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With Julia Gurney, eye square

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On November 28, a webinar by eye square will shed light on digital accessibility in UX research. Julia Gurney, Senior UX Researcher and Accessibility Lead, shares her insights and motivations in advance.

**“Our mission is to understand user experience holistically and in a diverse way.”**

**\_Julia Gurney**

**UX Senior Research Consultant and Head of Accessibility**

Your webinar on November 28 will focus on the importance of research into digital accessibility. Fortunately, it is becoming increasingly important that people with disabilities, whether visual, auditory, motor, speech, or cognitive impairments—have the same access to digital products as everyone else.

## **How can this be achieved?**

Achieving digital accessibility requires commitment, education, and ongoing improvement. There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution, as each company's goals and user needs are unique, but several foundational strategies can set any organization on the right path.

- 1. Define clear objectives: Start by identifying your specific accessibility goals and which standards you'll follow, like WCAG 2.1. This clarity helps create a tailored roadmap.**



2. **Embed accessibility in your culture:** Ensure teams are trained to understand and prioritize accessibility, empowering them to build inclusivity into products from the start.
3. **Conduct comprehensive testing:** At Eye Square, we emphasize mixed-method accessibility testing. Automated tools catch basic errors, but only real user feedback through interviews and usability testing provides deep insights into usability for diverse users.
4. **Iterate continuously:** Accessibility isn't a one-time project; it should be part of every update to keep products accessible over time.

With these steps, companies can offer more inclusive digital experiences to all users.

## What does accessibility testing mean?

Accessibility testing assesses whether digital products are usable by people with a range of disabilities. This can involve:

- **Automated testing:** Tools that check for common accessibility errors, like contrast or missing alt text.
- **Real user testing:** User-based testing allows real users with disabilities to provide feedback which is a key pillar for us at eye square.

At eye square, we can use a mixed-methods approach to capture both visible and hidden accessibility barriers, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of a product's accessibility.

## The European Accessibility Act (EAA) requires companies to comply with digital accessibility by June 28, 2025. What is the best way for companies that have not yet implemented this to take action?

There are many excellent experts who have a much deeper understanding of the intricate details of the law than I do, but here are a few key takeaways that have proven helpful for me.



It's important to remember that the EAA can vary for different companies, depending on their location within the EU and the specific products or services they offer.

Here are some tips I think companies should consider:

1. **Understand the legal requirements:** Review the EAA's documents on general accessibility, services, and products to know what's required.
2. **Analyze and map features:** Conduct a gap analysis to see where your product stands relative to the EAA standards.
3. **Plan and embed accessibility for the long term:** Create a compliance plan with milestones and adopt a "Design for All" approach to support ongoing improvements.
4. **Implement Inclusive design and continuous testing:** Ensure accessibility becomes part of the development cycle to stay compliant as products evolve.

## How can eye square help companies?

eye square offers tailored research and testing solutions that address each client's unique needs, including user testing with people with disabilities from diverse target groups. We help companies gain the insights necessary to create accessible products that meet legal requirements and deliver exceptional experiences for all users. Accessibility testing not only supports people with disabilities but also enhances usability for everyone, creating products that are intuitive, inclusive, and widely accessible.

## Why is accessibility so important to eye square, and I'm sure to you personally?

At eye square, accessibility is fundamental to our mission of understanding diverse user experiences. We believe everyone deserves equal access to digital products, and inclusivity is essential for a fair society. Personally, I'm passionate about ensuring that technology empowers all users, regardless of ability. Whether we realize it or not, each of us likely knows someone with a disability, and I am dedicated to helping everyone experience digital products equally. Through my work, I hope to foster a digital world where inclusiveness is the rule, not the exception.



## About Julia Gurney, Senior Research Consultant UX & Accessibility Lead



Julia Gurney is a Senior UX Researcher and Accessibility Lead at eye square. With a social science background and experience from the healthcare world, Gurney brings a unique perspective to the UX space. Gurney has worked in research for half a decade, with the last 3 years spent leading accessibility research studies for Fortune 100 companies. In her role at eye square, she leads digital accessibility research, dedicated to the goal of giving every user a voice. Her efforts focus on turning the ideal of 'access for all' into everyday practice, thereby helping brands keep their promise to every customer.