Athabasca University

Accessibility Checklist & Resources

Information, Communications, & Technologies (ICT)

The most common accessibility barriers in online learning environments, documents and applications can be avoided when these things are considered in their design and implementation. Evaluate your content against this list, and see how it measures up!

- ☐ 1. **Images** – do images have meaningful descriptions in "alt text" and visible captions?
- ☐ 2. **Headings** – are headings made using styles, named meaningfully, and support a logical reading order in addition to font changes?
- ☐ 3. **Multimedia** – is it closed captioned, have audio description, or at minimum a text transcript provided to facilitate comprehension and SEO?
- ☐ 4. **Player** – does not play automatically, is the player accessible by the keyboard or a downloadable version, and is there nothing that flickers 3+ times per second that may cause seizures?
- ☐ 5. **Colour Contrast** - optimize contrast between text and background, checking with a Color Contrast Analyser
- ☐ 6. **Naming Practices** – are link text, buttons, edit fields descriptive and unique, avoiding "click here", "read more", and graphics without labels?
- ☐ 7. **Text Size** – use scalable font sizing techniques to ensure text is resizable by a browser or app (%, em, rem)?
- ☐ 8. **100% Keyboard Functionality** - can all links, buttons, controls, clickable objects, and forms, be controlled using the keyboard, without a mouse? Keys like tab, Esc, Enter, arrows
- ☐ 9. **Visual Focus** – do the keyboard focus and mouse hover have distinct visual appearance so targets are found easily (menus, controls, buttons, forms, links)?
- ☐ 10. **Language** – set document or paragraph language properties. Use plain language in text.
- ☐ 11. Use an **Accessibility Checker** – built into most popular applications such as O365, Adobe Acrobat, inDesign, web browser plug-ins or free site evaluators like WAVE?
- ☐ 12. **Colour** – avoid sole use of colour to convey meaning of information, use patterns, text versions, symbols, or font attributes
- ☐ 13. Avoid Sensory Cues – do not rely on single sensory cues like a sound, a flashing item, colour, a visual or audible error without an accessible alternative.
- ☐ 14. **Text is searchable –** ensure text is not an image of text in documents (PDF), sites, images, data tables, charts). Try to select or search for a word to test it.
- ☐ 15. **Tables** – tables are for data not layout. (use CSS, styles) and include column and row headers in data tables
- ☐ 16. Check out WebAim's resources including best practice techniques and common rationale to understand the importance of accessible documents, web content and applications.

Using this checklist will help you grab the low hanging fruit that create accessibility barriers.

To learn more or get assistance contact Accessibility Services AT@athabascau.ca

Manually Test for Accessibility

There are a few simple techniques to pick the “low hanging fruit”. The understanding of why it is important may take further reading.

- Turn off the graphics-loading feature of your web browser and access your website
  - Can you understand and read all the content of your website without the graphics?
  - The content you see is similar in reading order to that which will be viewed on mobile devices, with text to speech and screen reading software. If not, text alternatives should be created.
- Check to see that all content presented in color can be understood if you could not distinguish one color from another.
  - In a browser run your page using simulation overlays to experience cataracts, colour blindness, tunnel vision, etc. (NoCoffee for Chrome. NoCoffee for Firefox
  - Run a free Colour Contrast Analyzer for appropriate contrast between foreground text and background
- Mute the sound on your computer. Play your multimedia file. Is it understandable especially if you are just learning the concept? Would a caption or transcript assist in understanding the material? DO-IT at UW has great captioning resources.
- Do graphics/images have alternative text, “alt text” or a longer text description for people who cannot perceive what the graphic is saying? Do not forget a visual caption which is different. Blog article on creating good alt text.
- Review all content using the keyboard only by unplugging your mouse.
  - Is there a visual indication to tell you where you are in the page or program?
  - Use the TAB key to jump between buttons or links,
  - Use Arrows to scroll a window/page,
  - Use the ENTER key to activate a button or control,
  - Does the ALT key activate the menu, does the underlined letter activate that menu item?
  - Does the ESCAPE key close a pop up?
  - How long did it take you to navigate one page of your site or app?
  - Take the #NoMouse Challenge

More Accessibility Resources

W3C’s Web Accessibility Initiative created the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), as industry standards worldwide for web developers and content creators to design accessible documents and applications. We use accessibility features to ensure use by assistive technologies, improve user experience, and facilitate equitable access for people who experience physical, sensory or process challenges. The goal of Accessibility is to ensure the most people can perceive, operate, and understand our ICTs.

WCAG Guidelines, Free Accessibility Tutorial, Accessible ICT Procurement Toolkit, More Accessibility Evaluation Tools, Accessible OER Textbook Toolkit, A WCAG success criteria checklist (public),