

Accessibility

Best practices for making nonprofit websites & donation forms work for everyone

Nearly 49 million Americans have some type of disability. Like everyone, these individuals utilize email and the web daily which presents some interesting challenges for designing and developing for the web.

Key web considerations for disabled



The visually impaired range from individuals who cannot distinguish between reds, blues and greens (color blind), individuals with moderate impairments using high resolution monitors, and the fully blind who using screen readers and other assistive devices.



Those with physical limitations may find using a mouse impossible. Your designs and code must accommodate keyboards, headwands, or other assistive devices.

Everyone knows someone with a disability

48.9 million 9.4 percent of non-institutionalized civilians in the U.S. live with a disability.

2 million 8.8% of Americans report visual difficulties even while wearing glasses or contacts. 2 million have no residual vision.



8 percent of males and 1 percent of females are color blind.

Our accessibility study



During October 2013, we tested 9 nonprofit websites and donation forms for accessibility using Grace Strother's high resolution monitor and screen reader. We also conducted testing of websites with five colorblind users.

We compiled the data from that study and the WC3 Guidelines for Accessibility to create these best practices for nonprofit designers and engineers.



The disability is not the problem.
The accessibility is the problem.

Mohamed Jemni #TED2013

Best practices for donation forms

1 Simple things make a huge difference

- **Alt tags** - Images and FLASH are invisible to readers without alternate text. Over half of the nonprofit sites tested did not have alt text for the "Donate" image button leading to the donation form.
- **Form field labels** - In our donation form testing, including labels with "for" and "title" attributes for form validation information meant the difference between an unusable and a great experience.

```
<label for="txtEmail">  
  Email address:  
  <span title="Required"*/span>  
</label>  
<input name="txtEmail" />
```

2 Smart error messages

Poor form validation caused huge problems in our testing. Individuals using assistive devices are unable to "see" an error message and a specific field within the form at the same time.

The most accessible form validation provided a summary of all errors with field highlighting and field-level error messages.

3 Device-independence

Put that mouse away for a minute. Spend a few minutes getting the tab order solid especially if some fields show/hide dynamically. If you can tab into hidden fields, they aren't hidden to screen readers!

4 One column - accessible & mobile

Two column forms and table-based layouts cause many problems such as a tab order which jumps from "first name" to "credit card number" then to "last name". A single column layout is also much more mobile friendly.

5 Be mindful of color

High contrast colors work best for the visual impaired. *Italicized* and grey text also impacts readability. From our color blind testing, links which were not underlined were often indistinguishable from normal text.

6 Clear page and form layouts

Users with screenreaders cannot "scan" a page but just start from the top. Make the reading order the same as the visual order. Beware layouts with poor separation of content and navigation, too much "visual noise", and other layout woes which become barriers for the visually impaired.

7 Avoid unnecessary steps and fields

Users with screenreaders surf the web amazingly fast. Still, they must "touch" almost everything on a page to determine if the text, field, or hyperlink is relevant. Don't lose donors with too many clicks.

8 Use good mark-up

Using tables for layout causes horizontal tabbing and other unhappiness. Also, bad for mobile. If you've read this far, you likely already know this.