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

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-raisinig features during this session

Accessibility with Word Press

Limitations and Benefits
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

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.

WordPress Accessibility: the problems
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

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.

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.
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.

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]
- 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]
In the WordPress Core

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.

Front-end Accessibility with WordPress?

- Without the theme, there’s no website.
- Themes and plug-ins are the primary sources of problems using WordPress accessibly.
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

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

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.
What do you use plug-ins for?

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

Plug-in Guide

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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.
What is available now?

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

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

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...
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.
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?

Web Readers Skim

• Everybody skims on the web
• Everybody wants to skim on the web
• How does assistive technology allow skimming?
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/

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.

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
Questions?

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/](http://www.ada-audio.org/Webinar/AccessibleTechnology/)