Managing Expectations with AI and Accessibility

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WebAIM
web accessibility in mind

Disclosure

I use AI, just not all the time

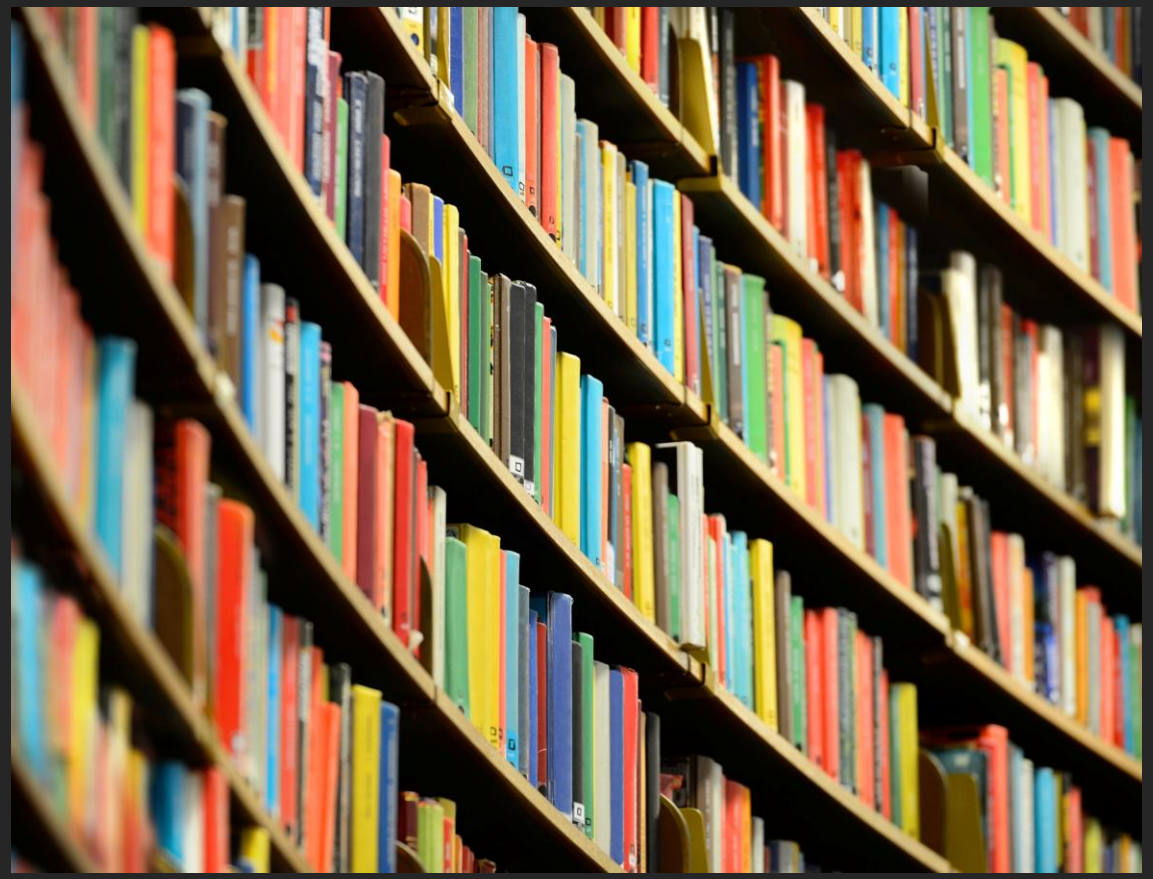
- ChatGPT
- Microsoft Copilot
- Grammarly, actually all the time
- Sometimes, but rarely, Claude

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About AI in General

- These products aren’t actually intelligent
  - No abstract thought or learned experience
  - Calling them that can make people love or hate them more

Very Booksmart, Though



- The Large Language Model (LLM) on the backend
  - Huge (proprietary) datasets
  - Complex structures and algorithms to find and report information back
  - Datasets have some gaps…

A Prompt

- “As a percentage, how much of your dataset includes information about web or digital accessibility?”
  - “My best estimate is that considerably less than 1% of my training data specifically addresses web or digital accessibility.” –GPT
  - Previous inquiries reported **.1-.5 of 1%**

GPT got Honest

- “…I may have substantial knowledge of WCAG success criteria, but still make mistakes interpreting normative requirements, especially where conformance depends on subtle distinctions between normative language, informative guidance, and established implementation practices.”

Implications and Thoughts

- Potentially problematic for those new to accessibility
- Likely incorrect information in the datasets
  - Little to no transparency about curation of information
- Enough conformance confusion as it is

On Prompting…

- We don’t directly change the LLM
  - Our prompting may be used to improve it
- Conversations within an AI are self-contained
  - Even a separate conversation won’t look at a previous one
  - Revisiting a conversation can be useful
- Building a skill allows for repeated, specific processes

On Advertising

- AI uses the usual channels, plus…
  - Very. Personal. Advertising.
    - Tries to increase trust
    - …to increase revenue…
    - …from you…
- More trust can lessen your involvement



AI in Action

EXPERIMENTATION AND WALKTHROUGHS

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Wrapping Up: Alt Text

- GPT did better than anticipated
- I'd still rewrite some of it
- Watch for content duplication
  - And resulting bloat
- Align your strategy for alt with the general content strategy
  - No AI in content authoring? No AI with alt.

Wrapping Up: Heading Correction

- Swings and misses
- On individual docs, you don’t need the overhead of AI

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Ending on A High Note: Promise of AI

- Assumptions
  - You build the guardrails
    - Well informed prompts
    - Good reference material
    - Your own experience and expertise

AI Skills and Scaling

- Using skills helps scale efforts up
- Potential as a first pass with bulk document remediation
  - You're still the necessary expert
  - More likely to get the return on investment
  - More likely to justify the extra overhead

More on Scaling

- Start with one document to build AI skills and prompts
- Group documents with similar structure
  - Use a reference document
- Also helpful with repetitive tasks
  - EG, PDF remediation after export from MS Office

General Advice

- Ask AI to ask you questions when it gets stumped
- Refer to things like Northeastern University's Accessibility Prompts
  - Mileage will still vary
- Ask AI what references might help
- Research good prompting

Suggested Reference Points

- WebAIM.org
- WCAG 2.2 Understanding docs
- World Wide Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative
- ARIA Authoring Practices Guide

What would you like to ask?

QUESTIONS

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Thank You!

Services

- Training
- Evaluation
- Consultation

Resources

- E-mail discussion list
- Monthly newsletter
- Tutorials, articles, and resources
- Blog

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