China's Information Accessibility Standards: Development & Application

EU–China E-accessibility Technical Seminar · InDiCo Global

October 28, 2026 · Online · 10-minute presentation

Zhejiang University

China has built a full-chain accessibility standards system

Facilities → Information exchange → Social services · nearly 30 national & industry standards

Three decades of evolution



Sources: National standards public platform (std.samr.gov.cn); SAC & MIIT information accessibility standard catalogues

From reference to independent development

2008 reference (WCAG 1.0) → 2012 adoption (WCAG 2.0) → 2016 independent development

2008

Reference phase

YD/T 1761-2008 by MIIT, adopting WCAG 1.0;
adopted by Beijing 2008 Olympic & Paralympic portals

2012

Adoption phase

YD/T 1761-2012 adopted WCAG 2.0 with five-level refinement; CDPF & MIIT evaluations of portals

2016

Independent development

Joint working group on information accessibility standards launched at the CDPF (2016-09-13)

Sources: YD/T 1761-2008 / YD/T 1761-2012 (MIIT); CDPF joint working group launch, 2016-09-13

03 · CORE STANDARD

GB/T 37668-2019: China's first web accessibility national standard

Released Aug 2019 · effective Mar 1, 2020 · led by Zhejiang University

58

technical indicators

Four dimensions (POUR): Perceivable · Operable · Understandable · Robust

First national standard for internet content accessibility in China

- Led by Zhejiang University, with 14 drafting organizations
- Every requirement comes with a test method - implementable in practice
- Adopted by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) and the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF)
- Widely reported by People's Daily, Xinhua and W3C

Sources: GB/T 37668-2019 (SAC std.samr.gov.cn); Zhejiang University news (news.zju.edu.cn, 2020-03); People's Daily 2020-03

03 · REVISION

The revised GB/T 37668 aligns with WCAG 2.2

Non-equivalent adoption of ISO/IEC 40500:2025 (WCAG 2.2) · revision plan 20252537-T-469 in final approval

WCAG 2.2

Aligned via ISO/IEC 40500:2025, the ISO adoption of W3C WCAG 2.2 (published Oct 2023)

Revision fully supersedes GB/T 37668-2019; effective three months after publication

- Revision plan 20252537-T-469, issued Jul 2025 - now in final approval
- Led by Zhejiang University; drafting organizations grew from 14 to 20
- Device & platform leaders joined: Xiaomi, Honor, OPPO, vivo, Tencent, Ant Group
- Coverage extended from web to mobile apps and intelligent terminals

Sources: SAC standard platform (plan 20252537-T-469, 2025-07); ISO/IEC 40500:2025; W3C WCAG 2.2 (2023-10-05)

Legislation and policy now mandate digital accessibility

2020 elderly-friendly plan → 2021 MIIT action → 2023 Barrier-free Law → 2024 tech-assisted disability → 2026 15th Five-Year plan

Nov 2020

State Council plan
Smart tech for the elderly
Traditional & smart service delivery in parallel

Jan 2021

MIIT action
Senior-friendly & accessible apps: 3,000 websites/apps upgraded by Mar 2025

Sep 2023

Barrier-free Law
Chapter 3 on accessible information exchange; statutory obligations

Dec 2024

Tech-assisted disability
Nine-department guidance on science & tech for persons with disabilities

Jul 2026

15th Five-Year plan
Disability protection & development, 32 key tasks (残工委发〔2026]4号)

Sources: NPC law 2023-09-01; 国办发〔2020]31号; MIIT; 残联发〔2024]31号; 残工委发〔2026]4号

Mobile is where accessibility matters most - and gaps persist

1.257 bn

China's mobile internet MAU,
Dec 2024 (QuestMobile annual report)

>85%

of smartphone users with visual impairments rely on mobile
(Beijing Statistics Bureau, 2024)

Where mobile accessibility still fails

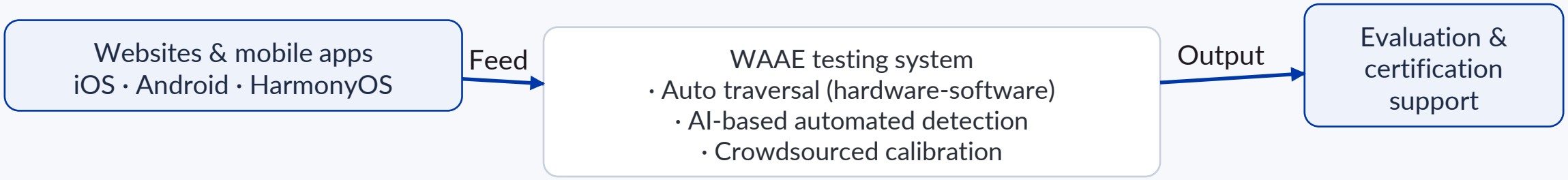
- **Focus trap** - users get stuck in an unreachable element
- **Wrong focus order** - keyboard navigation jumps unpredictably
- **Missing or wrong alt text** - images not described for screen readers

Accessibility modes help - yet automated, scalable checking is needed to close the gap at scale.

Sources: QuestMobile 2024 China Mobile Internet Annual Report; Beijing Statistics Bureau 2024

A compliance testing system turns standards into practice

WAAE intelligent testing system · supports national standards & WCAG · automated + crowdsourced checking



Standards & WCAG as the checking criteria

CAICT national evaluation tool (2022) · CDPF portal reviews (2012-) · Beijing 2022 & Hangzhou 2023 Games

Sources: CAICT procurement (2022); CDPF portal evaluations (2012-); "Tech Winter Olympics" & Hangzhou Asian Para Games compliance checks

06 · TECHNOLOGY

WAAE combines three detection mechanisms for scale

Automatic traversal · AI-based detection · crowdsourced calibration - across Web, iOS, Android, HarmonyOS

01 Auto traversal

Integrated hardware-software traversal covers the whole page and screen, detecting focus traps, wrong focus order and missing alternative text.

02 AI detection

AI recognises UI elements and evaluates accessibility criteria automatically, making large-scale screening of apps and websites feasible.

03 Crowdsourced calibration

Persons with disabilities calibrate results through a crowdsourcing platform, combining automated coverage with real-user judgement.

Cross-platform by design - one rule set drives testing of Web, iOS, Android and HarmonyOS applications since 2016.

Sources: WAAE system documentation; CDPF joint working group (2016-); Zhejiang University research publications

06 · PROVEN TRACK

WAAE is embedded in national evaluations and major games

A track record from 2012 to today - government reviews, national tools and international games

2012

CDPF portal evaluations - WAAE supports the China Disabled Persons' Federation in reviewing provincial and ministerial websites.

2022

National evaluation tool - procured by CAICT as the official tool for the national senior-friendly and accessibility action on mobile apps.

2022

Beijing 2022 "Tech Winter Olympics" - accessibility compliance testing for official apps and services of the Games.

2023

Hangzhou Asian Games & Para Games - accessibility compliance checks for the city's digital services during the Games.

Sources: CAICT procurement (2022); CDPF portal evaluations (2012-); Beijing 2022 "Tech Winter Olympics"; Hangzhou 2023 Asian Para Games

Challenges span standard-setting, implementation and adoption

A shared bottleneck: professionals combining accessibility, standards and technology are still scarce

01	**Standard-setting**	Standards must keep pace with rapid technology change - AI, mobile and connected devices; test methods need alignment with evolving WCAG editions.
02	**Implementation**	Scalable, cross-platform testing - web, iOS, Android, HarmonyOS - is hard; the trade-off between automated and human review is still unresolved.
03	**Adoption**	Companies need stronger incentives; real-user testing with persons with disabilities and a mature evaluation & certification system are still evolving.

A shared bottleneck - interdisciplinary talent combining accessibility, standards and engineering is scarce in both China and Europe.

Sources: synthesised from GB/T 37668 implementation and WAAE practice (2012-2026)

Trends: from web to mobile, AI and international alignment

Scope expansion

From websites to mobile apps and intelligent terminals - a national standard on mobile intelligent terminals is under development.

AI-powered accessibility

Large-model voice interaction, speech-to-text for deaf users, and AI-generated alternative text are entering mainstream products.

Convergence

Senior-friendly and disability accessibility efforts now share the same tools, standards and evaluation systems.

International alignment

Tracking WCAG 2.1 / 2.2 and benchmarking national requirements against EN 301 549 - the European standard cited by the European Accessibility Act.

Sources: SAC & MIIT standard plans; W3C WCAG 2.2 (Oct 2023); EN 301 549 V3.2.1 (CEN/CENELEC/ETSI, 2021)

China and Europe: aligned standards, open cooperation space

Dimension	China	Europe
Core standard	GB/T 37668-2019 · 58 indicators	EN 301 549 V3.2.1 (EAA-cited)
Web guidance	WCAG 2.0/2.1 in force · 2.2 revision underway	WCAG 2.1 / 2.2 based
Legal anchor	Barrier-free Environment Law 2023	European Accessibility Act 2019/882
Governance	MIIT · CDPF · SAC evaluation	EAA + Web Accessibility Directive

An open space for cooperation

- Standards interoperability and mutual recognition between GB/T 37668 and EN 301 549
- • Joint testing methods and cross-validation of evaluation tools (e.g. WAAE)
- • Cooperation on AI accessibility - language models, voice and intelligent terminals
- • Joint proposals in ISO/IEC JTC 1 and W3C accessibility groups
- • New: China proposed technical requirements on AI-agent accessibility at today’s JTC 1 plenary

Sources: GB/T 37668-2019; EN 301 549 V3.2.1; Directive (EU) 2019/882; Barrier-free Environment Law of the PRC

Thank you

Building an accessible digital world together - from standards to practice

Questions & discussion welcome

Zhejiang University · China-EU E-accessibility Seminar
Hangzhou, China · Online · 28 October 2026