Accessibility with Word Press

The Accessible Technology Webinar Series is sponsored by the Great Lakes ADA Center and the Pacific ADA Center, both members of the ADA National Network.

The Session is Scheduled to begin at 1:00 pm CST

We will be testing audio quality periodically

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Webinar Features

Closed captioning – click **CC** icon (located in the Audio/Video Panel) or control-F8 (command-F8) and adjust your screen.

Questions - Highlight "*Great Lakes*" in the participant list and "right click" on your mouse to send a private message. Type your message into the chat area that appears. The question will be viewed by all moderators. (Keyboard - F6, Arrow up or down to locate "Great Lakes" and select to send a message)

Customize your view – You can change the size and location of any of the panels (Chat, etc.) by hovering your mouse over the ≡ icon at the right of each panel and select "Detach Panel". Each panel can be repositioned and resized.

Please do not use emoticons or hand-raising features during this session

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Accessibility with WordPress

Limitations and Benefits

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Who am I?

- A WordPress plug-in developer
- An advocate and consultant on web accessibility
- A writer on practical accessibility
- Read more at http://www.joedolson.com

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Why WordPress?

WordPress is a free, open source CMS

WordPress has many active users – 65% of the most popular 1 million sites are built on WordPress

Many of the accessibility limitations in WordPress can be easily overcome, with a little knowledge.

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WordPress Accessibility: the problems

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650,000 top sites – that's a lot of visitors!

- Inaccessible themes – affects **your** users
- Inaccessible plug-ins – affects the **plug-in's** users
- Core problems in WordPress – affect **everybody**
- **Writing Accessible Content** – created by everybody

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What's a Theme?

- Themes control the structure and appearance of a site
- Almost **all** of the public experience of a WordPress site comes from the theme.
- For most sites, most accessibility problems come from the theme.

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Finding Accessible Themes

- Most themes are not accessible.
- Finding accessible themes is very, very difficult.
- Building custom themes is expensive.
- Customizing themes for accessibility is not cheaper.
- Most accessible themes are actually **frameworks**.

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What's a framework?

-Basic structure and layout
- minimal color or ornamentation.
- Easy for a developer to modify.

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What's a framework?

-Basic structure and layout
- minimal color or ornamentation.
- Easy for a developer to modify.

- Not so easy for a casual user.

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Some (reportedly) accessible themes:

- Blaskan: http://blaskan.net/
- Skeleton: http://www.badeyes.com/services/
- Ambrosia: http://wordpress.org/extend/themes/ambrosia
- Scrapbook: http://wordpress.org/extend/themes/scrapbook
- Genesis Child Theme: http://wp-accessible.org/2012/11/release-version-0-2-of-the-accessible-genesis-child-theme/
- Twenty-Eleven Child theme: https://github.com/RRWD/accessible-twenty-eleven-theme
- Twenty-Twelve Child theme: http://daniemon.com/blog/accessible-wp-theme-twenty-twelve/

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In the WordPress Core

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Some fundamental problems.

Most of the base HTML and functionality generated by WordPress is **great**

A couple things don't quite meet specs:
- Empty searches do not return an error
- Default values for "more" links are not specific.
- Tons of redundant title attributes
- Contact forms with un-associated text

These are mostly fixable in themes

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Front-end **Accessibility** with WordPress?

- Without the theme, there's no web site.
- Themes and plug-ins are the **primary sources** of problems using WordPress accessibly.

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WordPress 3.5 was big for the admin:

- Removed tabindex
- Added skiplinks
- Fixed tabbing order in many contexts
- Now possible to log out by keyboard (but not by voice command)
- Numerous form fields now properly labeled
- Keyboard navigation has clearly visible focus
- Screen Options now much more easily found and used, giving better access to screen customizations and accessibility modes

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WordPress 3.6 is still moving forward:

- Improves the Add Media Panel
- Adds screen reader and keyboard support for Custom Menu interface
- Improvements in usability and accessibility for version comparison

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What about those plug-ins?

- WordPress plug-ins are **all over the map**
- There is little to no quality checking in the plug-in repository.
- Even if there was, checking for accessibility would be almost impossible to do.

- Yikes.

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What do you use plug-ins for?

- Contact forms
- Calendars
- eCommerce
- Social Media widgets
- Newsletter sign-ups
- *Thousands of other tasks*

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Plug-in Guide

- Contact forms
- Calendars
- eCommerce
- Social Media widgets
- Newsletter sign-ups
- *Thousands of other tasks*

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Using Plug-ins

• There are over 20,000 plug-ins in the repository. You cannot assume that most of them are accessible.

• Due to the nature of the WordPress.org plug-in search engine, most of the results for 'accessible' do not relate to accessibility.

• Most plug-ins must be vetted independently.

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What is available now?

Install and configure my plugin WP Accessibility:
http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/wp-accessibility/

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What can the
WP-Accessibility plug-in do?

- Remove redundant title attributes
- Enable skip links with WebKit
- Add skip links with user-defined targets.
- Add language and text direction attributes
- Remove the target attribute from links.
- Force a search page error on an empty search
- Remove tabindex from elements that are focusable.
- Strip title attributes from images in content.
- Add post titles to "read more" links.
- Add an outline to the :focus state for focusable elements.
- Improve accessibility of admin styles

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What **can't** this plug-in do?

- Fix color contrast issues.
- Correct forms to add labels or give meaningful errors.
- Fix heading structures for screen reader navigation.
- Give appropriate alt attributes to images
- *Correct for many possible unknowns...*

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What about creating accessible content?

P.O.U.R. Principles

- Perceivable
- Operable
- Understandable
- Robust

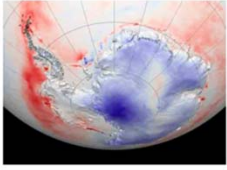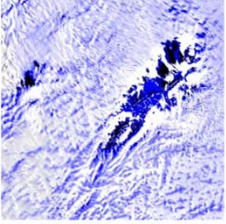## Example:

https://sites.google.com/site/antarcticaclassproject/

What does this example do wrong?
What does it do right?

Hint: you can see everything that's on the page.

This page, prepared by three students in Professor James Aber's Fall 2009 Introduction to Geospatial Analysis class at Emporia State University, provides information about Antarctica, where one of the three students, Molly Reardon, is currently located.

The image above shows heating and cooling trends over and around Antarctica from 1982-2003, where:
- red indicates areas of warming
- blue indicates areas of cooling
Secondary source: jennifermarshasy.com
Primary source: NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center Scientific Visualization Studio

As noted on the NSIDC website, changes in the stability of the ice shelves in Antarctica prompted the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) to start monitoring the major ice streams and glaciers along the coast. They have been maintaining an archive of this imagery since late 1980's. A wealth of data and images are available via their Data Catalog, such as the Antarctic Ice Shelf Image Archive that is shown on the left.

The image above, which shows a large accumulation of meteorites

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Imagining Accessibility

- What is missing if you can't see the page?
- What is missing if you can't hear audio?
- What can't be operated if you can't use a mouse?
- What is lost if you are using a tablet or mobile device?

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Web Readers Skim

- **Everybody** skims on the web
- Everybody **wants** to skim on the web
- How does assistive technology allow skimming?

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Is that all?

For now, yes. There are undoubtedly other accessible WordPress themes: but no easy way to find them.

Searching for accessible themes requires critical judgement.

Audited accessibility tag is coming to the WordPress theme repository – but it's not there yet.

WP Accessibility can fix some problems, but not all.

The Cities Project is working on building accessible WordPress themes: http://accessiblejoe.com/cities/

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What's the summary?

•On the public side, WordPress makes very few mistakes, and these can be corrected by a theme or plug-in. **BUT**: WordPress only controls a small percentage of the presentation of a web site.
•Currently available themes are generally lacking a focus on accessibility; and there isn't a good way to find accessible themes.
•Extending WordPress via plug-ins is hazardous, and requires careful vetting.
•The admin, though not perfect, is improving.

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Accessibility Resources.

- *WCAG Recommended Techniques*: highly technical, though simpler than the WCAG itself. http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG-TECHS/

- *WebAIM:* Simplified summaries, recommendations. Extensive documentation on almost every accessibility topic: http://webaim.org

- *University of Minnesota, Duluth Web Design References:* Extensive curated catalog of accessibility articles on the web: http://bit.ly/t3tPZC

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Questions?

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Thank you for participating!

NEXT SESSION IS JULY 25, 2013

UPDATE ON ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY (ICT) POLICY

This session was recorded and will be
archived at
http://www.ada-
audio.org/Webinar/AccessibleTechnology/

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