

# Simple Steps to Improve Website Accessibility

## Presentation Notes

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These are things you can do to make your web pages more accessible to people with disabilities. Depending on how you create your web pages, some these details may have been taken care of automatically, or may have been overlooked, or may have been mis-applied.

### HTML Markup

HTML is used to identify the functional parts of your document. CSS is used to control how the parts of your web page look. See the back of this handout for a illustration of what HTML markup looks like.

### Heading Tags

The `<h1>`, `<h2>`, `<h3...6>` tags are used to identify the main heading and the sub-headings of your document. The number indicates the hierarchical level of the heading. Your main heading (which you would commonly think of as the title of your document) would be tagged with `<h1>`. The sub-headings under your main heading would each be tagged with `<h2>`. If you have further subheadings under an H2 heading, they would be tagged with `<h3>`.

A screen reading system that audibly reads out a computer screen for a visually-impaired person will read out the heading tags, which can help the user understand the structure and content of the web page. If you use only visual styling (e.g., font, bolding, positioning, color, etc.) to distinguish your headings from the rest of the text, someone using a screen reader will get none of these clues.

Another benefit of using heading tags is that it also helps with computer analysis of the content of your web pages.

Be aware that the HTML `<title>` tag is used for the title that appears at the top of your browser window, not any title that appears on your web page. The title is also used for the label that appears on you bookmarks list.

### Alternative Text for Images

The `<img>` tag is used to place a graphic image on a web page. Image tags need to specify the source of the image, i.e., the file location of your graphic image file, and can optionally specify where and how the image appears. One of the optional attributes is the "alt" text, which is short phrase that describes the image. A screen reading system will audibly read out the alternative text.

```

```

Keep your alt text to 125 characters or fewer so the JAWS screen reader doesn't break the text into multiple blocks.

If you have a graphic image that is purely for decoration, you can still add an alt attribute with nothing between the quotation marks ( alt="" ). This will tell the screen reader that the image can be ignored. Also, when you submit your page to an accessibility testing website, your decorative graphics won't be flagged for lacking alt text.

If you have a graphic image that you can't describe in a short phrase, such as a map of the library or the image of a flyer, you can place a link on your web page to another page that is a written description of what's in the image.

### **Provide a Link to Skip the Navigation Links at the Top of the Page**

Many websites have pages that have a strip of navigation links and other content at the top of every page. Someone using a screen reading system would have to listen to all of that before being able to hear the main content of the page.

You can place a link near the top of the page that jumps down to a point further down that page.

In the pages I create, I put the H1 heading at the top of the body section, and right below it, I put a link:

```
<a href="#content">skip to main content</a>
```

I create a destination for the link by placing an anchor name tag right above the page's main content:

```
<a name="content"></a>
```

I use CSS to make the link appear in tiny letters at the far edge of the screen, in a color that blends with the background. It's still on the page, so the screen reader won't ignore it, but it isn't noticeable.

If you have a complicated page layout, you can use the same technique to create hidden links between the different sections of the page.

### **Accessible PDF Documents**

There is more to know about creating accessible PDF files than I can go into in this presentation. The least you need to know is that "printing" a document as a PDF might create a PDF file that isn't accessible. A safer way is to use the "Save as PDF" function in applications that have it.

## **Scripting Languages**

Scripting languages like Javascript could cause accessibility problems. You should consider accessibility if you put a function on a page that requires the use of a mouse, or makes information or navigation menus appear and disappear based on mouse location.

## **Testing Your Web Pages**

There are websites that will analyze the accessibility of your web pages. A popular one is the WAVE Web Accessibility Tool at <http://wave.webaim.org>

## **Adding Closed Captioning to Your YouTube Videos**

You can easily add Closed Captioning to your YouTube videos. You can paste or type in the text of your captions, and the captioning system can automatically work out the timing of when the captions should be displayed. Or you can use the automatic captioning feature, and then manually edit the captions to correct any transcription errors.

The exact steps may vary depending on whether you just uploaded your video or if you want to add captions to a video you've already uploaded, but the basic general steps are:

1. Go into the Video Manager.
2. Choose the video you wish to caption.
3. Click on "Subtitles and CC" along the top of the screen.
4. Set the Language.
5. Click on "Add new subtitles or CC".
6. Choose the method you want to use.

## Example of Using HTML Heading Tags

A document you want to post to the web may look like this:

### **Title of My Document**

#### **The First Major Section of My Document**

This is a paragraph in my document. I'm using it to introduce this section.

This is another paragraph in my document. It has more information I wish to provide about this topic. I want to prepare you for more specific information in the sub-sections.

##### **This Is a Sub-Section**

I'm going into more specific details here.

#### **This Is the Second Major Section of My Document**

This is a paragraph in my document. I'm using it to introduce this section.

You would use HTML to mark up the text of your document like this:

```
<h1>Title of My Document</h1>
```

```
<h2>The First Major Section of My Document</h2>
```

```
<p>This is a paragraph in my document. I'm using it to introduce this section.</p>
```

```
<p>This is another paragraph in my document. It has more information I wish to provide about this topic. I want to prepare you for more specific information in the sub-sections.</p>
```

```
<h3>This Is a Sub-Section</h3>
```

```
<p>I'm going into more specific detail here.</p>
```

```
<h2>This Is the Second Major Section of My Document</h2>
```

```
<p>This is a paragraph in my document. I'm using it to introduce this section.</p>
```

You would use CSS to control how your headings and paragraphs appear by specifying font, size, weight, spacing, positioning, color, etc.

## Example of Coding for a “Skip Navigation” Link

```
<head>
<title>LCC Library: Contact Us</title>
</head>
<body>
<h1>Contact Us</h1>
<div id="skipnav"><a href="#content">skip to main content</a></div>

<div id="titlebar">
<div id="titlelinks">
<ul class="ministack">
<li><a href="default.html">Library Home</a></li>
<li><a href="aboutthelibrary.html">About the Library</a></li>
<li><a href="researchtools.html">Research Tools</a></li>
<li><a href="infolit.html">Learn How to Find Info</a></li>
</ul>
</div>

</div>
<div id="breadcrumb">
<a href="default.html">Library Home</a> &nbsp;&gt;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;
<a href="aboutthelibrary.html">About the Library</a> &nbsp;&gt;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;
Contact Us
</div>

<div id="content">
<a name="content"></a>
```

(The library’s list of contact information begins here)

The link is contained in a division called “skipnav”. The CSS file for this page defines “skipnav” as a page-wide box at the top of the page. It contains tiny 1-pixel tall text, in the same color as the background, located at far right edge. You can’t mark it as `visibility:hidden` or use zero font size, because then the screen reader will ignore it and not read it.

```
#skipnav a:link, #skipnav a:visited, #skipnav a:hover, #skipnav a:active {
text-decoration: none;
color: #ccf
}

#skipnav {
position:absolute;
top:1px;
color:#ccf;
font-size:1px;
width:100%;
text-align:right;
line-height:0;
padding:0;
z-index:8;
}
```