Draft Press Release — ISTQB® Certified Tester Digital Accessibility Testing

ISTQB® Introduces New Digital Accessibility Testing Certification

ISTQB® has released the new Certified Tester Digital Accessibility Testing (CT-DAT) certification, version 1.0, a dedicated syllabus addressing the growing importance of ensuring that software can be accessed and used by people with disabilities. The new certification reflects the increasing visibility of digital accessibility worldwide, together with evolving standards, regulations, and expectations for organizations to deliver accessible digital products and services.

Digital accessibility was previously addressed within the ISTQB® Usability Testing syllabus. The new CT-DAT v1.0 syllabus establishes it as a stand-alone area of testing, allowing substantially greater coverage of the knowledge and practical considerations testers need to evaluate accessibility effectively. The syllabus addresses digital accessibility principles and disabilities, global accessibility guidelines and standards, accessibility testing activities, planning and execution, analysis and communication of findings, assistive technologies, and the use of accessibility testing tools—including the opportunities and risks associated with artificial intelligence.

Creating a dedicated Digital Accessibility Testing certification also recognizes that accessibility is more than a specialized aspect of usability. It affects whether people can access essential software functionality and digital services and is increasingly influenced by organizational, contractual, regulatory, and legislative requirements. CT-DAT v1.0 provides testers and organizations with a structured approach for integrating accessibility throughout the software lifecycle, combining automated and manual testing, assistive-technology-supported testing, accessibility audits, and end-user testing with people with disabilities.

CT-DAT v1.0 extends the ISTQB® portfolio with focused knowledge for testers who need to understand, plan, perform, and communicate digital accessibility testing as part of delivering inclusive, high-quality software.

CT-DAT — FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Why has ISTQB® created a separate Digital Accessibility Testing certification?

Digital accessibility has grown substantially in importance, scope, and visibility. Organizations increasingly need to ensure that software can be accessed and used by people with disabilities, while accessibility is also receiving greater attention through standards, procurement requirements, regulation, and legislation. Accessibility was previously included within the ISTQB® Usability Testing syllabus. Creating Certified Tester Digital Accessibility Testing (CT-DAT) v1.0 as a stand-alone certification allows the subject to receive the depth and focus it now warrants.

Why isn't digital accessibility simply part of usability testing?

Usability and accessibility are closely related, but they address different aspects of software quality. Usability considers how effectively, efficiently, and satisfactorily users can achieve their goals. Digital accessibility considers whether people with disabilities can access and interact with software and its functionality. Separating the subjects allows each to be addressed in greater depth while recognizing that both contribute to inclusive, high-quality software experiences.

What does CT-DAT add compared with the accessibility content previously included in CT-UT?

CT-DAT v1.0 substantially expands the treatment of digital accessibility. It addresses digital accessibility principles and disabilities; relevant guidelines, standards, and regulations; accessibility testing activities; planning and execution; analysis and communication of findings; assistive technologies; and tools used for digital accessibility testing. It also considers automated and manual testing, assistive-technology-supported testing, accessibility audits, end-user testing with people with disabilities, shift-left practices, and the opportunities and risks associated with AI-assisted accessibility testing.

Why is CT-DAT being introduced now?

Digital products and services play an increasingly important role in employment, commerce, education, government, communications, and everyday life. At the same time, expectations for accessible software continue to increase, supported by greater awareness as well as evolving standards, regulations, procurement requirements, and legislation. This makes digital accessibility an increasingly important capability for software development and testing organizations rather than a niche testing concern.

Is CT-DAT focused only on websites?

No. Although web accessibility and WCAG are important parts of the subject, CT-DAT v1.0 addresses digital accessibility testing of software more broadly. The principles and testing approaches can apply to different types of software products and technologies, depending on their context and applicable requirements.

Does CT-DAT teach WCAG?

CT-DAT 1.0 introduces the structure and application of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and typical criteria relevant to software accessibility testing. It also places WCAG within a broader context that includes other accessibility standards, guidelines, and applicable requirements. The objective is to enable testers to understand how accessibility requirements inform testing rather than to turn the certification into a detailed WCAG compliance course.

What role does assistive technology play in CT-DAT?

Assistive technology is an important part of understanding and evaluating how people with disabilities interact with software. CT-DAT v1.0 addresses assistive technologies and their application in accessibility testing, including technologies such as screen readers, screen magnification, voice control, and other interaction mechanisms.

Does CT-DAT cover accessibility testing tools and AI?

Yes. The syllabus addresses categories of tools used for digital accessibility testing, their appropriate uses, and their limitations. It also considers the growing role of artificial intelligence in accessibility testing, including the potential benefits as well as the need to recognize risks and validate AI-generated findings or recommendations.

Does automated accessibility testing replace manual or end-user testing?

No. CT-DAT v1.0 emphasizes a complementary approach. Automated tools can identify certain accessibility conditions efficiently, but they cannot evaluate every accessibility requirement or determine the complete user experience. Manual testing, assistive-technology-supported testing, audits, and end-user testing with people with disabilities provide different forms of evidence and can reveal barriers that automated testing alone cannot identify.

Who is CT-DAT intended for?

CT-DAT v1.0 is particularly relevant to software testers, test analysts, test engineers, accessibility testers, test managers, developers, product teams, and others involved in evaluating or delivering accessible software. It can also help organizations build a more structured accessibility testing capability.