Accessibility for the Web and Social Media

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"Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times if one only remembers to turn on the light."
~ Albus Dumbledore

Turn on the Light

WVASFAA
2019-20

What to Expect

- Web accessibility and benefits

- Legal considerations

- WCAG

- Social Media

- Website or Email

- Files

- Resources

What Is "Web" Accessibility?

- Digital content designed so that people with what may be considered disabilities can access the same info as those without

- Auditory, cognitive, physical, or visual

- Also benefits those without disabilities such as those using mobile devices, older individuals with changing abilities, or people with temporary disabilities or situational limitations

- Text-to-speech

- Digital content could be a website, email, files/documents on a website or attached to email, or social media

Additional Benefits

- Often enhances the experience for everyone

- Increases your audience

- Oh… and protecting your institution from legal action

Legal Considerations

- There are multiple policies with legal implications but no actual regulations to follow

- Required by law – sort of – in many situations as part of accessibility, non-discrimination, and/or procurement law

- United States
  - 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA) – private sector
  - Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 (2013) – private sector
  - Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 – private and public sectors
  - Section 504 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (1990) – public sector
  - Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended (2009) – private and public sectors
  - Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (1998) – government

Legal Considerations

- Formal complaint filed with the Department of Education

- Lawsuits
  - Legal landscape has been rapidly moving toward equal access
  - "In the US, the number of legal actions continues to rise and courts increasingly decide in favor of equal access, often citing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Structured Negotiation is another way that legal pressure is effective, encouraging companies to meet accessibility requirements while avoiding litigation."

- Institutional policy

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

- WCAG or WCA Guidelines
- Created to make online content more accessible
- Guidelines used by most entities since there are not exact rules
- Designed and updated regularly to apply broadly to different technologies
  - Website
  - Social Media
  - Email
  - Apps
- Levels
  - A is the lowest
  - AA is the mid-range (and includes A requirements)
  - AAA is the highest (and includes A and AA requirements)
- Most places aim for Level AA WCAG requirements

Social Media

- Videos must have captions, text alternatives – primarily if instructional – and low background noise

- Do not only use emojis/symbols to convey information or directions

- Nothing should flash more than 3 times in one second period

- Links
  - Use a URL shortener (like bit.ly)
  - Indicate if the link goes to audio [AUDIO], a picture [PIC], or a video [VIDEO]
    - Here is a demonstration of how to access entrance counseling [VIDEO] https://.......
  - Make it clear where it goes if characters allow
    - See our SAP website at https://...........

Social Media

- Put mentions and hashtags at the end of tweets/posts unless they fit in the context
  - ✓ You can get help with your #FAFSA by going to see the helpful @HARFinAid team
  - ✓ There are some brand new scholarships available for certain majors! #Scholarships #GetMoreScholarships #FreeAid @HARNursing @HARMedicine @HARDentistry
- Capitalize the first letter of each word in a hashtag (camelbacking)
  - ✗ #aiddemo
  - ✓ #AidDemo
- Avoid using acronyms in posts… unless the acronym has become its own word
  - ✓ FAFSA
  - ✗ SAP

Alt Text

- Images **must have alternative text** or captions

- Beware of images with writing on them

- Readers cannot read text on images because it is usually part of the image itself

- Text within an image must be provided through another method:
  - In the alt text
  - In the post or caption itself
  - Via a link provided in the post or caption

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WHAT TO HAVE HANDY FOR THE FAFSA
- Your Social Security Number
- Your Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- Your federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable)
- A FSA ID to sign electronically
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)

SOURCE: FAFSA.ED.GOV/HELP/BEFORE003.HTM

What info do you need to fill out your FAFSA? Full details at http://1.usa.gov/1SrGBW5 #FAFSA #HowToFAFSA

Best Practices: Twitter

- Go to your settings and turn on alternative text for images

Best Practices: Instagram

- Use the post's description area to add alternative text to caption video posts (since Insta videos are usually less than a minute)
- Edit the machine-generated alt text to provide richer descriptions and give context to the photo
  - A path in my home town lined with yellow flowers on a sunny day.

Best Practices: Facebook

- Edit the machine-generated alt text to provide richer descriptions and give context to the photo

- Like Facebook's Accessibility page for updates on new accessibility features

- Hashtags are more of a "current" thing for Twitter or Instagram

Website or Email

- Please note that WCAG also applies to files uploaded to websites or sent via email

- Same rules apply for videos and audio, things flashing and alternative text for images

- Logos should have alt text indicating that it is a logo

- Do not use only symbols or location to convey information
  - "To go to the next page, press the button on the right"
  - "To go to the next page, press the round button on the right labeled 'Go'"

Links

- Different for websites, email, and documents than social media
- Make the link clear so the purpose of the link can be determined by the link text
  - ✔ Specific guidelines can be found on our [Preparing for the FAFSA](#) page.
  - ✘ Specific guidelines can be found at https://financialaid.wvu.edu/applying-for-aid/preparing-for-fafsa.
- If unable to provide a page name, shorten the link
- Avoid using the same text to link to different websites
  - ✘ "here" or "click here"
- Indicate if the link goes to audio, video, or a picture *and* provide a link to a text alternative (unless the link is after the text)

Navigation

- Link to other pages

❌   - Students must be enrolled at least half-time for loans to disburse.

✔   - Students must be enrolled at least [half-time](#) for loans to disburse.

- Break content into sections under appropriate descriptive headers

- Provide navigation links to bypass blocks of content

Complete the FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed every academic year a student is interested in federal financial aid. Please note some state aid and scholarship programs require the student have a valid FAFSA.

- What should I do first?

- When should I apply for aid?

- Where do I complete the FAFSA?

What Should I Do First?

See our Preparing for the FAFSA page for steps you should tal may need.

Return to Top of Page

Readability

- Headings should be descriptive and sequential
- Usually Header 1 is the webpage heading

Main body text:

Start with Header 2

Description of stuff and things on this page.

Header 3 Is a Section Under H2

Stuff and things for this section.

Header 4 Is a Section Under H3

Stuff and things for this section.

Header 4 Is a Section Under H3

Stuff and things for this section.

Back to H3 As a Section Under H2

Stuff and things for this section.

Readability

- Use clear and consistent language
  - ✓ If you withdraw from classes, your financial aid may be adjusted based on your updated coursework. Aid disburses based on your courses.
  - ✗ Submit your FAFSA by the March 1 priority deadline. You may be selected for verification after your application is received.
  - ✓ Submit your FAFSA by the March 1 priority deadline. You may be selected for verification after your FAFSA is received.

- Consider creating a Style Guide to ensure terminology and phrasing is used consistently
  - ✗ Follow the terms of your Academic Success Plan for the terms listed on your plan.
  - ✓ Follow the terms listed on your Academic Success Plan for the semesters listed on your plan.

Readability

- Be as concise as possible
  - Avoid going over a 10th grade reading level… when possible
- Only use an acronym if it has already been spelled out on the page or section
  - Free Application for Federal Student Aid then FAFSA moving forward
  - If there is a lot of content broken into sections, this may need done for each section
- Be consistent in forms (i.e. ensure Student Name, ID Number are always phrased the same and in similar locations such as the top of the first page)

Color

- Be aware of the color contrast (excludes logos)
- Online tools where you can check if the contrast is sufficient
- Can depend on the size of the text
- Smaller text means a starker contrast is needed

It's not exactly easy to read text when the contrast between the background color and font color is insufficient.

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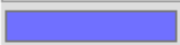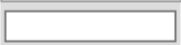
Contrast Checker

Foreground Color

#7070FF

Lightness

Background Color

#FFFFFF

Lightness

Contrast Ratio

3.85:1

permalink

Normal Text

WCAG AA: **Fail**

WCAG AAA: **Fail**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

Large Text

WCAG AA: **Pass**

WCAG AAA: **Fail**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

Graphical Objects and User Interface Components

WCAG AA: **Pass**

✓

Text Input

Explanation

Color

- Color cannot be used as the only visual means of conveying information, action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element

- Legends that only use color as the key → consider using distinct patterns too

- Flow charts that use color to show the flow → consider using different lines or shapes for different branches of the flow

- "Do the tasks marked in red"

Other Text Elements

- Avoid underlining text; that commonly indicates a link

- Use bold or italics instead

- Line spacing should be at least a space-and-a-half within paragraphs *(usually 1.5 times the font size)*

- Paragraph spacing should be at least 1.5 times larger than the line spacing *(usually 2 times the font size)*

- Word spacing in fonts is usually 0.16 times the font size

- Do not "justify" text because it messes with the visual spacing

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Tables

- Do not use tables as a design element
- Use sparingly
- Avoid a table within a cell or table
- All tables must be standard – including Excel sheets – meaning no merged cells and clear headings for columns

Student Aid Information			
	Fall	Spring	Total
Grants	$2500	$2500	$5000
Scholarships	$2000	$2000	$4000
Work-Study	$500	$500	$1000
Loans	$2750	$2750	$5500

Student Aid Information

Aid Type	Fall	Spring	Total Aid
Grants	$2500	$2500	$5000
Scholarships	$2000	$2000	$4000
Work-Study	$500	$500	$1000
Loans	$2750	$2750	$5500

Files

- WCAG applies to documents as well
- Most programs have an accessibility checker – including Word, Adobe, Excel, and PowerPoint
- PowerPoint presentations are a little difficult to make compliant
  - Background images, images with alt text, color contrast, every slide has to have a distinct title
  - Avoid putting on website if possible or consider recreating the information as a website
  - ADA-compliant version may look very different from presented version

Files

- Do not put "scanned" PDFs on a website; scanning a document to create a PDF creates an image that a reader cannot read
- PDF forms can be even more difficult to make compliant
- Each field needs a unique name and instructions
  - **Student Name:** "Input Student Name"
- Each field has to be tagged as a form field
- Better for a form to be a fillable PDF than Word document
  - Using spaces or underscores
- Make sure the Word document is compliant *before* converting to a PDF

Resources

- WCAG: https://www.w3.org
- How to Meet WCAG: https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/quickref/
- Web Accessibility Laws & Policies: https://www.w3.org/WAI/policies/
- The Business Case for Digital Accessibility: https://www.w3.org/WAI/business-case/
- Email checklist: https://www.hhs.gov/web/section-508/making-files-accessible/checklist/email-508-checklist/index.html
- SiteImprove: https://siteimprove.com/

Resources

- Social Media Best Practices: https://accessibility.umn.edu/tutorials/accessible-social-media

- Color Contrast Checker: https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

- Gunning Fog Index: http://gunning-fog-index.com/

- Readability ("consensus"): http://www.readabilityformulas.com/free-readability-formula-tests.php

- Microsoft Programs Accessibility Checker: https://support.office.com/en-us/article/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f