

Making Sites Built with CMS Accessible

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Components of masscfids.org

- Main site construction: Joomla! – open source content management system
- Article editor: JCE – Joomla Content Editor (plug-in)
- Design template: Firenze – Joomla template from RocketTheme
- Newsletter: Acajoom – independent Joomla plug-in (subscribe/unsubscribe)
- Google docs – for Contact Us form
- Search – Joomla standard component
- Future:
 - Google Check-Out – accept payments online
 - CiviCRM – Constituent Relationship Management – Database components: Membership, Donations, Mail (replace Acajoom), other
 - Survey

The requirements and the expectations

- Comply with basic accessibility standards and accommodate visitors with cognitive impairments (consistent navigation, print this screen, search, site map); details to be specified in Statement of Work.
- Joomla!
 - <http://www.joomla.org/accessibility-statement.html>
 - Output is accessible, back-end will be in v. 2.0
 - Comes with one accessible (“table-less”) template
- And the assumptions....
 - Plug-ins and templates will meet same standard as Joomla! (not...)
 - “It’s Google, they have to be accessible, right?”

What we did (slide not in handout)

- Include “Print/Email/PDF” button on each page
- Organize long articles with table of contents
- Open 3rd party links in new window; with label
- Alt-text for all images and generic links
- Minimize number of PDFs; structure them as much as possible
- Avoid use of tables in content
- Browser text re-sizer (required plug-in)

The results

- First round of accessibility testing resulted in:
 - 7 “invisible” link errors, one was in global header
 - Header tags used for formatting, not in correct order
 - Tables not properly marked up (“article index”)
 - No Title on iFrame (Google docs/contact us page)
 - Form fields not properly labelled (Acajoom, G-docs)
 - Color used to convey error information (Google docs)
 - Color contrast failures (RocketTheme template)
 - No “skip to main content” link
 - Plus a few other minor ones

What can be fixed and what not

- Links, headers, tables - manual fixes for all article pages (no time estimate for remediation yet)
 - Links easily fixed (header image needed developer)
 - Re-select headers – redefined in CSS by developer
 - Re-create article index – use anchor links not “pagebreak”
- Color contrast – can be changed in template CSS
- Skip to main content – any ideas?
 - Correct Header tags will help JAWS users
- Form field labels/iFrame title/error message not labelled
 - we have no control over these except to substitute with a different component

Lessons learned

- Learn enough to do basic testing as you go
 - Keyboard testing
 - Color contrast analyser
 - HTML checker (e.g. Cynthia Says)
 - Be visually observant – placement of field labels, error handling
 - If in doubt, look at source code when page is displayed
- Adjust stylesheets if needed, before you start entering content
- Pre-test major components before incorporating them
- Don't assume that major vendors are compliant – if not, look for substitutes. Ask about accessibility!
- Advocate for accessibility
 - Send questions/posts to Forums
 - Emails to vendors
 - Educate development partners