Web Accessibility

Guidance on creating accessible web content

General Information

The Web Accessibility Initiative of the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) offers the most comprehensive array of information and resources about web accessibility you will find in one place. Go there for:

> ➢ the Web Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) and strategies for implementing them;
> ➢ explanations of how people with a variety of disabilities use the internet;
> ➢ tips on how to make your website as accessible as possible, not only for individuals with a disability, but for those using mobile devices ("Designing for Inclusion"); and
> ➢ many other helpful discussions and resources.

WebAIM (Web Accessibility in Mind) has an excellent set of articles devoted to issues of accessible web content; browse the list under "HTML Accessibility."

For information about legal provisions and voluntary guidelines related to web accessibility, see WebAIM's articles under "Standards and Laws."

Finally, you can learn how to evaluate the web content you create to ensure it is accessible to individuals with a disability. See the WebAIM list of "Evaluation, Testing, and Tools" articles.

Check the accessibility of the websites you want students to use.

Here are some of the most popular accessibility checkers for websites:

> ➔ WAVE (a product of WebAIM; originally developed with the sponsorship of Temple's Institute on Disabilities and Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology) gives feedback in graphic form. **Special feature**: WAVE allows the user to discover the sequence in which a screen reader will read a page or table.
> ➔ W3C Markup Validation Service: evaluates HTML and XHTML code according to W3C (Worldwide Web Consortium) accessibility standards.
> ➔ HISoftware's Cynthia Says offers a free web content checker that processes about one page per minute and evaluates it according to the set of standards

you choose. The report shows whether the page passed or failed each standard, and provides the text of the standards. **Special features**: The program will flag insufficiently descriptive link labels. The "emulate this browser" feature allows you to see what the page will look like in a different browser.

� Web accessibility checker for the Dreamweaver MX authoring tool. Specifically integrated with Dreamweaver, it offers a less extensive evaluation than WAVE. WebAIM has a comprehensive instructional article, "How to make accessible web content using Dreamweaver."

Other Resources on Web Accessibility

Online training module on issues related to web accessibility. This module was produced by Ohio State University's FAME project (Faculty and Administrator Modules in Higher Education). It includes brief and easily navigated sections of text supplemented by video clips of students, disabilities specialists, and faculty. The module concludes with several short case scenarios that invite viewers to select the most appropriate response among the options given; the quality of each answer is then assessed in detail.

Accessibility validators and simulators (list of links).

AccessIT: National Center on Accessible Information Technology in Education.

EASI (Equal Access to Software and Information) offers online courses and webinars (for a fee) on a variety of topics related to accessibility. The website also allows free access to several archived webinars and podcasts.

HiSoftware and Microsoft, Web Accessibility Handbook, available for download after free registration on the website.

Litzkow, Michael, et al. "Making multi-media web-based lectures accessible: experiences, problems, and solutions." Proceedings of California State University Northridge Center on Disabilities Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference, 2004.

Pilgrim, Mark. *Dive Into Accessibility: 30 Days to a More Accessible Website*, 2002. An entertaining, no-nonsense trip through the practical intricacies of accessibility.

Shapiro, Brian. "Technology Transformation and Disability: Universally Accessible Web Tables," in Jeanne L. Higbee, ed. *Curriculum Transformation and Disability: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education* (PDF). Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy, General College, University of Minnesota, 2003: 265-84.