

Committee: **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

Organization/Sector represented: **Digital Marketing/Tech**

Name: **Jay Menard**

Address:

2006-340 Colborne St.

London, ON

Occupation: **Content Strategist**

Work experience: **20 years in communications and media, starting with being EIC of The Gazette at Western, moving to medical writing and Web writing in Montreal, before returning to London to be a communications co-ordinator/marketing writer for Quixtar Canada. The past two years, I have been the Content Strategist at Digital Echidna, where we have taken a leadership role in accessibility. I have also regularly freelanced for local and national media, both in print and radio (filling in as host at CJBK)**

Education: **English Language and Literature BA Program at Western. Since then I have confirmed bilingual status at Western's continuing education program, have been LEAN certified in Kaizen, and have participated in various other programs such as leadership effectiveness training, first aid certification, and the like.**

Skills: **I have long been interested in accessibility, starting in my early 20s when my cousin was left quadriplegic following an accident at his home. In my role at Digital Echidna, I've been heavily involved in our accessibility efforts, including sitting on the Ability First advisory committee,**

Interest reason: **It's a natural extension of what I'm already doing, it's an issue that I have a passion for, and I think I can bring a comprehensive perspective in light of my involvement with AODA compliance efforts. This is an issue that extends beyond the traditional "wheelchairs and ramps" idea of accessibility and must be part of a larger, broad-scale approach towards accessibility.**

Contributions: **I believe that I can combine real-world experience with my marketing/media/communications background to effectively present issues both internally and to the public. I believe in getting the right message to the right person in the way that best meets their needs. I believe my digital accessibility experience also is invaluable as we move towards creating a more inclusive society.**

Past contributions: **I currently sit on the board of Ability First, an organization designed to help businesses understand the business case behind hiring people with disabilities. I am also on the board of the Business Cares Food Drive and the Gazette Publishing committee.**

Interpersonal: **It's something I do every day. As a content strategist I work with our clients to ensure their message gets heard in the way that's best suited for their clientele. With 20 years in business, I know that the message people think they want to send may not be the right one, and learning how to navigate that sensitive area has been a valuable learning experience. As a Kaizen leader, I was able to save our company thousands of dollars just by looking at issues, listening to all sides, and developing solutions that worked for all. And working in the media (including my own site), I believe in letting people share their stories. I believe that if I write an opinion piece, it has to be fair, and only includes criticism if I'm willing to provide a solution. I also firmly believe that no idea is worth having unless you're willing to have it challenged. If someone comes up with a better solution or a flaw in my argument, I'm happy to amend my thoughts with new information.**

Interview interest: **Yes**