

A woman with curly hair, wearing a light-colored jacket and blue pants, is seated in a blue wheelchair. She is looking down at a tablet computer she is holding. The background is a blurred workshop or office space with shelves and equipment. A solid red vertical bar is on the right side of the image.

LA WORDPRESS MEETUP

Designing Websites for Accessibility

12.18.2019

creative
bixler

WHO I AM



Barron Bixler

Principal & Creative Director
Bixler Creative

WHO WE ARE



We're a full-service social impact branding agency serving nonprofits, universities and cultural institutions.

Founded in 2008 and based in Los Angeles, we do:

- Brands
- Websites
- Print collateral
- Messaging platforms
- Marketing strategies

DISCLAIMER

This presentation does not constitute legal or professional advice, and I am not an accessibility design expert.

I'm here to share my firm's individual experience designing and building websites for clients for whom accessibility was a key priority, as well as some lessons we've learned along the way.

WHAT WE'LL COVER TODAY

1

What is accessibility design?

2

Why design for accessibility?

3

Key principles of accessibility design

4

Accessibility design best practices

5

Resources

A woman with curly hair, wearing a light-colored jacket and blue pants, is seated in a blue wheelchair. She is looking down at a tablet computer she is holding in her lap. The background is a blurred workshop or office space with shelves and equipment. A person in a blue shirt and purple pants is standing in the background, partially obscured. The overall image has a semi-transparent dark overlay.

WHAT IS ACCESSIBILITY DESIGN?

A SIMPLE DEFINITION FOR A COMPLEX SOLUTION

Accessibility design improves the overall ease of use for webpages and mobile applications by removing barriers and enabling more people to successfully complete tasks, especially people with a diversity of abilities.

WHAT IS ACCESSIBILITY DESIGN?

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international community that develops open standards to ensure the long-term growth of the Web. ([w3.org](https://www.w3.org))



The W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) develops standards and support materials to help designers, engineers and others understand and implement accessibility guidelines. ([w3.org/wai](https://www.w3.org/wai))



The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) were developed by WAI and explain how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. ([w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/](https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/))

WHAT DO THE WCAG GUIDELINES APPLY TO?

Web “content” generally refers to the information in a web page or web application, including:

- Code or markup that defines structure, presentation, etc.
- Natural information such as text, images and sounds

Accessibility design includes technical, structural, functional, aesthetic, content and even cultural dimensions of how websites are designed, written and built

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WHY DESIGN FOR ACCESSIBILITY?

WHY DESIGN FOR ACCESSIBILITY?

- As of the 2012 census, approximately 57 million Americans report having a disability; 54% of them report going online
- The U.S. is estimated to have more web users who are blind and low-vision than the entire population of Canada

The idea that people with disabilities constitute a small minority of your website users is a myth.

It's better for all users—both with and without disabilities—as well for you, no matter what your line of business, to make your website(s) more accessible.

WHY DESIGN FOR ACCESSIBILITY?

- More organizations—especially local, state and federal agencies, universities, etc.—are requiring it

Also...

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires equal treatment of people with disabilities in public accommodations both online and offline.

A woman with curly hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and blue pants, is seated in a blue wheelchair. She is looking down at a smartphone she is holding in her hands. The background is a blurred workshop or office space with shelves and equipment. A solid red vertical bar is on the right side of the image.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF ACCESSIBILITY DESIGN

TYPES OF DISABILITIES ADDRESSED

1

Visual

2

Cognitive, learning, and neurological

3

Auditory

4

Physical

5

Speech

WCAG PRINCIPLES

In order to be considered “accessible” according to the WCAG standards, website content must be:

1

Perceivable

2

Operable

3

Understandable

4

Robust

PERCEIVABLE

1

Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.

- Text alternatives
- Media alternatives
- Sequence / hierarchy of information
- Color and contrast, text legibility

OPERABLE

1

User interface components and navigation must be operable.

- Keyboard accessible
- Enough time to react
- Navigation
- Different inputs

UNDERSTANDABLE

1

Information and the operation of the user interface must be understandable.

- Readable
- Predictable
- Input assistance

ROBUST

1

Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

WCAG PRINCIPLES

Each of these principles has 3 levels of WCAG achievement and compliance:

A

Minimum Level



AA

Middle Level



AAA

Most Ambitious Level

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ACCESSIBILITY DESIGN BEST PRACTICES

DESIGN BEST PRACTICES

1

Accessibility is not a barrier
to design or innovation

2

Don't use color as the only means
of conveying information

3

Ensure sufficient contrast between
text and background

DESIGN BEST PRACTICES

4

Pay attention to forms and other user inputs, especially labels and other visual cues

5

Think about information hidden behind hovers

6

Keep it clean and simple

CONTENT BEST PRACTICES

1

Keep it as concise as possible while not compromising message integrity; lead with most important message

2

Use H1-H6 plus P to define an intuitive content hierarchy

3

Use short, descriptive headers above every section of content

CONTENT BEST PRACTICES

4

For images, use “alt tags” and captions where appropriate

5

For multimedia content, provide text alternatives where appropriate

6

Think about your hyperlinks! Use verb clauses, not “click here”!

FUNCTIONALITY BEST PRACTICES

1

Think about visual acuity

2

Think about physical coordination, especially with respect to mouse movements

3

Test your work

A woman with curly hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and blue pants, is seated in a blue wheelchair. She is looking down at a tablet computer she is holding in her hands. The background is a blurred workshop or office space with wooden tables and various items. A person in a blue shirt and purple pants is standing in the background, partially obscured. The overall image has a semi-transparent grey overlay, and a solid red vertical bar is on the right side.

RESOURCES

RESOURCES

WCAG Resources

- w3.org
- w3.org/wai
- w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/
- <https://www.wuhcag.com/wcag-checklist/>

Free NVDA Screen Reader

- <https://www.nvaccess.org/download/>

Tools to Test Your Site's WCAG Compliance Level

- <https://wave.webaim.org/>
- <https://www.powermapper.com/products/sortsite/checks/accessibility-checks/> (they have a few different checks, so if you run a report, click on the accessibility option)

Miscellaneous

- <https://usability.yale.edu/understanding-your-user>

THANK YOU!

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