



WebEmpower Workshop

North Macedonia Public Sector Web Administrators

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Web Accessibility in the Public Sector

- Fundamentals
- Users
- Practice
- Responsibilities of website administrators

What is digital or web accessibility?

- Digital accessibility means that websites, documents, forms, videos and other digital services are designed and managed so that people with disabilities can use them.
- users can perceive the content
- understand it
- navigate it
- interact with it
- complete tasks independently

Why is accessibility especially important in the public sector?

- public information and services must be available to everyone
- accessibility supports equal treatment and inclusion
- inaccessible websites create barriers to rights, services and participation
- accessibility is both a legal and an institutional responsibility

Who NEEDS accessibility essentially?

Accessibility is essential for people with:

- Blindness
- Partial sight
- Deafness
- Hard of hearing
- Mobility impairments
- Cognitive and learning disabilities
- Neurological conditions
- Speech impairments
- Multiple or combined impairments

Who else benefits from accessibility?

Accessibility is not only for disabled users. It also benefits:

- older people
- mobile phone users
- people with temporary injuries or impairments
- users in noisy or bright environments
- people with slow internet connections
- anyone who values clarity, consistency and ease of use

The four principles of web accessibility

1. Perceivable
2. Operable
3. Understandable
4. Robust

Perceivable

- text alternatives for meaningful images
- captions for video
- content not conveyed by colour alone
- sufficient contrast
- content that can be presented in different ways without losing meaning

Understandable

- clear and simple language
- predictable navigation and behaviour
- consistent layout
- clear instructions
- helpful error messages in forms

Operable

- full keyboard access
- visible keyboard focus
- logical navigation
- clear interactive elements
- enough time to complete tasks
- no unnecessary movement or flashing

Robust

- proper HTML structure
- correctly marked headings, lists, tables and forms
- compatibility with assistive technologies
- reliable behaviour across browsers and devices

Blind users: habits, tools and needs

How blind users access the web:

- using screen readers
- listening to content through speech output
- navigating by headings, landmarks, links, lists and form fields
- moving quickly through the page using keyboard shortcuts
- sometimes using refreshable Braille displays

Typical needs:

- correct page structure
- meaningful heading hierarchy
- useful link text
- accurate alternative text for informative images
- properly labelled form fields and buttons
- accessible tables and error messages
- no important information hidden only in images or visual layout

Partially sighted users: habits, tools and needs

How partially sighted users access the web:

- enlarging text or the whole screen
- using browser zoom, screen magnification or high contrast settings
- adjusting colour, spacing or font display
- reading visually, but only part of the screen at a time
- sometimes combining visual reading with speech tools

Typical needs:

- strong colour contrast
- resizable text without loss of content or function
- content that reflows well when zoomed
- clear headings and spacing
- readable fonts
- buttons and links that are easy to identify
- no text embedded in images
- no content that disappears or overlaps when enlarged

Hard of hearing users: habits, tools and needs

How hard of hearing users often access digital content:

- using residual hearing, sometimes with hearing aids or cochlear implants
- relying partly on audio and partly on text support
- needing better sound quality and reduced background noise
- often benefiting from captions even when they can hear some speech

Typical needs:

- captions for videos and recorded content
- transcripts for audio materials
- good audio quality
- ability to control volume
- minimal background noise in media
- clear visual support for spoken instructions

Users with mobility impairments: habits, tools and needs

- **How they may access the web:**
 - keyboard only
 - alternative keyboards
 - switch devices
 - voice control
 - head pointers or other alternative input devices
- **Typical needs:**
 - full keyboard access
 - clear focus order
 - large enough interactive targets
 - no dragging, hovering-only or complex gestures
 - enough time to complete tasks
 - simple interactions and consistent navigation

Users with cognitive, learning or neurodivergent conditions: habits, tools and needs

How they may access the web:

- reading slowly or carefully
- relying on consistency and repetition
- needing extra time for tasks
- being affected by clutter, overload or distractions
- sometimes using text-to-speech or reading support tools

Typical needs:

- plain language
- predictable structure
- short and clear instructions
- consistent menus and layouts
- clear feedback and error prevention
- reduced clutter and fewer distractions
- processes broken into manageable steps

Practical responsibilities of website administrators

- page titles
- heading hierarchy
- link text
- image alternative text
- file and document accessibility
- video captions
- form content and instructions
- content clarity and consistency

Key things administrators should do on websites

- use headings in the correct order
- give each page a clear and meaningful title
- write descriptive link text
- add alternative text to informative images
- mark decorative images appropriately
- avoid using colour alone to convey meaning
- check contrast
- use tables only for data
- make forms clear and properly labelled
- ensure uploaded documents are accessible
- check pages using keyboard navigation before publishing

Accessible documents and media

- do not upload scanned, image-only PDFs
- ensure Word, PDF and PowerPoint files are structured accessibly
- caption videos
- provide transcripts where needed
- make downloadable files understandable and clearly named

Accessibility: procuring digital services and content

- accessibility requirements included from the start
- compliance with WCAG and relevant standards
- accessibility testing before acceptance
- keyboard and screen reader checks
- accessible templates for documents and forms
- accessible video production
- accessibility statement
- plan for fixing barriers
- training for editors and administrators

Typical mistakes on public sector websites

- poor heading structure
- vague link text such as “click here”
- images without meaningful alternative text
- forms without labels
- inaccessible PDFs
- poor colour contrast
- inaccessible menus
- missing captions
- unclear error messages
- information given only by colour, shape or position

Final message

Accessibility is part of everyday publishing practice.

- not only a developer's task
- not only a legal requirement
- a question of inclusion, quality and trust
- small content decisions can remove major barriers