

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TAKEN FROM THE AIDS.GOV BLOG

ACCESSIBILITY

What is web accessibility?

Web accessibility means that people with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, interact with, and contribute to the Web. Web accessibility encompasses all disabilities that affect access to the Web, including visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, and neurological disabilities.¹

Why should I care about accessibility?

First, because it is the right thing to do. Second, Federal law requires all Federal agencies and Federal contractors to meet the requirements of Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794d). Section 508 compliance requires Federal agencies and contractors to:

- Eliminate barriers in information technology,
- Make available new opportunities for people with disabilities, and
- Encourage development of technologies that will help achieve these goals.

How many Americans are affected by accessibility issues?




- 28 million (10% of the population) are deaf or hearing impaired,
- 11.4 million people have visual conditions not correctable by glasses,
- 2.8 million people are visually handicapped from color blindness, and
- 1.1 million people are legally blind.²

What role does accessibility play in response to HIV?





Giving individuals living with HIV/AIDS information in a variety of formats can improve treatment outcomes. For instance, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs added text alternatives (alt tags) to images on a web-based HIV medications tool. Now a visually challenged person living with HIV can use a screen reader to get information on specific drugs, dosing schedules, etc.

What technology do I need to make my website accessible?

Examples of the many online tools to help you identify accessibility issues include:

- WebExact (formerly known as Bobby): webxact.watchfire.com 
- Cynthia Says: www.cynthiasays.com 
- UITest.com: www.uitest.com 

Where can I learn more about accessibility?

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Section 508: www.508.hhs.gov
- Section 508: www.section508.org 
- The World Wide Web Consortium's Website Accessibility Initiative: www.w3.org/WAI/ 
- National Center for Accessible Media: www.ncam.org 
- WebAim.org's articles and discussion lists: www.webaim.org 

¹ Web Accessibility Initiative, "Introduction to Web Accessibility," Available at: <http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/accessibility.php>. Accessed on 8/29/08.

² U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, "Section 508: Why Comply?" Available at: <http://www.hhs.gov/web/policies/pdf/accessibility/whycomply.html>. Accessed on 8/29/08.