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RESEARCH ARTICLE

BALANCING ACCESSIBILITY AND PERFORMANCE IN PROGRESSIVE WEB APPLICATIONS USING MICRO FRONTEND ARCHITECTURE: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF REACTJS, ANGULARJS, AND VUE-JS

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Abstract

The increasing complexity of modern web applications demands a balance between accessibility and performance, especially in Progressive Web Applications (PWAs). This research paper examines the impact of accessibility-first design on performance optimization in PWAs developed with popular JavaScript frameworks-React, Angular, and Vue. Additionally, it explores the role of Micro Frontend Architecture in enhancing modularity, maintainability, and performance. Through comparative analysis and case studies, the paper presents strategies to effectively integrate accessibility and performance in the context of Micro Frontends.

Introduction:-

In recent years, web development has seen a paradigm shift towards building applications that are not only feature-rich but also perform efficiently and are accessible to all users. Progressive Web Applications (PWAs) have emerged as a popular solution, combining the best features of web and mobile applications to deliver fast, reliable, and engaging user experiences (Singh et al., 2020). At the same time, Micro Frontend Architecture has gained traction as a means to decompose monolithic applications into smaller, independent modules that can be developed and deployed separately (Kurapati, 2024).

This paper focuses on the challenge of balancing accessibility and performance in PWAs built using JavaScript frameworks like React, Angular, and Vue. Accessibility ensures that applications are usable by individuals with disabilities, while performance optimization is critical for user satisfaction and engagement (W3C, 2020). This research highlights strategies for implementing an accessibility-first design approach while leveraging Micro Frontend Architecture to improve both performance and modularity.

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Literature Review:-

Progressive Web Applications (PWAs)

PWAs are web applications that offer a native-like experience on the web, characterized by fast load times, offline capabilities, and responsiveness (Hodgman, 2019). By leveraging modern web technologies such as service workers and Web App Manifests, PWAs deliver enhanced performance and user engagement (Google Developers, 2021). The ability to cache resources allows PWAs to function even in poor network conditions, contributing to improved user experiences (Ramaswamy, 2020).

Micro Frontend Architecture

Micro Frontend Architecture involves breaking down a monolithic frontend into smaller, independently deployable units, allowing teams to develop and maintain individual components without affecting the entire application (Roccabruna et al., 2021). This architectural style offers improved scalability, faster development cycles, and better alignment with team structures (Fowler, 2019). Micro Frontends also facilitate performance optimization by enabling teams to focus on specific areas of the application, thus improving load times and responsiveness (Ford, 2021).

Accessibility in Web Design

Accessibility is essential for ensuring that web applications can be used by individuals with various disabilities (Horton & Quesenbery, 2014). Adhering to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) helps developers create inclusive designs through the use of semantic HTML, ARIA attributes, and compatibility with assistive technologies (W3C, 2020). Accessibility not only enhances usability but also positively impacts overall user experience (Moreno et al., 2019).

JavaScript Frameworks: React, Angular, and Vue

React, Angular, and Vue are among the leading JavaScript frameworks used for developing dynamic web applications. React's component-based architecture and virtual DOM provide excellent performance (Wieruch, 2020), Angular‘s two-way data binding facilitates real-time updates (Clark, 2020), and Vue's reactivity offers lightweight, efficient development (You, 2021). Each framework supports PWA development and Micro Frontend Architecture but comes with its unique challenges and advantages (Baumer, 2021).

Web Performance Optimization

Optimizing web performance involves reducing load times, improving responsiveness, and minimizing resource consumption. Core Web Vitals, including Largest Contentful Paint (LCP), First Input Delay (FID), and Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS), provide key metrics for evaluating a website's performance (Google Web.dev, 2021). Techniques such as lazy loading, caching, and code splitting play a crucial role in enhancing performance (Rivas, 2021).

Challenges in Balancing Accessibility, Performance, and Micro Frontend Integration

Accessibility and Performance Trade-offs

While accessibility is crucial, it can sometimes conflict with performance objectives, particularly in large-scale applications. For example, incorporating ARIA attributes or custom keyboard navigation may increase JavaScript processing times, potentially leading to slower interactions (Olsen, 2020). Similarly, ensuring that dynamic components are accessible can result in larger DOM sizes, impacting load performance, especially on mobile devices (Fielding, 2020).

Micro Frontend Architecture and Performance

Although Micro Frontends enhance modularity and scalability, they can introduce performance bottlenecks if not managed effectively. Each micro frontend may load its own set of resources, increasing HTTP requests and potentially slowing down overall performance (Jones, 2021). Furthermore, maintaining a consistent accessibility standard across multiple micro frontends can be challenging, as different teams may adopt varied approaches (Ford, 2021).

Complexity in PWAs with Micro Frontends

The integration of PWAs and Micro Frontend Architecture introduces additional complexity. Developers must ensure that individual micro frontends align with the overarching PWA strategy, which encompasses service worker implementation, caching strategies, and offline functionalities (Singh et al., 2020). Striking a balance between

accessibility, performance, and modularity becomes a significant challenge in such scenarios (Roccabruna et al., 2021).

Strategies for Optimizing Accessibility and Performance in PWAs with Micro Frontends

Accessibility in Micro Frontend-Based React PWAs

React's flexibility allows for the creation of accessible and high-performance micro frontends. Using libraries like Reach UI or React-ARIA helps ensure that components adhere to accessibility standards without introducing substantial performance overhead (Wieruch, 2020). Server-side rendering (SSR) can enhance accessibility by providing pre-rendered content for screen readers while improving performance through reduced Time to First Byte (TTFB) (Alvarez, 2020). Shared libraries can further promote consistent accessibility practices across different micro frontends.

Accessibility in Angular PWAs with Micro Frontends

Angular's Ahead-of-Time (AOT) compilation and Tree Shaking features enhance performance by optimizing the application during the build process (Clark, 2020). Angular Material provides a suite of accessible UI components that help maintain performance without sacrificing accessibility (Frost, 2019). Implementing lazy loading for micro frontends ensures that only necessary resources are loaded, minimizing initial load times (Rivas, 2021). Utilizing Angular Elements allows each micro frontend to encapsulate its functionality while adhering to accessibility standards.

Accessibility in Vue PWAs with Micro Frontends

Vue's lightweight architecture and Composition API facilitate the development of performant micro frontends. The use of directives such as `v-focus` aids in managing keyboard navigation, enhancing accessibility without adding significant performance overhead (You, 2021). Vue 3's reactivity ensures efficient updates to components, reducing the impact of accessibility features on performance (Hodgman, 2019). Additionally, Vue's compact bundle sizes contribute to overall performance, allowing multiple micro frontends to operate harmoniously without affecting load times (Baumer, 2021).

Case Study: Implementing Accessibility-First Design in Micro Frontend PWAs

This section presents a comparative case study of PWAs built using React, Angular, and Vue within a Micro Frontend Architecture. Each application was assessed using Lighthouse to evaluate accessibility and performance metrics.

React PWA with Micro Frontends

The React-based PWA incorporated Reach UI components to ensure compliance with accessibility standards. Using server-side rendering and micro frontends, the application achieved excellent performance metrics. Implementing code splitting and lazy loading allowed for independent loading of each micro frontend, significantly reducing initial load times (Wieruch, 2020).

Angular PWA with Micro Frontends

The Angular PWA utilized AOT compilation and Angular Material components to achieve both accessibility and performance. Micro frontends were implemented using Angular's lazy loading feature, facilitating scalability without performance degradation. Shared modules ensured adherence to accessibility standards across different micro frontends (Frost, 2019).

Vue PWA with Micro Frontends

The Vue-based PWA excelled in both accessibility and performance due to its lightweight design. The Composition API enabled efficient development of modular micro frontends, while Vue Router's dynamic routing ensured that only necessary components were loaded, thereby improving overall performance and accessibility (Baumer, 2021).

Conclusion:-

Balancing accessibility, performance, and Micro Frontend Architecture in PWAs developed with JavaScript frameworks such as React, Angular, and Vue poses significant challenges. However, by employing targeted strategies, it is possible to achieve high levels of accessibility and performance while harnessing the modularity of micro frontends. Techniques such as lazy loading, code splitting, and the utilization of accessible component libraries can optimize performance without compromising accessibility. Future research should explore the

implications of emerging technologies, such as Web Assembly and edge computing, on further enhancing the balance between accessibility and performance in micro frontend architectures.

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