

ArtsWeb & Accessibility

The goal of these guidelines is to address issues of accessibility in the creation of content online. These guidelines have been created in accordance with [Monash ITS Web accessibility requirements][<http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/accessibility.html>]. The quotes herein are taken from [HREOC][Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission] World Wide Web Access: Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes, which forms a basis for compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Legal Requirements

Many countries now have legislation or policies relating to Internet accessibility. In Australia, Section 24 (Goods, services and facilities) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 states:

1. It is unlawful for a person who, whether for payment or not, provides goods or services, or makes facilities available, to discriminate against another person on the ground of the other person's disability or a disability of any of that other person's associates:
 - a. by refusing to provide the other person with those goods or services or to make those facilities available to the other person; or
 - b. in the terms or conditions on which the first-mentioned person provides the other person with those goods or services or makes those facilities available to the other person; or
 - c. in the manner in which the first-mentioned person provides the other person with those goods or services or makes those facilities available to the other person.
2. This section does not render it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability if the provision of the goods or services, or making facilities available, would impose unjustifiable hardship on the person who provides the goods or services or makes the facilities available.

This means that there are certain provisions that need to be considered before content is published. Putting content online in an inaccessible format may leave developers open to legal action.

- Disability Discrimination Act, 1992
(http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/dda1992264/)
- Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
World Wide Web Access: Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes
(http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html)
- Section 508 (US legislation)
(<http://www.section508.gov/>)
- W3C: Policies relating to Web accessibility
(<http://www.w3.org/WAI/Policy/>)

Web Pages

“The Commission believes that the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines that have been developed by the W3C Consortium provide the most comprehensive set of benchmarks for assessing the accessibility of websites, and represent current international best practice in accessible web design. Familiarity with these guidelines should thus be viewed as essential for anyone involved with the design or evaluation of an accessible website.”([http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html - s3_1](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html-s3_1))

artsWeb Requirements:

- HTML must be valid. It can be validated through the use of [W3C’s Markup Validation Service](<http://validator.w3.org/>).
- Pages must at a minimum meet all W3C’s WAI priority 1 guidelines. This will ensure Level A compliance.
 - See [W3C’s WAI Priority Checklist](<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/full-checklist.html>)
 - See [W3C’s WAI Guidelines 1.0](<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/>)

PDF Files

“The Portable Document Format (PDF) file system developed by Adobe has become widely used for making documents available on web pages. Despite considerable work done by Adobe, PDF remains a relatively inaccessible format to people who are blind or vision-impaired. Software exists to provide some access to the text of some PDF documents, but for a PDF document to be accessible to this software, it must be prepared in accordance with the guidelines that Adobe have developed. Even when these guidelines are followed, the resulting document will only be accessible to those people who have the required software and the skills to use it.

The Commission's view is that organisations who distribute content only in PDF format, and who do not also make this content available in another format such as RTF, HTML, or plain text, are liable for complaints under the DDA. Where an alternative file format is provided, care should be taken to ensure that it is the same version of the content as the PDF version, and that it is downloadable by the user as a single document, just as the PDF version is downloaded as a single file.”[[http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html - s2_3](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html-s2_3)]

artsWeb Requirements:

- Content created in PDF must also be replicated online in HTML format complying with WAI Guidelines.
- If a PDF is created accessible features must be used where possible.

Flash Presentations

“As an example, work is currently underway to make Macromedia's Flash technology accessible to people who use screen-reading software. While some positive progress has been made, it will be a considerable time before most users will benefit, and even then, Flash may be accessible only in certain specific circumstances. It is certainly wrong for web designers to assume that improvements in the accessibility of a technology mean that it can be used indiscriminately without regard for the principles of accessible web design.”[[http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html - s2_4](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html-s2_4)]

artsWeb Requirements:

- Content/navigation created in Macromedia Flash must also be replicated online in HTML format complying with WAI Guidelines.