Verndale’s Website Accessibility Checklist

Reviewing the following checklist will help to address the 5 factors that allow for full online participation: perception, understanding, navigation, interaction, and contribution.

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

* Orientation and basic theme of the website should be easily recognizable on each subpage
* Flat hierarchy: Few clicks needed to reach the content
* User-friendly categories: Subpages have an intuitive semantic link to the parent page
* Important website areas should be reached with one click
* Implement skip navigation links
* Consider the inclusion of an HTML site map page

DESIGN

* Consider accessibility toolbar: allow adjustment of font type, size, image sizes
* **Buttons/Links**
  + - Highlight interactive elements with buttons or different colors
    - Make the buttons large enough to catch the eye of every user
    - Have a focus indicator that makes links, form fields, widgets, buttons, and menu items look different from the elements around them
    - Link should change color on hover and/or click
    - Underline links
    - Link text should make sense on its own and is descriptive enough for a user to know where it is taking them
* **Fonts**
  + - 16px is a generally a good size for body text (no smaller than 12), with headers being larger
    - Fonts: no serifs, have fixed widths between letters, use bold letters
    - Use bold to add emphasis rather than italics or UPPERCASE, but use it sparingly
    - Recommend some specialized fonts created just for dyslexia: OpenDyslexic
    - Consider specialist font for people with learning disabilities called ‘Fs Me’
    - Use a small number of fonts, ideally only 1 or 2 for headings and body text.
    - Avoid comment columns filled with small text
* **Forms**
  + - Formulate clear instructions on how a visitor can correct form errors
    - Arrange the form elements in such a way that they are visually close together
    - Don’t use placeholder text within Form fields
    - Always include labels with form fields
    - Must use other information signals besides color, such as numbers or asterisks
* **Miscellaneous**
  + - Avoid flashing ads/images
    - Avoid background music
    - Slow or no auto-scrolling of carousels
    - No hover-over content
    - Break text into smaller sections divided by headers and sub-headers
    - Text should have a high contrast against its background
    - Zoom in on your content without losing any pictures and texts

COPYWRITING AND CONTENT

* Set “alt” tag for every image (120 char or less)
* Include “longdesc” for every complex image, could also include lists of items that appear
* Put your hashtag in camel case
* Look out for text that’s full of modern technical terms or unexplained abbreviations
* Consider easy language that explains content in a simple way: Sentences in easy language are short and only contain one statement
* Avoid the subjunctive, synonyms, and negations
* Link text should make sense on its own and is descriptive enough for a user to know where it is taking them

VIDEO AND MEDIA

* Captions for all video
* Audio Descriptions for all video
* Interactive Transcripts for all video
* Audio Transcripts for all podcasts

DEVELOPMENT AND CODE

* Use HTML5 structural elements
* Use ARIA landmarks
* Use skip navigation links
* Headings should be used for navigation, not just stylistic
* Don’t use HTML tags for a style effect
* Design with CSS, strictly linear output
* Build JavaScript elements so they are keyboard and screen reader accessible
* Don't use frames/framesets
* Stay away from auto-playing music and videos
* Don't use captcha with forms
* Pressing enter key should submit the form
* Avoid hover-over content
* Make allowances in layout for zoom flexibility

SITECORE

* Base template fields should include metadata like browser title and meta description, ARIA labels
* Alt tags for images should be required
* Consider an integration to Cognitive Services to automatically set alt tags
* Video/audio content types should require transcript files
* Include video/audio transcripts in search indexes

QUALITY ASSURANCE

* Tools: Accessibility Scans: Wave, Chrome, Siteimprove, Screen Readers
* Test with actual screen reader
  + - JAWS: Job Access With Speech, most popular screen reader
    - ChromeVox: Free chrome extension built using HTML5, CSS, and Javascript, leveraging ARIA markup
* Usability Testing with people who can provide real feedback about accessibility success
* Change color add-on in Chrome to test accessibility for color blindness
* Test use of keyboard for access to all functionality: tabbing, esc key, space bar
  + - tabbing through - making sure you can use the up/down arrows
    - esc key works to close a drop down
    - space bar to open drop downs, select checkboxes
* Review this additional helpful checklist: <https://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap5chklist.htm>