

1. Setting the scene

A working definition...



“Web accessibility is about designing sites so as many people as possible can access and interact with them effectively and easily – for example buy a product, find information, or apply for a job, independent of who they are or how they access the net”



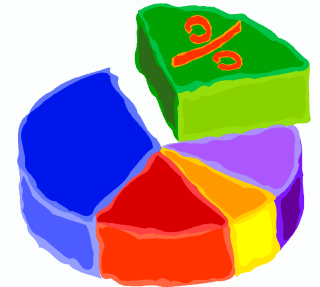
Why is it an issue?

- Lack of standards in the early days of the web
- Ignorance of the needs of disabled web users
- Development tools were very poor at creating accessible websites
- Limited advice and support available

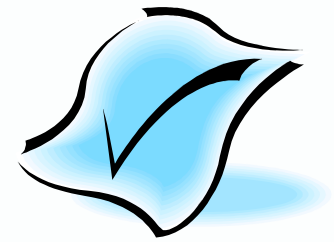
... Fortunately this has started to change



- In 2004 **81% of 1000** websites tested for a DRC report did not meet minimum accessibility standards.
- Of the UK's top 100 company's Websites- only **6%** met minimum accessible standards in 2001 – by April 2006 this had increased to **25%**. **Source:** Nomensa
- Estimated number of disabled people in the UK that have problems with inaccessible Websites is between **1.3** and **3.2 million** with an estimated annual spending power of **£10-20 billion**. **Source:** EFD/McKinseys
- Approximately **32 %** of people using accessibility options or assistive technology do so for ease of use, comfort and convenience. They have no physical difficulty or impairment. **Source:** Forrester Research 2004



Key Benefits



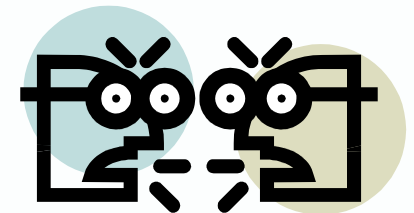
- ✓ Reach a wider audience – up to 10 percent
- ✓ Makes your site more useable for everyone (35% better)
- ✓ Reduces site maintenance – lower bandwidth and hosting cost
- ✓ Device/platform independence (1 in 3 devices handheld by 2010)
- ✓ Improves search engine rankings
- ✓ Social responsibility and reputation
- ✓ You don't break the law
- ✓ Future-proofing your online presence.

Issues from the real world



Typical problems our disabled clients have experienced when trying to use inaccessible websites which means they have had to use alternative ways to obtain the information:

- Surcharges for using phone call to purchase
- Unable to purchase special offers in store
- Unable to access latest offers on “accessible version”
- 20 minute queue to purchase by phone
- £1 a minute support call for information freely available on the website
- Unable to get key information for timetable and to plan cheapest route – so paid more for same journey.

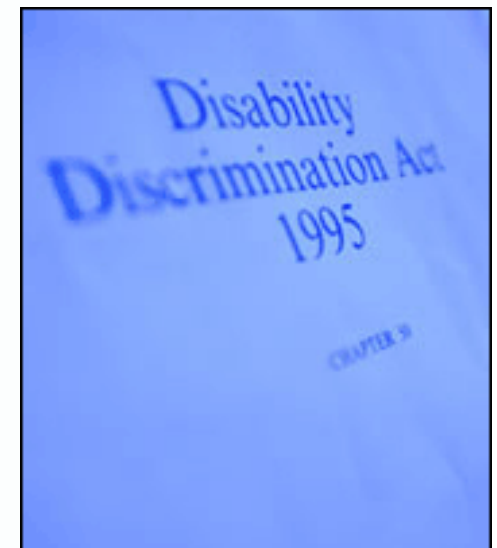


- Open software and commercial Software tools providing more accessibility features to help designers build accessible sites
- More designers creating websites to W3C web standards which includes accessibility – compatible with handheld devices such as mobiles, Palms and Pocket PCs
- More accessible Flash
- More examples of mainstream accessible websites
- Clarification of relevant legislation – UK, Europe and World
- New version of W3C Web content accessibility guidelines 2.0

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)



- The DDA covers employment and the provision of goods and services to disabled people
- The DDA has been rolled out in stages to give organisations time to adjust – grey areas clarified by case law
- An accessible Website is given as an example of a ‘reasonable adjustment’ in the goods and services DDA code of practice – law since 1999
- A service that is **only** available over the web is arguably most at risk from this legislation;



How disabled people access the web



9.8 million people in the UK have a disability under the DDA. The groups that have specific Issues with web and intranet accessibility are:

- **Vision** – including blindness, colour blindness and tunnel vision
- **Hearing** – both total deafness and hard of hearing
- **Mobility** problems with hands and arms
- **Cognitive, Mental and learning** disabilities

~ Many have more than one disability

