Matthew Cowan

Summary

Web developer and designer with over 16 years of experience building and maintaining public-facing websites, including mass transit, destination marketing, and e-commerce. Works from a combined graphic design and development background, with a focus on semantic HTML, responsive layout, and accessible interfaces. Holds the IAAP CPACC credential.

Experience

Freelance Web Developer & Designer

2010 – Present

- Develops and maintains web applications for public-facing and regulated sectors, including public transit, destination marketing, and e-commerce.
- Audits existing sites to identify accessibility and user-experience barriers, and carries the findings through to implemented fixes.

Marketing Agency (Client Name Redacted) — Subcontracted Senior Web Developer

2017 – Present

- Advocated for accessibility QA carried out with blind and vision-impaired users rather than automated tooling alone.
- Pushed for a minimum standard at launch, including performance thresholds and passing tests as a release gate.
- Involved in bidding and estimating, including the accessibility scope of proposals.
- Mentored junior developers.

Client Name Redacted — Public Transit Website

2018 – 2020

- Converted GTFS transit data feeds into published timetables across 30+ routes, including changes during the rollout of new express lines.
- Handled malformed GTFS data and unannounced changes to the feed format.
- Built a large set of front-end blocks, and integrated third-party real-time arrival embeds.
- Tested with keyboard navigation and screen readers (NVDA, Narrator, VoiceOver).
- Held maintenance responsibility for the site throughout the engagement.

Client Name Redacted — Major Destination Marketing Organization

2025 – 2026

- Built the site navigation and significant parts of the home page.
- Trusted with unexpected back-end work: took over the member portal's billing section and its two-way HubSpot sync while the lead developer took a long-delayed vacation.
- Audited other areas of the member portal for accessibility defects, and fixed what was found.
- Tested with screen readers and keyboard navigation through to launch.

Client Name Redacted — Architecture, Engineering, and Construction Firm

2013 – Present

- Sole developer across successive generations of the site over more than a decade: an initial Joomla build, a rebuild in WordPress on ACF Flexible Content, and a migration to ACF-based blocks so the site could be edited in the block editor.
- The block migration measurably improved editing speed and the day-to-day authoring experience for the client's internal team.
- Identified that the firm's international presence brought it within scope of European and Canadian accessibility law, made the case for acting before any complaint arrived, and then carried out the remediation.
- Carried out an accessibility remediation of the site, working to WCAG 2.2 AA.
- Ran the accessibility audit internally rather than commissioning it, and prioritized the findings for repair.

Fit-Flavors — Contracted Web Developer

2017 – Present

- Integrated a nutrition-data provider API to render accessible nutrition information directly in the page, replacing images of text that had carried it previously.
- Completed an accessibility remediation of the site.
- Worked with third-party auditing tools to report defects and propose fixes.

Ceregraphic — Subcontracted Web Developer

2019 – Present

- Brought in to solve specific technical problems and to absorb overflow work.
- In 2022, helped remediate accessibility defects across a set of client sites, working on individually scoped issues that the designer had already identified but could not resolve.

Core Competencies

- **Accessibility** — WCAG 2.2 conformance work, manual audits, screen reader and keyboard testing (JAWS, NVDA, Narrator, VoiceOver), remediation of existing sites.
- **Testing** — axe, WAVE, Lighthouse, color contrast analyzers; Playwright suites including regression tests that fail the build when an accessibility fix is removed.

- **Tooling** — built a browser extension for reduced-motion checks, vision-deficiency simulation, reflow and forced-colors testing, visible live regions, and warnings where an accessible name differs from the visible text.
- **Development** — semantic HTML and CSS, responsive design, WordPress, custom block development, front-end and back-end.
- **Design & UX** — interface and UX design, color and typography.

Certifications

IAAP Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC)

Education

Associate of Applied Science, Graphic Design — East Central College, 2010