

Accessibility made easy

Images:

The key to accessibility is to make all content exactly that - accessible. Images and figures can be tricky, as an image says more than a thousand words, but it is your responsibility to create a little text that explains what is shown on the image. This text can be put in the “alt” tag on your images and then it will be read aloud by screen readers, accommodating the hearing-impaired.

example: ``

The alt text should not be too long, in fact a few sources recommend that it should be kept below 100 characters, but there is no official limit.

It can be helpful to write alt text, as though you cannot see the image. Do not write an entire summary of what the image represents, but concisely explain “What is on the image?”, “What is going on?” and “What do I want to explain with this image”.

IMPORTANT: Not all images need to be read aloud. However, these images need to have an alt text as well. By writing `alt=""`, you tell the user that you have thought about the image, and deemed that it is not worth conveying. This way they know they did not miss something.

Navigation:

It is essential that the user can access all parts of the page via keyboard input alone. For instance, if you are working with pop up windows like modals, then put a clear path to the modal, e.g. a link ‘alt’ text that will tell the user to click a specific button to access it.

A modal, or any pop up element will not be read by a screen reader unless it is visible on the screen.

This same goes for event handlers, it is usually a good idea to stick to the event handler: mouseclick. This can be accessed through the enter tap, but other event handlers do not have an assigned key. Make sure that the user is able to access all commands via the keyboard.

You can still have fancy things like hover and such, but make sure that an alternative exists so all users can enjoy the functions you have made.

You need to be careful when toggling images using the css. If you use the invisibility style attribute it might not be sufficient since the image will still be rendered and therefore read by a screen reader, so it is necessary to change the alt text as well. It is therefore crucial to be

certain and check the methods you have used. For instance, instead of using “visibility”, you could maybe use “display:none;” which will make sure the image does not render.

HTML:

Try to keep your HTML as clean as possible, since the screen reader might get confused if elements appear in a different order than they appear in the code. Always check your visual elements with a screen reader, if you have implemented advanced elements.

If your text is nicely structured some screen readers allow the user to get a quick overview of some key elements, for example the H1 tag will appear as a heading for a paragraph and so on. So use the “normal” tags in HTML, instead of making your own.

Important tags include: Headings (H1- H6), Tables (caption), and the table’s elements (title).

If possible, it is considered good practice to also include ways for the user to change the font-size, color, font-type etc. This way the user can modify the layout in a way that best suits them when they read your website.

Good practices:

Good practices for color blind:

- Underline links and make them appear in a distinctly different color (color-blind appropriate) from the rest of the text.
- Check that no important graphics are in the red/green, or blue/yellow combination.

Good practices for dyslexic people:

- Try to avoid black text on white background, and if you do, then try to provide an alternative, as this harsh contrast can make it difficult for dyslexic people to focus on the words.

Good practices for people who are hearing-impaired:

- Include subtitles to all videos, and in general include a text alternative to any sound effects.

Good practices for elderly people:

- Use larger hitboxes than normal, it can be difficult to navigate buttons that are too small.
- Use larger elements in general, this is easier to navigate.

Final note: It is next to impossible to design a website that is equally easy for everyone to navigate, so just try to accommodate as many different people as possible.

Also check out w3.org's full page on accessibility based code:

<https://www.w3.org/TR/2002/REC-UAAG10-20021217/guidelines#tech-provide-outline-view>