

# Fostering a Healthy AT Ecosystem

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# Agenda

- Introductions
- Accessibility at Microsoft
- 3 Key Topics
  - Business Case for Accessibility
  - Challenges with the AT Ecosystem
  - Potential Solutions
- Q&A

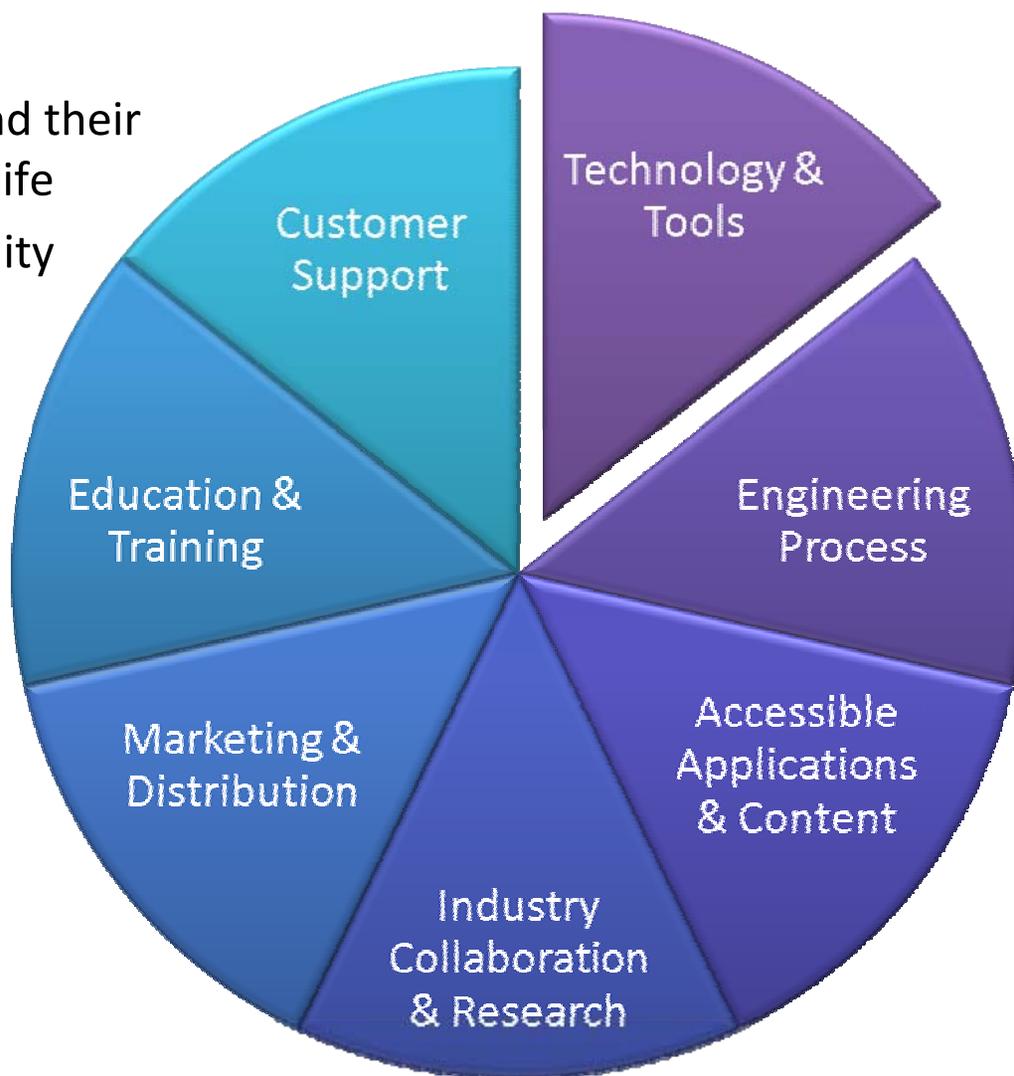
# Essence of the Business Case

- Accessibility is Good Business:
  - Improves usability for all customers
  - Increases addressable target market
  - Improves product relevance in emerging markets
  - May enable new mainstream user scenarios (e.g. speech)
- Accessibility Contributes to a Healthy Workforce
  - More flexible products keep aging workers productive longer
  - Improves employability of people with disabilities
- Important component of:
  - Corporate Social Responsibility
  - Qualifying for sales to federal agencies and enterprise orgs
  - Customer and partner satisfaction

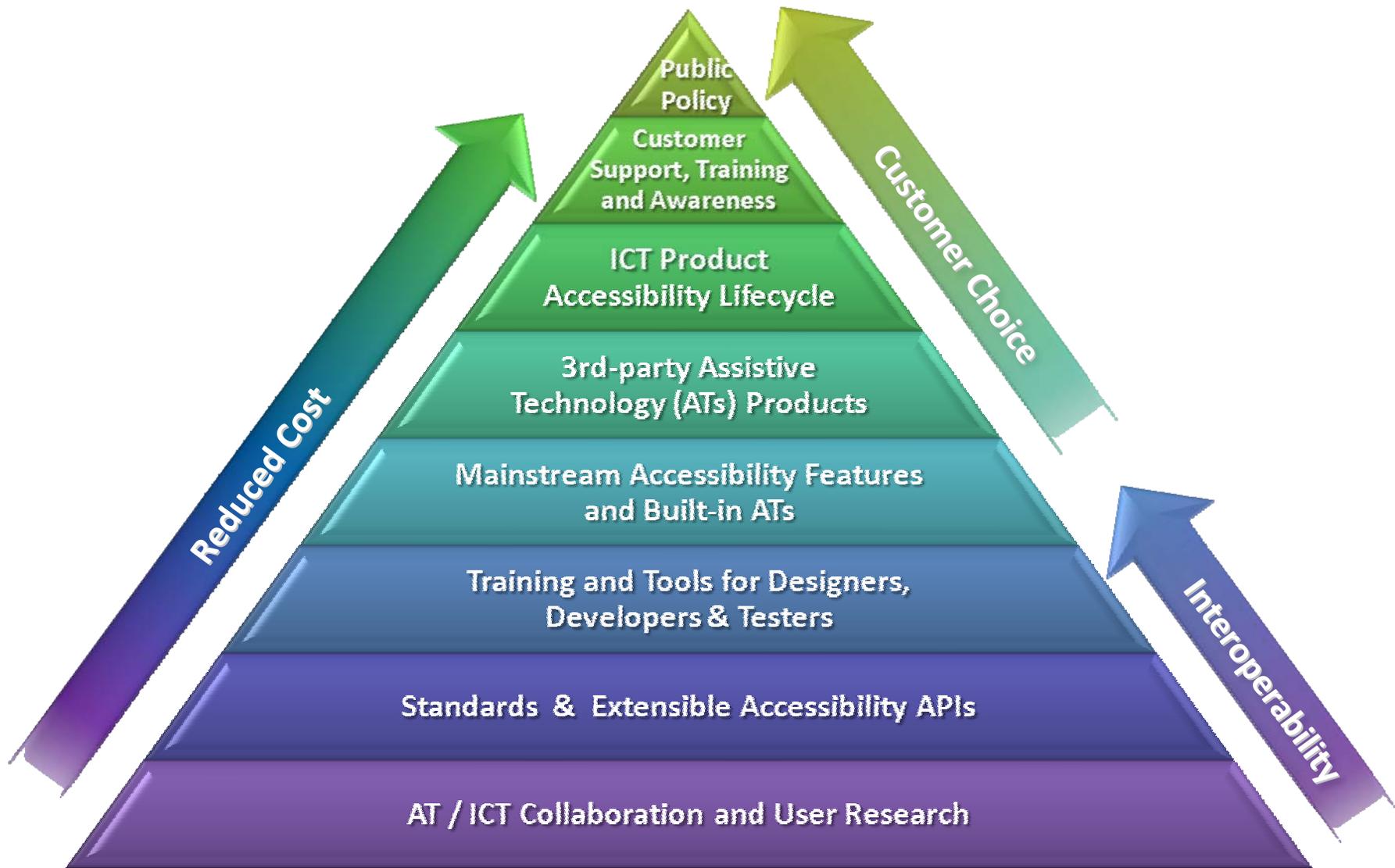
# Framing the Challenges and Solution

## Key Issues for Consideration

- Low awareness of AT products and their potential to transform a person's life
- Complexity of AT/IT interoperability
- Localization & distribution of ATs
- Difficulty supporting customers
- Value of current products and technologies in the market
- Pace of technology innovation
- Proper balance of built-in and 3rd party features or products
- Need for collaboration

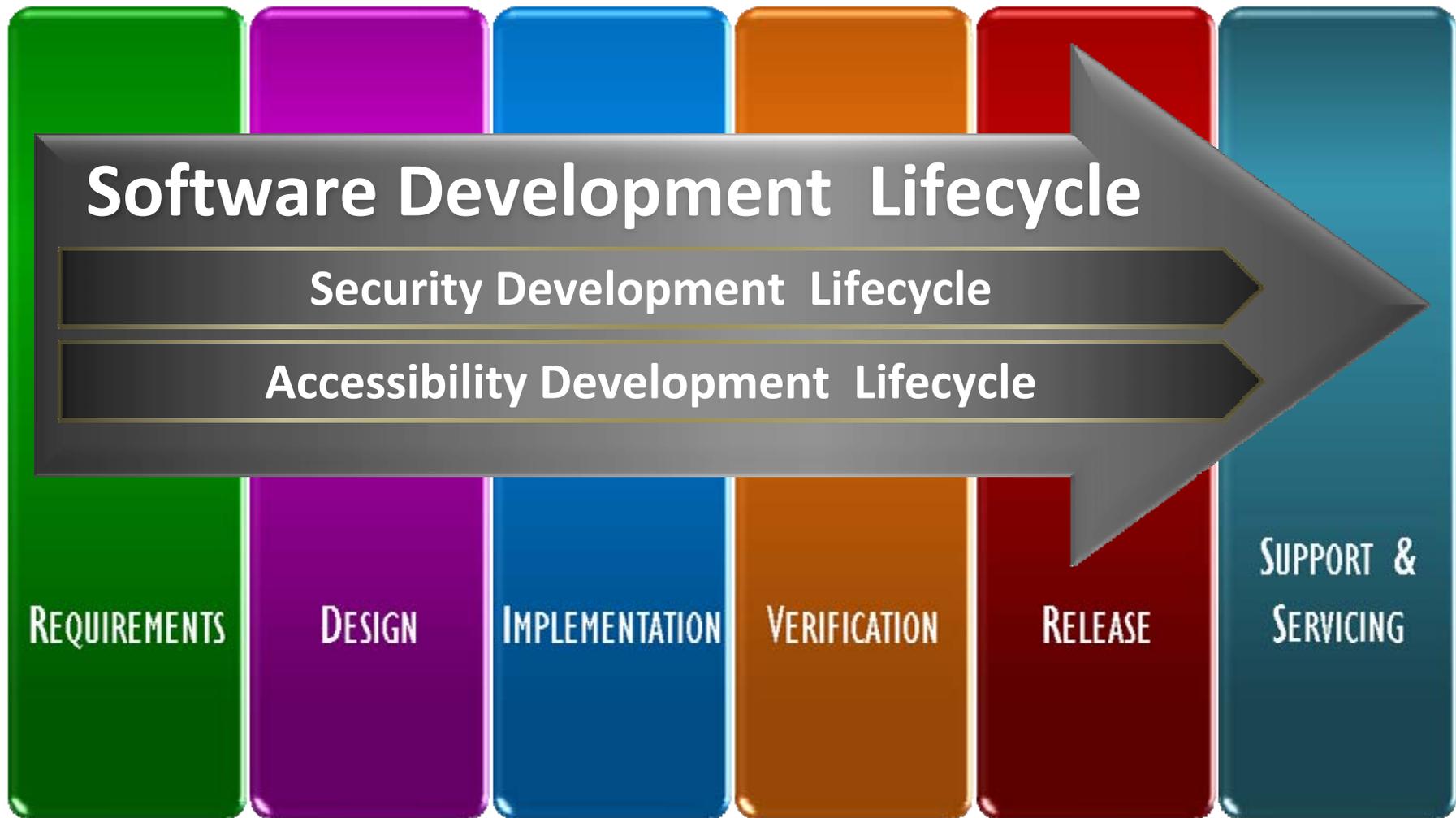


# Enabling a Vibrant AT Ecosystem



# Microsoft's Accessibility Development Lifecycle

... an integral part of modern product development



# Ecosystem Actively Working to Lower

## Costs

Examples in the market today:

### Web or USB ATs

Web-based ATs (textHelp's BrowseAloud or Jeffrey Bingham's Web Anywhere) and portable USB-based versions of ATs available from Claro, Dolphin, Freedom Scientific, GW Micro, etc.

### Free ATs

Windows, Mac and Linux include ATs; Free, open-source ATs exist for Windows (e.g. NVDA funded by grants from Mozilla, Microsoft, Adobe)

### Free Tools

Free access to Microsoft's professional development tools (BizSpark & DreamSpark programs); Microsoft's open source accessibility testing tools (AccChecker, AccVerify)

### AT & IT Collaboration

Accessibility Interoperability Alliance (AIA) offers engineering collaboration between ATVs, mainstream ICT companies, NGOs and researchers; Working closely with ATIA

### Free APIs

UI Automation API is now freely extensible so any developer can add features needed for their ICT or AT product; Contributions can be reviewed and endorsed by the AIA.

### API: Cross Platform

The AIA and Linux Foundation working to achieve cross-platform Accessibility; Novell work on UI Automation provides cross-platform interop between Windows and Linux.

### New Biz Models

Commercial ATVs are exploring new models for funding and distributing their products: ad-funded, monthly subscriptions, free-to-consumer-paid-by-enterprise, etc.

# Other Opportunities to Improve Accessibility

## Technology & Tools

- Encourage AT & ICT companies to implement platform accessibility APIs (improves interoperability and reduces maintenance)

## Engineering Process

- Use procurement to encourage adoption of an Accessibility Development Lifecycle (improves predictability of outcome)

## Accessible Applications & Content

- Consider public funding to help existing AT vendors migrate to modern Tools and APIs (not something we can do as industry)

## Research & Collaboration

- Endorse the AIA where ATVs + ISVs + NGO + Researchers can work side by side to resolve engineering challenges; Invest in research to understand how to better transform GUIs into alternate experiences

## Marketing & Distribution

- Create public/private partnerships to increase awareness of AT solutions and to keep consumers and rehab professionals up-to-date

## Education & Training

- Help promote the importance of including Accessibility APIs and industry best practices in university engineering curriculum; include information about AT products in education & rehab curricula

## Customer Support

- Open a dialogue on funding objectives and strategies between EU, US, Korea, Japan etc. to educate and support people with disabilities

# **DISCUSSION**