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RSB Website Accessibility

Bigger, Bolder, Brighter

Accessible Website Design

Many people believe that because information is online, it is accessible. If your website is not designed to meet accessible web standards, your information will not be accessible to people who are blind or vision impaired, or who have other disabilities.

What is Web Accessibility?

Web Accessibility is a philosophy of website design which endeavours to make the site as easy and effective to access for the widest possible range of potential users, irrespective of their limitations and capabilities, their location, equipment or bandwidth.

Built in Browser Enlargement

A person with low vision may use the built in enlargement functions of their web browser. This method will only work if the website has been set up to allow resizing of text.

Enlargement Software

If the built in browser enlargement is not sufficient for a person with low vision they may use enlargement software. This software will enlarge the whole screen so that the user sees only a magnified portion of the screen on their monitor. Standard layouts and navigation become much more important in helping an enlargement software user find their way around a website.

Please contact the RSB Adaptive Technology Centre for more information about enlargement software on (08) 8417 5599 or email atc@rsb.org.au

Screen Reading Software

People who have very low or no vision may use screen reading software. Screen reading software will read out content and navigation to the user. Users of screen reading software only use the keyboard, not the mouse, to navigate a website.

Please contact the RSB Adaptive Technology Centre for more information about screen reading software on (08) 8417 5599 or email

Website Accessibility Standards

In order for your website to be accessible several techniques need to be integrated into the design of the website.

The standards used in Australia are based on the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WIA). At the RSB we are focused on accessibility for people who are blind or vision impaired, but an accessible website can be beneficial for people with a variety of disabilities.

Because the W3C WIA standards are complex and can be difficult to interpret, the RSB has prepared a simplified list of important features to include in your website design to make it more accessible for people who are blind or vision impaired.

It is suggested that a professional web designer who has experience with accessibility practices be consulted to make the necessary changes.

 • Use a standard and consistent layout:
People using screen reading software to access your website will locate navigation and content more effectively if they are in standard places on the page and do not move around from page to page.

• Provide a link at the beginning of the page that moves directly to the content:
Every time a page loads or reloads screen reading software will start reading from the top of the page. Usually this means that it will read out the page navigation each time. If you provide a skip to content link at the beginning of the page users can choose to bypass the navigation and jump straight to the content.

• Ensure the user can resize the text:
Text should be given a scalable unit size rather than a fixed size. Users can then choose to resize the text with the built in browser functions. Graphical text should also be avoided where possible as it cannot be enlarged by the user.

• Apply Alt tags to all images:
If you apply an Alt (Alternative) tag to an image it will be read out by screen reading software when a user navigates to that image on the page. If no alt tag is applied, the screen reading software will read out the image name which, often, will not explain the image to the user. Alt tags need to describe the image in the context of the page.

• Provide text equivalents for all media files:
Any audio or video files should have links to text equivalents. PDF files either need to be created in an accessible way or a text equivalent should also be provided.

• Ensure your site uses appropriate structural mark-up:

Heading tags should be used in a consistent and logical way. Users of screen reading software will be able to effectively navigate around your site if heading tags are appropriately used. Lists should also be tagged correctly.

• Ensure link text is meaningful and informative:
Don't create 'click here' or 'Download' links. Download links should also include information about the type of file and the size of the document to be downloaded. For example: Annual Report 2012 (text 19Kb)

• Don't use tables for layout purposes:
Tables should only be used to display tabular data and should be marked up appropriately so they can be read properly by screen reading software.

• If you use forms, make sure they are marked up for screen reading software:
All form objects need to be correctly labelled so that screen reading software users know where they are in the form and what information they need to be entering. Users also need to be able to access and fill out the whole form and submit it using only the keyboard.

For more information or assistance with developing an accessible website, please contact RSB Information Technology on (08) 8417 5555 or email mail@rsb.org.au

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