



Webinar Questions & Answers

Webinar #4: Why Digital Accessibility Audits are Important and What's Involved in the Process

When barriers are removed everyone benefits. But how do you ensure that your website remains accessible to as many audiences as possible?

Question 1: Are we able to print the results of the accessibility checker?

Answer: The accessibility checker task pane appears next to your content and shows the inspection results. Select an issue under "Inspection Results" to see why and how to fix an issue. You can save this report and print it.

Question 2: Can ASL-English Interpreter or accessibility options be automatic on the website and social media platforms?

Answer: Someone can have sign language as their first language. My hope is artificial intelligence helps us in this way because I can tell you right now, the artificial intelligence used to describe images today is horrible. It's horrible as it is today, as I sit here it won't be horrible in five years. So, I think your comment is great, because hopefully, AI can help. Now, one thing about interpretation, humans are the best interpreters. Humans understand the nuances. Maybe one day artificial intelligence will be that good. But until then human interpretation is still the best.

Question 3: Do website developers typically know how to make a website accessible and is this common practice for website companies?

Answer: That's a tough one. In my experience, even in provinces that have had accessibility legislation in Canada for quite a long time, I find that some web developers

say, “Yup, they’re accessible, the websites”, and they’re not. A tool you can use is the WAVE automated website checking tool. It’s a great tool.

WAVE does a million-web page survey, and they’ve done it for four years now. They just brought out the results from their last survey. About a month and a half ago they did a survey. They took a million home pages worldwide and they put them into the WAVE tool. They found for the past four years is that about 96% of websites are still inaccessible. Websites require easy fixes such as: image descriptions, colour and contrast.

Why are we still here in 2024? The needle hasn’t moved a lot in 24 years. And my feeling is, and this is just my personal view, if auditors with disabilities would be brought into every project in some way, we would then see major change, and then the answer to your question would be very, very different. It’s a great question, though, in my experience the expertise can vary. If you don’t have a lot of knowledge about website accessibility, how do you know what they’re saying is true? That’s the issue that people have had across Canada. It’s tough because there are very few people doing what I do. So, you really have to look for people who others recommend and ask personally to ask them to say, why is this accessible? Tell me why it’s accessible? Give that a try. We’ve got some great companies in Manitoba and across Canada completing accessibility audits.

Question 4: You mentioned that the tasks you implement have changed since you learned more through your PHD education. What’s a specific example of a task that you would give your auditors now that you have more knowledge on the subject?

Answer: It is about how to ask questions, to get those answers. You can look that up on the internet. So there are a number of ways of giving tasks in audits. They’re not right and they’re not wrong. They’re just different ways that you get information. Every website I look at I do it slightly differently. What I learned in my PHD work since 2019, is that the wording you use can give different answers. I vary my wording now, I didn’t used to. I used to use similar wording. Now I change it up, and I can’t give you exact examples here, because I can’t think of anything off the top of my head, but there is a lot of information about this on the Internet. You don’t have to do a PHD right? You don’t have to pay that big money. There’s a lot of information on the Internet about how to form questions. It’s really, how do you form questions right to get answers. So please feel free to look that up. I vary it with every website I do. I vary the language I use.

I vary the questions I ask, because I want to try to get different answers from people, and the auditors may not know that they may find that out right now.

When starting to make our website more accessible, to go through a report item by item, and resolve as many questions as possible. My reports are huge. They're like a hundred pages or more, because they've include screen prints. They explain things. Other consultants give you a five-page report. Very different. My reports are different from others.

Whether you're doing the audit or hiring somebody else, you're going to use the report to figure out what barriers you must lower. What barriers can you lower now, and which ones need more time. My reports are very long, very detailed, but they give a lot of information.

Question 5: Does the WAVE Checker have the ability to provide a report?

Answer: It does, and it can. Yes, I'll just say that I've never used it that way, but it could. There are different ways of using it. Just Google it. But usually, I just put through a web page. I look at it and then I write things down in a report. For me, I'm just using it to do final checks to see if I've missed anything of those barriers.

Question 6: What's the average cost of conducting a website audit? It might be difficult to say now but many internal advocates will need to push their organizations.

Answer: Costs vary from audit to audit, so it is not a question that can be answered easily. I must evaluate every project to give a quote.