

Tips for accessibility testing

Testing approach

- Determine the accessibility standards and what level you are trying to achieve.
- Conduct technical testing, incorporating a combination of automated testing and manual inspection.
- Consider including user testing to appreciate practical accessibility and usability issues that may be experienced by people with a disability.

Automated testing

- Automated accessibility checkers assist the accessibility testing process, particularly for web sites with a large number of web pages or for organisations with multiple web sites.
- These tools can only test for a limited number of accessibility problems - about one third of the WCAG success criteria.
- They can also support a manual inspection process by identifying specific aspects of a web page that need to be checked.

Automated tools

- The WAVE by WebAIM is an automated accessibility checker used for testing individual web pages (wave.webaim.org).
- Web Accessibility Checker by the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre at the University of Toronto checks single HTML pages for conformance with accessibility standards (<http://achecker.ca/checker/index.php>).
- Functional Accessibility Evaluator evaluates the functional accessibility of web pages (<http://fae.cita.uiuc.edu/>).

Manual inspection

- Manual inspection consists of visual inspection of a web page and its code.
- There are a number of browser functions, accessibility toolbars, and other tools that can be used to support the manual inspection process
- Typically manual inspection is based on a sample of representative pages on a web site:
 - Start with the Home page and any other main entry points
 - Include a page from each level of the navigation
 - Include a few content pages (with different layouts or types of content)

- Include the search page and associated results page
- Include an example form
- Include pages that contain specific functionality (eg. shopping, maps, blogs)

Accessibility Toolbars

- Vision Australia Web Accessibility Toolbar for IE (www.visionaustralia.org/info.aspx?page=614)
- Web Accessibility Toolbar for IE Version 2.0 (www.paciellogroup.com/resources/wat-ie-about.html)
- Web Accessibility Toolbar for Opera (www.paciellogroup.com/resources/wat-about.html)
- Juicy Studio Firefox Web Accessibility Toolbar (addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/9108/)
- Web Developer Toolbar for Firefox: (addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/60)
- WCAG 1.0 Colour Contrast Analyser (www.visionaustralia.org/info.aspx?page=628)
- WCAG 2.0 Colour Contrast Analyser (www.paciellogroup.com/resources/contrast-analyser.html)

User testing

- Including people with a disability in user testing allows you to appreciate the usability issues these people may face when accessing your web site.
- While users testing web sites can provide their personal experiences, they cannot determine if the website is technically accessible, or if it will work with every type of assistive technology.
- Users should be skilled, but not expert, with their assistive technology.
- The web site needs to be technically accessible before asking users to test it.
- Bear in mind that people with a disability may require more time to complete tasks and they may benefit from some time to familiarise themselves with the web site before attempting any tasks.

References

- "Involving Users in Evaluating Web Accessibility" (www.w3.org/WAI/eval/users)
- "How People With Disabilities Use the Web" (www.w3.org/WAI/E0/Drafts/PWD-Use-Web/)

Digital Access

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