



Guidelines for Creating Accessible Websites and Webpages

Producing Accessible Websites

Web accessibility refers to the [inclusive practice](#) of making [websites](#) usable by people of all abilities and [disabilities](#). The internet and its resources have become such an integral part of our lives, it may seem unbelievable that a huge, albeit computer literate, population of the world may not have access to the vast store of knowledge that websites provide. Companies in turn do not realize that they lose out on a huge buyer base because their websites and sales pitches cannot be read, heard or understood properly by people with disabilities.

Companies are also susceptible to negative consequences if they ignore accessibility. An example in case is the 2007 class action suit against Target for not adhering to the disabilities act and not taking appropriate measures to make its website accessible.

The lawsuit that Disability Rights Advocates (DRA) filed against Target on behalf of Sexton and others alleges that Target's website, [Target.com](#), is inaccessible to blind people using screen readers and other assistive technology. It thus "excludes the blind from full and equal participation in the growing Internet economy that is increasingly a fundamental part of daily life," the [complaint](#) says.

Though it may be very difficult to make the website accessible to each and every person in the world, there are a few simple things that a company can ensure. If as a company, you are unsure whether your website is accessible, it is advisable to commission a professional web design organisation who is disability confident.

The usual, though simple, issues that pose a problem are:

- Inability to change the size of the text directly through the website. Though most browsers give you an option to change font size, it will be much more user friendly if the option could be inculcated within the site itself.
- Inability to change the contrast or colour scheme of the text, so as to make it more reader friendly for the visually impaired.
- Images that do have alternative text.
- Text which does not have audio rendering.
- Inability to access the site without a mouse.

The above issues are the simplest to overcome in a website without compromising on its design or functionality. There is also a lot of software that aid in reading or comprehending a website. All that

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is needed is to make sure that the website uses language/coding such as to enable such other hardware and software to make your site more accessible.

A few things that you can inculcate into your site are:

- Ability to change text size, and colour contrasts.
- An alternative text description of any images.
- Avoiding moving images, or giving the viewer the option of skipping to content without having to view the moving images.
- Combining descriptive text with any moving images or videos.
- Ability to access the links and content with only a keyboard and its shortcuts.
- Clear navigation bars with logical flows.
- Creating flexible page layouts that scale correctly when text size is used.
- Defining tab orders in a logical way so that the user can use the tab key to move to the next field.

The above are some simple practices that a web designing company can use or employ if creating an accessible website.

There are many resources out there for a web development company to make and comply with the accessibility requirements. Some of the resources mentioned below give more technical knowhow on building accessible websites.

- **WAI:** the web accessibility initiative website gives a lot of information.

The above article has been written by Minal Jain , from Kaos Ltd, A Web & Print Solutions company. www.lostinkaos.com