Website Accessibility
Guide for Haiku Websites

Contents

Background

On 23 September 2020, The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (known as WCAG 2.1) came into effect. In this guide we cover the most common accessibility issues on Haiku websites and give pointers on how to avoid them.

[Read about the Website Accessibility Regulations (The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018).](#)

[Read the Accessibility Statement for the Medical Sciences Division website](#)

Page structure, titles and headings
Structure
- Page structure should be logical and consistent with other pages on the website. For example, don't disable the left hand navigation and then use a portlet to rebuild it on the right.
- When using a keyboard to navigate a page, the order must be logical.
- Only use bullet points for lists, not to draw attention to one sentence or link.

Page Titles
- Page titles must be unique to the site and indicate the purpose of the page.

Headings
- Use headings and sub-headings to break page content into short manageable sections.
- Headings should be hierarchical.
- Headings must be informative and meaningful.
- Don't use headings for items that aren't headings, e.g. to draw attention to a line of text.
- Don't use bold as a substitute for a heading.

Links and tables
Links
- Links should be meaningful out of context and make sense without reading surrounding text.
- Do not use link text such as 'Click here', 'Read more' or 'Find out more'

- Links should be embedded within text, not typed in full. For example, 'To find out more, visit https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/accessibility' should be 'To find out more, read our Accessibility Statement'.
- External links should always open in the same window. Further guidance is available here.

Tables
- Don't use tables for layout, e.g. to layout images.
- Use row and column headers when using tables to display tabular data.

Use of colour, contrast, language and visual characteristics
Colour
- Do not use colour as the only way to convey information of any kind. For example, the text 'click on the blue button' is not compliant as relies on the user being able to see colour.

Contrast
- Make sure that you select the appropriate copyright text style (either light or dark) for an image.
- Images containing text must have a 3:1 contrast between the text and the background.

Language
- Ensure your content is written and presented in a way that is suitable for the website and its intended audience. Don't make it too complicated or use jargon/acronyms.

Visual Characteristics
- Bold, underline and all caps should not be used to draw attention to a specific sentence/word.
- As above with colour, do not use size, shape, sound or location as the only way to convey instructions. For example, don't refer to the 'navigation on the left/right of the page' or the 'small rectangle button'.

Images and images containing text
All Images
- All images must have meaningful alternative (alt) text. The alt text must provide the same information presented by the image. You don't need to prefix it with 'image of' or 'photo of'.
- All image file names should be informative and meaningful.
- Purely decorative images (used for layout or non-informative purposes) do not require alt text.

Images containing text
- Images containing text should be avoided, logos are exempt from the regulations.
- If unavoidable, images containing text must have a suitable text alternative to include the image text.
- Infographics, charts, graphs and posters should have the full text description available, located either near the image or on a separate webpage, linked to from the infographic page. The alt text should describe where the description is.

Audio and video content
Audio content
- All audio content must be accompanied with a transcript.

- There must be a way for users to stop audio content if it plays automatically and lasts longer than three seconds. Check that this is possible with the third party service you have chosen to host your audio content.
- There must be a way for users to change the volume without changing their system settings. Check that this is possible with the third party service you have chosen to host your audio content.

Video only content
- Do not use content that flashes more than three times a second.
- All video only content must have a text description that serves the same purpose as the original content, describing the video and all important activity that takes place on-screen.

Video with audio content
- Do not use content that flashes more than three times a second.
- All video with audio content must have synchronised captions that includes all dialogue and important sound-effects.
- There must be a way for users to stop audio content if it plays automatically and lasts longer than three seconds. Check that this is possible with the third party service you have chosen to host your content.
- There must be a way for users to change the volume without changing their system settings. Check that this is possible with the third party service you have chosen to host your content.

Accessible documents (Word, PDF's etc.)
- All documents, including PDFs must be fully accessible
- Documents must have an informative and meaningful title
- Text should be left aligned, not justified
- Avoid underlining, except for links
- Do not use colour or shape alone to show meaning
- Do not use images containing text
- All links should be meaningful out of context, without reading the surrounding text
- Tables should only be used for data, not for laying out other types of content
- Avoid splitting or merging cells in tables
- Tables must have appropriate alt text
- Each table must have one header row and one header column. The headers should not be visually communicated by formatting the text using size or colour
- Always run your final document through the programme's accessibility checker before converting to PDF

Useful resources
Below are some useful tools that might be helpful for learning about accessibility issues:

- [Decision tree for deciding whether an image requires alt text or not](#) (w3.org)
- [Guidance on appropriate use of alt text](#) (WebAIM)
- [Contrast checker](#) (WebAIM)
- [Check the accessibility of a webpage](#) (WAVE Tool)
- [Check the accessibility of a document](#) (WebAIM)
- [Adding or amending YouTube captions](#) (YouTube)
- [Screen reader demo for digital accessibility](#) (YouTube)