WEB ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

Making our website usable for those with hearing, movement, sight, and cognitive disabilities

Version 1.0

What is web accessibility?

The TJC website is fundamentally designed to work for all people, whatever their hardware, software, language, culture, location, or physical or mental ability. When the website meets this goal, it is accessible to people with a diverse range of hearing, movement, sight, and cognitive ability.

Thus the impact of disability is radically changed on the Web because the Web removes barriers to communication and interaction that many people face in the physical world. However, when websites, web technologies, or web tools are badly designed, they can create barriers that exclude people from using the Web.

It is essential that the Web be accessible in order to provide equal access and equal opportunity to people with diverse abilities.

Accessibility supports social inclusion for people with disabilities as well as others, such as older people, people in rural areas, and people in developing countries.

There is also a strong business case for accessibility. Case studies show that accessible websites have better search results, reduced maintenance costs, and increased audience reach, among other benefits.

Example of web accessibility

Ms. Jones is a student at TJC. She is blind and, like many other blind computer users, does not read braille.

To use her computer and the Web, Ms. Jones uses:

- Screen reader software that interprets what is displayed on the screen and generates speech output
- Web browser with keyboard support to help use websites without a mouse

She uses the keyboard to navigate the website, often by jumping from heading to heading to get an overview of what is on a web page. Her screen reader indicates the structural information on a web page such as headings, column and row headings in tables, list items, links, form controls, and more. She has become accustomed to listening to speech output at a speed that her co-workers cannot understand at all. However, when websites are not coded properly and do not include structural information, Ms. Jones would have to read every web page from top to bottom to find the information that she needs. This is unmanageable and she avoids such websites where she can, both for leisure and for business.

Much of the information on the documents used her school are organized in tables, which can sometimes be difficult to read by people using screen readers. However, since the tables in these documents are marked up properly, she easily orients herself to the information in the tables. The documents also include alternative text for images, labels for form elements, and other navigational cues that are interpreted by the screen reader.

Common A-level Accessibility Issues

These issues are in accordance with the WCAG 2.0 Guidelines, Issues which can introduce problems for the users of our website.

Non-distinguishable links - The same link text is used for links going to different destinations. Users might not know the difference if they are not somehow explained.

Text in images - Images of text should be avoided except in special cases, such as in logos. Review the images to assess whether images of text is used and should be avoided.

Presentational Attributes Used (in-line styles) - Presentational attributes such as 'border', 'align', or 'bgcolor' are used. It's important to review these issues and determine if they can be fixed by moving the presentational attributes to your CSS. It's not always practical to make these changes, but should be made when possible and considered a best practice.

Image with no alt attribute - The image does not have an 'alt' attribute (alt="").

The heading is missing text - The tag for the heading is present, but there is no text in the tag.

iFrame is missing a description - The iFrame has no 'title' attribute or the 'title' attribute is empty.

No set language - The webpage is missing a definition of the natural language.

Avoid the use of 'font' tag - Do not use the 'font' tag to create changes in typography.

Webpage should have exactly one title element - Webpages should have a single title. It is incorrect for a webpage to either have no title or to have multiple titles. The web page needs a title describing the topic of the page. The first thing a screen reader encounters when the web page has loaded is the text within the 'title' attribute. If the title does not describe what is on the page, you are making it very difficult for users who rely on HTML mark up to determine what page they're on.

link text is not sufficient - The link text is generic text that does not identify the link purpose. The link does not seem to have any programmatically determined link context that can aid in identifying the purpose either. Link texts should be written so they make sense out of context. Generic texts such as "Click here" and "More" give no indication as to the destination of the links.

Links should be combined - Adjacent links, one with a link text, the other with an iconic representation of that link, point to the same destination.

Page element is missing a description - An element of the type 'object' is present but the element does not have an alternative text. Provide a description of the content, within the 'object'-tags.

Use unique identification for elements - The ID used for an element on the page is also used for another element on the page.

Image does not have the correct alternative - The image does not have an alt text which indicates that

the image is used for decorative purposes. At the same time there is a mouse over text (title attribute) present on the image. If the image requires a description there should be an alt text. If not there should be neither alt text nor mouse over text for the image.

'Select box' without a description - Drop down menus (select boxes) should always have a description that is explicitly associated with the field to make sure that users of assistive technologies will also know what the field is for.

Use correct markup for highlighting text - If the text should be emphasized use semantic elements. If the text is a heading, an H-tag (such as H1, H2, H3...) should be used instead. If the text is highlighted as a visual effect, CSS should be used to do this. Inline "strong" or "underline" tags should not be used.

Form element needs a description - The form element has a label but text has not been added (label tag is empty).

Use correct styling of text - Do not use the 'small' tag to alter text size.

Table does not have a description - If the data table has a description or instructions connected, use the correct markup to make this evident.