

Week Ten: Accessibility & Standards

Accessibility and Standards have much in common – they both are about ensuring that our work will be usable and available to the largest possible number of readers, visitors and customers.

Accessibility Theory

Implementing Accessibility

- Implementing Accessibility takes place in the markup code
- So... Designer dude, "your design will still look good"

Web Crawlers

- Web crawlers are in essence the worlds biggest "blind user" of the web
- This "blind user" gives out recommendations in the form of search results to a bazillion other users every day

Not Limited to the Visually Impaired

- Many access enhancements are targeted for the motor impaired population
- Access enhancements are also geared for the user on his/her palm pilot or web enabled cell phone as well

Section 508

- Section 508 became U.S. law as part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – intended to end discrimination against people with disabilities
- Public Law 105-220 (Amendments of 1998) expanded Section 508 to include computers and other equipment used for transmitting, receiving and/or storing information
- This requires all websites under its jurisdiction to provide "equal or equivalent access to everyone"
- Section 508 does not forbid the use of CSS, JavaScript, images, table-based layouts, Flash or QuickTime

Accessibility Elements

Images

- 1) Leaving out the `alt` attribute and text for images will cause screen readers to read nothing when coming across an image and will be flagged as WAI access errors and cause validation errors
- 2) When using `alt` attributes, make sure the text is logical to the image and conveys the proper meaning:

```
<div id="logo">
  <a href="http://www.premiumdw.com/"></a>
</div>
```

- to a visually impaired user, this will signify that this image is the link back to the home page

- 3) For images that are meaningless such as spacer GIFs, one should use a `null alt` attribute:

```

```

- 4) Background images do not get an alt attribute

Media

- 1) when displaying media that requires a plug-in, include one clear link to the required plug-in
- 2) If you are using an image as a link to the plug-in, use the proper alt attribute with text

Color

- 1) if you use color to denote information (such as clickability), reinforce it with other methods
- 2) make the difference between linked and ordinary text obvious
- 3) avoid referring to color in your text – “visit the yellow box for help”

CSS

- 1) test your pages with and without style sheets to make sure your structure is correct (remember week one?)
- 2) your structured markup is what will convey the hierarchy of meaning when viewed without CSS
- 3) test your CSS in multiple browsers and across multiple platforms – NOW!!

Scripting

- 1) code your pages to work even when JavaScript is disabled
- 2) provide alternatives for non-mouse users:

```
<li><a href="#" onclick="slidingMenu('assignmentLinks')"
onkeypress="slidingMenu('assignmentLinks')">Assignments>></a></li>
```

- if a non-mouse user is trying to access this sliding menu they can access it thru a “key-press”

Image Maps

- 1) Avoid image maps if you can
- 2) If you need to use them, use client-side image maps with the `alt` attribute
- 3) just say no to server-side image maps

Frames

- 1) NO!
- 2) BAD!
- 3) ICK!