ACCESSIBILI TECH Solutions improving lives

Funded by European Union

Accessibility Toolkit

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Section 1

Purpose of toolkit

Why this toolkit?

This toolkit offers simple and easy to read information about the needs of people with disabilities and how to accommodate these needs in different situations.

It is intended for ICT professionals, educators, healthcare providers, carers, students, policy makers and the general public.

The **ACCESSIBILITECH** project aims to improve and enhance e-inclusion and e-accessibility for people with disabilities and other groups with similar needs. This project is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, that aims to empower this population, so they can realise their rights.

To ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities it is important to keep accessibility in mind and to comply with current standards and laws.

Although there have been many advancements in accessibility in the past few years, many technological products that are not accessible are still reaching the market. This is partly due to the fact that there is still a lack of knowledge and misinformation about accessibility and needs of users.

The goal of this toolkit is to provide knowledge about the needs of users when interacting with technology and guidelines on the following:

- Common accessibility mistakes
- How to improve accessibility in digital documents
- How to improve accessibility in videos
- Organizing accessible events
- Accessibility features in mobile devices

The toolkit also provides external resources that complement the information provided.

Section 3

Most common accessibility mistakes

10 common accessibility mistakes

1. Images without alternative text

People with vision disabilities need alternatives to visual information. Adding an alternative text describing the content of a photo, illustration, graphic and so forth improve their experience and access to a text, a website, social networks. In fact, most websites, social network platforms, and word processing software provide the means to add an alternative text to images.

2. Inappropriate or too long alternative text

Provide a succinct description of images that is not longer than two sentences. Say what you see but avoid phrases such as “image of a building” or “photo of a woman”. It is better to say, “an empty high rise building with a glass facade” or “a young woman standing by a tree wearing a red dress”.

3. Non-descriptive links

Copying and pasting an URL address or phrases such as “click here”, “here” or “info”, makes it hard for people relying on assistive technologies to understand the purpose of a link that has no context. It is better to add a descriptive and relevant short link texts such as “Register to our conference”, “Read more about accessibility features in iOS”.

4. Insufficient colour contrast

Low colour contrast is an issue for people with low vision or colour blindness. Make sure your designs and font colours conform to WCAG 2.1 allowable colour contrast ratio. There are several colour contrasts checkers available that can be downloaded at no cost.

5. Conveying information using colour alone

People who are blind, have low vision or see colours differently will have trouble perceiving information conveyed only with colours. It is better to add text. Using visual attributes (shapes, icons, contrast, etc.) makes the information accessible for people with colour vision deficiencies but not for those who are blind.

6. Using serif typeface

Some people with low vision may have a hard time reading a text with a serif typeface such as Times New Roman. Using a sans serif font family such as Arial, Verdana, Tahoma and similar will improve legibility for them.

7. Videos without captioning

People with hearing loss need alternatives to sound information. Adding captioning to your videos will improve their experience. There are various free programs and services to add captioning or subtitles to videos, including YouTube.

8. Unclear heading hierarchy

Using headings in a semantical and logical order helps people who rely on screen readers to understand and perceive the content better.

9. Forms without labels

When providing forms for event registration, surveys, or gathering information, make sure the form is properly labelled, and accessible for screen reader users.

10. Complex tables

Avoid adding complex tables to a document with combined rows or columns. Tables must be as simple as possible with the headers properly identified. If complex tables are a must, you must mark up the elements for screen readers to properly identify them.

Learn more about how to make accessible tables

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