Web Accessibility for Marketers: inclusive design matters
There is a powerful business case for making your online products or services accessible to everyone.

Did you know that nearly 15 per cent of the population in Canada live with a disability? In addition, many informal polls suggest that a majority of people experience temporary challenges one or more times in their lives. Is this large demographic able to access your products or services online?

If a consumer can’t reach you easily, you may have lost a client.

Five ways web accessibility can boost your business:

1. Stand Out from the Crowd: Setting higher standards for web accessibility improves customer satisfaction.
2. Self Service: Improving usability for all drives down costs of telephone support.
3. Search Engine Optimization: Accessible web assets significantly improve search engine indexing of your site.
4. Social Justice: Contributing to a society where no one is left behind is the right thing to do.
5. Legislation: Conforming with accessibility legislation puts you on the right side of the law.

Inclusive design benefits everyone

Accessible web design is not only for people with permanent disabilities. Most people experience temporary, or acquired, disabilities from common occurrences such as: injuries, strain, stress, illness, or aging.

Inclusive design enables:

- Content to display better on the full range of devices used by your audiences
- People using assistive technologies to engage, learn about, and purchase your goods and services
- People who temporarily cannot easily see, hear, speak or use their hands to get what they need
- Translation tools to present your content in other languages

Become an agent of change

To reap all the rewards of creating accessible content, inclusive design must become part of your entire design and production process, from planning through to evaluation.

Everyone involved in creating online content has a part to play. If creating accessible content is not yet a part of how your team rolls, seize the opportunity to become an agent of change for your business.

See CMA’s inspiring videos.
Don’t forget to share them with others!

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Embrace standards, comply with the law

“Over the next 10 to 15 years, technology has the capacity to virtually eliminate barriers faced by people with disabilities…” ~ Steve Ballmer, Former Microsoft CEO

Canada is leading the way

in applying accessibility standards. Canada’s federal government was the first in the world to require that all their public-facing web pages complied with international standards for accessibility.\(^2\) Canada also consistently ranks in the top five globally, year after year, in benchmark studies on accessibility. Now is the time to be part of the change that will make information and online services accessible to all!

Provinces across Canada are strengthening their accessibility legislation. For example, Ontario’s Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) includes requirements for websites that already apply to private sector organizations and non-profit organizations with **50+ employees** that have a public-facing website. Other provinces, such as Manitoba, have similar legislation in the works.

Inclusive design and assistive technologies

It is easier to design accessible content by understanding the **types of barriers people face**, as well as the assistive technologies people use to access content online.

There have been **tremendous innovations** in recent decades. The more people use technologies to better see, hear, move, work, learn, and remember, the more their use will become mainstream – like eyeglasses and earphones, and Siri.

To learn more, watch the video clips from CMA’s **Accessibility Insights for Marketing** Roundtable.

Quality inclusive design

Web accessibility can be incorporated **without affecting** the quality of your creative. WCAG 2.0, a set of guidelines for making web content more accessible, is becoming the legislative standard worldwide. For each WCAG 2.0 guideline, there are testable success criteria set at three levels: A, AA, and AAA. Legislation typically points to Level A conformance, in the short term, and Level AA in the longer term.

**WCAG 2.0 “Conformance Levels”**

For your site to conform to Level AA, you must meet all Level A and Level AA Success Criteria.\(^3\)

Without level **A**: some people will find it **impossible**
Without level **AA**: some people will find it **difficult**
Without level **AAA**: some people will miss full impact

\(^2\) Wikipedia. Common Look and Feel (Last modified December 14, 2014)
\(^3\) W3C. 2008 (ratified 2010) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0
Making your website more accessible

Here are a few examples of what marketers should do to make websites more accessible:

✓ Give every web page a unique, descriptive page title.
✓ Identify the language of every page or change of language within a page.
✓ Provide text equivalents for all non-text content, such as “alt” attributes for photos.
✓ Choose sufficiently contrasting colours.
✓ Use multiple ways to convey information, rather than relying only on colour.
✓ Instead of using a picture of text, convey the content using machine text.
✓ Make sure you can browse the site and do everything without a mouse.
✓ Confirm the order that screen readers announce your content makes sense.
✓ Caption pre-recorded video content and webinars.
✓ Provide descriptive text transcripts for audio and video.

Resources for creating accessible web content

Learn more about making websites, PDFs, and other online and printed documents more accessible by visiting the resources provided online at CMAaccessibility.ca.

For more information on standards and guidelines on how to make your website more accessible, see the resources outlined in the CMA guide Marketing with accessibility in mind: a guide to inclusive design.

Feedback?

Email advocacy@the-cma.org or call 416-391-2362.