

## Inclusion, Diversity, Access, and Equity

### Strategies for a More Inclusive Website

Websites have become incredibly popular ever since their development. In the modern age, people use websites for various things daily. You might use them to find information about stuff, buy something you want, and even chat with your friends. Think of websites as your go-to tool for getting things done efficiently. In addition to your personal use of websites, businesses also utilize websites to inform people of their products and services, which helps them grow and succeed.

Let's look at a specific example to understand this better. Imagine starting a school paper, and you need to check out the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) website. This website is a hub of information. It tells you where to find important places, such as the library, introduces you to your teachers, and details student services. But that is not all. Quick links on the website take you to important stuff like news about what is happening on campus, upcoming events, and signing up for your classes. It is a treasure trove of helpful information all in one place. One of the most convenient characteristics of websites is that they are a central spot for online learning, no matter what grade you are in. This convenience makes it easy for students like us to find what we need and learn online. All of these features make UNCG an efficient and effective place of learning.

Not only have websites become more popular, but they have also changed their appearance. Not too long ago, websites used to be very simplistic and ordinary. They mainly had text and a few pictures and could have looked fancier. But as technology advanced, websites started getting a lot more stylish. In recent times, websites have excellent graphics, fantastic animations, and even videos that play right there on the page. The experience of visiting a website today compared to a decade or two ago is drastically different. This stylistic growth has made websites more informative, visually appealing, and exciting.

In a nutshell, websites are like magic tools that make our lives easier. They help us find information quickly, buy things with a click, and learn new information effortlessly. Businesses also benefit significantly from websites because they can show off their excellent products and services to people like your family and friends. This way, they can get more customers and

increase their revenue. When schools like UNCG have well-developed websites, it makes learning smoother and better for students like the members of these groups.

However, websites have a few shortcomings. Some websites have audio players for the visually impaired, and most videos have captions for the hearing impaired. However, these features are only sometimes present. Take the above example, UNCG's websites. They do not offer audio options for the visually impaired, and the only way someone with this disability could use the website would be to either use an add-on or have someone read the website to them. While many people would already have some sort of add-on, some may not, and the website not offering any form of audio translation could have adverse effects, especially since it is a university website connected to students.

While only sometimes deemed necessary by many people, it is essential to remember that access to websites for everyone is something that we should strive for. People being able to access university information - or even just a random website on the internet - could be the difference between someone who is informed and someone who is not. A strategy for a more inclusive website could include making sure that everyone who has access to the website can read and understand the information, ensuring the details provided are both correct and displayed in a way that makes it easy to understand and follow, guaranteeing that any accompanying visuals are not overpowering the information shown.

This process is crucial because not only does it help people with disabilities access information, but it also benefits a broader audience, including those without disabilities. For example, everyone may have experienced assisting their grandparent at some point on a new technology device they purchased. Not only does age limit their comprehension ability, but also the fact that they never grew up learning the importance of digital skills. It is vital to provide alternative ways of interaction in such cases. Large and legible fonts, screen readers, keyboard interfaces, alt text for images, etc., can make all the difference. The same case scenario might be different for speakers of other languages or those who are not fluent. The option of translating specific texts is not commonly available, and most websites are limited in scope to be even applicable to all languages. Therefore, web accessibility should also adapt to include internationalization, making it "possible to use web technologies with different languages, scripts, and cultures" (W3C Internationalization Activity Blog, n.d.). Inclusion expands to economic and geographic location boundaries. These are defining factors that frequently affect

an individual's access to technology. This issue can be improved by optimizing websites for low-bandwidth connections and ensuring compatibility with older devices, assuring users from different regions and statuses can access relevant content. (W3C Accessibility, Usability, and Inclusion, 2016).

Furthermore, because technology has become an integral part of today's information age, a website that reflects the idea that it adapts to human diversity is vital for a positive web browsing experience. Diverse perspectives in web design lead to more creative and innovative solutions that benefit a broader range of users (Tan, 2019, p. S31). Diversity has become especially important because of the spread of disinformation and propaganda. There are critical differences between both terms despite being sometimes used interchangeably. While both involve the manipulation of information, propaganda can contain a mix of true and false news to shape public opinion to favor a specific viewpoint. On the other hand, disinformation is intentionally false news meant to mislead or deceive readers. As a result, published content has become very customized only to fit specific audiences in fear of threat, primarily political. However, while this can become quite controversial, many would agree that it helps address the issues of disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation. On a bad note, though, it can unintentionally lead to some kind of echo chamber, also known as filter bubbles in websites, where readers are only exposed to information that fits their existing beliefs. You can even find such practices implemented in prominent social media platforms like Facebook. Many users often complain that their feed is automatically filtered to show what they like to see. This leads to the question: If diverse viewpoints and education are not welcomed, how can our society become informed of what is happening worldwide?

We can test users' responses to an interface's graphical representation, organization, readability, and navigation to ensure the features of a website are functional (Garett et al., 2016). As mentioned before, qualities that make a website easier to use, such as large fonts and directional guides, should be implemented for users to interact with or understand the presented information, and adjustments could be made to the original user interface if there are impediments due to the existing attributes. Integrating user feedback in web design allows us to make an accessible web page that is easy to use for everyone. Sometimes, the feedback makes its way to you on its own; however, it is also recommended to ask for it directly. Gathering feedback can include creating a website section dedicated to user commentary, consulting a sensitivity

reader to review writing for poor phrasing and insensitive language, and utilizing services such as Writing Diversely. This service provides a list of specialist editors (Patel, 2022). There are various other methods, but the main concern is utilizing user responses effectively. However, what is the significance of their reactions?

User assessments are necessary for providing user convenience, one of our primary goals, and they supply alternative points of view that allow you to identify problems that you may not have previously been able to solve. Alternate points of view are essential as they widen your scope of potential user obstacles and help prevent scenarios of tunnel vision during development. These perspectives are vital to creating a website that is most accessible and usable to the broadest audience, as you can potentially have a variety of solutions provided by those who may have specific problems. For example, user viewpoints would allow developers to identify issues with filtered social media content and improve their automated systems. This transformation could make users more aware of worldwide information and current events since their content would not be automated to cater to them. Once you learn how to handle particular issues, such as automation, you can implement the provided solutions in future projects, increasing usability and making your creations accessible.

As our group begins the development of our website, we must produce a web page that is easy to navigate and access. We will employ inclusive design principles to ensure that our website is manageable for everyone. These include things previously mentioned, such as large fonts and simple formats. Furthermore, it is crucial that the language we use provides clarity and is easy to understand as we explain the procedure of our Microchip project to page visitors. Since our group has diverse perspectives, it will be easier to represent a broad range of future users who may visit the website. Additionally, when completing the site, we can show it to classmates, friends, family members, or professors to observe the functionality of its features. This display will allow us to improve the website and guarantee that it is accessible to an array of users, making it likely that future visitors easily navigate the website. Inclusion and accessibility must be considered, allowing everyone to navigate the website we create.

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