

AI for A11y Pros

Tools that Work for Solopreneurs and Small Teams

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About Simon Miner

- Software engineer/web developer for more than 25 years
- 10+ years teaching accessibility
- Certified accessibility practitioner
- Founder of Pedal Point Solutions
 - Certified Disability-Owned Business
- Legally blind
- Avid AI user, but not an AI expert



Agenda

- Why AI matters for a11y pros
- Guidance and guardrails
- AI workflows for accessibility
 - Content and communication
 - Design and development
 - Testing and reporting
- Key takeaways
- Q&A

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Why AI Matters for A11y Pros

The reality for solopreneurs and small teams

- We wear many hats
 - Sales and marketing
 - Testing, auditing, design, development
 - Consulting and training
 - HR, finance, legal
- AI can replace repetitive work and speed up structured tasks
 - Allows smaller organizations to grow impact without increasing headcount
- Efficiency cannot replace thoughtful accessibility work

AI and a11y have a complicated relationship

AI is helping

- Automates some repetitive a11y checks
- Scales remediation guidance
- Enables faster audit reporting

AI is hurting

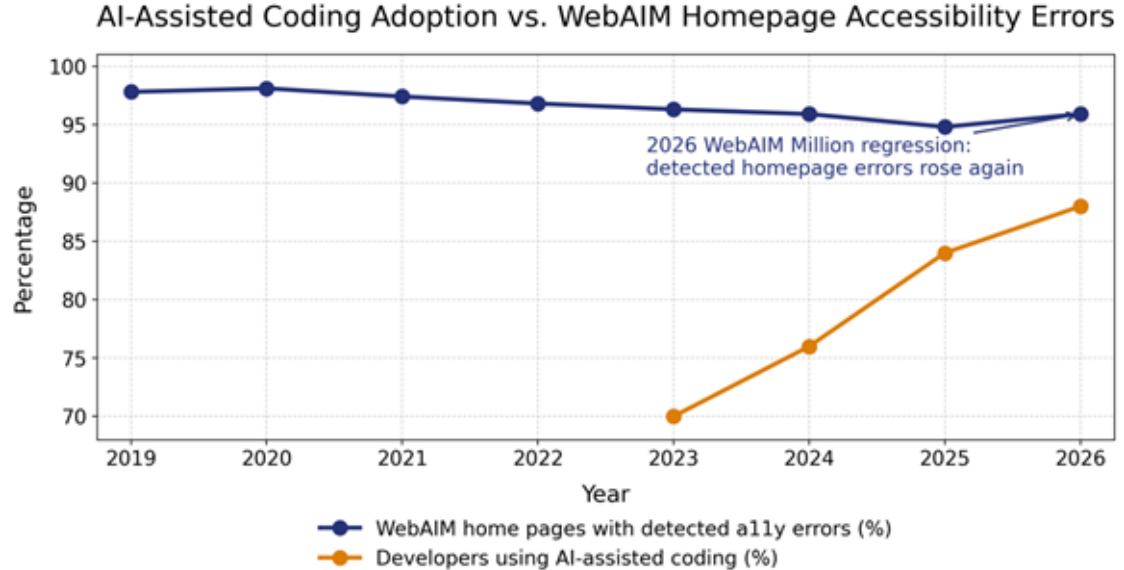
- Auto-generates inaccessible code, websites and docs
- Builds UIs with poor semantics
- Hallucinates alt text for images

AI is excluding

- Disabled voices left out of design
- Inaccessible training data and lack of disability context
- Tools assume non-disabled defaults

Vibe coding seems bad for accessibility

- For the first time, this year's WebAIM Million Report shows a regression
- This happened as AI-assisted coding is exploding
- Data sources
 - [Web AIM Million](#)
 - [Stack Overflow Developer Survey](#)



See [AI Doesn't Fix Accessible Systems. It depends on Them.](#) by Anna Cook

Learn, practice, and experience digital accessibility

Guidance and Guardrails



Use AI for...

- Repetitive and structured tasks
 - Drafting reports, formatting notes, summarizing findings, generating templates
- Early-stage brainstorming and iteration
 - Exploring ideas, UI concepts, alt text drafts, remediation approaches.
- Administrative or operational work
 - Follow-up emails, proposal scaffolding, internal documentation
- Accelerating lower-risk deliverables
 - First drafts of marketing copy, training material, reports that will be reviewed

✗ Don't use AI for

- Business-critical decisions
 - A11y strategy, legal positioning, prioritization, high-impact recommendations
- Work that differentiates you
 - Your voice, consulting style, lived experience, creativity, relationship-building
- Important human conversations
 - Sensitive discussions, conflict resolution, coaching
- Tasks requiring intuition or deep niche experience and expertise
 - Complex usability judgments, assistive tech workflows, contextual a11y decisions



Rules for using generative AI

- Actively seek out and experiment with new ways to use AI
- Only rely on AI for tasks you are experienced in and comfortable doing yourself
 - You cannot accurately review what you don't understand
- Always review AI-generated content
 - Hallucinations are real and confident
- Revise AI outputs to reflect your expertise, tone, and judgment
 - Customize before you share and publish to preserve your voice, integrity, and reputation
- Use detailed prompts and conversational chats
 - But stop if prompting becomes more work than the project
- Regularly skip AI to stay sharp. Beware situational disempowerment.

Practical Applications

Content and Communication

- Copy

- Drafts for social media posts, blog articles, newsletters, alt text, audio description scripts

- Images

- Promotional banners, blog post and newsletter graphics, simple charts,
- [Venngage](#) - web-based design platform with a focus on a11y and AI-tooling

- Templates

- Lead follow-up emails
- Proposals, SOWs
- Extract templates from (anonymized) client deliverables

Example: Iterating an event banner

“Design a banner for a disabled storytellers event using info from this email...”

“Too busy. Simplify it.”

“Use accessible color combos”

“Incorporate the attached logos.”

“Fix text contrast.”

“Shorten the teaser.”



Example: Discovering the sales pipeline snapshot

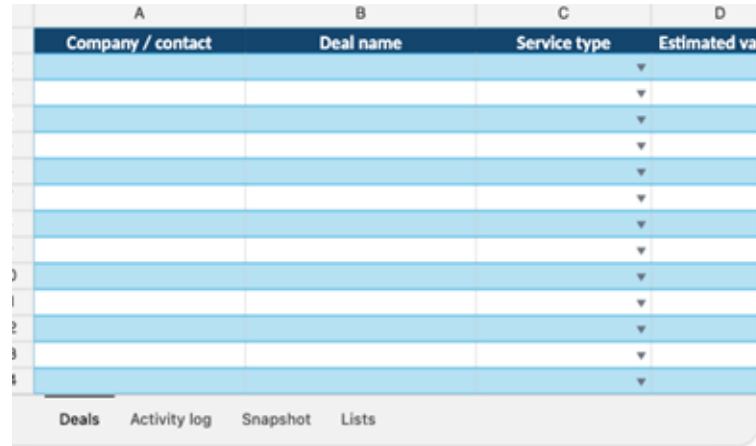
“Is there a standard report or document I can create that shows the current or ongoing state of my leads, prospects, clients, and partners?”

AI support provided

- CRM-style spreadsheet structure
- Pipeline stages and metrics suggestions
- Formulas for close rate and average touches
- Reusable Excel template

Human expertise needed to

- Determine meaningful pipeline stages
- Define what counts as a “touch”
- Decide which relationships matter
- Interpret while deals stall or close



The screenshot displays a web-based spreadsheet interface for a sales pipeline. The main table has four columns: 'Company / contact' (A), 'Deal name' (B), 'Service type' (C), and 'Estimated value' (D). The 'Service type' column contains a series of downward-pointing arrows, indicating a dropdown menu. Below the table, there is a navigation bar with four tabs: 'Deals' (selected), 'Activity log', 'Snapshot', and 'Lists'.

A	B	C	D
Company / contact	Deal name	Service type	Estimated value
		▼	
		▼	
		▼	
		▼	
		▼	
		▼	
		▼	
		▼	
		▼	
		▼	

Deals Activity log Snapshot Lists

Design and development

- Rapid prototyping and website building tools
 - [Lovable](#), Webflow, Squarespace, ...
 - A11y is NOT baked in, must be explicitly prompted
- Code completion and correction
 - Github Copilot
 - [General-purpose a11y agent experiment](#) by Eric Bailey at Github
- Project summarization
 - “Parse this repo and summarize its architecture. Briefly explain what the project does, then list its major folders/components and describe the purpose of each: [URL]”
 - Returned summary of project, its architecture, major components, and tech stack



Example: Songclock - An accessible audio clock

- Built with Vercel's v0 using only AI-generated code
- 20+ prompts over a couple of days to:
 - Scaffold an analog clock that translates time into musical tones
 - Refine to an ear-training tool with tone intervals, dynamic scores, and sound controls
 - A11y improvements to keyboard usage, color contrast, screen reader optimization, and focus management
 - Iteratively resolved cross-browser issues with timing and clearer communication of musical patterns
- AI prototypes, but human expertise needed for a finished product.



<https://songclock.app>

Testing and reporting

- Simple single-page snapshot tests for lead and prospect evaluations
- AI-assisted automated tests
 - Deque's Intelligent Guided Tests, MCP server, etc.
- Testing reports
 - Clean up and format notes
 - Integrate these into report template
- Always manually review findings and results

Conclusion

Use AI to accelerate scaffolding and support work.
Use human expertise and judgment to ensure accessibility.

Key takeaways

- **AI simultaneously helps, harms, and excludes** because it learns from an Internet filled with inaccessible patterns and lacks broad contextual awareness..
- **Use AI intentionally, not automatically.**
- **Verify every output.** Confident responses are not always correct, accessible, or inclusive.
- **Find tools and workflows that fit your context,** your clients, and your style.
- **Accessibility expertise matters more than ever** in an AI-driven world.

Questions?

Thank you!

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