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Pacific ADA & IT Center (Pacific DBTAC) is committed to building a partnership between the disability and education communities and to promoting full and unrestricted participation in society for persons with disabilities through training, outreach and technical assistance. The Center's work is made possible by a grant from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR).



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ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility Tips

Series #3

**Quick tips for enhancing
the learning experience of
students in all schools**

Accessible Web Site Design



This document is available in alternate formats (CD, large print, and audiotape) by contacting the Pacific ADA & IT Center (Pacific DBTAC). Please call our toll-free Technical Assistance hotline at 1-800-949-4232, email to adatech@adapacific.org, or use the contact form on our web site: <http://www.adapacific.org>. We hope that you will find this series valuable.

What Does An “Accessible Web Site” Mean?

An accessible web site is one that does not exclude people with visual, aural, learning, or physical disabilities.

Universally accessible web sites should:

- Provide alternate descriptions of graphical elements
- Provide headers for columns and rows in tables that contain data
- Use identifying language for links
- Have high contrast between background and text
- Meet Section 508 Standards

Why Is Accessibility Necessary?

Accessibility allows your information to be available to all users. Ask the following questions about your web site accessibility:

- Is your site’s color contrast sufficient for visually impaired users?
- Can a user who is blind or visually impaired understand the content of your graphics, charts and tables?
- Can a user who is deaf or hearing-impaired understand the audio on your web site?
- Is your web site too cluttered with graphics, links, or flashing text for someone with a visual or learning disability ?
- Can a user without state-of-the-art hardware access information from your site?

What Is Universal Design?

Universal Design (UD). UD is the “design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.” (*Center for Universal Design, NC State Univ. www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/*)

Applications with accessible code empower people who are visually impaired to interact with personal computers, PDAs and the Internet. This is achieved by enabling their screen reading software to narrate document text, give directions for operating programs and describe graphics, photos, charts, tables, menus and navigation controls.

Audio is inaccessible to deaf users, therefore text is needed. Users who are deaf depend on web designers to provide captioned text that is synchronized with audio clips on the website. In addition, many users will appreciate being able to read the text of audio elements.

Users with learning disabilities sometimes have difficulty comprehending websites that are cluttered or disorganized. All users will benefit from well designed sites.

Many Internet users have older computers or slow Internet connections. If your audience includes schools, libraries, rural areas or international users, then many visitors may have barriers that limit access to your site. Web content that requires high-speed internet connections is not accessible to all.

Do Accessible Sites Have A Special Look?

Most accessible web features are developed at the source code level to interact with software that accommodates people with disabilities. Some features like alternative graphic descriptions can be accessed by all users.

How Do I Begin?

To get started, go to Pacific ADA and IT Center’s accessible web site at: <http://www.pacdbtac.org> where you’ll find basic problem-solving support and links to the resources you will need.

How Do I Test My Web Site For Accessibility?

For guidance in performing a preliminary review to check for accessibility visit: www.w3.org/WAI/eval/#prelim

OR

You can do the following and see how well you are able to navigate and access all of the information on your web page:

1. Turn off images
2. Turn off the sound
3. Change the font size
4. Set screen resolution to 640x480
5. Change display color to black and white, put away the mouse and tab through the links and form controls on each of your web pages and forms