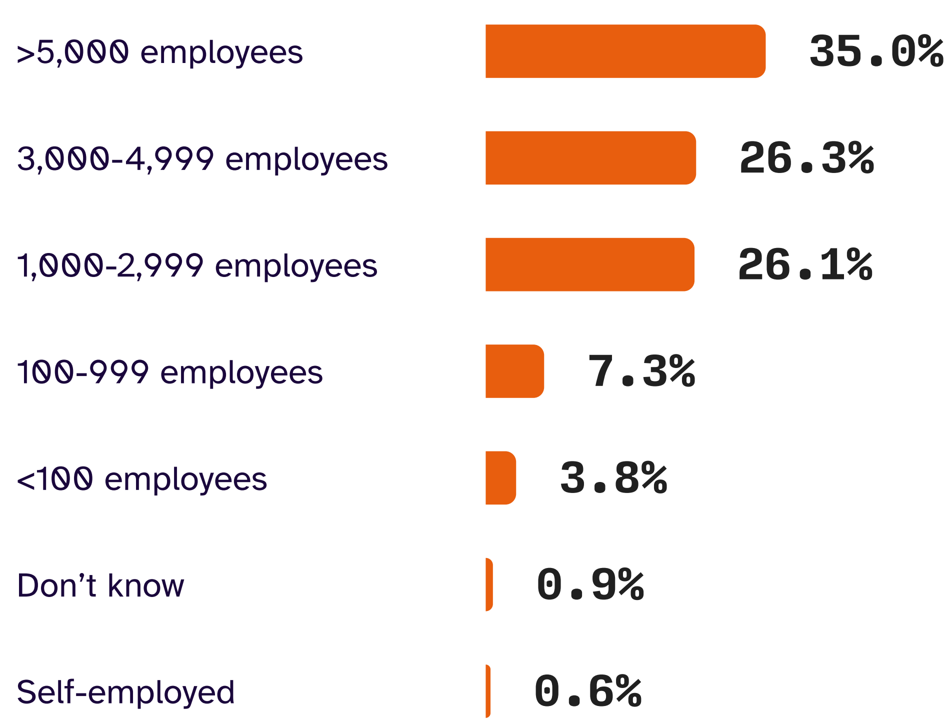


About respondents' organizations

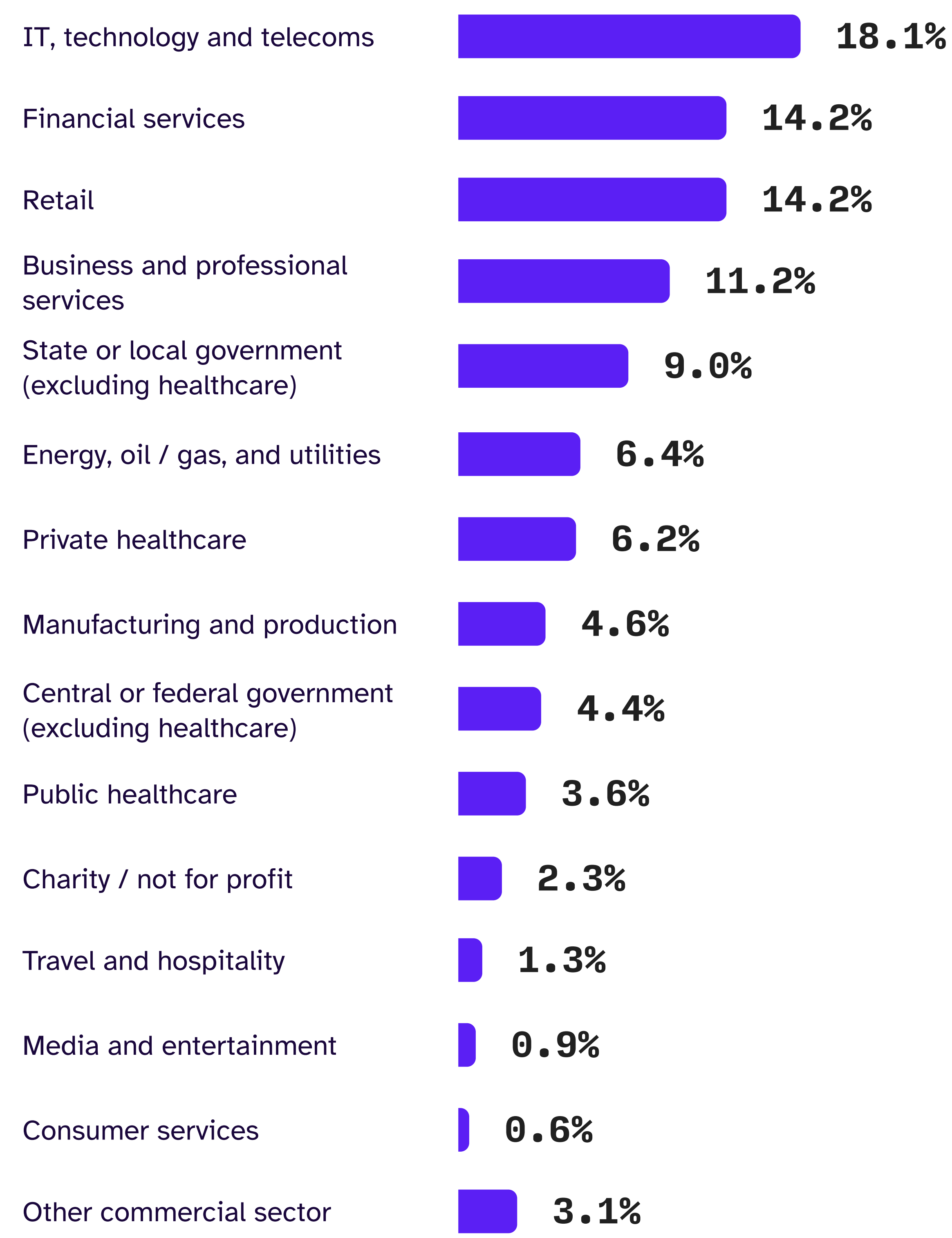
Organization location



Organization size

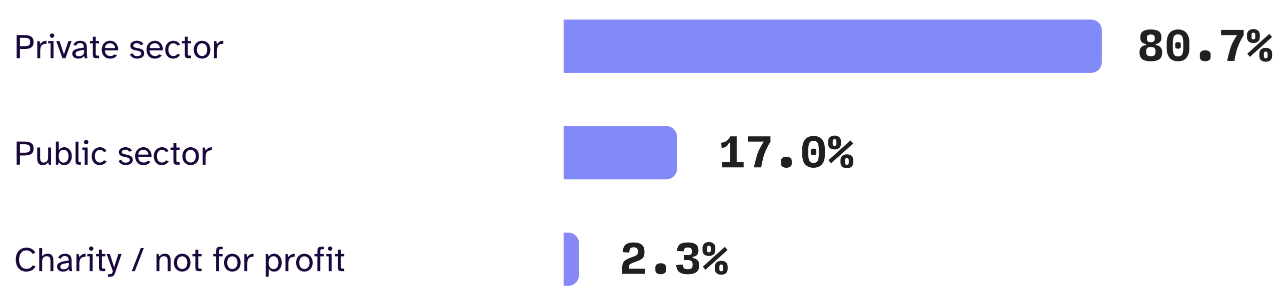


Organization industry

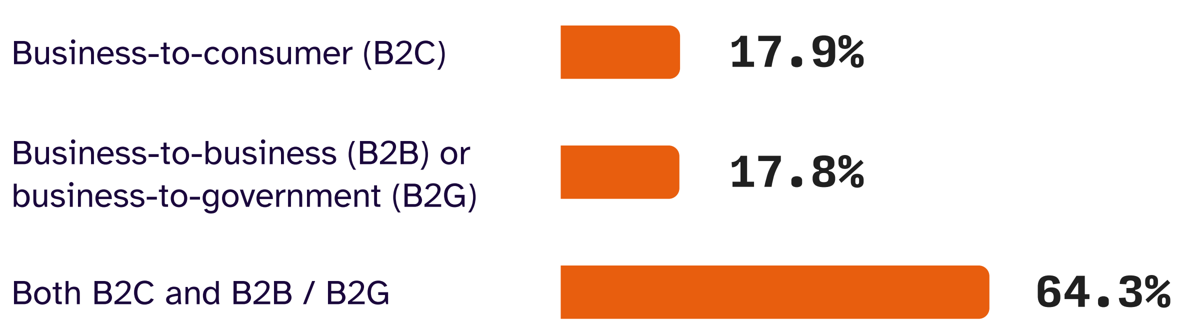


About respondents' organizations

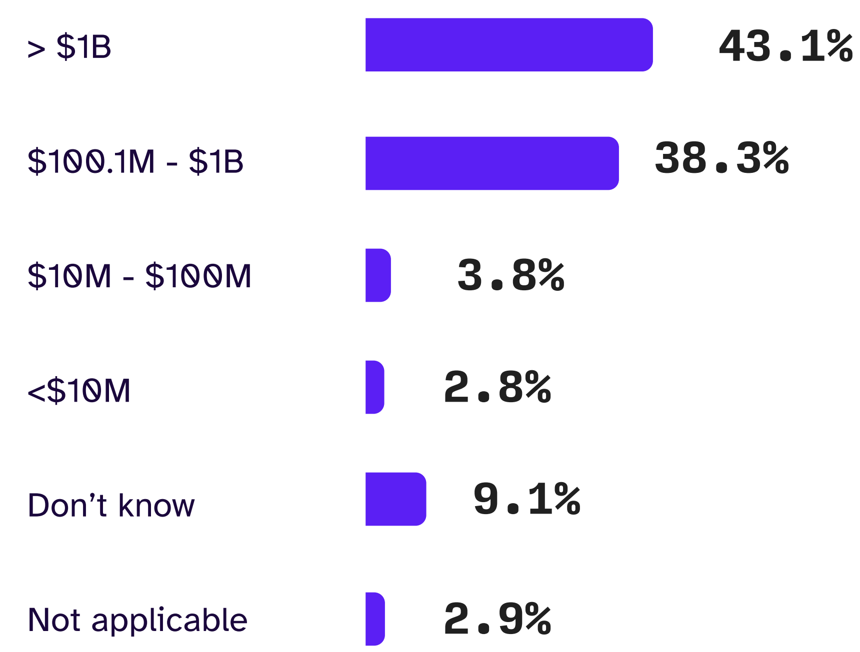
Organization sector



Organization type (private sector only)



Organization revenue (private sector only)



03

Exploring our findings

Exploring our findings

The following sections of this report unpack key trends surfaced in our research and offer perspective on notable developments in the digital accessibility landscape.

As adoption of digital accessibility grows, strong governance sets impactful programs apart.

Digital accessibility remains a mainstream priority for organizations across sectors, industries, and markets. In fact, our findings suggest that overall adoption of digital accessibility is increasing: 82% of respondents surveyed in 2024 say their organizations have a digital accessibility policy in place, up from 72% of respondents to the 2023 survey. Respondents to our 2024 survey are also more likely to consider their digital accessibility policy impactful: 52% say their policy has a "major impact" on their organization's operations, relative to 40% of respondents in 2023.

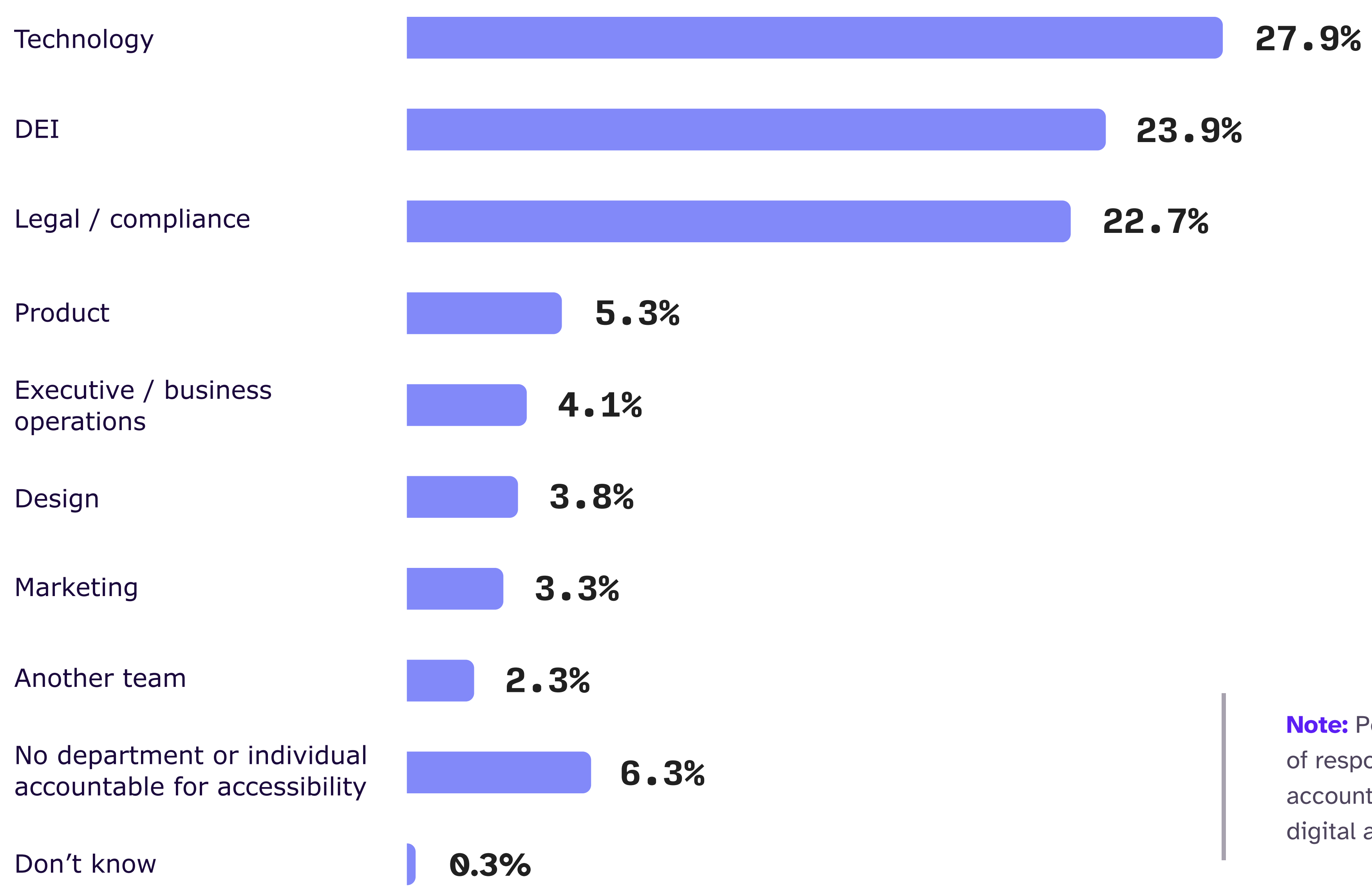
Notably, respondents that indicate that their policy has a "major impact" on their organization's operations widely report having other core aspects of a mature digital accessibility practice, such as robust executive support, effective training, and a proactive approach to accessibility—underscoring the role of a strong policy in successful program management. Relative to those whose policies have a "minor impact," respondents who say their policies have a "major impact" are more than 150% more likely to consider executives "highly supportive" of digital accessibility, 160% more likely to say they have "highly effective" digital accessibility training, and almost 200% more likely to say they start addressing digital accessibility in planning.

More organizations are assigning accountability for accessibility.

More widespread policy implementation isn't the only signal organizations' commitments to accessibility are deepening. The vast majority (93%) of respondents to our 2024 survey say their organization has a department or individual who is accountable for overseeing the adoption of accessibility across their organization, relative to 74% in 2023.

Consistent with our 2023 findings, digital accessibility is most likely to be owned by a technology team, such as engineering, followed by the team responsible for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and the legal / compliance team.

Which team is accountable for digital accessibility?



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who indicate this team is accountable for overseeing the adoption of digital accessibility at their organization.

Ownership of accessibility by DEI teams corresponds with more proactive approaches.

Respondents at organizations where DEI teams own digital accessibility tend to approach digital accessibility more proactively than those at other organizations: 32% of professionals who say their organizations start addressing accessibility in planning report that accessibility is owned by DEI teams. That's compared to 25% when it's owned by technology teams and 24% when accessibility is owned by legal / compliance teams.

Meanwhile, respondents at organizations where accountability sits within technology teams are more likely to address accessibility later in the digital experience creation life cycle—in development or quality assurance (QA).

This may indicate that when accessibility is approached as part of a broader effort to advance inclusion, teams are more inclined to be proactive than when they treat it as a purely technical or legal problem. We explore how organizations are adopting proactive accessibility, and the benefits of this approach, in more depth, in the section of this report titled, "Organizations are approaching accessibility more proactively and embracing automation."

Organizations that assign accessibility ownership to DEI teams address accessibility earlier than those that assign ownership to technical or legal teams.

	When an organization begins addressing digital accessibility during the digital experience creation life cycle			
Team accountable for digital accessibility	Planning	Design	Development	QA
DEI	31.6%	23.1%	22.5%	21.2%
Technology	25.2%	21.7%	39.0%	30.8%
Legal / compliance	24.2%	26.3%	23.5%	22.1%
Other department	17.5%	22.2%	13.0%	21.2%
No accountable department	1.5%	6.7%	1.9%	4.8%

Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who begin addressing digital accessibility during this stage of the digital experience creation life cycle.

“Treating accessibility as an inclusion initiative, rather than a technical project, leads to more successful outcomes because inclusion doesn’t have a start and end date. Rather than a task to be completed, accessibility must be approached as an ongoing, agile process that evolves with changing standards and regulations, and one that is embedded into the culture of the organization. When accessibility is part of an organization’s DNA, integrated into teams’ processes, it becomes a sustainable long-term practice.”

Jon Avila
Chief Accessibility Officer,
Level Access

Most accessibility programs are bolstered by executive support and sustained budgets.

Corresponding with digital accessibility being a widespread priority for organizations, the vast majority of respondents to our survey indicate that their digital accessibility programs are backed by some level of executive support. When asked how supportive executives are of digital accessibility at their organizations, 59% of respondents say leaders are “highly supportive” (meaning executives actively advocate for the prioritization of digital accessibility), and 38% say they are “moderately supportive” (meaning they are aware of digital accessibility and provide some level of support, but do not actively advocate for it).

Executive support is often critical for securing a budget for accessibility initiatives—so, it follows that organizations are also budgeting for digital accessibility. A notable 83% of respondents report they have a dedicated digital accessibility budget, and most say their organization plans to maintain or increase their budget in the year ahead.

While budgets tend to be higher in the U.S. than in the U.K. and EU, respondents in the U.S. and EU are equally likely to indicate they will continue budgeting for digital accessibility: 63% of U.S. respondents say they plan to maintain or increase their budgets, and 64% of EU respondents say the same. Sustained or growing investment among EU organizations, in particular, may be partly attributed to the upcoming 2025 EAA compliance deadline, while U.S.-based organizations have long felt the regulatory pressure.

Stricter regulations may also contribute to consistent investment within specific industries, such as healthcare: A notable 68% of respondents from private healthcare organizations say they plan to maintain or increase their budgets. This finding may be informed by new rulemaking under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which impacts many U.S. healthcare providers across the public and private sectors that receive federal funding.

Which industries are most likely to sustain or increase their investment in accessibility?

Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who indicate their organizations plan to maintain or increase their digital accessibility budget in the next 12 months.

Strong governance coincides with executive support.

Respondents at organizations with three core elements of accessibility governance—a policy, dedicated budget, and accountable party—are more likely to say executives are “highly supportive” of digital accessibility. More than two thirds (68%) of respondents at organizations with a policy, dedicated budget, and accountable party say executives are “highly supportive,” relative to 39% of those with some—but not all—of these elements in place, and 8% with none of these elements.

This correlation may be due, in part, to the fact that executive buy-in is often a requirement for establishing a governance structure in the first place—organizations may be unable to secure a budget, stand up a policy, and assign accountability without executive backing. However, organizations that can demonstrate the value of governance may also be in a better position to maintain, and strengthen, executive buy-in.

Confidence in accessibility is increasing, but challenges persist.

As organizations increasingly prioritize accessibility, confidence in the accessibility of digital experiences is growing. However, gaps in communication and misalignment across role levels—particularly regarding support and resourcing—continue to present barriers to progress.

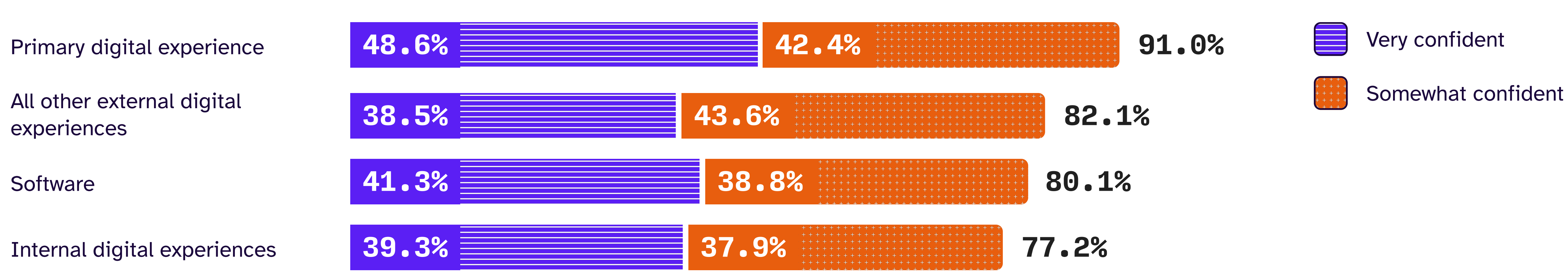
While respondents report higher confidence in portfolio-wide accessibility, other experiences continue to lag behind primary websites.

Our findings suggest that respondents are becoming more confident in the accessibility of digital experiences across their portfolios. Slightly less than half (49%) of respondents are "very confident" their organization's primary digital experience (such as their main website) is accessible, up from 35% in 2023. Relative to 2023, 2024 respondents were also 44% more likely to be "very confident" in the accessibility of all other external-facing experiences (such as mobile apps and customer-facing documents), and 50% more likely to be "very confident" in the accessibility of internal digital experiences (such as intranets and employee-facing documents).

But while confidence is increasing year-over-year, when we compare 2024 respondents' levels of confidence across different types of digital experiences, we find substantial inconsistencies. Respondents tend to be much less confident in the accessibility of other external experiences, and internal experiences, than in their organization's primary digital experience. Respondents at organizations that create software products also report lower levels of confidence in these products than in their organization's primary digital experiences.

Given that website accessibility issues are a common trigger for legal and regulatory action (which we'll explore in the later section, "Legal action remains widespread as international regulations tighten"), it may not be surprising that organizations are prioritizing their websites—however, inconsistent confidence across other digital assets suggests that teams may be focusing on the accessibility of websites at the expense of other experiences.

How confident are professionals in accessibility across their digital portfolio?



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who report being "very" or "somewhat confident" in the accessibility of the digital experience specified.

Governance and proactivity correspond with higher accessibility confidence.

Notably, respondents who have an accessibility policy, dedicated budget, and an accountable party—core elements of accessibility governance—are more likely to be "very confident" in the accessibility of their primary digital experience, as well as in the accessibility of other digital experiences.

Confidence in different digital experiences among respondents at organizations with core elements of governance versus those without

Type of digital experience	Respondents at organizations with an accessibility policy, budget, and accountable party	Respondents at organizations with some, but not all, of these elements	Respondents with none of these elements
Primary digital experience (e.g., website)	56.4%	27.9%	0.0%
All other external digital experiences	44.8%	25.3%	3.0%
Internal digital experiences (e.g., intranet, internal documents)	47.1%	21.8%	0.0%
Software	49.3%	21.8%	0.0%

Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who are "very confident" an experience is accessible. (Respondents were asked to indicate their confidence in each type of digital experience in separate questions.)

Additionally, those who begin addressing accessibility at the beginning of the digital experience creation life cycle, in planning, tend to be more confident than those who take a reactive approach.

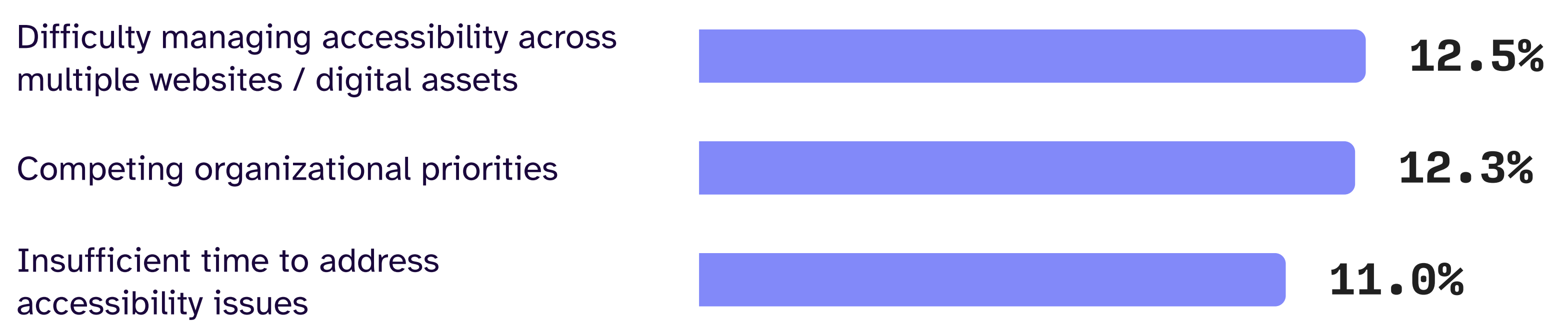
Type of digital experience	Respondents at organizations that begin addressing digital accessibility in planning	Respondents at organizations that begin addressing digital accessibility in design	Respondents at organizations that address digital accessibility after an experience is live
Primary digital experience (e.g., website)	58.4%	46.3%	28.6%
All other external digital experiences	42.2%	34.3%	20.8%
Internal digital experiences (e.g., intranet, internal documents)	45.1%	37.0%	19.5%
Software	50.1%	35.8%	18.2%

Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who are “very confident” their digital experiences are accessible. (Respondents were asked to indicate their confidence in each type of digital experience in separate questions.)

Portfolio management and competing priorities are common barriers to accessibility progress.

Managing the accessibility of a portfolio of digital assets can be complex work—and this complexity may be one explanation for respondents' inconsistent confidence. When asked about the top challenges their programs face, organizations are most likely to rank "difficulty managing accessibility across multiple websites / digital assets" as the number one challenge, followed by "competing organizational priorities" and "insufficient time to address accessibility issues."

What are organizations' top digital accessibility challenges?



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who rank this first among the challenges facing their digital accessibility program.

Respondents at smaller organizations are more likely than larger organizations to say they face the most difficulty navigating competing organizational priorities: In fact, this is the top challenge for those at organizations with less than 1,000 employees, with 22% of respondents in this cohort ranking this challenge first. Meanwhile, respondents at organizations with more than 1,000 employees are most likely to identify difficulty managing accessibility across multiple websites / digital assets as their top challenge.

Organizations grapple with misalignment about the quality of communication, training, and executive support.

Although teams are more aligned about the accessibility of their digital experiences across their portfolio, many respondents report struggling with communication surrounding accessibility. Only 48% of those surveyed say their organizations communicate clearly and frequently about digital accessibility, and leaders and practitioners disagree on this topic: While 54% of senior leaders say communication is clear and frequent, just 43% of practitioners feel the same.

Gaps in communication may contribute to misalignment about other key aspects of an accessibility program, including training and the quality of support received from executives. Overall, 94% of respondents say accessibility training is available at their organizations—however, a much smaller percentage (44%) consider this training "highly effective." And senior leaders are more likely to say their organizations' accessibility training is "highly effective" than practitioners.

Senior leaders are more likely than practitioners to consider digital accessibility training "highly effective."

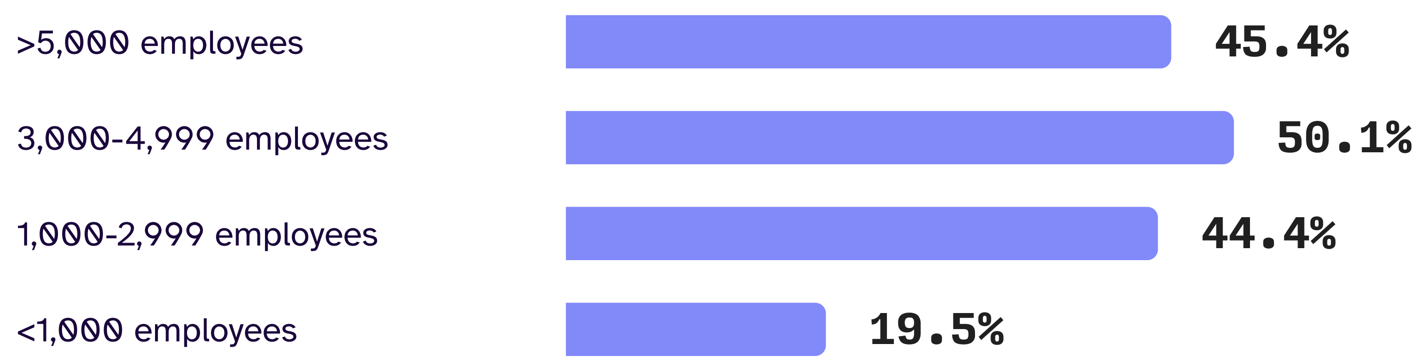
A similar discrepancy emerges in the perceived quality of executive support for accessibility programs, with leaders more inclined than practitioners to report that executives are "highly supportive" of digital accessibility.

Senior leaders are more likely than practitioners to perceive executives as "highly supportive" of digital accessibility.

Smaller organizations struggle with training and executive support.

Perceptions about the importance of training and executive support also vary across organizations of different sizes, with smaller organizations reporting less success securing support in both areas.

Perceived efficacy of accessibility training by organization size



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who say that digital accessibility training at their organization is “highly effective.”

Perceived quality of executive support by organization size

Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who say that executives are “highly supportive” of digital accessibility.

These findings may be explained in part by the fact that competing priorities are a particular challenge for smaller organizations: Organizations struggling to balance accessibility alongside other business objectives may face more difficulty persuading executives to make it a priority. This challenge can negatively impact resourcing for accessibility, including training and access to certified digital accessibility professionals.

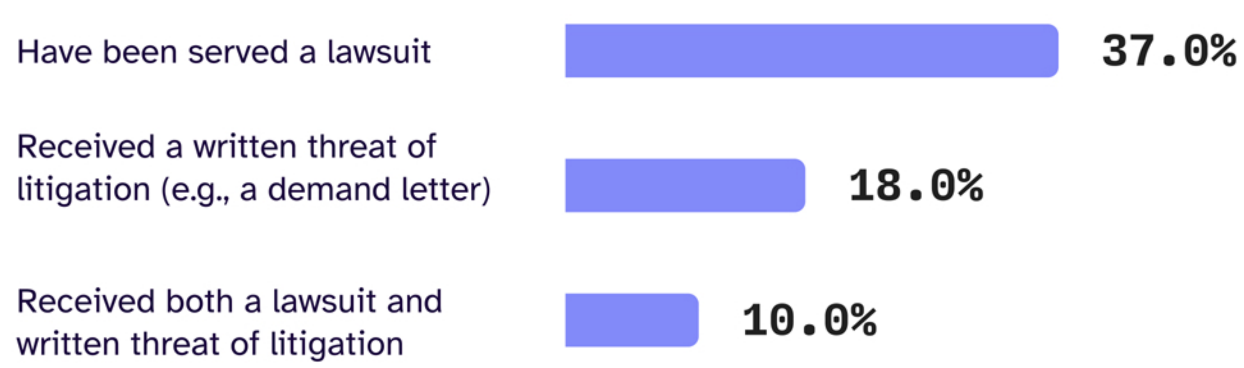
Legal action remains widespread as international regulations tighten.

Organizations are continuing to report high rates of legal action related to digital accessibility. In the U.S., 43% of respondents to our 2024 survey say their organizations have been involved in some form of digital accessibility-related legal action in the past year, a slight downtick from 46% of U.S. respondents in 2023.

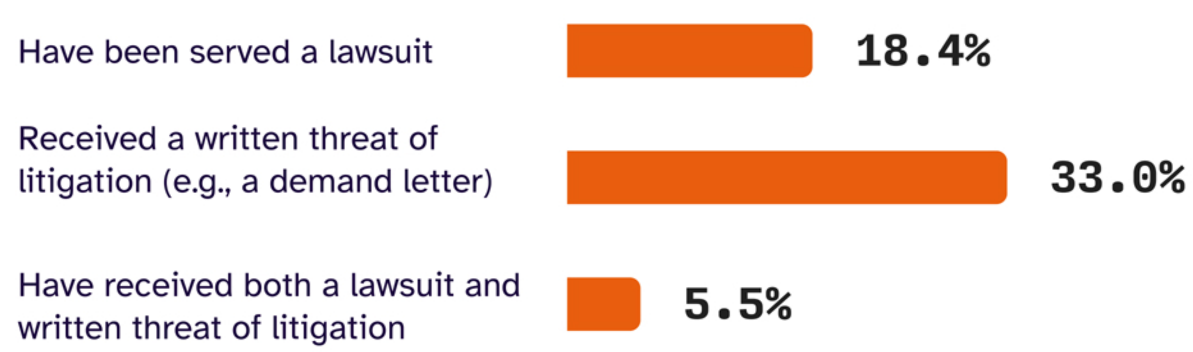
Among U.S. respondents to our 2024 survey who report legal action, 17% say they received a lawsuit, 20% say they received a written threat of litigation (such as a demand letter), and 6% say they received both a lawsuit and a written threat of litigation.

Consistent with our 2023 findings, U.S. respondents at retail and financial services organizations both reported above-average rates of legal action. This data also aligns with broader trends in case law, with retail brands and financial services organizations remaining common targets for web accessibility litigation under the ADA.

Retail: 65.0% of U.S. respondents say their organization has been involved in legal action over the past year.



Financial services: 56.9% of respondents say their organization has been involved in legal action over the past year.



Many professionals also believe their organization is at risk of legal action in the year ahead, although this figure has dropped slightly. Just more than one-third (36%) of U.S. respondents believe their organization is at risk of digital accessibility-related legal action in the next 12 months.

When asked about the specific factors leading them to feel their organization is at risk, U.S.-based respondents are most likely to say that, given the increased volume of litigation related to accessibility, they believe legal action is unavoidable: 62% identified this as a factor. Another 56% cite lack of sufficient resources as a contributing factor.

Digital accessibility compliance is a global priority.

While digital accessibility laws in Europe tend to be enforced by regulatory bodies, as opposed to primarily through private litigation, our findings suggest regulatory activity in the EU is frequent. More than two-thirds (68%) of respondents in the EU say their organization was involved in some form of regulatory action related to digital accessibility over the past year. Activity is particularly high in Germany, where compliance with accessibility laws is strictly monitored: 81% of respondents in Germany report facing regulatory action in the past year related to the accessibility of their digital experiences.

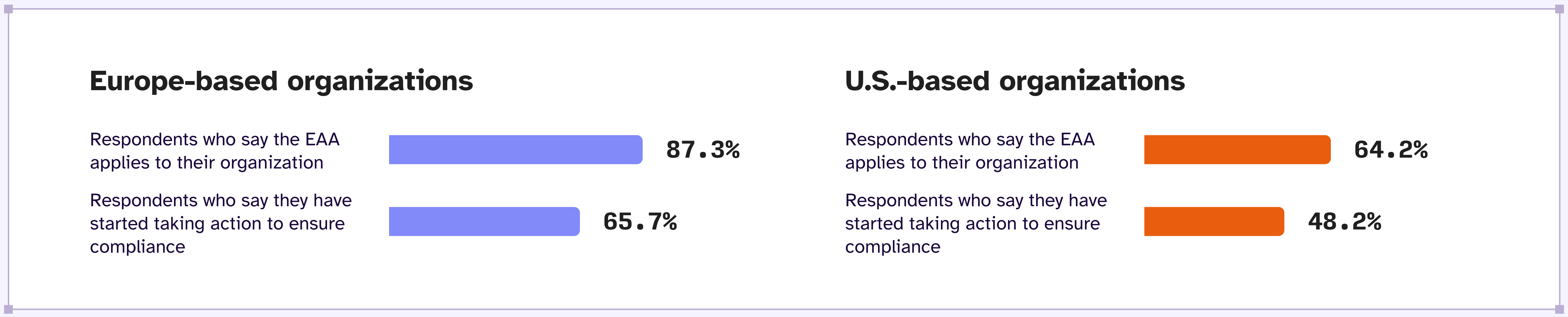
Notably, strong executive support for accessibility tends to correspond with less frequent regulatory action among EU-based organizations. While nearly three-quarters (74%) of respondents at organizations with “moderately supportive” executives say their organization has been involved in regulatory action, this figure drops to 65% for those with “highly supportive” executives.

With EAA enforcement on the horizon, organizations understand their obligations—but many are still waiting to act.

Enforcement of the EAA is set to begin in 2025. Most organizations with consumers in the EU, regardless of where the company is based, are subject to the law's compliance requirements—and our research indicates that organizations in both the U.S. and Europe are aware of the law.

Overall, 73% of survey respondents say the EAA applies to their organization. However, just 55% say that they have started taking action to ensure compliance (the remaining 18% say the law applies to them, but they have not yet taken any action). These findings suggest that while organizations understand they have obligations under the EAA, they may not have a sufficient sense of urgency given the June 2025 deadline.

European organizations tended to be more aware of the EAA, and more likely to have started preparing for the deadline, than those in the U.S. Given this gap, companies stateside may particularly benefit from greater education about the EAA's requirements and how to meet them.



“A few years ago, many organizations were scrambling to meet the deadline for compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This deadline was in December, and many product teams didn’t take notice until August. When they did, they realized their roadmaps were suddenly in jeopardy, their teams didn’t have the proper training, and they simply weren’t ready to meet their legal obligations. With the EAA enforcement deadline looming, don’t get caught in the same trap.”

Corbb O’Connor
Director of Accessibility Advocacy, Level Access

“EAA compliance isn’t achieved overnight. To meet the June 2025 deadline, organizations must start working toward meeting the law’s requirements now.

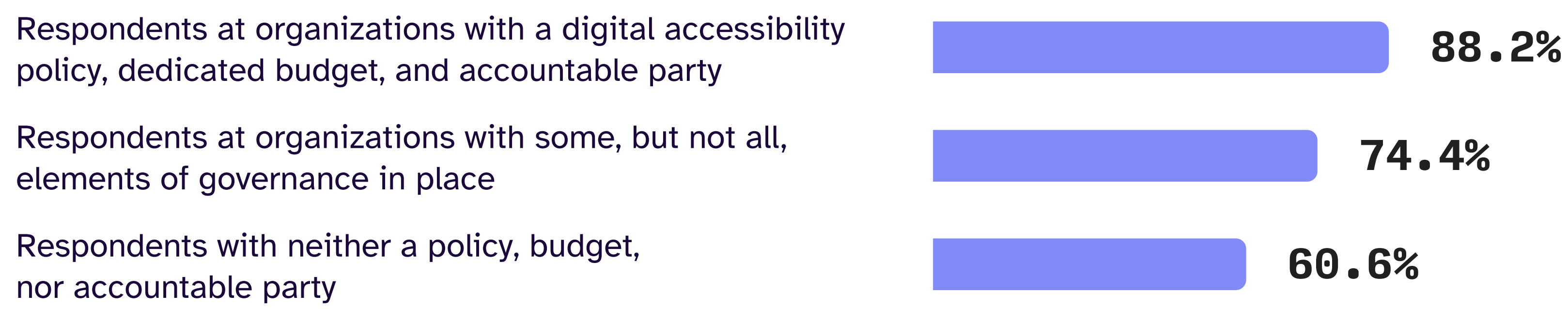
Think about it like catching a flight: If your flight leaves at 9:00 AM, you don’t leave your home for the airport at 9:00 AM. If you do, you’ll miss your departure.”

Jon Avila
Chief Accessibility Officer, Level Access

Good governance may reduce legal and regulatory risks.

With legal action still rampant, and global regulations tightening, organizations may be wondering how to mitigate their risk. Our research suggests that practices associated with strong accessibility governance and maturity—such as implementing a policy, securing dedicated budget, and establishing accountability—are associated with perceived reductions in legal and regulatory risks.

Reported reduction in legal risk, relative to the implementation of governance practices



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who say digital accessibility contributed to reduced legal risk for their organization.

Reported reduction in legal risk, relative to the availability and quality of accessibility training

Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who say digital accessibility contributed to reduced legal risk for their organization.

While compliance continues to prompt digital accessibility efforts, usability fuels sustained progress.

Consistent with our 2023 data, legal compliance is the most widely reported reason that organizations started addressing digital accessibility—but improving usability for all is the number one reason they continue.

Organizations' top three reasons for starting to address digital accessibility

Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who say digital accessibility contributed to reduced legal risk for their organization.

Organizations' top three reasons for continuing to address digital accessibility

Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who identify this as the primary reason their organization continues addressing digital accessibility.

This trend is present across both U.S. and aggregate data. However, when we review only responses from professionals in Europe, respondents report that improving usability for all is their organizations' primary reason for starting to address digital accessibility—and they cite competitive pressure as the primary reason they continue. European organizations' different motivations for starting to address accessibility may be attributable to the fact that regulatory action surrounding digital accessibility in Europe does not tend to have the same financial consequences as private litigation in the U.S., and may not be as strong of a motivator for launching an accessibility practice. More research might probe the specific competitive pressures that are continuing to drive European organizations' accessibility programs. Given the EAA's impact on global commerce, it's possible that organizations consider meeting these regulatory requirements a competitive imperative.

Organizations are approaching accessibility more proactively and embracing automation.

As organizations aim to ensure accessibility amid an active legal and regulatory landscape, they're taking active steps to improve the efficiency and efficacy of their programs: Namely, approaching accessibility more proactively, and leveraging automated tools.

Proactive accessibility is gaining traction.

Incorporating accessibility into the planning and design of a new digital experience generally requires less time, and fewer resources, than retroactively addressing accessibility issues in digital experiences that are already built or live. Because proactively approaching accessibility tends to make accessibility more sustainable for organizations, proactivity is widely understood to be a marker of a mature digital accessibility program.

Our survey findings indicate that organizations today understand the benefits of proactive digital accessibility. When asked about their top three priorities with regard to improving accessibility, organizations are most likely to include addressing accessibility more proactively in this short list, with 55% of respondents selecting this option.

Many respondents indicate that their organizations are already adopting a proactive approach to accessibility, and they report doing so in higher numbers than in 2023. More than six in 10 (61%) respondents to our 2024 survey say their organization begins addressing accessibility in either planning or design, up from just more than half (52%) in the previous year. Additionally, the proportion of respondents who say they address digital accessibility after an experience is live went down—from 11% in 2023 to just 6% in 2024.

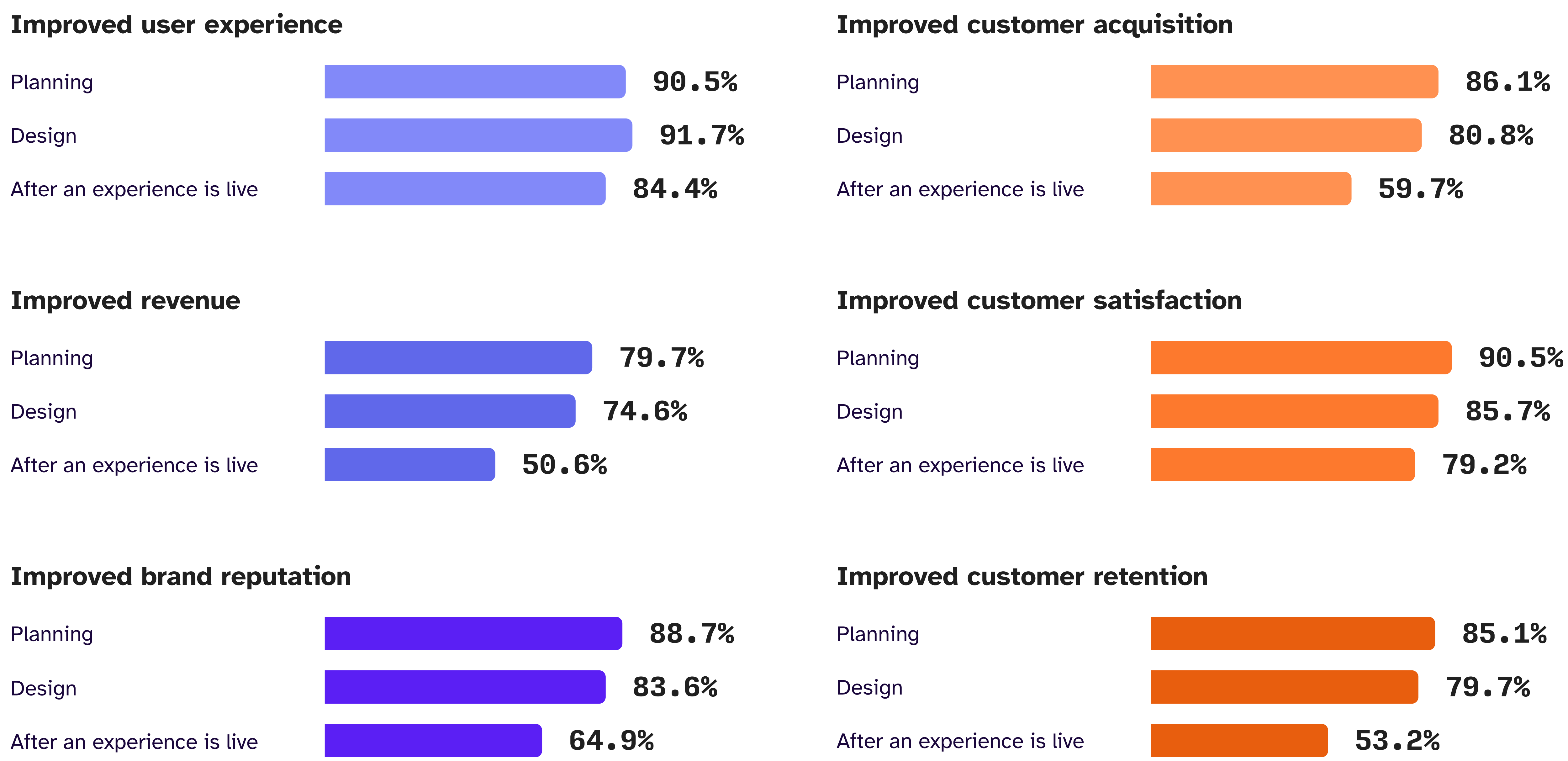
	When do organizations start addressing digital accessibility? (2024 vs. 2023)						
	Planning	Design	Development	QA / testing	After an experience is live	We do not typically address accessibility	Don't know
2024	29.0%	32.3%	23.5%	7.7%	5.7%	1.2%	0.6%
2023	19.7%	32.0%	23.8%	10.9%	10.9%	0.0%	2.5%

Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who say their organization begins addressing digital accessibility during this stage of the digital experience creation life cycle. The option "We do not typically address accessibility" was added in our 2024 survey.

Proactive accessibility pays off.

Organizations that take a proactive approach to accessibility are reaping the rewards: Four in 10 respondents included incorporating accessibility when designing among the top three most impactful actions taken by their organization to improve accessibility. Additionally, consistent with our 2023 findings, respondents at organizations that start addressing accessibility in the earliest phases of experience creation are more likely than those who rely on reactive fixes to report that digital accessibility has contributed to a wide range of positive business outcomes.

Reported improvements in key business objectives among organizations who start addressing digital accessibility in planning or design, relative to after an experience is live



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who report that digital accessibility has contributed to improvements in the specified business outcome.

Mature organizations prioritize proactive accessibility.

Given that approaching accessibility proactively is an indicator of program maturity, it may not be surprising that organizations taking other steps toward maturity—such as establishing governance, implementing training, and securing executive support—tend to be more proactive.

Organizations with strong governance (encompassing a policy, budget, and accountable party) in place are more likely than those without governance in place to start addressing digital accessibility at the very beginning of the digital experience creation life cycle, in planning. Among respondents at organizations with a policy, budget, and accountable party, 33% say that they start addressing digital accessibility in planning, compared to 17% at those with some, but not all, of these elements, and 3% of those with none.

Respondents at organizations with training and executive support, other crucial markers of maturity, are also more likely to start in planning. A notable 37% of respondents at organizations with “highly effective” training, and 25% at those with “somewhat effective” training, say they begin addressing digital accessibility in planning, relative to 19% at those with ineffective training and 14% at those with no training. Similarly, 35% of respondents at organizations with “highly supportive” executives say they start addressing accessibility in planning, compared to 20% at those with “moderately supportive” executives.

Organizations are more likely to address accessibility in planning when they report other indicators of program maturity

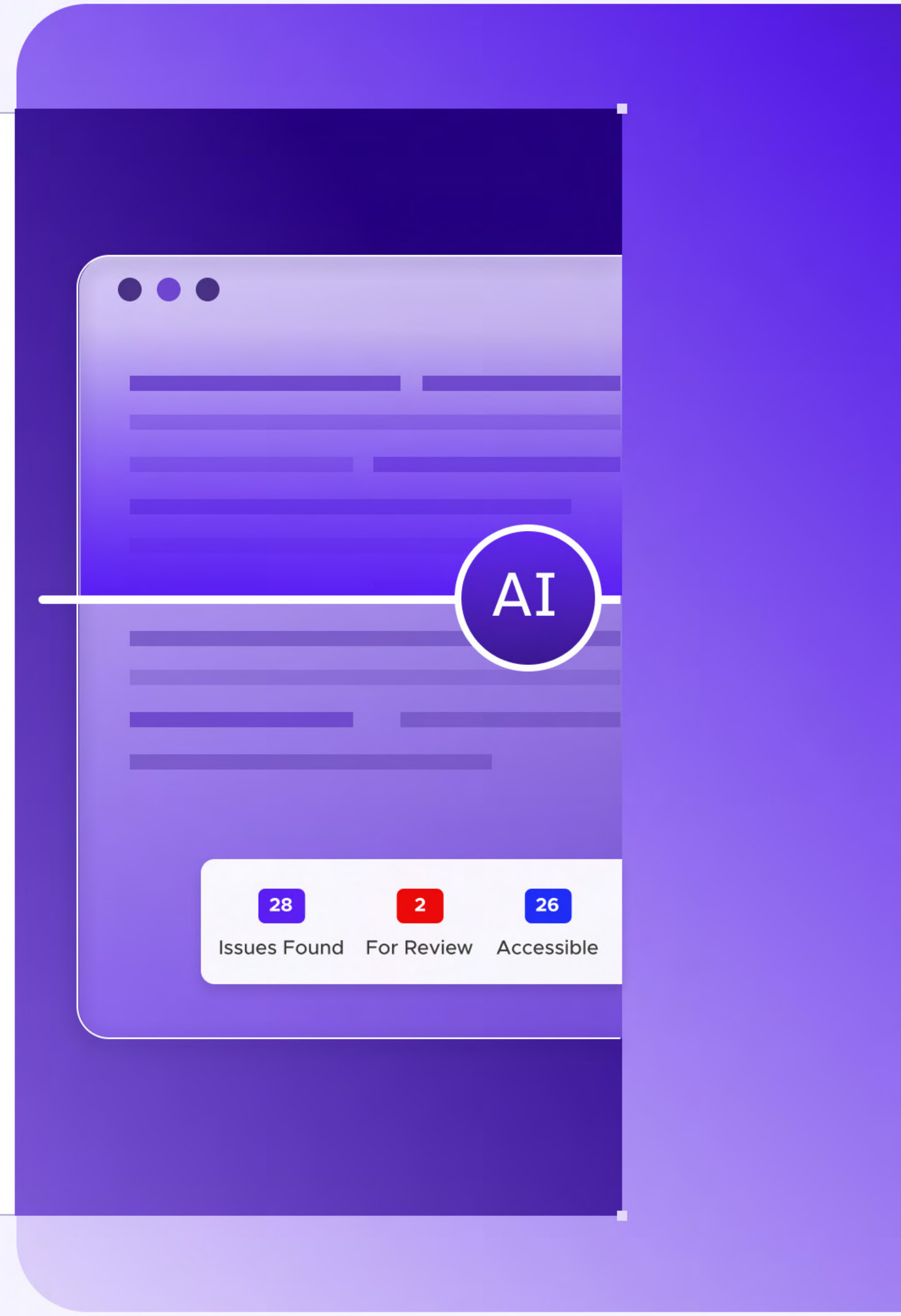
Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who say their organizations address digital accessibility in planning.

Organizations drive efficiency with AI, automated remediation—but technology has not replaced the need for human expertise.

Our 2023 survey identified that finding sufficient time to remediate accessibility issues was a widespread challenge for teams. While many respondents to our 2024 survey cite inadequate time to fix issues as an area of difficulty, they're embracing new technologies—such as AI and automated remediation—that can help accelerate this process. However, our findings suggest that these tools have not replaced the need for guidance from certified accessibility professionals.

AI tools are already a key part of accessibility tech stacks.

Amid rapid advancements in AI, organizations are broadly integrating AI technologies into their accessibility efforts. A notable 79% of respondents say they are already incorporating tools with AI capabilities, such as generating alt text or accessible code, into their accessibility strategies. The same proportion (79%) say that, when considering new digital accessibility solutions, AI capabilities are an important factor in their purchasing decisions.

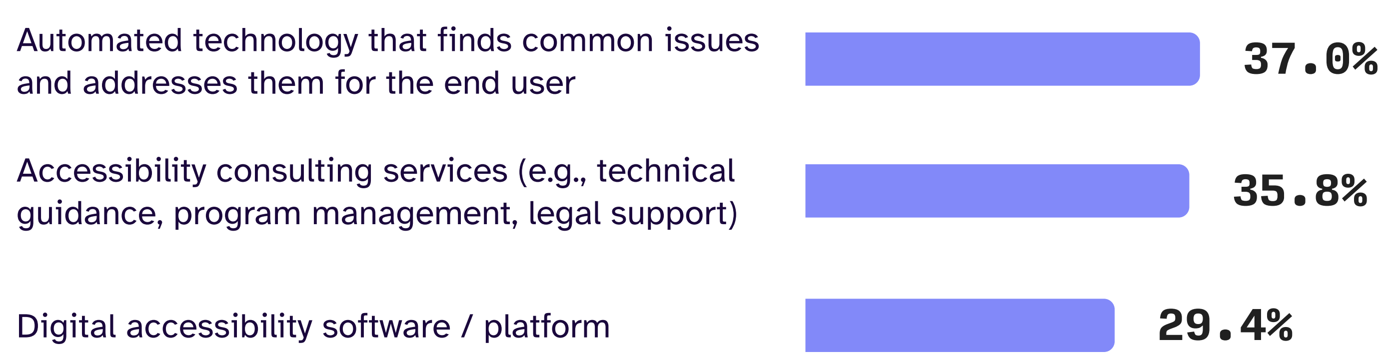


Adoption of automated remediation is widespread, but professional expertise remains critical.

Automated remediation refers to technology that automatically scans web pages to identify common accessibility issues, and then addresses those issues for the end user as the page is loaded. Addressing common issues with automation may allow developers to focus on solving more complex accessibility problems that automation cannot find, and those that automation can find but cannot address. Our research suggests automated remediation tools are widely utilized: 45% of respondents say their organizations use automated remediation, with adoption consistent across the U.S. (46% of respondents) and Europe (45%).

Optimism about the impact of this technology, particularly when it comes to saving time, is even more widespread: Almost nine in 10 (89%) of respondents say automated remediation has already, or could, improve the efficiency of their digital accessibility programs. In fact, when asked to select the top three digital accessibility tools or services they would prioritize when investing in new or additional resources, respondents were most likely to include automated remediation tools in this short list. Accessibility consulting services ranked second, suggesting respondents are also aware of the continued need for human expertise—such as that provided by certified accessibility professionals—when both testing and remediating digital experiences.

What are organizations' top priorities when investing in new or additional digital accessibility tools or services?



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who include this item in the top three tools or services they would prioritize.

"Tools and technology that automatically address common accessibility issues can accelerate progress when it comes to making sites more accessible. Automated remediation allows teams to focus on complex accessibility issues rather than spending time on large numbers of common, repetitive issues."

Jon Avila

Chief Accessibility Officer,
Level Access

Digital accessibility delivers business results

Professionals continue to connect digital accessibility to a broad range of positive business outcomes for their organizations, from enhanced user experience and stronger brand reputation to increased revenue.

As was the case in 2023, improved user experience is the most widely reported benefit of digital accessibility, with 89% of respondents reporting better performance in this area due to their digital accessibility efforts. Improved customer satisfaction follows, with 87% of organizations attributing positive customer satisfaction to digital accessibility. Additionally, 75% of respondents say digital accessibility has contributed to improved revenue. This figure marks a substantial increase from 61% in 2023, suggesting organizations may be increasingly aware of the business benefits of accessibility.

Top five business outcomes positively impacted by digital accessibility

Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who report that digital accessibility has contributed to improvements in the specified business outcome.

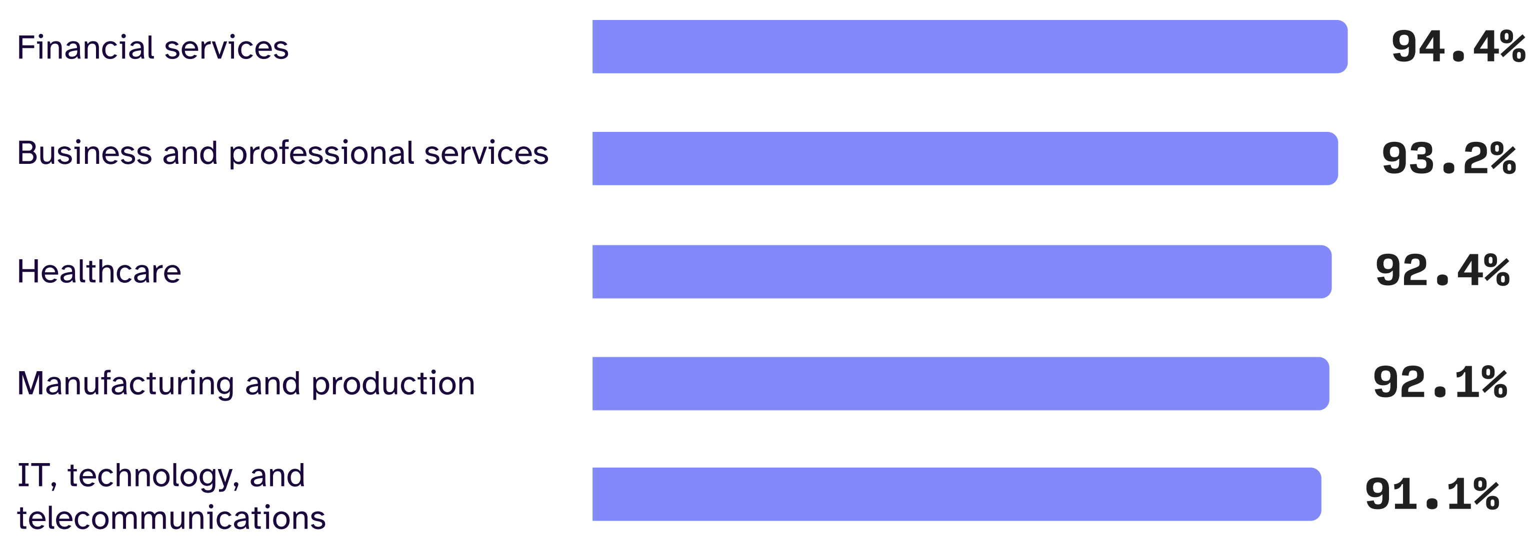
Accessibility is a competitive advantage

Consistent with our 2023 findings, the vast majority of respondents (89%) consider digital accessibility a competitive advantage for their organizations. This perspective is shared by those at both B2C and B2B or B2G organizations, but slightly more common in the B2B / B2G space: 88% of respondents at B2B / B2G organizations, and 91% of those that operate in both a B2B / B2G and B2C capacity, feel digital accessibility is a competitive advantage, compared to 84% of B2C organizations.

Respondents working in certain industries, such as financial services and business and professional services, are particularly likely to say digital accessibility puts their organization at an advantage: 94% of respondents in financial services, and 93% of those in business and professional services, agree with this statement.

Among financial services organizations, this opinion may be attributed to the industry's highly regulated nature: Organizations may understand compliance with legal mandates governing accessibility to be a business imperative. Meanwhile, it's likely that business and professional services organizations face pressure from clients to meet accessibility requirements.

In which industries are respondents most likely to consider digital accessibility a competitive advantage?



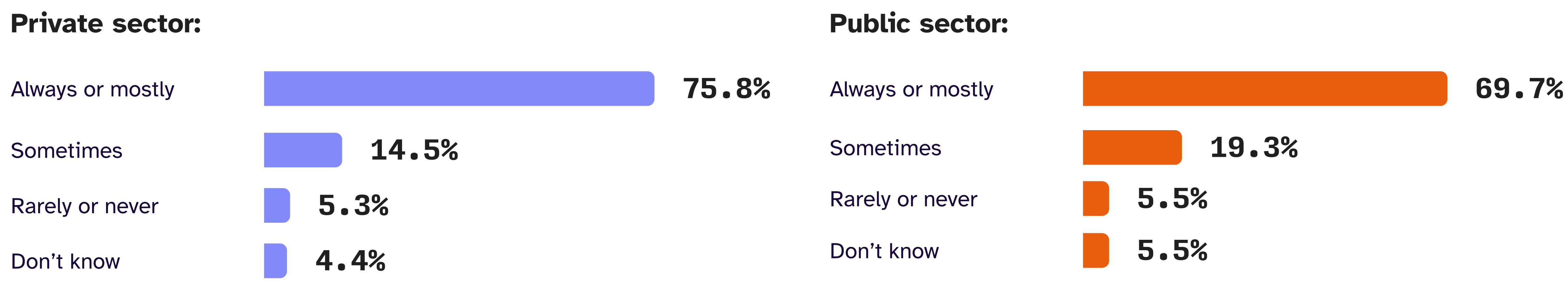
Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who consider digital accessibility a competitive advantage for their organization.

Accessibility is increasingly required in digital product procurement.

The fact that B2B / B2G organizations, in particular, consider digital accessibility a competitive advantage is no surprise given that more organizations are prioritizing digital accessibility in product procurement. Nearly three quarters (74%) of all respondents to our 2024 survey, and 81% of senior leaders, say their organization requires proof of digital accessibility most or all the time when purchasing digital products. These figures represent a notable increase from 2023, when 58% of respondents, and 73% of senior leaders, said accessibility was a procurement requirement.

Notably, accessibility is not only a procurement requirement in the public sector—where U.S. federal government organizations and many public entities in Europe have long had to meet strict compliance requirements for third-party products—but also among private-sector businesses. Although respondents at public-sector organizations are slightly more likely to say digital accessibility is a procurement requirement all of the time, those at private-sector organizations are more likely to indicate it's a requirement most of the time.

Is proof of accessibility required when your organization purchases digital products?



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who selected this option.

The overall increase in organizations requiring accessibility in procurement may be partly attributable to the tightening regulatory landscape. Recent regulations—including the EAA and new rulemaking under Title II of the ADA—require that a wider range of organizations ensure the accessibility of third-party digital products. Because the EAA, in particular, applies to private businesses operating in Europe, this regulation may partly explain the large number of private-sector organizations prioritizing accessibility in procurement.

Additionally, it's clear that organizations continue to prioritize user experience, with improving usability remaining the number one reason organizations sustain their digital accessibility efforts. Ensuring that third-party products are accessible is critical to delivering an inclusive experience for all users.

"Too often, organizations hear the word 'accessibility' and think about 'compliance' for an amorphous group of 'disabled people.' As a blind screen-reader user who has hired and led teams at B2B software-as-a-service (SaaS) companies, I wish those who made software would think about my needs as a paying user of their tools."

Corbb O'Connor

Director of Accessibility Advocacy,
Level Access

Mature digital accessibility programs drive business.

Respondents at organizations with established accessibility governance practices (encompassing a policy, dedicated budget, and accountable party)—a key indicator of maturity—are especially likely to consider digital accessibility a competitive advantage. Nearly all (96%) respondents at organizations with all three elements of governance believe it's an advantage, relative to 78% at those with some—but not all—of these elements.

Additionally, respondents at organizations with strong governance tend to report positive business outcomes associated with accessibility in higher numbers than those at other organizations.

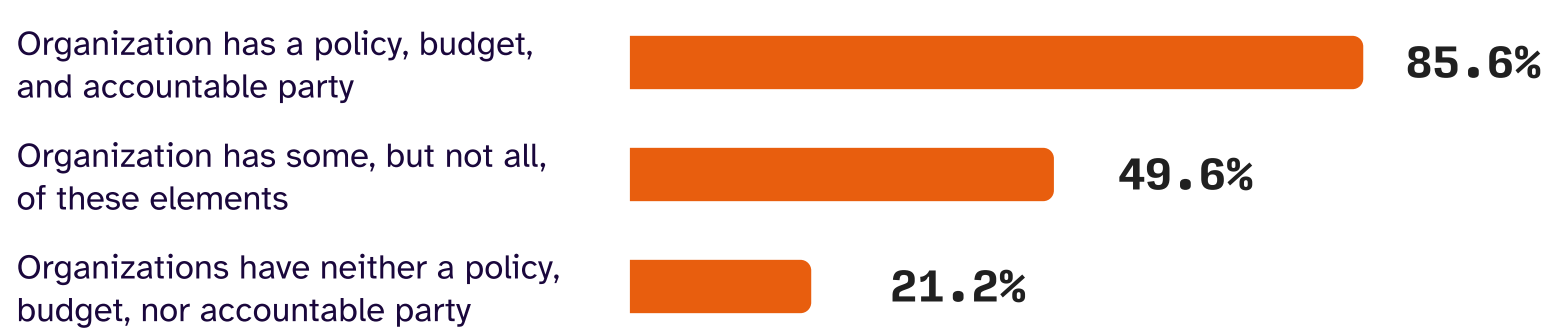
Percentage of respondents who report improvements in key business objectives, relative to accessibility governance practices

User experience improvements

Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who indicate that digital accessibility has contributed to improvements in user experience for their organization.

Percentage of respondents who report improvements in key business objectives, relative to accessibility governance practices

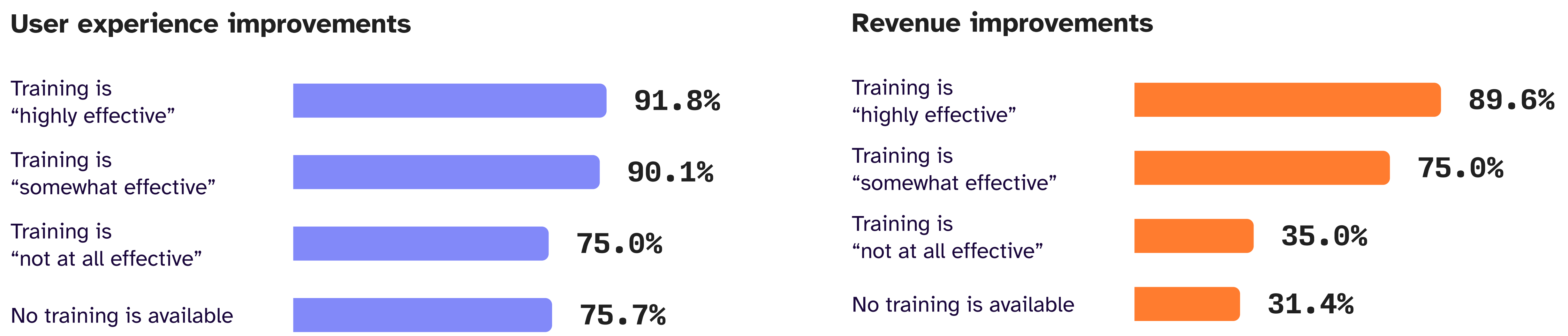
Revenue improvements



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who indicate that digital accessibility has contributed to improvements in revenue for their organization.

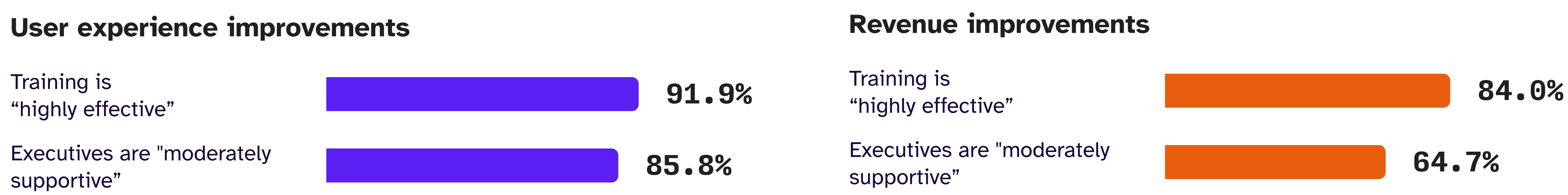
Training and executive support, also important factors in maturity, similarly corresponded with more widely reported progress toward key business objectives as a result of accessibility.

Percentage of respondents who report improvements in key business objectives, relative to availability and quality of accessibility training



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who indicate that digital accessibility has contributed to improvements in this business objective for their organization.

Percentage of respondents who report improvements in key business objectives, relative to level of executive support for accessibility



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who indicate that digital accessibility has contributed to improvements in this business objective for their organization.

The state of digital accessibility in Europe

While the concentration of private litigation surrounding digital accessibility in the U.S. may lead some to speculate that the European market is less mature than the U.S. market when it comes to accessibility, our findings from U.K. and EU-based organizations indicate otherwise. Organizations in Europe are not only aware of the need to prioritize digital accessibility but also the need to establish robust programs to deliver accessible experiences to users.

Accessibility governance is strong within European organizations.

In Europe, 86% of respondents say their organizations have a digital accessibility policy, and 82% have all three pillars of governance—a policy, dedicated budget, and accountable party—in place. Organizations in France appear to have the strongest governance practices, with 89% of respondents saying their employers meet all three criteria.

Accessibility governance across European countries

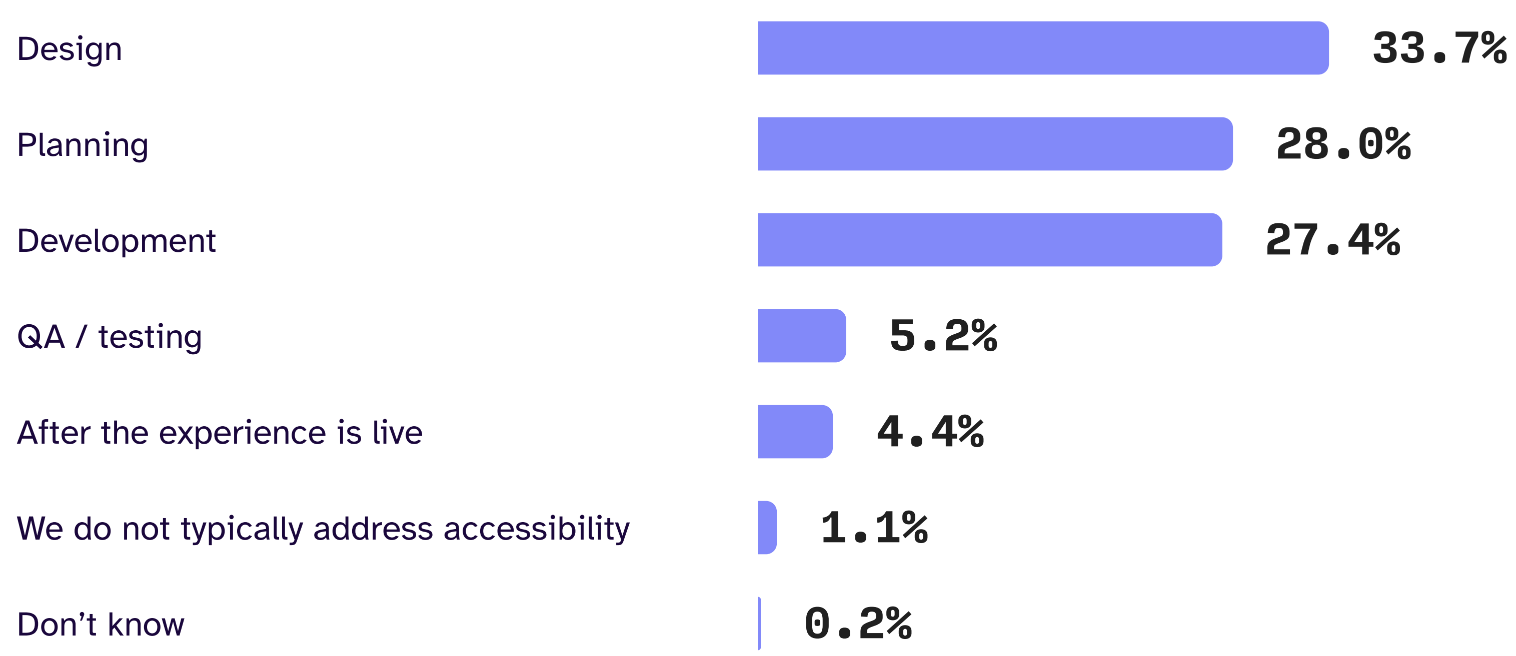
Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who say their organization has an accessibility policy, dedicated budget, and accountable party

Executives at European organizations are generally supportive of digital accessibility efforts, and employees have access to training resources. More than six in 10 (62%) respondents in Europe say executives are “highly supportive” of their digital accessibility efforts, and 36% say executives are “moderately supportive.” Additionally, nearly all (97%) of respondents say some form of accessibility training is available at their organization, with 51% considering this training “highly effective.”

European organizations are addressing accessibility proactively.

As is the case in the U.S., U.K. and EU organizations have broadly adopted a proactive approach to digital accessibility, with 62% of respondents saying their organizations start addressing accessibility in either planning or design.

When do organizations in Europe begin addressing digital accessibility?



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who indicate their organization begins addressing digital accessibility during this phase of digital experience creation.

Also consistent with U.S. data, organizations in Europe are more likely to approach digital accessibility proactively when accountability sits within the team responsible for DEI, relative to a technical or legal team. Among respondents at organizations where DEI teams own accessibility, 40% say they begin addressing accessibility in planning—compared to 17% of those at organizations where technology teams own accessibility, and 25% of those at organizations where legal or compliance teams own accessibility.

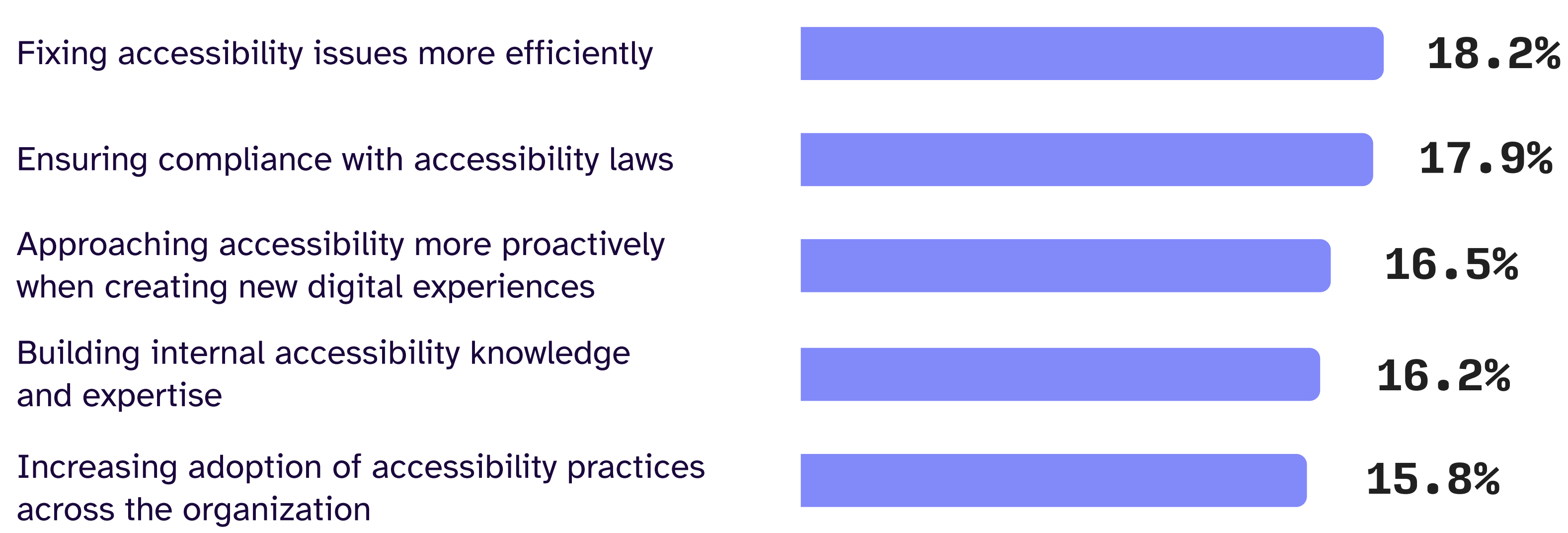
Across most nations, organizations are more likely to begin addressing digital accessibility in design than at other points in the digital experience creation life cycle. However, survey results suggest that organizations in Germany are particularly proactive: Four in 10 (40%) respondents based in Germany say their organizations start addressing digital accessibility in planning.

Meanwhile, Italy is the only nation where respondents are most likely to indicate that their organizations begin addressing digital accessibility in development, with 39% saying accessibility work starts during this phase. This trend may be partly attributed to the fact that Italy was also the only country in which accessibility was more likely to be owned by a technology team than the team responsible for DEI, as well as Italian organizations' comparatively less mature governance practices.

Efficiency and regulatory compliance are top priorities for European teams.

When asked about their top priorities with regard to improving digital accessibility, respondents in Europe are roughly equally likely to rank "fixing digital accessibility issues more efficiently" and "compliance with digital accessibility laws" at the top of their lists—findings that might be informed by organizations' efforts to meet the June 2025 EAA compliance deadline.

Top five digital accessibility priorities for organizations in Europe

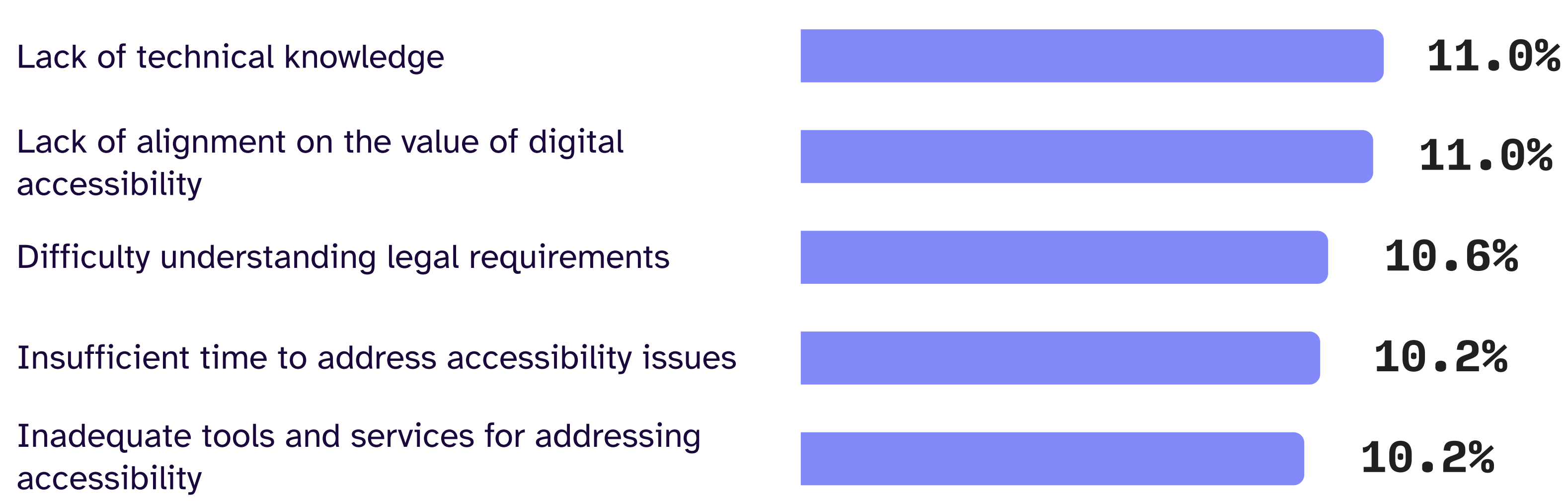


Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who rank this item as their top priority with regard to improving digital accessibility at their organizations.

European accessibility programs are limited by a lack of knowledge and alignment.

European organizations' greatest barriers to progress tended to revolve around lack of internal knowledge and alignment. Given the widespread availability of training reported by respondents, further research may be needed to probe the reason for these knowledge gaps: It's possible that the education currently available to teams has not yet caught up to evolving technical standards and regulatory requirements, or that teams do not have sufficient access to guidance from certified accessibility professionals.

Top five digital accessibility challenges for organizations in Europe



Note: Percentage figures refer to the proportion of respondents who rank this item as the top challenge facing their digital accessibility programs.

Conclusion and action items

The findings from our 2024 survey underscore the fact that digital accessibility is a legal and business imperative for organizations today and leads to better business outcomes. In both the U.S. and Europe, organizations are not only investing in digital accessibility, but establishing robust programs supported by executive leadership. While challenges remain—particularly surrounding the management of accessibility across multiple digital experiences—organizations that establish strong governance practices and proactively integrate accessibility into the creation of new product and content are well-positioned to navigate these difficulties and sustain success.

Establish a governance framework:

Respondents at organizations with an accessibility policy, a dedicated accessibility budget, and an accountable party are twice as likely to be “very confident” in the accessibility of their primary digital experiences as those with less mature governance practices. They are also more likely to report a host of business benefits, including reduced legal risk and improved user experience, due to digital accessibility. By creating a policy, securing resources, and clarifying responsibilities, organizations can lay a strong foundation for progress.

Start addressing accessibility as early as possible in digital experience creation:

Respondents whose teams begin incorporating digital accessibility in planning or design are more than 60% more likely to say digital accessibility contributed to improved revenue for their organizations than those whose teams wait to address issues until after digital experiences are live. When creating new digital products and content, work to incorporate accessibility into the earliest stages of the process.

Implement high-quality training and education:

Professionals with access to “highly effective” digital accessibility training are more likely to say their organizations approach accessibility proactively than those whose employers offer “somewhat effective,” ineffective, or “no” training. Program leaders should not only implement accessibility training, but also validate that the training they’re providing is thorough and relevant for teams across their organization. Hiring staff who are certified accessibility professionals will also help build your organization’s internal expertise.

Invest in tools for monitoring portfolio-wide accessibility:

Respondents tended to be far more confident in the accessibility of their primary digital experiences, such as their websites, than other external and internal experiences, and indicated that they struggled to manage accessibility across multiple assets. Accessibility platforms with program management capabilities can help organizations track accessibility across large digital portfolios, making it easier to provide a consistent user experience across digital touchpoints.

Set up channels for regular communication about accessibility progress:

Fewer than half of respondents say their organizations communicate clearly and frequently about digital accessibility, and senior leaders and practitioners were misaligned about the quality of accessibility-related communication. Because siloed or infrequent communication can lead to resourcing gaps, it’s crucial for program leaders to establish channels for sharing accessibility progress updates and requesting support with challenges.

About Level Access

After more than 25 years as a dedicated partner to organizations of all sizes, across industries, Level Access understands the challenges that organizations face when adopting and scaling their digital accessibility practices. Level Access's unified solution combines advanced technology with the market's deepest bench of expertise, empowering organizations to confidently navigate these challenges and ensure their digital experiences are accessible to all.

The Level Access Platform provides a single source of truth for tracking, managing, and reporting on accessibility across your digital portfolio, serving as a central system of record for decentralized workflows. Additionally, Level Access's tools for practitioners involved in the software or product development life cycle seamlessly integrate with the platforms teams are already using, making it easy for experience creators to proactively embed accessibility in their day-to-day work.

Beyond technology, Level Access's expert managed services include manual testing (with use case testing by people with disabilities), detailed Design Evaluations, demand letter review, and support with program management. And with on-demand role-specific training through the Level Access Academy, it's easy to equip every team with the skills they need to adopt an effective, sustainable approach to accessibility.

To learn more, visit LevelAccess.com.

Info@levelaccess.com

G3ict The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs

IAAP International Association of Accessibility Professionals

The Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (G3ict) is a nonprofit organization formed by leading industries, disability advocacy groups, and public organizations in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to address the inequality and lack of accessible products and services for persons with disabilities. For more information about G3ict, please visit G3ict.org.

The International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP), a division of G3ict, has a mission to define, promote, improve, and diversify the accessibility profession globally. IAAP equips organizations to build a skilled workforce and develop accessibility maturity by providing certifications, professional education, solution-based tools, and subject matter expertise.

For more information about IAAP, visit AccessibilityAssociation.org

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