OPUS

Accessibility: Web Content Guide

WEB ACCESSIBILITY

Web Accessibility is the practice of making websites and web applications usable by people with disabilities. The goal is for all users have equal access to information and functionality.

The following is a compilation of best practices to help anyone prepare content for their website and format it in a way that is accessible for all users. Our guidelines are based on global industry web standards created by the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative.

STRUCTURE AND HEADINGS

Benefits

Allow all users, including users who leverage assistive technologies, to understand the structure and relationships of the content.

Create structure: use headers and proper markup

- **Heading structure:** Headers (<H1> - <H6>) can be scanned and/or skipped with assitive technologies and can make the site more navigable to users with screenreaders, text only browsers, etc. Pages that are well structured, follow proper syntax, and pass the W3C validator are most accessible. Use headers H1-H6 in order. This makes the structure of the content and relationships in the content easy to understand.

- **Links:** Label links properly, avoid using language such as "click here," "See More," or "Learn More", etc, because the screen reader reads out "link learn more" and the user does not know what they would learn more about. Instead of "For a full bio click here." you should write "Read full bio". The the screen reader reads "Link read full bio" and the user knows what they will get to if they follow the link. Be brief but descriptive with your link labels.

- **Anchor links:** Use both id and name when creating anchor tags: <a id="content" name="content">

IMAGES

Benefits

- Ensures all users of your Web site can access and understand what visual elements are conveying through alternative formats.
- Differentiate between images that are ornamental and those necessary for content, learning comprehension and retention, to assist with reinforcing learning concepts.

Context

Visual elements presented in the form of graphics, charts, or video may not be accessible to blind users, low-vision users, or users with cognitive impairment. Description of key visual elements (i.e., elements that are only presented visually) in the form of alternative text, long description, transcripts, or audio description, makes these elements more accessible to users. When describing for educational purposes, the key visual elements are typically those that convey an essential learning goal.

Use ALT tags on all images

- Alt tags and title tags should be added to images because screen readers will read this text to people who can't see the images.
- If an image conveys complex information, such as a graph, use a brief ALT tag and link the image to a longer page with an extended explanation using the longdesc tag: <IMG SRC="graph.gif" ALT="graph of donations by donor type" LONGDESC=http://www.web-site.com/donationsgraph.txt title="graph of donations by donor type">
- ALT tags are often misused, often people overuse them. It's better to leave the ALT tag blank (ALT="") than to enter a text description that is not useful or redundant. For example, an image with a caption below it does not need alt text that matches the caption. In this case, use the alt tag blank to avoid redundancy.

Note: Images used to convey content (e.g. equations, diagrams), should be delivered to the site developer with alt tag tag and long description text (via email or separate document). Developers should not be responsible for creating this text.

Resources for accessible images

- WebAim's Creating Accessible Images - solid and excellent resource to create images that are accessible.
- Description and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) - includes information on what description is, how to do it, resources and learning opportunities, as well as vendor lists.

COLOR CONTRAST

Benefits

- Low vision, color blind, and aging persons can access your content.

Choose colors that work for everyone

- Provide sufficient color contrast.
- Do not rely on color as the sole means to convey information.   Add another visual element to indicate meaning, such as an underline or an icon.
- Color vision deficiencies affect interpretation of red and green as well as yellow. Beige, yellow and orange can be confused with red and green.

Tools to Measure Contrast

- Paciello Group Color Contrast Analyzer (Mac & Windows)
- WAVE accessible color checker
- Contast Checker
- Color Contrast Checker & Ration Calculator

CAPTIONS AND TRANSCRIPTS

Benefits

- Ensures a diverse audience can view your video, including deaf and hearing impaired, people for whom English is a second language, and in situations where noise is an issue or volume is turned off.
- Increases comprehension and retention. Seeing text and hearing audio together reinforces learning concepts, fosters understanding and use of unique vocabulary terms, and helps those with learning disabilities.
- Increases Search Engine Optimization (SEO) by making content in video easier to find.

Provide captions for video and transcripts for audio

- Auto captions are not sufficient. Captions must be accurate and synchronized with the video.
- If you have a transcript for your video, that can be used to create captions.
- Make sure any podcasts contain a transcript of the audio.

Closed Captions: Adding Captions to Video

- In order to caption a video, you must either own it or have permission to caption it. If you do not own the video, contact the owner for permission.
- Video Captioning Service Providers
    - 3PlayMedia — full-service provider of captioning, transcription, and sub-titling solutions
    - Rev.com — full-service provider of captioning, transcription and subtitling solutions
- Do-It-Yourself Video Captioning Tools
    - YouTube — Find out how to edit YouTube auto captions to add to your video.
    - CADET — Do it yourself captioning tool for Mac and Windows.
    - MovieCaptioner — closed captioning software for Mac and Windows (works offline)

Guidelines for Writing Captions

- Place captions on the bottom two lines of the screen as long as it does not interfere with existing visuals. If there are visuals appearing on the bottom of the screen, then place captions at the top of the screen.
- Make captions two lines or fewer.
- Make caption length 32 characters per line or fewer.
- Left-align the captions.
- Divide longer sentences at a logical point where speech normally pauses.
- Use font type Helvetica medium or similar type (sans serif).
- Use a translucent box as a background so that text will be clearer, especially on light backgrounds.
- Caption higher education media at a presentation rate of approximately 120-130 words per minute. Caption theatrical presentations at a near-verbatim rate. No caption should remain on-screen less than two seconds or exceed 235 wpm.
- Editing is performed only when a caption exceeds the presentation rate limit. Edit to maintain original meaning, content, essential vocabulary, and meet presentation rate requirements.

ACCESSIBLE PDF AND OFFICE DOCUMENTS

Benefits

- Ensures all users of PDF and Office documents can use these product successfully. Documents created can be used, viewed, and understood by all audiences and people using assistive technologies.

Attributes of Accessible Documents

- Text within the file is selectable and searchable (text is not rendered as an image).
- Document language is specified (e.g. "English").
- Document structure is tagged to define a logical reading order and to identify headers, paragraphs, data tables, form and other page elements.
- Images have alternative text descriptions.
- Color contrast is sufficient and information is not conveyed using color alone.

PDF Documents

- We recommend Adobe Acrobat Pro software for creating accessible PDF documents.
- Resources
    - Adobe Acrobat PDF Accessibility
    - Lynda.com tutorial on creating accessible PDFs

Microsoft and Open Office Documents

- PDF documents are typically exported from source documents authored in Microsoft Office or Open Office. We recommend incorporating accessible elements into your source documents. Styles, Headers, Alternative Text, Tables, and Links, make both your Office and your exported PDF documents more accessible.
- Resources
    - National Center on Disability and Access to Education Cheat Sheets (Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat, and InDesign)
    - Create and verify PDF accessibility (Acrobat Pro)

CONTACT US

opusdesign.us · hello@opusdesign.us