Web Accessibility

What is web accessibility?

Making a website accessible to everyone is vital to ensure that everyone using your website feels comfortable and relaxed. It may sometimes be the smallest flaw that can let down a website, making it uncomfortable or even impossible to navigate. A lack of accessibility on your website may close off many potential viewers, some of which may be your target audience. It may also offend certain people that feel as though they are being pushed away from your site. Ensuring that your website is easy to access for everyone can be very simple and easy to achieve, however.

The best way of ensuring web accessibility is by using the four principles, or POUR:

- Perceivable
- Operable
- Understandable
- Robust

At the most basic step, you must make sure that your website is perceivable. In other words, making sure it is accessible to everyone, even those who may be deaf, colourblind or visually impaired. This can be an issue that will prove detrimental to some, but is also quite simple to solve. Make sure the colours of the text, items and background all contrast well with each other, simple examples such as yellow and blue or green and red are safe choices. Good contrast heavily relies on the values and saturation of colours. If audio is necessary for certain areas, these should be accompanied with subtitles.

To ensure that your site is operable to as many people as possible, a good suggestion is to try and make it accessible using only a keyboard, as there are some who are unable to use a computer mouse. There should also be chances for people to undo certain mistakes and selections with ease, if a time-limit is required it should be generous, and on certain actions warnings and cancellation options are a must.

Another important factor in designing a website is making sure it is clear, concise and very understandable. Make sure to use concise language, that all labels are clear, that navigation is consistent throughout the whole site, and that every action taken on the site has a clear result. Where necessary, there should be clear guidelines, as well as terms and conditions for certain sites such as online stores.

Lastly, you should make sure that your website works consistently on all types of technologies. Whilst there may be certain limitations, your website should be able to work well on various different browsers, platforms and devises. The simplest way to ensure this is to make sure the code is clean and robust.

The Good and the Bad

An excellent site that has reliable web accessibility is Youtube. Being one of the most popular sites in the world, it is important that it can be easily accessible to as many people as possible, and this website succeeds with a good contrast in colours, easy to understand font and functions and consistency on all devices. The one area where it may fall ironically is within the people, as anyone can upload content, some of these videos may be misleading or confusing. Despite this Youtube has worked hard to make the website a safe and comfortable experience.

On the other hand, an infamous site that has terrible web accessibility is Arngren. Terrible font colours outdated designs and an absolute mess of items and links make this website near impossible to operate.

Web accessibility is one of the most essential parts of creating a website, however if planned carefully can be easily executed.