



Webinar Questions & Answers

Webinar #3: WCAG Requirements and Working with Web Developers to Create Accessible Websites

The internet has become an integral part of our daily lives, providing us with access to information, services and entertainment. But how can we ensure it remains accessible to everyone?

Question 1: Our website developer stated that their designs are WCAG 2.1 AA compliant. The developer provided me with a link to complete an access scan which found 60 issues. Many of these issues are design based. What have you found to be the best approach to get this issue resolved when the company is not Manitoba based?

Answer: I would try going back to whoever developed the site. See if they'd be willing to, either for free or for a fee, make those changes to the site identified in your scan. The question is always around contracts. Did the original contract state that the site would be compliant, or did it say they would do the best we could? Or did it not even mention it? There may be some contractual obligations. It is really complicated. A lot of folks will say one thing, and it's not 100% true. It often requires negotiation and an understanding of terms of what accessibility means. The beautiful thing about WCAG is it's relatively black and white about what passes and what doesn't. Even if your site is accessible according to the WCAG requirements, some people may not be able to access all the content on the site. This is why it should always be monitored and checked.

Question 2: Regarding Alt Text, do you have any recommendations for guidelines regarding what makes good Alt-Text?

Answer: One of the things I've been seeing is that a lot of folks are starting to use ChatGPT. You can drop an image into ChatGPT and it will generate some alt text. You still must determine if that text is an acceptable solution and if it provides context for the image.

To explain context, imagine you are running a zoo and your website is showing an image of a lion. Now say, you're running a bank and you had that same picture of a lion on the bank's website. Context really matters here. Alt text for the zoo may be lion laying in sun, but that wouldn't work for the bank. It should explain what that image represents and why it is being used on the bank's website. It should provide a little bit more bountiful information. I'm not against using AI tools, but always remember to provide context for image ALT text.

Question 3: Does hitting tab only navigate through links and videos?

Answer: This could depend on the website. There are different ways of navigating using the keyboard. PC and Apple computers also have differences in shortcut keystrokes. I suggest testing this out on your site to see how navigation works. But yes, tap is one of them. But there are many other ways to navigate sites.

Question 4: Do you have any recommended sources or tips to find good photos with diverse people? We are a small business and can't solely depend on our own photo library?

Answer: Stock photography companies have done a real disservice to us designers and communicators. It is difficult to find a truly diverse set of audiences. Whether race, ethnicity, gender and ability or disability. A few free stock sites like PEXELS and unsplash UNSPLASH are okay.

Question 5: Is it better to develop your own video content to ensure accessibility rather than using available YouTube videos?

Answer: Yes, definitely. I'm all for developing your own content, not only because you have total control over it, but you can design, build and say whatever you want in your message or story. You can also control the speed people speak for audience clarity. You can also add captions and control the message. Custom made videos are the best.

Question 6: What might you recommend to larger organizations where a majority of employees author digital content for both internal and external audiences? In our case, a post-secondary context. It isn't exactly viable to reach out to a consultancy for each course developed.

Answer: It's a really good and hard question. One thing you could think about is kind of deputizing or assigning that task to somebody internally within your organization. I found over the years that there are people, if you tap them, they're willing to step up and would love to spend time on a special project because perhaps they know somebody who is disabled, or perhaps they themselves have a disability. An advocate internally can support projects without having to encounter additional costs. That's my one hint.

Question 7: How do you work with organizations that have thousands of pages? How do you strategize the process of making the site accessible?

Answer: Typically, it depends on a few things. The age, type of content management system, the organization size and budget. Look at the most important pages of the site first. You can use Google analytics or another analytics tool to try to figure out these pages. It's very unlikely that all those thousands of pages are being accessed evenly. In fact, I'd estimate it's probably an 80/20 rule. 20% of those pages are being visited by 80% of the people. So, try to tackle the most important pages first, and worry about those secondary and tertiary pages next.

Question 8: how to integrate people with disabilities, whether externally and internally when creating web content?

Answer: I think we're getting to the point in our culture, where we can freely ask for people's experiences and feedback. Ask around and see what folks may be willing to share their story and provide feedback on the accessibility of your website. It's a really complex question.

Question 9: How would you suggest navigating as a municipality the need to communicate specific legal requirements (such as public notices or permit forms), while also making them accessible?

Answer: I think the overarching important point is to create an accessibility statement on your site. It can state that these are important notices and that you are doing your best to make them accessible. Plan to make them as accessible as possible. This

indicates to people that this is a priority for you and a critical part of your work and your information governance.

Question 10: How do you know if a pdf document is accessible as there are different ways they are added to a site; scanned, exported to a PDF, or printed to a pdf - how do you fix existing pdfs on the site if not compliant as there are many.

Answer: PDF, accessibility is its own kind of world. Making an accessible PDF is doable, but it also requires a set of skills. There are courses online that show how to convert a PDF into an accessible PDF. It's not super hard, but it does involve several steps. I'll just say this, most PDFs are poorly made and aren't very accessible.