

aria-expanded html attribute

Asked 1 year, 5 months ago Active 1 year, 5 months ago Viewed 12k times



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I am currently making a navbar and came accross the `aria-expanded` html attribute. I know of course that the element is used to let an element either expand or collapse. I could find very little information with regard to this and the [W3C docs](#) aren't that clear IMO.

Question

How does this attribute work exactly?

javascript

html

asked Feb 3 '18 at 17:05



[Willem van der Veen](#)

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- 1 The attribute doesn't change anything in regards to the visual representation of an element: *"When authors use collapsible content, for example, to hide navigation menus or lists of content, the triggering link or button **should indicate to screen reader users** whether the collapsable content below is in the expanded or in the collapsed state. **The aria-expanded attribute is used for this purpose.**"* – [Andreas](#) Feb 3 '18 at 17:10

"I know of course that the element is used to let an element either expand or collapse" Not quite. It's used to inform screenreaders whether the element is expanded or not (and incidentally that it can be expanded/collapsed, which might otherwise not be discoverable by blind users.) ARIA attributes don't *do* anything to the document, they're informational cues about the document state. – [Daniel Beck](#) Feb 3 '18 at 17:11

- 1 @Andreas So this means that you need to manage the value of the `aria-expanded` manually / "programmatically"? – [Jnr](#) Feb 20 at 17:01

4 Answers



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The [aria-expanded](#) [attribute](#) is simply a flag for the user agent. It

Indicates whether the element, or another grouping element it controls, is currently expanded or collapsed.

...where that indication is for the element's contents, or if [aria-controls](#) is also specified, for the target element.



You set its value to indicate what you've done to the page (e.g., you've expanded or contracted a section). It doesn't have any particular behavior associated with it, it's for letting the user agent know what's going on so it can interpret that for its audience (who may be vision-impaired and need some other indication that a section is/isn't expanded).

answered Feb 3 '18 at 17:14



[T.J. Crowder](#)

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ARIA attributes are related to accessibility. In this particular case, it's to let users with assistive technology (e.g. screen readers) know whether an element is expanded or not. It does not have any native effect on the styling of the element, but you can target that with CSS attribute selectors: `[aria-expanded="true"]`. You can toggle the value with JavaScript as needed.

answered Feb 3 '18 at 17:13



[chriskirknielsen](#)

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Aria attributes in general are used to make web applications accessible to people with disabilities. They are used primarily by screen readers to determine how to treat html elements.

The aria-expanded attribute provides information about whether an element is in an expanded or collapsed state.

For example, if you have a collapsible element which contains a text, then a screen reader would know that the text is not currently displayed on the screen when the aria-expanded attribute is set to true.

answered Feb 3 '18 at 17:12



[dybzon](#)

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As mentioned [here](#):

WAI-ARIA is a spec defining support for accessible web apps. It defines bunch of markup extensions (mostly as attributes on HTML5 elements), which can be used by the web app developer to provide additional information about the semantics of the various



elements to assistive technologies like screen readers.

Hope it helps

answered Feb 3 '18 at 17:11



[dstrants](#)

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