SI 539 Final Project – Accessibility Review

Evaluator
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Website evaluated
http://research.umich.edu/initiatives

Accessibility guideline followed
Quality Assurance

Evaluation Result & Recommendation

1. Run through each page with the WAVE Chrome Extension.
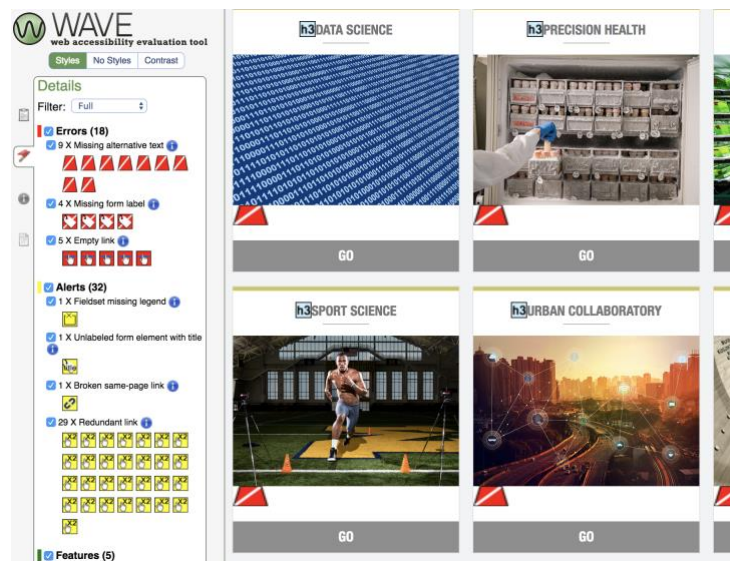
Result:
Fail (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Most images on the website miss alt text

Recommendation:
The website designers need to add alt text to the images that don't have one.

2. Users should be able to navigate through content using their keyboard.

Result:
　　　Pass

Recommendation:
　　　Although the webpage is navigable with keyboard, it's hard for users to find which
　　　content they are currently navigating through because of poor color contrast (Figure 2).
　　　The designers thus should improve the color contrast between the highlighted items
　　　and the none-highlighted ones so that users can more easily tell where their mouse
　　　focus is at the moment.

Figure 2: Poor color contrast

3. Users should be able to navigate content using a screen reader.

Result:
　　　Fail

Recommendation:
　　　Currently, the webpage is not navigable with screen reader. So, it's recommended that
　　　the designers improve accessibility for screen reader users.

4. The general architecture and hierarchy of the content should make sense.

Result:
　　　Fail

Recommendation:
　　　(1) Fix the double navigation bar issue
　　　There are two navigation bars at the top of the page (Figure 3). This can be confusing for
　　　users because it's hard for them to expect or guess under which tab the content they
　　　are looking for is located. Plus, the first navigation bar has very small fonts which can be
　　　hard for users to read. And the second navigation bar has all-capitalized text which is
　　　hurting the readability, too.

Designers can improve the situation by reconsider the navigation structure and combine the two nav bars whenever it's possible. Also make sure the font is of decent size and the text is not all capitalized.
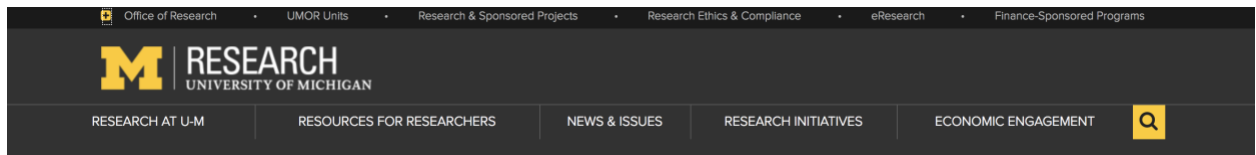

Figure 3: Double horizontal navigation bars are confusing

(2) Make the clickable elements obvious

The "Interdisciplinary Research Initiatives" section is the major part of the whole webpage where individual research initiatives are listed as clickable cards (Figure 4). However, these cards are of poor affordance with no clear indication that they are clickable because: First, the images are not clickable which is counter-intuitive. Instead, users have to click on the text below the image to go to each individual research initiative page where there is another problem. "Go" is not necessarily a straightforward word to indicate clickability. We rather suggest change the word to more confusion-free terms like "Learn more" or "View more". Also, turning the images clickable elements will be helpful.
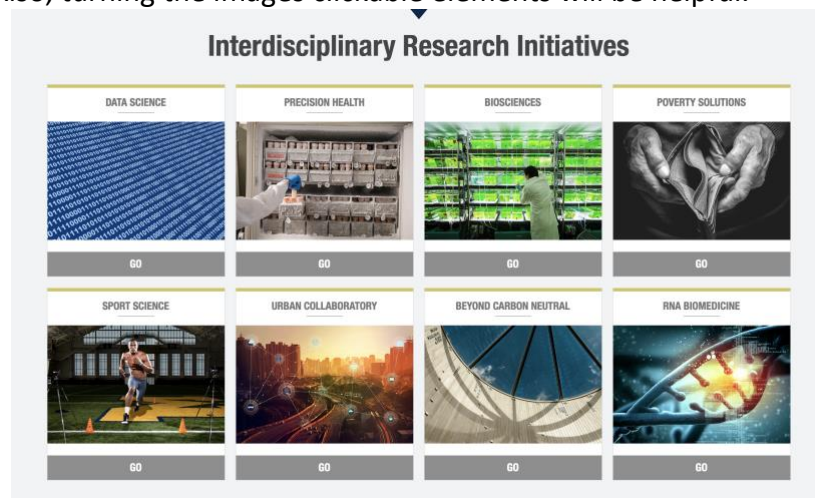

Figure 4: Clickable elements are not clearly indicated

5. Charts and images should all have alt-text so that users with screen readers or users on a slow connection will still be able to understand the images.

Result:
    Fail

Recommendation:

As revealed in the first point and indicated by Figure 1 above, a lot of images on the website miss alt-text. Thus, the designers should add alt-text so that users with screen readers or those on slow connection will still be able to understand the images.

6. Decorative images should not be visible to screen readers.

Result:
N/A

Recommendation:
As mentioned by the 3rd point above, the whole webpage is none-navigable to screen readers thus decorative images are also invisible to screen readers, which of course doesn't mean it passes this standard. Designers are recommended to improve accessibility for screen readers and be careful about which items should be visible to screen readers and which should not.