



Accessibility

*It is estimated that 15 to 30% of the nation's population, or approximately 52 million people, have disabilities. A Harris Poll from June 2000 found that 43% of those, or 22,360,000 Americans with disabilities, are online.**

Providing equivalent access to electronic and information technology to all students, faculty, and staff is required by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and California SB302. Following these guidelines will help to ensure that your Web pages are more accessible to users with disabilities.

Alt tags

- Provide text alternatives to visual and auditory content. For example, type *Aerial photo of CSUS* in the alt tag text box in your Web editor or enter directly into HTML code.
- Keep alt tags meaningful and short.
- If you must use bullets or buttons, use " " as the alt tag.

Color

- Text and graphics must be understandable when viewed without color. Avoid statements such as "Read the red text first." *Users with color blindness or otherwise sight-disabled will not be able to see which text is red.*
- Select foreground and background colors with sufficient contrast between them. *Print the pages of your site in black and white to check the contrast and readability.*
- Use solid, single color backgrounds.

Graphics

- Avoid using graphics that contain multiple objects.
- Provide alt tags for all the graphics on your pages.

Links

- Place a 1x1 pixel invisible gif in the upper left corner of your Web page, add alternative text to the gif such as "Go directly to main content," and link the invisible gif to the beginning of your main content. *This gives the returning disabled user the option of skipping through the headers and navigation.*
- List links on your page, rather than placing them on one line separated by vertical lines or pipes. *This facilitates screen readers in accurately reading through the links and allows users with fine motor control limitations to more easily select one link.*
- Size links so that you, as a test, can readily click them using your non-dominant hand.
- Place links on words describing what will be accessed, such as *Resources* rather than *Click here*.

Navigation

- Check that your site can be navigated without using the mouse. Use the tab key and directional arrows.

University Computing & Communications Services
California State University, Sacramento
<http://www.csus.edu/uccs/>

Search

- If your page has a search function, place it close to the top of the page so that a disabled user can utilize it quickly without having to listen or scroll through lengthy content.

Sound/Animations/Video

- Provide alternate text files for sound.
- Use closed-captioning on videos.
- Provide alternate descriptions for animations.
- Give the user a choice of versions; for example, with or without Flash, Shockwave, JavaScript or other.

Structure

- Use style sheets to control layout and presentation. *However, check that your page is readable with stylesheets turned off to give the user the choice of what works best for her needs.*
- Use screen layouts that are consistent and uncomplicated.
- Avoid using images to represent text where possible, with the possible exception of navigation links.
- Begin a site with a table of contents linked to each specific section of the site or have a site map to provide an overview.
- Provide a text-only version of your page and include a link to that version near the top of your page.

Tables

- Tables can be used for layout if used correctly. *Older* screen readers read line-by-line horizontally across the page whether tables are present or not; they do *not* read all the information in one cell and proceed to the next. Test your page with a screen reader. One version, JAWS, is available in the Faculty/Staff Resource Center, SQU316.

Testing

- Enlist the help of people with disabilities to test your pages.
- Test your pages with an accessibility page validator:
<http://validator.w3.org/>
<http://bobby.watchfire.com/bobby/html/en/>
<http://aprompt.snow.utoronto.ca/>

Text

- Use style sheets to format text. Avoid using absolute font tags such as *font face* or *font size*. Specifying relative sizes such as h1 and h6 allows users to adjust text size to their sight needs.
- Use single columns of text, rather than multiple columns.
- Avoid using images to represent text. *Users cannot upsize to read.*
- Use formal grammar. Write for your audience.
- Avoid the use of large blocks of italic text; it's harder to read.
- Don't use flashing or animated text.
- Provide the long version of acronyms at the beginning of every page where the abbreviated name is used.

Notes

1. Screen readers see PDFs as images, not text; so include links to text versions of PDFs if you include them in your site.
2. Text-only versions of Web sites can be created with "Betsie," a download offered free by the BBC at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/betsie/>.
3. Accessibility logo provided through CPB/WGBH National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) at <http://ncam/wgbh.org/webaccess/symbolwinner.html>

* IBM Accessibility Center, <http://www-306.ibm.com/able/>