



Digital Web Services Network

Bringing together digital product managers, designers, and engineers.

DWSN Quarterly Forum

Thursday, April 16, 2026

cdt.ca.gov/dwsn



California Department of
Technology

Digital Web Services Network

- Welcome to the DWSN forum, we will begin shortly.
- For the best experience, please use your computer to join the meeting.
- Mute your audio.
- Turn off your video.
- Use the raise hand button or the meeting chat for comments and questions.



CDT Office of Digital Services

Opening Remarks

Greg Duncan, Web Services Manager

DWSN Forum Agenda

- Opening Remarks Greg Duncan (CDT) (5 minutes)
- User Testing of Chat Designs Elizabeth Leonard and Elizabeth Tran (SCIF) (30 – 45 minutes)
- CAWeb Publishing Roadmap Harvey Dhillon (CDT) (10 – 15 minutes)
- What's new in Web Accessibility Compliance for 2026 Tiffany Wilson (CDT) (10 – 15 minutes)
- Closing Remarks Greg Duncan (CDT) (5 minutes)



SCIF Digital Experience Team

User Testing of Chat Designs

Elizabeth Leonard, UX Designer, Digital Experience

Elizabeth Tran, CX Data Researcher, Customer Experience

*State Compensation Insurance Fund's
Customer Experience &
Digital Experience Collaboration*

Our Intro to User Testing of Chat Designs

Date: April 2026

by [Elizabeth Tran](#), CX Researcher
and [Elizabeth Leonard](#), UX Designer



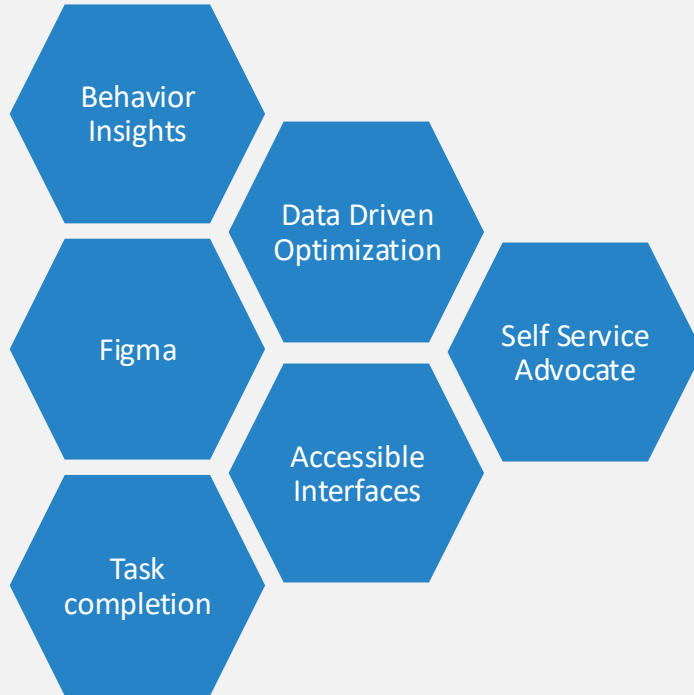
Agenda

- Maximizing partnerships
 - Getting Customer Experience (CX) and Digital Experience (DX) aligned
 - Preparing for the test
- Making the prototypes
 - Standardizing the files
 - Limitations of Figma prototypes
- Findings and recommendations
 - Getting to actionable data
 - Present the findings
- Lessons Learned
 - Our new practice
 - Our collective impact

Maximizing Partnerships

Partnership = Better Testing, Better Experiences

Digital Experience



- Stayed Flexible
- Share and Explore Ideas
- Respect of Expertise
- Segment Work Tasks

Tested, Trusted, Customer- Ready Experiences



Customer Experience

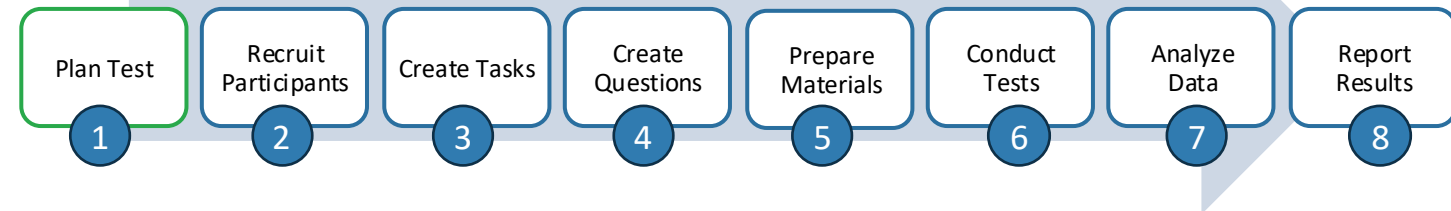
Usability Testing Framework

Preparation for User Testing

- Start with the end in mind
- Concise goals and hypothesis questions
- Imagine statement to set context
- Diversify data with questions and task
- Leverage Industry Experts

Customer Research Canvas | Evaluate | Version 1

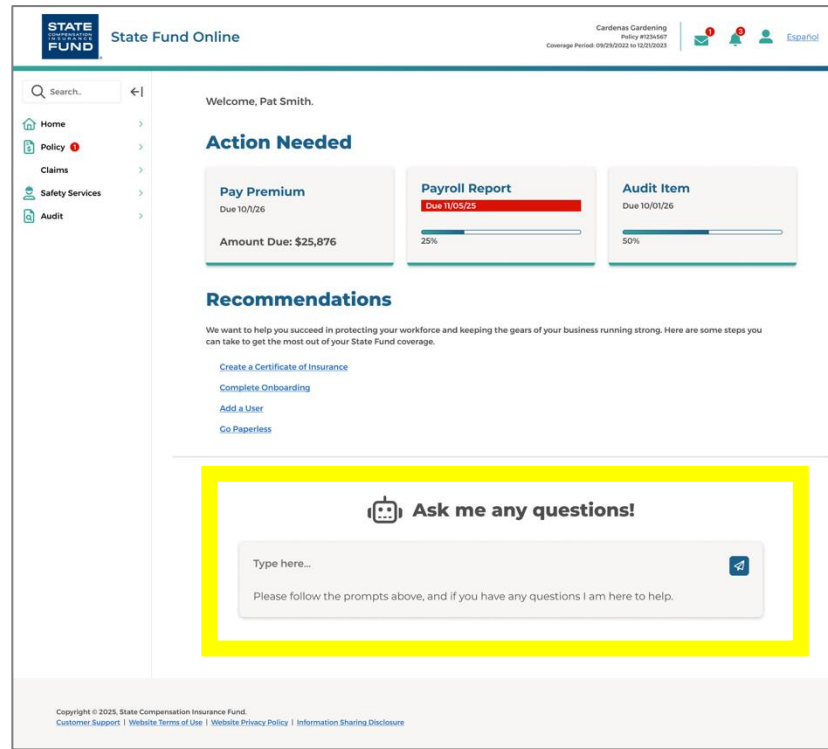
Business Context	Executive Sponsor	Facilitators and SMEs Business Leaders	Target Start and Delivery Date
<p>Background: Separate portal redesign project underway and we want to ensure we develop an effective, efficient and data driven framework for conducting user testing</p> <p>Purpose:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establish repeatable best practices to conduct usability testing.2. Example Scenario: Create a user driven digital experience that reduces friction, improves engagement, and guides future design decisions across the broader digital ecosystem. <p>Without user feedback, we may invest into a design that may not reflect real user behaviors, which could impede digital adoption.</p>			
<p>Goals and Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establish Usability Testing Best Practices<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Efficient and Effective Framework2. UI Experience Project (example scenario) <i>Optimize the User Digital Journey</i> Assess multiple navigation and layout mockups to determine most intuitive design<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver on additional EngagementGather feedback on visual preferences and interactive elements to guide micro-level design decisions<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify usability pain points and challenges• Enable User Driven DesignUse structured insights from users to inform decision ensuring the final experience reflects real user behavior and preferences <p>Measure performance metrics between designs and preferences</p>	<p>Test Approach</p> <p>Run 2 different User Test with Dry-Run</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Test 1 will compare UI experience test between 4 designs (4 designs added left chat - buttons & text, chat only, and big button turbo tax)2. Test 2: Micro preference testing of chat placement & engagement	<p>In and out of scope</p> <p>In: UI (buttons & text, chat only, and big button turbo tax, Left chat and UI (added later)) Chat placement Out: Verbiage placement, language <i>scrability</i>, accessibility, and preference scenarios outside of in scope, device and OS type, returning vs. new user type</p>	<p>User Testing Approach and Analyzing</p> <p>Recruitment: Blind Users Participants: No restrictions (Ask about online capabilities) Think out loud and questions Hardware: User Testing 10 Testers per Test</p>



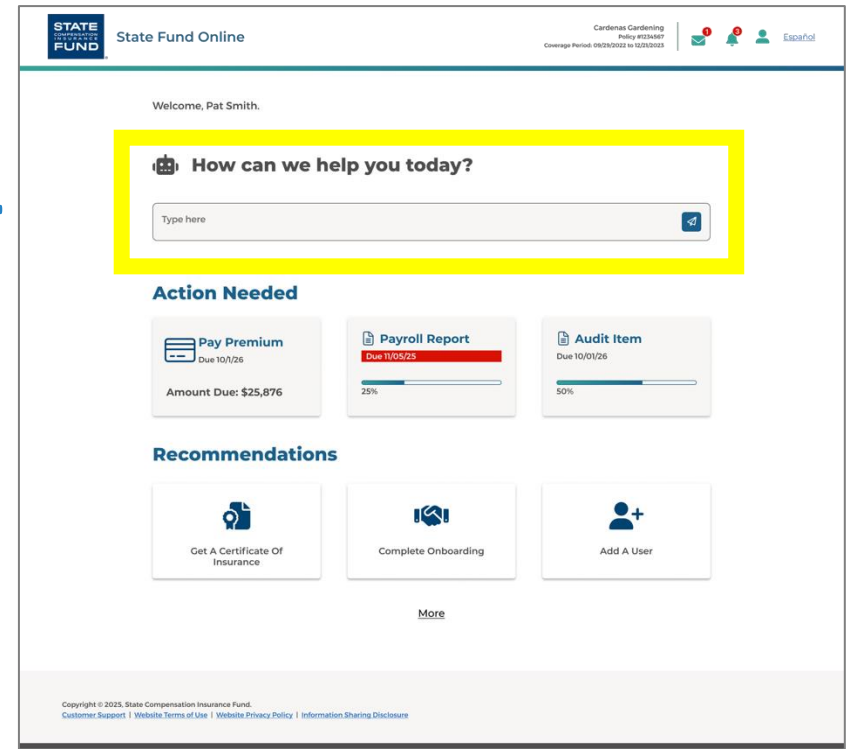
Making the Prototypes

Four Design Concepts

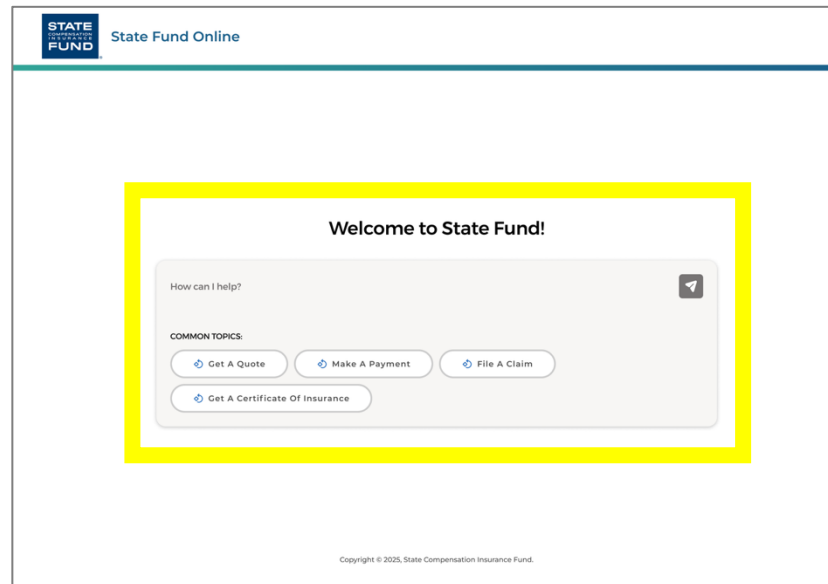
Bottom Chat



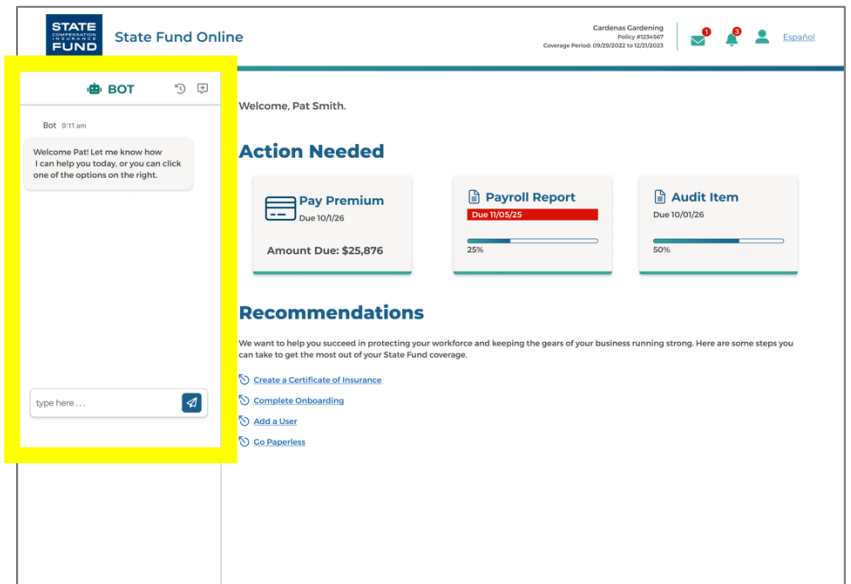
Top Chat



All Chat



Left Chat



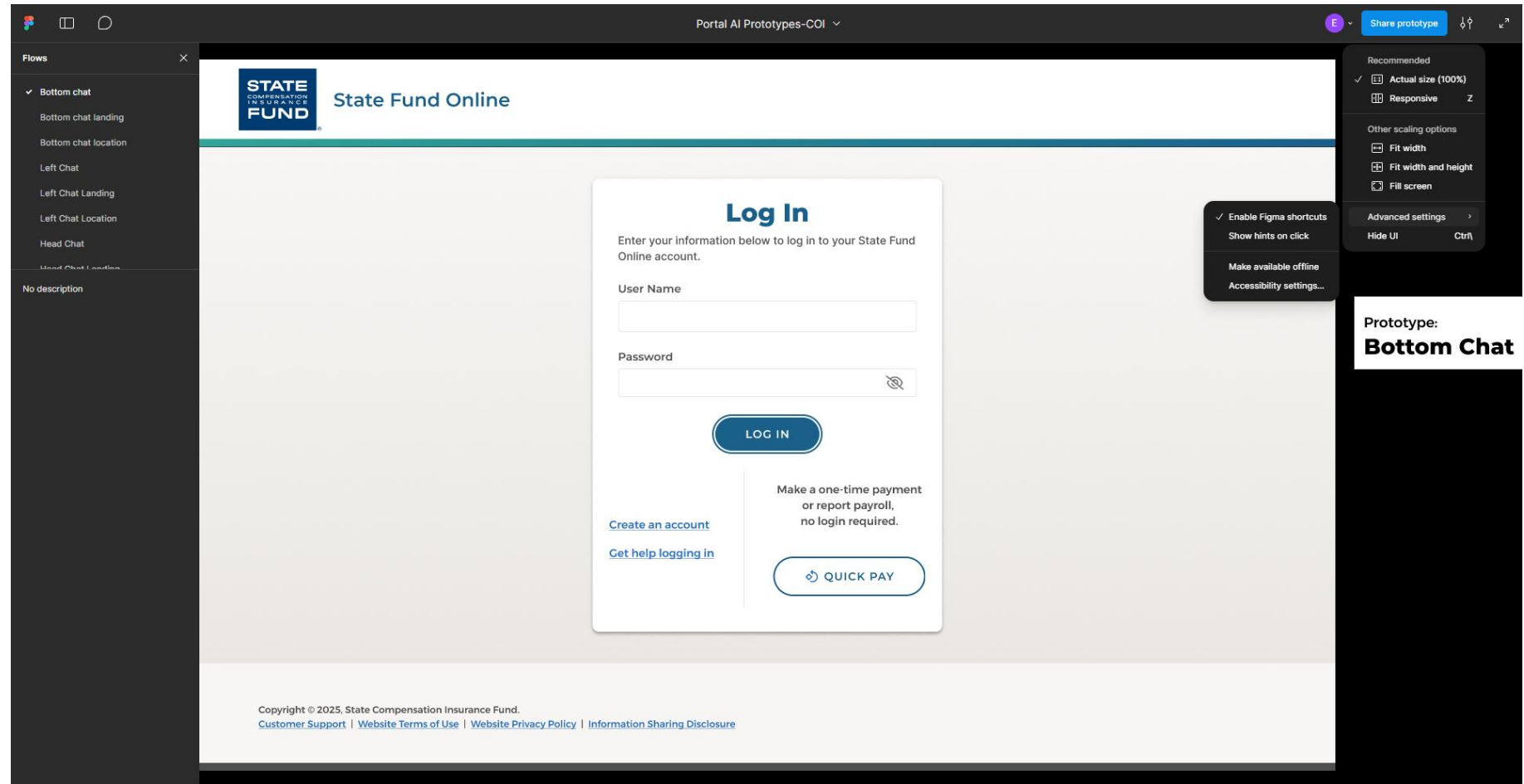
Standardizing the Prototypes

- User task options
- Description copy
- User contact info
- Number of task steps



Prototype Performance

- Limit the number of screens
- Flatten layers where you can
- Curate distractions
- Name & label the designs



Figma Prototype Limitations

- Design:
 - Tester can't type in fields
- Make:
 - No analytics tools
 - Loose fidelity in hover and active states

Bot 9:11 am

To get started, can you tell me if any of these are true?

- This certificate is for a bid.
- This certificate is for the DMV or CSLB.

type here ...



Bot 9:11 am

To get started, can you tell me if any of these are true?

- This certificate is for a bid.
- This certificate is for the DMV or CSLB.

It is for a bid.



Test 4 Designs Across 3 Campaigns

1

Intuitive Interface

Which user interface is the most intuitive to navigate?

2

Chat Can Help

Do users think that chat can help them beyond the task at hand?

3

Engagement Preference

How do users prefer to enter in information?

Making a Test in UserTesting.com

Session Types

- Unmoderated: Facilitator not present; session is recorded
- Think-aloud: Records face, screen, and audio
- Interaction tests: Record screen and clicks only

Test Creation

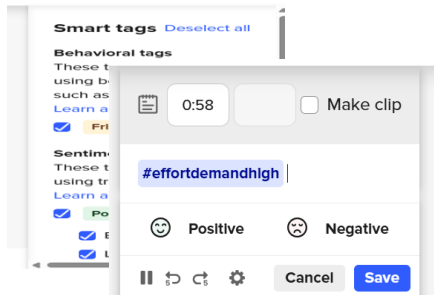
- Make sure test tasks match the prototype
- Add a tester screening question
- Number instructions within each task to guide testers step-by-step
- Remind testers to expand their browser window for an accurate view



Getting to Findings and Recommendations

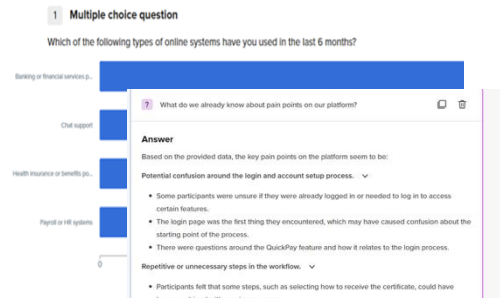
Getting Actionable Data

PREPARE DATA



- Review Recordings
- Use Tags & Built in sentiments tagging
- Use Video clips

IDENTIFY THEMES



- AI for directional pain points and summary
- Explore reports

ORGANIZE FINDINGS



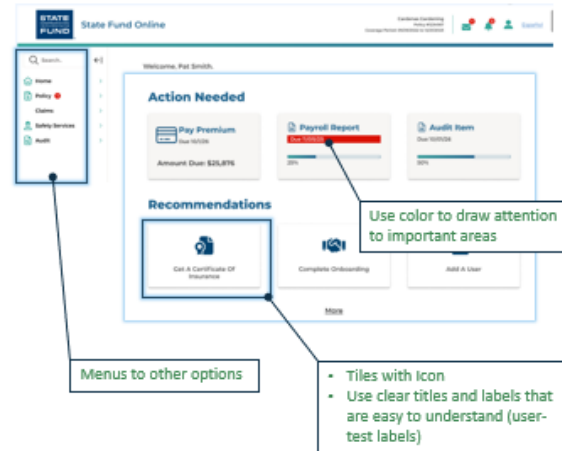
- Establish a **Simple** scoring model and definitions
- Insights across the Customer Journey

IDENTIFY PATTERNS



- Create Data Visuals
- Correlate qualitative and quantitative data

Best Practices | Sharing Findings for UX Teams



Must have

- Clear chat purpose and intent (search or chat)
- Set user expectations: use cues to explain what the chat can help with and when to use it.
- Optional chat, not forced & less intrusive

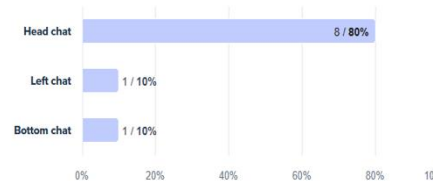
Nice to have

- Side-by-side (chat) view

- Scannable Visuals
- Charts & Data from User Testing
- Prioritization at a feature level
- Insights on initial goals along with prioritization

12. Which chat location do you prefer to interact with for addressing concerns or questions?

Multiple choice · 10 participants



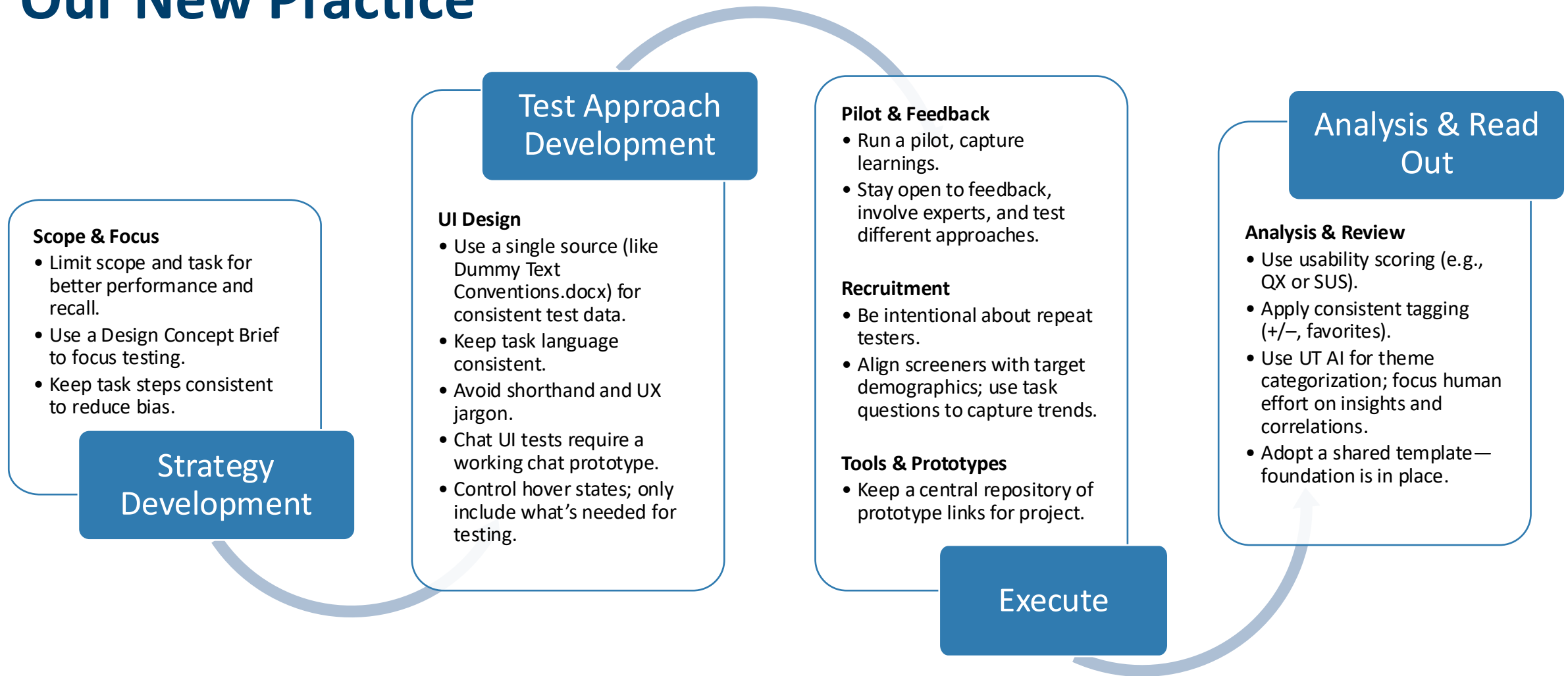
Recommendation Summary of 3 Campaigns 👍 Recommended Priority

Validate Concepts

1 Intuitive UI Experience 👍	2 Chat Help	3 Engagement Preference (Enter)
<p>Insight: Users preferred elements in each design and did not prefer one complete design over the other.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate initial non-chat related findings and rerun usability test on UI only (not w/chat and w/working UI), set usability score benchmark. • Establish design test practices for consistency. 	<p>Insight: Users were unclear if the chat was a search tool and its intrusive design led to accidental selections. While some found potential typing burdensome, most valued the chat for complex tasks and appreciated its ability to take action.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define Chat functionality & purpose (search tool or a conversational assistant) • Use working model of chat for usability testing • Incorporate Chat Help UI findings on slide 17 	<p>Insight: Insights were too similar each other to gather preference, unable to capture engagement preference (actionable) feedback from text. We were able to gather suggestions for entering information from campaign 1.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate findings on Engagement Preference on slide 14 initial and re-run usability test with working UI • Consider testing different types of information sources of text address to obtain a for data for various scenarios.

Lessons Learned

Our New Practice



Our Collective Impact

- User Testing Standard Practice
- Findings have been echoed across other projects by leadership
- Team collaboration projects: CX/DX



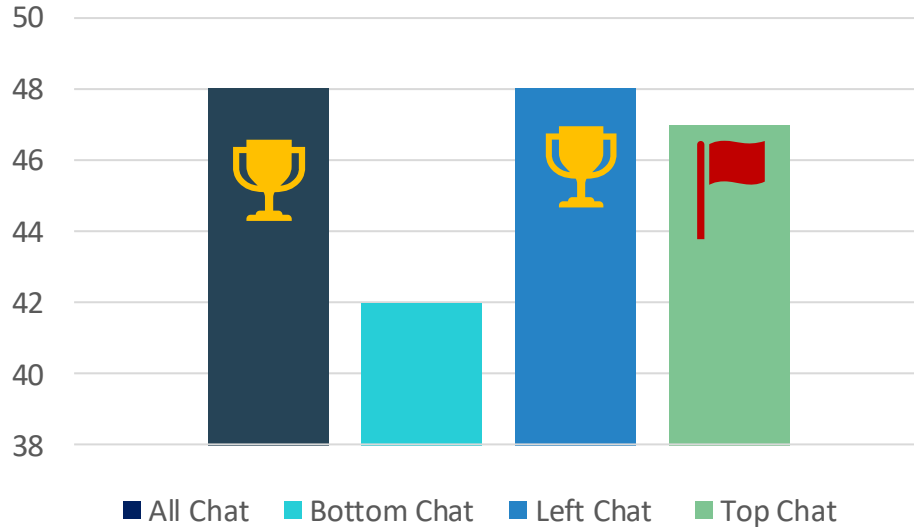


Questions?

Appendix

Initial Findings: Campaign 1

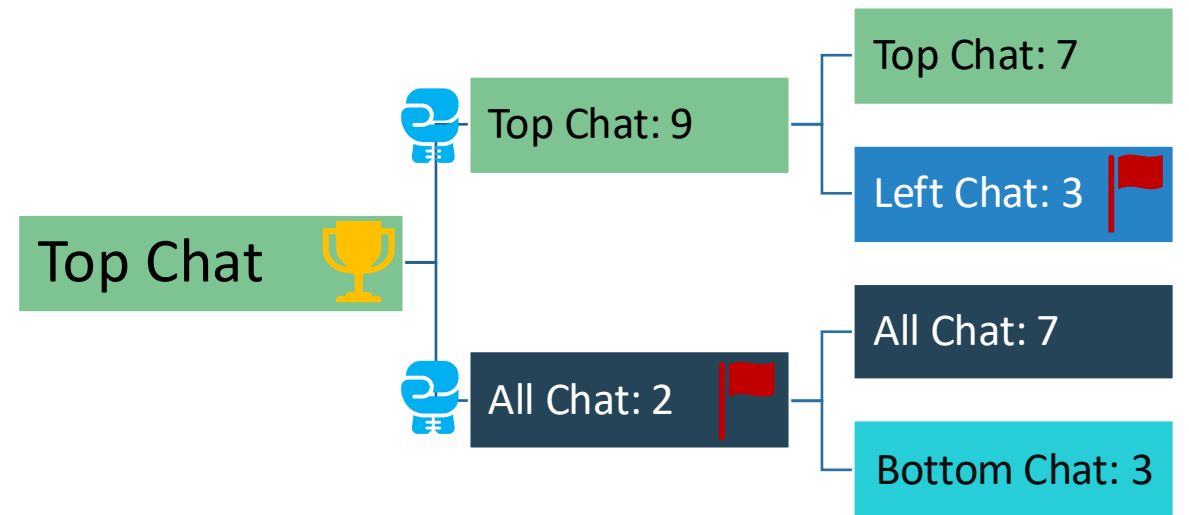
Rating: How easy was the activity?



Observation:

Users rated All Chat and Left Chat as easier to use; but Top Chat won in terms of UI preference votes.

Votes: Which website do you prefer?



Key Interpretation:

Users preferred different aspects of each UI, such as auto fill or tiles with big icons, but found length of steps in Top Chat cumbersome.



CDT Office of Digital Services

CAWeb Publishing Roadmap

Harvey Dhillon, Web Consultant

Agenda

- What is CAWeb Publishing?
 - Service Overview
 - Platform Benefits
- The future
 - State Template 6.0: Modernized Design & Components
 - Action Plan
 - Divi 4 → Divi 5 Transition Plan
 - Divi 5
- Contact Information

What Is CAWeb Publishing?

CAWeb Publishing is California's official, fully managed WordPress service providing secure, scalable hosting and a modern, state-branded website platform for departments seeking a reliable turnkey solution.



Service Overview

- **California Department of Technology (CDT)**
 - Ensures CAWeb runs smoothly and stays aligned with statewide standards
- **Statewide Web Community**
 - Shares feedback and best practices that shape platform improvements
- **Department Web Teams**
 - Keep site accessible, and compliant
- **Vendors & Integrations**
 - Provide analytics, accessibility tools, security features, and plugins

Platform Benefits

- Fully managed hosting, security, backups, and maintenance
- California-branded, accessibility-compliant design built in
- Easy, no-code content editing
- Access to support, training, and approved plugins

The future

- Why This Matters
 - Improving platform speed, accessibility, and overall performance
 - Keeping all sites aligned with the latest California design standards
 - Making content editing easier, more flexible, and more modern
 - Ensuring CAWeb remains stable, scalable, and reliable for the long term

State Template 6.0: Modernized Design & Components

- Identify all components and planned feature updates required for the upcoming CAWeb Publishing release

Customer requested CAWeb Components
CAWeb Card / Tile
CAWeb Carousel / Slider
CAWeb Hero Banner
CAWeb Icon List
CAWeb News / Blog Feed
CAWeb Contact Module

Template Component	Supported in CAWeb?	Notes
Breadcrumb	✘ No	Listed as unsupported in CAWeb
Side Navigation	✘ No	Not implemented in CAWeb
Countdown Timer	✘ No	Divi has one, but CAWeb does not support it
Progress Bar	✘ No	Not supported in CAWeb
Mega Menu	✘ No	No CAWeb equivalent
Icon Menu	✘ No	No CAWeb equivalent

Action Plan

- Add Navigation Mega Menu to CAWeb Publishing
- Conduct a full comparison between CAWeb Publishing and State Template 6.0
- Document planned component and plan feature list updates, features, and UI patterns

2349 Accordion 6.0 ▾

2108 Allow the user to turn the excerpt on/off ^

Course List CAWeb

2083 TablePress Previous and Next for Jaws

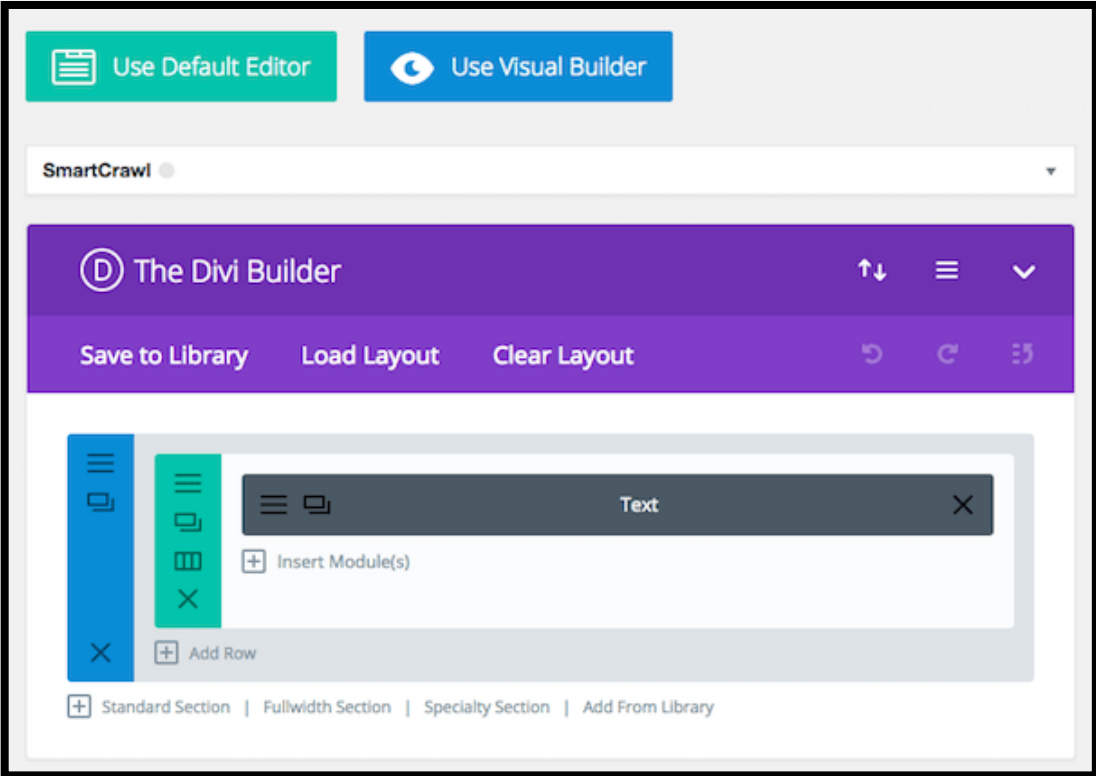
2084 Arrows to support Jaws

Divi 4 → Divi 5 Transition Plan

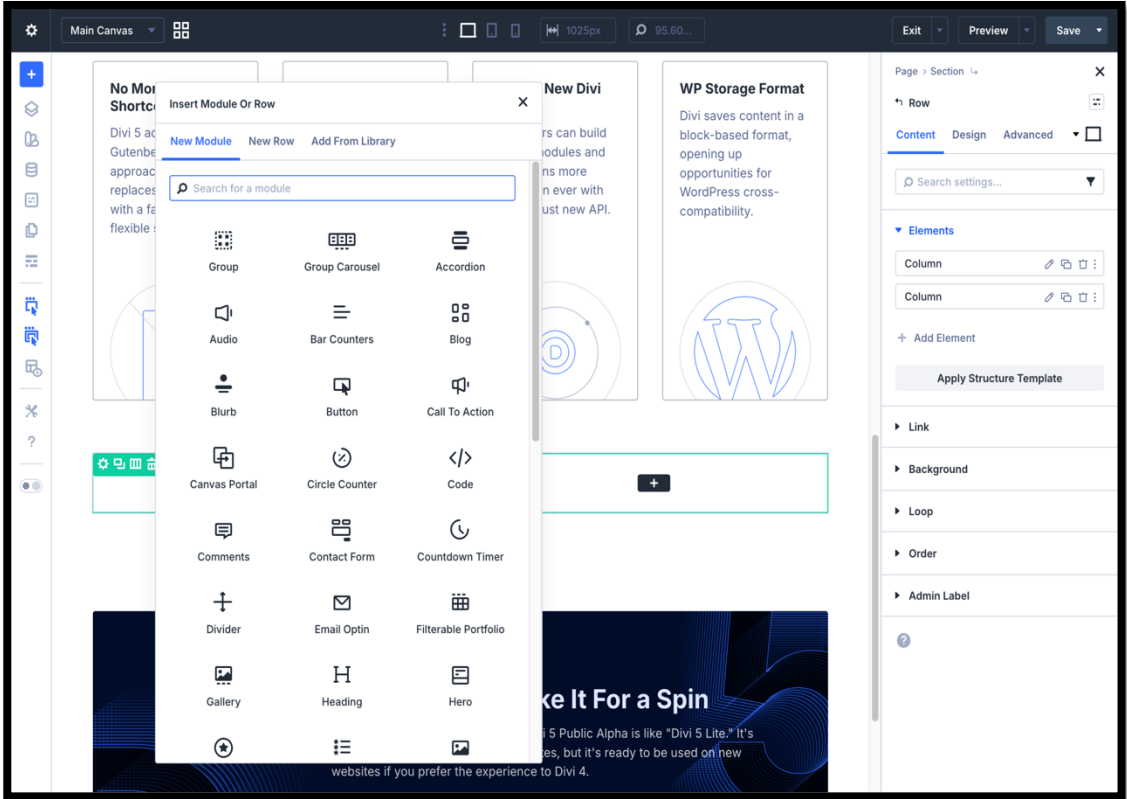
Phase	What We're Doing	Customer Impact
Assessment	Reviewing CAWeb components and testing Divi 5 compatibility	<u>No impact</u>
Compatibility Layer	Enabling Divi's Divi 4 compatibility extension to keep older sites stable	<u>No impact</u>
CAWeb Theme Update	Updating CAWeb to work natively with Divi 5	<u>Short maintenance window</u>
Validation	Running automated checks and fixing issues across the platform	<u>Optional site review</u>
Divi 5 Activation	Turning on Divi 5 for all CAWeb customers and retiring the compatibility layer	<u>Better performance + smoother editing experience</u>

Divi 5

Divi 4



Divi 5



Contact Information

- [CAWeb Publishing Contact](#)



California Department of Technology
Department of Rehabilitation
Franchise Tax Board

What's new in Web Accessibility Compliance for 2026: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II Regulations – Digital Accessibility

Tiffany Wilson, Senior Digital Accessibility Specialist

What is ADA Title II?

ADA Title II is a federal civil rights law that requires state and local governments to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to programs, services, and activities.

Note: Each agency is responsible for reviewing Title II and the legal interpretations.

What changed in 2024

- The ADA has always required state and local governments to:
 - Provide effective communication
 - Make reasonable modifications
 - Ensure equal access to services and programs
- What changed:
 - DOJ updated ADA Title II subpart H
 - Digital services (websites and mobile apps) are now explicitly included
 - Web content and mobile applications must meet [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) Version 2.1 Level AA](#)

Who must comply

- State agencies
- Public universities
- Local governments
- Contractors providing public services

Programs, services & activities

Title II goes beyond websites.

It applies to:

- All government services
- Programs, services and activities that are delivered digitally

What must be accessible

- Websites & web applications
- Mobile applications (iOS, Android, Windows)
- Digital documents (PDF, Word, etc.)
- Vendor-hosted systems
 - This can include 3rd-party payment portals
- Social media posts
- Procured applications, software, and hardware

Title II applies to content and applications that are both public-facing and internal-facing.

Exceptions

- Exceptions Are Limited
- All exception criteria must be met
- If one condition fails → not exempt
- Exceptions do not remove ADA obligations

Exceptions to Title II – archived content

Archived content must:

1. Be created before April 24, 2026 (50k or more total pop) or April 26, 2027 (50k or less total pop)
2. Only be used for reference, research or record-keeping
3. Be clearly identified as archived **and**
4. Not be updated

Example: An unedited water quality report from 1998 that a state has stored only for research purposes in an “archive” section of its website.

Exceptions to Title II– preexisting Conventional Electronic Documents (CED’s)

Criteria

1. It is a PDF, word processor, presentation or spreadsheet file; **and**
2. It was made available online before April 24, 2026; **and**
3. It is not currently used to apply for, gain access to, or participate in services, programs or activities

Result

If all three of the conditions are true, then your content is not required to be accessible.

Note: You may still have to provide documents in an accessible format if an individual requests it.

Exceptions to Title II – Third-party content

Some content from third parties does **not** have to be accessible.

This applies when:

- The content is posted by the public or outside users
- The agency does not control or manage the content
 - Example: A member of the public comments on an agencies' Facebook post.

These are **not** exceptions:

- A vendor posting content for an agency
- An agency paying for or directing the content

Exceptions to Title II – Individualized Password-Protected CED's

Some secure documents do not have to meet accessibility rules.

This applies when:

1. The document must be a “conventional electronic document,” which, as we described earlier, are word processing files, presentation files, PDFs, or spreadsheets
2. The document must be about a specific person, property, or account, **AND**
3. It is password-protected or secure

Examples:

- A personal tax bill
- A pdf version of a water bill for your home – however the web portal where the water bill is posted does not fall under the exception. (California law has a higher standard)

Undue burden and fundamental alteration

Not everything has to be fixed if it is:

- Too difficult or costly (undue burden)
- Changes the purpose of the service (A fundamental alteration)

Important:

- This must be proven (not assumed)
 - You must be able to argue this (possibly in court)
 - You must have documentation
- This is rare
- You still must provide access another way

Exceptions to Title II – Pre-existing social media posts

What is exempt:

- Posts made before April 24, 2026
- These do not have to meet WCAG 2.1

What is not exempt:

- Posts made after April 24, 2026
- These must be accessible (example: videos need captions)

Agencies are responsible for their own posts, not the social media platform.

Minimal impact on access

Some small WCAG issues may be acceptable if users with disabilities can still:

- Complete the same tasks
- Access the same information

With similar:

- Time
- Privacy
- Independence

If a user has to call, wait, or ask for help → NOT accessible

Conforming alternate versions

Sometimes an agency creates **two versions of the same content:**

- One version that is not accessible
- One version that is accessible

This is called a **conforming alternate version**

Under **ADA Title II**, this is **only allowed in rare cases**

When is it allowed?

Only when there is a:

- **Technical limitation**
- **Legal limitation**

That prevents the content from being made directly accessible

Separate accessible versions are **not a primary strategy**. Do not plan to create a separate accessible version.

What you are responsible for

- Content you create
- Documents you upload
- Systems your program uses
- Vendor tools your team selects
- Legal risks

If your program uses it, you are responsible.

Common mistakes

- “We’ll fix it later”
- “It’s too hard”
- “We have an accessible version somewhere else”
- “The vendor handles accessibility”

These do NOT meet accessibility requirements

Procurement & Vendors

Agencies are legally responsible to acquire accessible products from vendors.
This includes:

- Payment portals
- Scheduling systems
- Timesheets
- Chat & AI tools
- Externally hosted applications

Agencies can do this by:

- Requesting a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT)

What is a VPAT

- A [free online template](#) a vendor downloads and fills out to show how their product meets accessibility standards. It shows:
 - What works
 - What does not work
 - What partially/does not fully work
 - Includes detailed accessibility notes
- Once filled out, the vendor provides it to procurement. It becomes their products' Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR)
- When an ACR is received you should:
 1. Make sure it is complete and up to date
 2. Check for vendor documented accessibility failures
 3. Test the product (if possible)
 4. Document any issues
 5. If it fails accessibility, look for alternative products
 6. If the product is purchased with known issues:
 1. Document the decision and any workaround plan
 2. Follow up with the vendor on future fixes

Grievance procedure

- Any public entity with 50 or more employees must have a grievance procedure.
- Complaints should generally be submitted to the designated ADA Coordinator.
- The complaint should include the complainant's name, address, and a detailed description of the incident.
- While it varies, many procedures require filing within 14 to 60 days of the incident.
- If a disability prevents a user from filing a written complaint, the entity must allow alternative methods, such as a personal interview or audio recording.
- The ADA coordinator investigates and provides a written determination, often within 90 days.

Grievance example

Accessibility complaints

[\(28 CFR §35.107\)](#)

The California Department of Technology (CDT) is dedicated to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you have a complaint alleging that CDT is non-compliant with [Part 35 of Chapter 1 of Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) or took an action that is prohibited by [Part 35](#), the complaint procedure is to:

File the ADA compliant form

Send feedback regarding ADA complaints by filling out the form below.

Your information

Name *

First Last

Phone

Email *

Complaint details

Subject *

Message *

Do not send confidential information.

Do not send confidential information.

Write or Call Us

You can call or submit written feedback using the information below:

Melissa Carlin – Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer

California Department of Technology
707 3rd Street, 2nd Floor
West Sacramento, CA 95605
melissa.carlin@state.ca.gov
(916) 460-9867

Equivalent facilitation

Agencies may use alternatives to WCAG 2.1 if they provide equal or better accessibility

Example: Using a newer standard like WCAG 2.2

Accessibility standards

- Federal (DOJ): WCAG 2.1 AA (required)
- California: Moving toward WCAG 2.2 AA (2027)
 - We have been meeting WCAG 2.1 since the passing of AB434 and implementation in 2019

WCAG 2.2: what's new from 2.1

- Clearer focus indicators
- Larger touch targets
- Dragging alternatives
- Easier login
- Less repeated entry
 - Allow autofill repeated information
- Better mobile usability
- Consistent help
- Focus not obscured
 - Sticky footers or headers hiding focused elements

Compliance timeline State of California



Note: Dates shown are compliance deadlines.

What happens after April 26

Legal complaints can begin immediately.

Stage	What happens	Impact
Complaint filed	DOJ starts reviewing the issue	Legal costs begin
Violations confirmed	Discussions to resolve the problem	Costs increase (legal and consulting)
Settlement reached	Agreement with required actions	Ongoing monitoring may be required
Deadlines missed	Case may return to court	More penalties and longer monitoring

California accessibility governance

- SIMM 25A – [Accessibility Resource Guide](#)
- SIMM 25B – [Website Accessibility Certification](#)
- SAM 4833 – [Information Technology Accessibility Policy](#)
- SAM 4833.1 - [Exception to Accessibility](#)
- SAM 4833.2 – [Website Accessibility Certification](#)
- AB 434 transitioned to [California Government Code Section 11546.7](#) (Biennial certification)
- SAM 1721 – [Accessibility Requirements](#)
- [California Government Code Section 7405](#) – Electronic and Information Technology
- [California Government Code Section 6219](#) – Plain language
- Title II – [Americans with Disabilities Act Title II Regulations | ADA.gov](#)
- [California Government Code Section 11135](#) - Antidiscrimination (Federal law (ADA Title II) State law (§11135))

How to prepare now

- Create accessibility policies
- Fix high-impact issues/services first
- Train staff
- Report issues early
- Create issue reporting processes
- Make new content accessible
- Ask vendors about accessibility
- Test when possible
- Build to WCAG 2.2 for June 2027

Thank you!

- We will have a representative speaking on the VPAT/ACR process on May 21st at the Web Accessibility Community of Practice (WACOP)
- Please leave any questions in the chat



CDT Office of Digital Services

Closing Remarks

Greg Duncan, Web Services Manager



Digital Web Services Network

Bringing together digital product managers, designers, and engineers.

Thank you!

These slides will be published on the DWSN website (cdt.ca.gov/dwsn) in a few days.

Our next DWSN quarterly session will be an in-person + hybrid event on Thursday, **August 6, 2026**.

A save-the-date and details will be sent soon.