

Moving forward with digital accessibility in Higher Education

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JIIG-CAL PRINT	DATE	SECTIONS SEARCHED	JOB FOUND	CENTRE	GROUP	STUDENT
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WARNING-COMMENTS ON QUALIFICATIONS ARE BASED ON THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH JOB. IN SOME CASES A GREAT DEAL WILL DEPEND ON YOUR GRADES & ALSO ON THE AMOUNT OF COMPETITION FOR THE JOB. YOU MUST NOT ASSUME THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS GET THE JOB EVEN IF YOU HAVE THESE QUALIFICATIONS.

Introduction: Accessibility as a career?

- 7 - 9 JOBS IN THIS RANGE HAVE MORE OF YOUR LIKES THAN YOUR DISLIKES.
 - 4 - 6 THESE JOBS HAVE ABOUT THE SAME OF EACH.
 - 1 - 3 JOBS IN THIS RANGE HAVE MORE OF YOUR DISLIKES THAN YOUR LIKES.
- IF THE POINTS RATING IS LESS THAN 1, THIS USUALLY MEANS THAT YOU HAVE AN ILLNESS OR DISABILITY WHICH WOULD MAKE THE JOB VERY DIFFICULT FOR YOU.


JOBS FOUND IN SECTION E - IN ORDER OF SUITABILITY

Objectives for this talk

- Defining accessibility, and why we're here talking about it
- Organizational accessibility maturity
- A strategy for a shared responsibility for accessibility
- What are the things I can do now?
 - Practical advice for different stakeholders

BAKER





Equivalent access.
But sub-optimal user experience.



Equal access.
A better user experience for all.



Defining digital accessibility

Digital accessibility — a definition

- Relating to the degree to which a digital resource can be used for its intended purpose by people with disabilities

What? Digital resources

- Web sites and applications
- Mobile apps
- Digital documents: Word, PowerPoint, PDF, Excel, etc.
- Digital publications
- Tools for creating and hosting digital content (LMS, repositories, catalogues...)
- Desktop software
- Digital signage, kiosk interfaces
- Video, audio, animation
- Classroom technology

Why? The risks

- Inaccessibility means some people can't do their job, study, access information...
- Inaccessibility creates vulnerability to legal action
- Inaccessibility can lead to negative publicity
- Inaccessibility puts Sussex at a disadvantage compared to peer institutions
- Inaccessibility creates a financial burden for evaluation and remediation

Why? The regulatory framework

- Equality Act 2010
 - Sets out general rights for people with disabilities
 - Obligations for employers
 - Obligations for organisations providing employment and services (including education)

Why? The regulatory framework

- The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018
 - UK implementation of an EU directive on public sector web accessibility
 - Builds on Equality Act to provides more specific requirements for digital accessibility—**WCAG 2.1 AA**
 - Higher Ed institutions considered to full under definition of public sector bodies
 - Sets targets for new (Sep 2019) and existing (Sep 2020) web sites and apps (June 2021) to comply with the regulations
 - Defines exemptions (some multimedia, “heritage collection” content, some PDFs, maps)
 - Defines an obligation to provide an accessibility statement

Why? Opportunities

- Accessibility enables a greater audience to successfully use a digital resource
- Accessibility supports flexibility of interaction, accommodating different individual needs, devices, situations
 - Including those not yet envisaged
- Accessibility connects excellence in digital resource provision with inclusion and diversity goals

I mean, big picture, I think we could mitigate blindness as a disability in twenty years vis-a-vis technology. I really believe that.

— Jessie, TPG usability study participant and screen reader user

Who benefits from accessibility?

- People
- People with disabilities: visual, hearing, cognitive, motor, speech
- Older adults
- People with English as a second language
- People with technological or environmental constraints

Organisational accessibility maturity



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graph LR; A[Identify] --> B[Prioritize]; B --> C[Inject]; C --> D[Integrate];
```

Identify

Prioritize

Inject

Integrate



Identify

Identify and repair accessibility issues
based on standards compliance



Identify

Prioritize

Prioritize evaluation and repair activities
based on real-world impact



Identify

Prioritize

Inject

Inject accessibility best practices into the
design and development process



Identify

Prioritize

Inject

Integrate

Integrate accessibility best practices into
culture and practice

Where are you on the accessibility maturity continuum?

Where do you want to be on the accessibility maturity continuum?

What challenges do you foresee in getting to that point?



A shared responsibility for
accessibility

People responsible for digital resources

- Communications
- Developers
- Procurement
- Project managers
- Service managers
- Leadership
- Media producers
- Teachers
- Instructional designers
- Researchers
- Librarians
- Human Resources
- Students
- And more...

Responsibility for accessibility

- Responsible for ensuring that resources are optimally accessible, whether created in-house or procured
- Responsible for having and applying knowledge and skills appropriate to roles — writing, multimedia, visual design, development, procurement
- Responsible for defining, knowing and following policies and processes
 - including exception processes when accessibility can't be fully met

Responsibility needs knowledge and skills

- To apply best practice in accessibility when creating digital content
- To articulate accessibility needs when procuring digital resources, and assess candidate solutions
- To know when to ask for specialist help

Responsibility needs governance

- Standards for baseline levels of accessibility
- Processes for applying best practices
- Procurement processes for including accessibility in requirements, in evaluation and selection
- Processes for identifying and dealing with instances of inaccessibility
- Processes for giving staff the skills and knowledge they need to meet their accessibility responsibilities
- Processes for involving disabled people in accessibility decision-making

Responsibility needs leadership and commitment

- A public commitment to accessibility across the institution
- To define and implement an institutional accessibility strategy that supports all those with responsibility for accessibility
- Taking advantage of strategic partnerships with other organisations to influence accessibility in the marketplace

Organisational accessibility
strategy supports collective and
individual responsibility

Supporting creators of digital content

- Internal standards for accessibility
- Training and supporting resources—general, and tailored to specific roles and activities
- Tools that facilitate accessible content creation

Supporting procurers of digital content

- Define and publicise internal standards for accessibility
- Incorporate accessibility requirements in contract language
- Define and implement an exception process
 - What happens when you don't get what you ask for
- Work with other institutions to share expectations and experiences

Supporting people who use digital resources

- For many people, there should be no need to disclose accessibility needs when digital resources are designed with accessibility in mind
- For others:
 - Provide assistive technology and advice on using it
 - Provide guidance on diagnosing accessibility needs
- For all—open communication channels on accessibility
 - Include a way to report accessibility issues, and a system for handling them
 - Communicate current state and progress towards addressing known issues

The image shows three white starting blocks with red footpads arranged on a blue track. Each block has the 'TISSOT' logo on its side. The middle block is equipped with a white megaphone. The blocks are positioned on a blue track with white lane markings.

What you can do next

Photo credit: Andrew Hecker <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11108661>

If you produce Office-type
documents

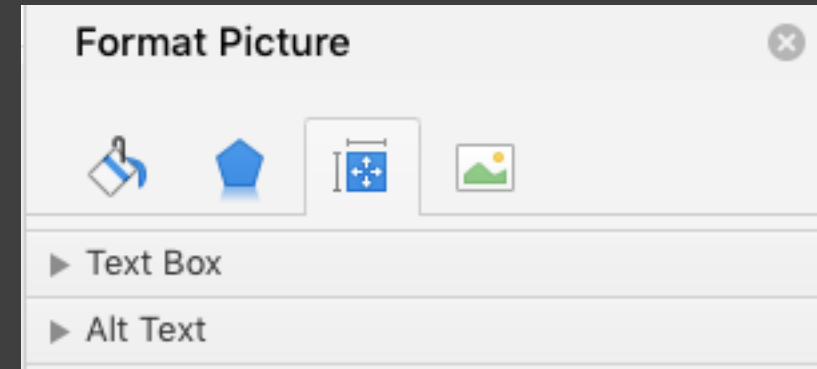
Making more accessible Office documents

- Use headings and lists to convey content structure
 - In Office, use the Styles menu



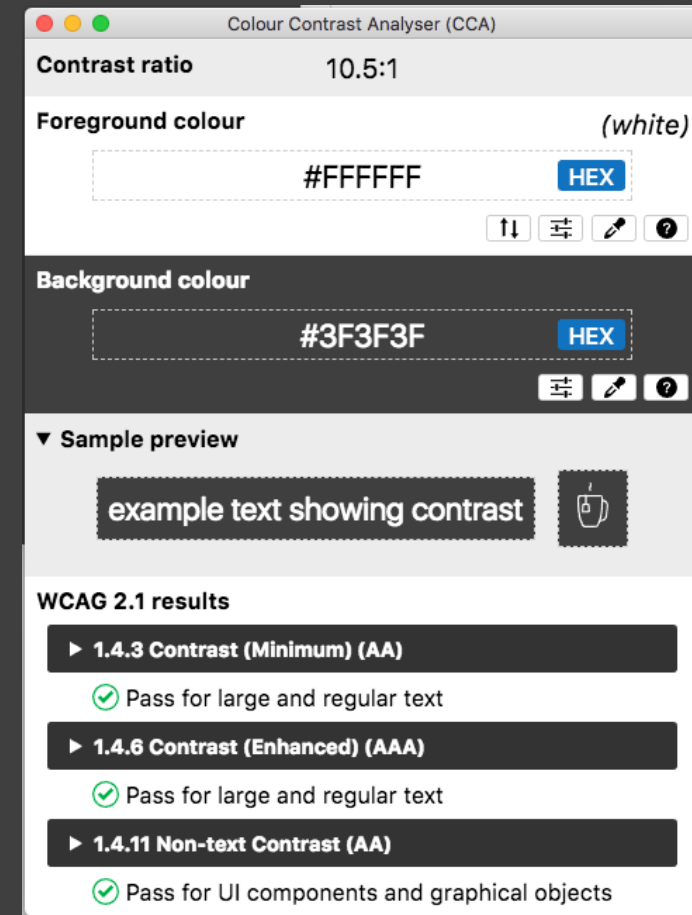
Making more accessible Office documents

- Provide images with suitable text alternatives
 - In Office applications, look in *Format Picture*



Making more accessible Office documents

- Use colour carefully
 - Ensure sufficient contrast between foreground and background colours
 - Use a contrast checking tool to check contrast
- Write accessibly
 - Use abbreviations and acronyms with care
 - Check for missing punctuation
 - Don't rely on visual appearance when describing other content



If you use a content publishing
tool

Using content publishing tools accessibly

- Familiarise yourself with and make use of features that support accessibility
 - Ways to add alternative text
 - Ways to add structure to your content
- Provide documents and links to documents with meaningful titles
- Use automated accessibility solutions with care
- Check content before publishing

If you develop web sites or
applications

Key web accessibility checks for developers

- Interactivity:
 - Does every input element have an accessible name, role and value?
 - Are these updated when the application's state changes?
- Keyboard:
 - Can every active element be reached and operated by the keyboard?
 - Is keyboard focus logical and clearly visible?
- Forms and error handling:
 - Do form fields have visible labels?
 - Are error messages provided that clearly describe the error?
 - Are they programmatically associated with the source of the error?

If you find you are responsible
for a resource with accessibility
issues

Dealing with the current situation

Based on the results of your evaluation, identify:

- What is the greatest accessibility risk?
- What's the best way to manage that risk?
 - Remediation now
 - Remediation/replacement later and provide temporary alternative now
 - Provide equivalent alternative access
- Document and be prepared to communicate your decisions

If you have authority to
establish or support campus
services

Campus-wide services that support accessibility

- Accessibility centre of excellence
 - Digital accessibility best practice repository
 - Tools to support accessible development and checking
 - Quick tips
 - Patterns for accessible documents and content
- Assistive technology and user research lab
- Services:
 - Captioning service
 - Alt formats service
 - Enterprise-level evaluation and monitoring service
- Training on accessibility—general, role based, injected into existing training modules

If you have an opportunity to
influence campus culture and
attitude

Support excellence in accessibility

- Reward excellence in accessibility and inclusive technology use
- Include accessibility expertise in job descriptions
- Demonstrate and promote inclusive digital communication across campus

Raising the profile of disability on campus

- Look at ways to increase representation of disability across campus, including in diversity and equality initiatives
- Make sure disability is represented positively in publicity materials
- Support recruitment of staff with disabilities



The road to accessibility maturity may be not always be quick, but the journey is worth it!

More on the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations

- Policyconnect.org.uk (2018)
 - Accessible VLEs – making the most of the new regulations
<https://www.policyconnect.org.uk/appgat/research/accessible-vles-making-most-new-regulations>
- Gov.uk (2018)
 - How we're helping public sector websites meet accessibility requirements
<https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2018/09/24/how-were-helping-public-sector-websites-meet-accessibility-requirements/>
 - Public sector website accessibility statements - what you need to know
<https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2018/11/21/public-sector-website-accessibility-statements-what-you-need-to-know/>
- Webdevlaw.uk (2016)
 - A plain English guide to the EU public sector accessibility directive:
<https://webdevlaw.uk/2016/12/05/plain-english-guide-eu-accessibility-directive/>