

Digital Accessibility

Digital accessibility refers to the experience that your website and social media users have when interacting with your organisation digitally. The main ways to ensure a simple and effective user experience are to give the user control over interactions (like slideshows and pop-ups) and to design your website or content with accessibility built in at the start of the process rather than after it has been made.

This section is about increasing the user's access to your digital services and varying the type of user that is interacting. This includes assessing how inaccessible your organisation's digital platforms already are, redesigning them to be user-centred, testing them within the community, and then making sure your online and in-person experiences are equal.

Topic 1: Importance of Online Presence

What?

This is your online brand identity, how your organisation is perceived online, and includes how easy it is (accessible) for users to interact with your organisation digitally.

Why?

There are a lot of people using the internet to do everyday activities such as managing health, looking for employment, obtaining higher education, and accessing news and entertainment. By ensuring your online content can be accessed through all possible technologies, like screen readers, screen magnifiers, and speech recognition software, you will be accessed by more people with disabilities who use assistive technology to access the internet. If your online services aren't accessible, users are likely to choose another business that offers easier and more accessible options.

Topic 1: Importance of Online Presence

How?

- Dedicate your efforts to making one platform easy and enjoyable to use, rather than having multiple mediocre accounts.
- Develop trust by maintaining and improving accessibility standards in your online spaces.
- Put as much effort into each online presence as you would into a physical store.
- Choose platforms that are relevant to your business and offer strong digital accessibility support for your users.
- Ensure your messaging is clear by only including significant information for your audience.
- If a store is hard to access and use, then customers or potential employees will go to another store, this is the same for online business.

Topic 1: Importance of Online Presence

How?

- Read [Web Accessibility: Driving an Inclusive Online Experience](#) for specific information on Digital Accessibility.
- Read [DIS Criterion 4. Make it accessible](#) for the legal standards of Digital Accessibility in Australia.

Topic 2: Content

What?

All information, whether written, audio, or visual, should be able to be perceived and understood by all users, including young people with disabilities.

Read [Colour Contrast Analyser – a new tool to analyze color contrast of webpages](#) to learn about colour contrast ratios.

Read Adobe's instructions for [Creating accessible PDFs](#) and Microsoft's instructions for how to [Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities](#).

Why?

Content becomes inaccessible when users are forced to take extra steps to understand information that is beyond their comprehension level. This is a significant barrier to accessing services, as it delays the process of using your digital space, sometimes to the point where users seek other services.

Topic 2: Content

How?

- Avoid jargon and use clear, straightforward, language.
- Be direct and say what you mean, using simple structured sentences.
- Practice the use of Camel Case by capitalising the first letter of each word in a hashtag (e.g., #CamelCaseIsCool) so that they aren't read out as one jumbled word (e.g., #camelcaseiscool).
- Use text-based security questions instead of image-based challenges (like CAPTCHAs).
- Organize information in a logical and intuitive layout to minimize misunderstandings, such as using headings to break up information into sections.
- Keep information concise to facilitate quick comprehension, especially for those using assistive technologies.
- Use alternative text and image descriptions so that any images that are used to aid in comprehension can be perceived by assistive technologies.

Topic 2: Content

How?

- Use descriptive link titles instead of generic titles like “click link here” so the individual knows where they’re navigating to.
- Ensure that moving or flashing visuals won't cause seizures and/or provide photosensitivity warnings where necessary.
- Check that the colour contrast levels between the foreground and background are in the correct ratio for colour-blind users.
- Keep information concise to facilitate quick comprehension, especially for those using assistive technologies.
- Include transcripts and captions for videos and have Auslan interpreted and plain English versions of content.
- Format digital text to be accessible to screen readers by using your PDF and Word document applications’ accessibility instructions.
- Check colour contrast ratios between foreground and background for visual accessibility.

Topic 3: Digital Agents

What?

Digital Agents are the technologies that your customers or employees use to interact with your content. For example, your website will act differently on a mobile phone compared to a desktop computer. It will be perceived differently through the technology used to access your information, whether that's assistive technology or the type of media player your customers or staff are using.

Why?

Information that cannot be accessed by users simply won't be accessed by users, so your business will be missing out on a large and diverse number of customers and potential employees.

Topic 3: Digital Agents

How?

- Design digital platforms that can seamlessly transition between desktop and mobile modes.
- Regularly update technology and staff training to comply with the latest accessibility standards.
- Ensure your HTML code is clean and well-structured.
- Provide alt text for images and detailed descriptions for visuals; label decorative elements to distinguish them from informative content.
- Make sure all functionalities can be accessed and operated using a keyboard.
- Test digital accessibility with screen readers like NV Access, a free, open-source, screen reader.
- If timed sections are necessary, allow users to extend the time. Preferably, avoid timers altogether.
- Choose digital agents that have inbuilt accessibility features such as text size, voice-to-text, colour adjustments, etc.,.

Topic 4: Feedback and Evaluation

What?

YPwD have a right to provide feedback on the services and products that we access. It is essential to expand your accessibility efforts to the evaluation process as well when improving of your organisations online space and feedback streams.

Why?

Including people with disabilities in your feedback and evaluation processes allows your organisation to streamline the improvement process by having accessible ways users and employees can express their experience. In turn, this increases your organisations chances of receiving useful feedback that will include people with disabilities in the improvements.

Topic 4: Feedback and Evaluation

How?

- Ensure that the methods used to collect feedback (e.g., online forms, surveys, interviews) are themselves accessible.
- Include specific questions about accessibility, such as "Could you participate fully in this experience?" or "How can we improve our accessibility?"
- Include a general feedback comment section to allow for unanticipated insights.
- Offer multiple channels for feedback, such as online forms, email, phone calls, text messages, and in-person interviews. This ensures that we can choose the method that best suits our access needs and preferences.
- Include an option for anonymous feedback to encourage honest responses, especially for sensitive issues.
- Actively respond to feedback and be willing to take accountability where necessary.

Topic 4: Feedback and Evaluation

How?

- Send confirmation of feedback submission to users and keep them informed about how their feedback is being used to make improvements.
- Implement regular cycles of feedback collection and evaluation to track progress over time.
- Allow adequate time for individuals to provide feedback.

Self-audit

1. My organisation tests and improves digital spaces to address new accessibility demands.

Never **Rarely** **Sometimes** **Often** **Always**

2. My organisation provides alternative methods of providing and receiving information.

Never **Rarely** **Sometimes** **Often** **Always**

3. My organisation undertakes specific digital accessibility training to learn how to be more inclusive to YPwD.

Never **Rarely** **Sometimes** **Often** **Always**

4. My organisation include young people with disabilities in its feedback and evaluation processes.

Never **Rarely** **Sometimes** **Often** **Always**

5. My organisation promotes the value of accessibility in our online spaces.

Never **Rarely** **Sometimes** **Often** **Always**

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Learn More

Did you know there are other Accessibility Guides on YDAN's website that cover the other 4 types of Accessibility?

Wanting to improve your accessibility further and receive tailored recommendations specific to you? See more online and contact us about YDAN's auditing service. Or if you would like to learn more about disability access and inclusion, check out our website for the workshops and trainings we deliver.

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