

Ministry of Justice – Digital Hub Project

Introduction

see:detail was commissioned to conduct Exploratory Testing and an Accessibility assessment of the Ministry of Justice’s Digital Hub website. The prime purpose was to provide the MoJ Digital Hub team with a high-level overview of the status of the website. The website under test will be used by offenders in the UK prison system.

Problem Statement

The website is strictly only accessible within certain IP ranges and so special permissions had to be gained to test the website from **see:detail** computers.

Test Methodology

The main site was assessed by performing targeted exploratory checks, concentrating on areas known to be high risk for accessibility issues, such as video content. To guarantee all issues were uncovered, a comprehensive assessment was needed to be carried out on every page. Where appropriate we have used accessibility automation tools to support our audit such as:

Webaim colour contrast checker, Wave accessibility tools, Firebug, MS Word or Libre Writer, Notepad++, Firefox ColorPicker Addon, Firefox Web Developer Toolbar, W3C Markup Validation Service, W3C CSS Validation Service, Internet Explorer v11, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 documentation. However, we believe that manual testing is still essential to ensure a comprehensive audit.

What we did

see:detail conducted an Accessibility assessment of each of the WCAG 2.0 individual guidelines. In many cases, individual criteria were broken down into further sub-criteria for the purposes of testing. For example, criterion 1.1.1 (non-text content) was broken down into seven points covering different requirements needed to make non-text content accessible (i.e. alt text on images, decorative images identified as alt="", alternatives to complex images available, etc.). As a result, the checklist used to assess accessibility consists of forty-three points for A-level accessibility, fourteen additional points for AA level accessibility, and twenty-eight extra points for AAA level accessibility.

Conclusion

The page language was set which helps to pass the AA level. The content also rendered very well when it was scaled or zoomed. No images contained any text which is good practice. Many areas also Passed by default making it much easier to pass AA grade.

The table below summarises the outcome of the accessibility tests.

	Pass	Fail	Total
A	31	12	43
AA	8	6	14
AAA	21	8	29
Total	60	26	86

Very few websites reach the high standard of AAA and many will opt for A level instead. This website was simple enough that a higher rating would be possible but the use of audio and video on the website makes those criteria the hardest to meet.

Whatever the MoJ chooses to do, we recommended that the MoJ justifies its decision on reasons other than technicalities of WCAG compliance. If the MoJ choose to justify the expense of providing captions and transcripts so that audio and video content is available to anyone, or choose to justify not providing captions and transcripts on the grounds of cost, that is fine. Opting to not make audio and video content solely on the grounds that other pages can be made WCAG-compliant is inadvisable.

The colour contrast was also a challenging element as it meant changing an existing site's design. we believe that the site could reach AA level with further work and many of the issues found could be easy to resolve. A business decision will need to be made on whether the MoJ wishes to commit to the additional work needed to make audio and video content accessible to everyone.

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More information can be found at:

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