

Accessibility

Website Planning

Topic Overview

- National guidelines and recommendations
- W3C guidelines
- Semantic coding
- Alt text
- Colour, contrast and font size
- Alternate style sheets (Firefox & IE8)
- Content order
- Dealing with tables
- Skipnav
- Keyboard navigation (access keys)
- Accessibility statements

National guidelines & recommendations

- Most countries now have or are developing guidelines.
- The EU has created the [Web Accessibility Benchmarking Cluster](#). This is a methodology for testing websites against the W3C WCAG 1.0 and 2.0 recommendations.
- There is no specific legal requirement in the UK but the Disability Discrimination Act applies.

Recommendations in The UK

- The Government Cabinet Office have initiated a number of guidance projects.
- For the public sector: [Delivering Inclusive Websites](#). A guide for public sector website owners when procuring websites.
- For the private sector: [Guide to good practice in commissioning accessible websites](#) by BSi. This is a publicly available specification (PAS 78:2006).
- Unfortunately, the guidance is short on detail and focuses on outcome rather than practice.

Accessibility for Web Designers

- The W3C [Web Accessibility Initiative](#) (WAI).
- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) version 2 (WCAG 2.0) were finalised on 11th December 2008.
- These are the guidelines we should use when building websites.
- W3C have provided the very useful "[How to Meet WCAG 2.0](#)".

Semantic Coding

- Semantic coding is important for accessibility because it gives meaning to content that might only be obvious visually.
- For example:

```
<p class="big">Title</p>
```

may look the same as...

```
<h1>Title</h1>
```

...but it has an entirely different meaning if the user cannot see the rendered result.

Alt Text for Images

- All images must have a text alternative, except for purely decorative images where a null alt attribute:

An image with a descriptive text alternative...

```

```

An image with a null alt attribute...

```

```

...the `longdesc` attribute is rarely used because of poor support but it can be used to link to another document with a longer description of the image.

Colour, Contrast & Font Size

- Make sure that websites are still readable by those with colour blindness.
- There are a number of useful checking tools such as the [Colorblind Web Page Filter](#).
- Contrast between foreground and background should be a minimum of 70% (as a general rule)
- Text should be large enough to be easily readable by those with less-than-perfect eyesight.
- To some extent, scaling browsers have improved this situation.

Alternate Stylesheets

- Alternate stylesheets can be created to provide higher contrast or larger text versions of a page.
- Some browsers (Firefox, IE8) provide the ability to switch stylesheets.
- It is possible to use JavaScript to build a style switcher into the web page. There are lots of online tutorials: [example](#).

Content Order

- Screen readers begin reading from the top of the HTML document and therefore, the order of the content in the document should reflect the order on the rendered page.
- This is sometimes difficult to achieve but a logical use of floating `<div>`s can usually be employed successfully.

Dealing with tables

- Tables are often difficult for screen readers to navigate so the addition of a summary attribute and a <caption> can be very useful.

```
<table class="diary" summary="This table shows the teaching schedule for the Website Planning course">
```

```
<caption>2009-10 Session Schedule</caption>
```

```
<tr><th>Date</th><th>Room</th><th>Title</th></tr>
```

```
<tr class="row2"><td>25th November 2009</td><td>Tower Lab C</td><td>Web hosting and domain names.</td></tr>
```

| 2009-10 Session Schedule | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Date | Room | Title |
| 25th November 2009 | Tower Lab C | Web hosting and domain names. |

Skipnav

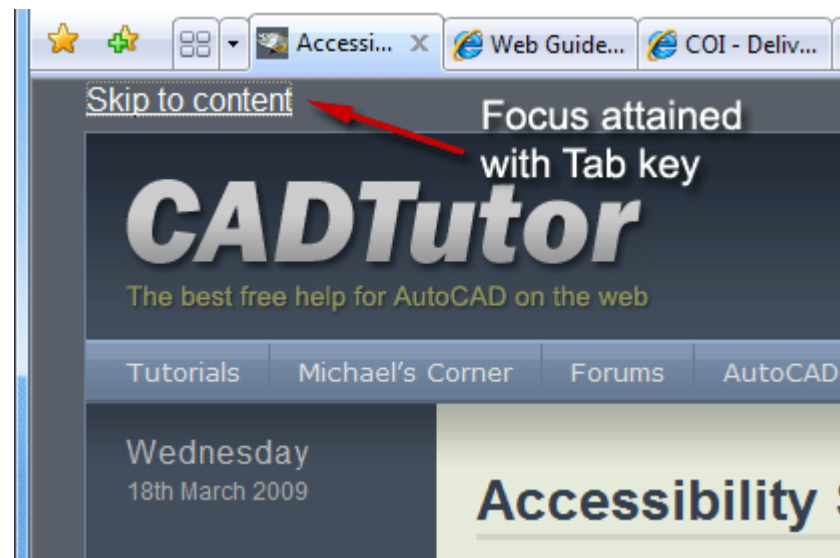
- Skipnav is the technique of allowing users using screen readers to skip the navigation and go straight to the page content.

Markup:

```
<a class="skip" href="#content" accesskey="2">Skip to content</a>
```

CSS:

```
.skip {  
  position:absolute; top:0; left:-9999px;  
}  
.skip:focus,.skip:active {  
  position:absolute; top:7px; left:26px;  
  background:#585F69; color:#FFF;  
}
```



Keyboard Navigation

- Site navigation by keyboard (rather than clicking on links) may be implemented using the `accesskey` attribute in anchor tags.

This markup allows the user to navigate to the site homepage by using a number key on the keyboard:

```
<a href="/index.php" accesskey="1">Home</a>
```

The link is invoked using Alt+1 then Enter in IE.

Accessibility statements

- Where a site provides accessibility features, an accessibility statement should be used in order to describe what is available and how it can be used.
- This can also be a statement of compliance.

Accessibility Statement

Access Key Details

The following access keys are available throughout CADTutor:

| Access key | Target |
|------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Home Page |
| 2 | Skip to Content |
| 3 | Site Map |
| 4 | Search |
| 5 | Skip to Global Navigation |
| 6 | Skip to Local Navigation |
| 9 | Contact |
| 0 | Access key details |

Accessibility Support

The screenshot shows the BBC 'My web my way' website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the BBC logo, 'Text only Help', a search box, and an 'Explore the BBC' button. Below this is a blue banner with the text 'My web my way - Making the web easier to use' and a 'Go back to original site' button. A secondary navigation bar contains buttons for 'My web home', 'How to guides', 'Disability on BBC Online', 'Best practice', and 'Jargon buster'. Below the navigation, there is a breadcrumb trail 'You are on: My web my way home' and a 'View sitemap' link.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- How to guides:** A section titled 'Choose a topic you would like help with' containing six buttons: 'I can't see very well', 'I am blind', 'I can't hear very well', 'I find words difficult', 'I find a keyboard or mouse hard to use', and 'Browse all guides'.
- What is My web my way?:** A section explaining the site's purpose: 'This site provides accessibility help, enabling computer users to make the most of the internet whatever their ability or disability.' It includes links to 'Read more about My web my way' and 'Comment on My web my way's new look'.
- BBC accessibility news:** A section with the title 'News and Sport low graphics switch-off' and a link to 'Read more news updates'.
- Disability on BBC Online:** A section titled 'The best of BBC Online for users with disabilities' with links to 'Ouch! The online disability magazine', 'You and Yours', and 'Games for switch devices'.
- Best practice:** A section titled 'Resources for making the web a more accessible place' with links to 'What is accessibility?', 'About My web my way', 'Useful web links', 'Contact us', 'Case studies', 'BBC accessibility policy', and 'Standards and guidelines'.
- Feedback:** A section titled 'What do you think about My web my way's new look?'.

The footer contains the BBC logo and copyright information '© MMX', a disclaimer 'The BBC is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.', and links for 'BBC Help', 'Accessibility Help', 'Jobs', 'About the BBC', 'Contact Us', 'Terms of Use', and 'Privacy & Cookies'.

Best Practice
As with many things, the BBC is leading the way in support for those with web access difficulties. Their new "My web my way" mini site is currently being developed.

www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/accessibility_beta/