The Essential Guide to Digital Accessibility

How do people with disabilities use the Internet?

According to the US Census, 21.2 million people with a disability (10.8 million females and 10.4 million males) lived in the US in 2016. People with disabilities have a lower median household income than people without disabilities. In the US, people with disabilities represent nearly one person in six.

Accessibility by Regulations

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a federal law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of public life, including education, employment, transportation, technology, and telecommunications.

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) developed by the W3C are widely accepted as the go-to standard for digital accessibility, but most digital accessibility lawsuits have been brought under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, also known as the 508 standard.

Accessibility opens your organization up to a new market.

In 2016, people with disabilities in the US spent $645 billion on disposable income. Assistive Technology

Many people with disabilities use some form of Assistive Technology.

What are some examples of Assistive Technology?

Here are some examples of Assistive Technology:

- Screen Readers Software
- Screen Magnification
- Text-to-Speech
- Input Devices
- Dictation Software
- Keyboard-Only Navigation Users
- Wheelchair Users
- Blindness
- Hearing
- Intellectual
- Cognitive
- Physical
- Speech
- Ambulatory
- Motor
- Language
- Learning
- Multiple
- Near Vision
- Far Vision
- Low Vision
- Depth Perception
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Accessibility and Business

Accessibility is part of fostering a more inclusive brand. It is good business as well as good policy. Companies that lead the way in accessibility can differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Access to technology is a human right. By removing digital barriers, your organization is helping to ensure equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

In 2017, there were at least 2,500 federal ADA lawsuits pertaining to inaccessible websites. That's more than double the amount of cases brought in 2016.

Can I fix accessibility on my website/app myself?

Some accessibility fixes can be performed through a combination of manual and automated accessibility testing. However, some accessibility fixes require a deep understanding of the underlying code and the specific software application.

First steps on the journey to accessibility...

1. Learn more about the importance of accessibility
2. Introduce the idea of accessibility to your team
3. Talk to your colleagues about accessibility
4. Learn more about your risk level
5. Introduce the idea of accessibility to your customers
6. Learn about the current state of digital accessibility
7. Learn about resources and tools available to help you
8. Implement a proactive approach

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