



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS
Independent Living Resource Centre
Simcoe • Grey • Bruce

AODA

Digital Guide

Welcome

Breaking Down Barriers, ILRC is a registered charity and inclusive agency serving individuals with visible and invisible disabilities. These diverse disabilities include physical, sensory, emotional and intellectual.

Located in Collingwood, ON, we are an accredited member of Independent Living Canada and provide a wide range of independent living skills programs, peer support activities, services, resources and referrals across Simcoe, Grey and Bruce Counties.

Disability Defined

Disability generally refers to a physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental impairment that may limit a person's ability to engage in certain activities, interact with their environment, or participate fully in society.



Website Accessibility

In 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) passed legislation to end discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The AODA's efforts to meet this expectation involves “developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards [...] with respect to services” in physical and virtual places. The AODA emphasizes the importance of creating accessible online platforms and resources, as it directly contributes to enhancing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

While the AODA does not specify what is needed for a website to be considered accessible, this workbook serves as a guide to equip public sector organizations with the essential tools needed to build websites that comply with AODA standards, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all.

Populations to Consider

When creating a webpage that is accessible, it is important to consider a wide range of disabilities and populations to ensure inclusivity. Some of the disabilities and populations to consider include:

Visual impairments: This includes individuals with partial or total blindness, low vision or colour blindness.

Hearing impairments: This includes individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and may require closed captions or transcripts for audio content.

Motor disabilities: This includes individuals with limited dexterity, mobility impairments or those who rely on assistive devices like alternative keyboards or switches for navigation.

Populations to Consider

Cognitive disabilities: This includes individuals with learning disabilities, intellectual impairments or conditions that affect memory, attention or processing speed.

Neurodiverse populations: This includes individuals with autism spectrum disorders, ADHD or other neurological conditions that may affect their ability to process or interact with online content.

Aging population: This includes older adults who may experience age-related vision or hearing changes, reduced motor abilities or cognitive decline.

Populations to Consider

Language and literacy barriers: This includes considering individuals with limited English proficiency or those with reading difficulties who may require simplified language or translation options.

Assistive technology users: This includes individuals who rely on screen readers, braille displays, voice recognition software or other assistive technologies to access online content.

By considering the needs of these diverse populations, website creators can design and develop inclusive and accessible web experiences that cater to a wider range of users.

Features to Consider

- **Font**
 - Type
 - Size
 - Adjustability
- **Screen Readers**
 - Links
- **Layout**
- **Greyscale**
- **Contrast**
 - High Contrast
 - Negative Contrast
- **Zoom**
- **Keyboard Accessibility**
- **Alternative Text, Closed Captions, Transcriptions**
- **Accessible Formats**
- **The ‘No Mouse Test’**

Font

When it comes to selecting a font for your website, it's important to make sure it's accessible to everyone.

Start by opting for a font that offers clear and easy legibility. The Canadian National Institute for the Blind suggests using non-decorative fonts such as Arial and Verdana, especially for screen reading.

For Example

Welcome to Breaking Down Barriers

VS.

Welcome to Breaking Down Barriers

Font Sizing

Font size and spacing is also important. Consider a size that promotes comfortable reading and make sure there is enough space between letters and lines for enhanced readability. This way, you're ensuring people with diverse abilities can easily access and understand content on your website. It's all about providing equal access to information and creating a positive user experience for every visitor.

For Example

Welcome to Breaking Down Barriers

VS.

Welcome to Breaking Down Barriers



Adjustable Font Feature

Including an adjustable font feature on your website allows users to tailor the font size to their specific needs. This is particularly important for individuals with visual impairments such as low vision or age-related conditions. These impairments may need larger text for comfortable reading.



The adjustable font feature gives users the power to customize their experience according to their visual capabilities and ensures everyone can smoothly navigate your website, read content and enjoy a positive user experience.

Screen Readers

Screen readers enable individuals with visual impairments or print disabilities to access and navigate content effectively. Screen readers are assistive technologies that convert on-screen text into synthesized speech or braille output, allowing users to listen to or read the website's content through alternative means.



Screen readers can read out headings, paragraphs and links, providing users with a structured understanding of the content and facilitating navigation.

Making a website compatible with screen readers also benefit individuals with cognitive or learning disabilities who may find it easier to comprehend information through auditory channels.

Screen Readers and Links

Clear and consistent navigation menus with logical labels serve as signposts for screen reader users, making navigation a breeze. Rather than using generic terms like 'click here' for links, providing descriptive text that explains the content or purpose of the link ensures that screen readers can effectively guide users living with disabilities to the relevant information.

For Example

To learn more about the services offered by Breaking Down Barriers, ILRC please click here.

vs.

Click here for Breaking Down Barriers, ILRC



Layout

The layout of a webpage is like the blueprint for a great user experience. It's not just about looks; it's about how people get around and engage with your content.

For individuals living with select disabilities, this is a game-changer.



Using headings and subheadings is like giving your content a map. This helps users with cognitive challenges or reading difficulties find and understand what they need. Logical layout also supports users with mobility challenges in having a smooth and frustration-free online experience.

Layout

Finally, giving clickable elements some space and using big, easy-to-click buttons, is extremely accommodating for users with motor challenges. These layout considerations are the secret ingredients for making your website accessible and inclusive.

Click Here



Greyscale

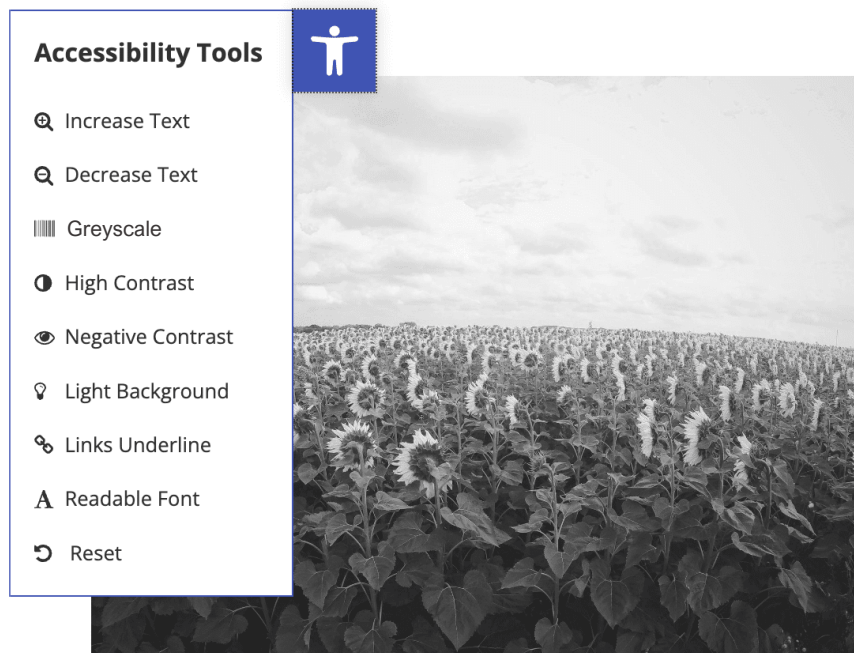
Greyscale refers to a range of tones from black to white, including various shades of grey in between. Allowing users to customize the greyscale on a webpage is a valuable step in enhancing the site's accessibility.

It benefits individuals with visual impairments like colour blindness or low vision as it eliminates the sole reliance on colour for conveying information.

This is particularly important when colours are used to signify important distinctions or convey emotions. Those with colour vision deficiencies may struggle to interpret the intended meaning.

Greyscale

By incorporating greyscale, the website ensures information is conveyed through alternative visual cues such as text, shape or contrast, broadening its accessibility. Additionally, greyscale can enhance readability and minimize visual distractions for individuals with cognitive impairments or sensitivity to bright colours.



High Contrast

A high contrast feature empowers individuals with visual impairments or colour vision deficiencies to perceive and discern content more effectively. By employing a noticeable difference between text and background colours, designers guarantee that is easily legible and prominently stands out.

Hello 

For instance, employing black text on a white background, or vice versa creates a high contrast that significantly improves readability. Likewise, using contrasting colours for interactive elements like buttons or links aids individuals with motor disabilities or visual impairments in identifying and engaging with them.

Negative Contrast

Negative contrast, also known as inverted or dark mode, can alleviate eye strain and visual fatigue especially in low-light or nighttime settings. By presenting a darker background with lighter text or elements, it creates a visually comfortable experience for users. This proves advantageous for individuals with light sensitivity such as those affected by migraines or visual impairments.



Offering a dark mode option on a website caters to a diverse range of user preferences and needs, ultimately amplifying accessibility and ensuring a more inclusive browsing experience.

Zoom

Having zoom functionality on a webpage allows users to adjust the size of the content according to their visual needs. Zooming enables individuals with visual impairments or low vision to enlarge the text and images, making them more legible and easier to perceive.



Zoom functionality also assists individuals with motor disabilities who may require larger clickable areas to interact with the website accurately. By providing zoom options, a website promotes inclusivity, allowing users to engage with the content comfortably and ensuring that everyone can access and navigate the site effectively.

Keyboard Accessibility

Having a keyboard-friendly webpage ensures individuals with motor disabilities or those who prefer keyboard navigation can seamlessly interact with the content.



Keyboard accessibility essentially means all interactive elements, from links to buttons and form fields, can be easily accessed and operated using keyboard input alone, without reliance on a mouse or other pointing device.

Alternative Text, Closed Captions, Transcriptions

Including alternative text (alt text), closed captions and transcription options guarantee individuals with visual or hearing impairments can easily access and grasp the information you're sharing.

Alt text offers textual descriptions of images.

For Example



Including the text, "A woman walking a dog" ensures that visually impaired users can understand the context of the image of the woman walking a dog.

Alternative Text, Closed Captions, Transcriptions

Closed captions or subtitles provide text-based transcriptions of audio or video content, giving individuals with hearing impairments the chance to follow along.



Transcription options provide a written version of audio content, benefiting those who may find it easier to read than to hear.

Accessible Formats

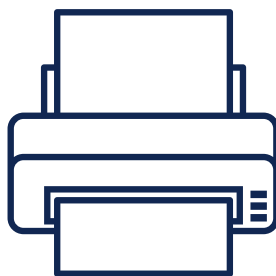
Making sure your webpage works seamlessly on various devices like phones, computers and tablets is a big step in boosting its accessibility.



Responsive design, which adapts the layout and functionality of the webpage to different screen sizes and orientations is key in delivering a consistent and user-friendly experience. For instance, fine-tuning the website for mobile devices with touch-friendly buttons and larger text sizes goes a long way in making it more accessible for users with motor disabilities or visual impairments.

Accessible Formats

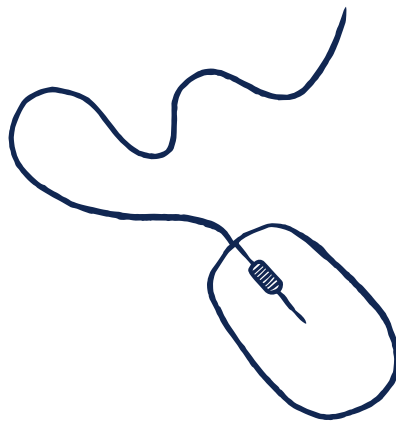
By providing accessible document formats, information from websites can be smoothly transferred to a printed document. Website creators can design print stylesheets that remove unnecessary elements like navigation menus or advertisements, adjust font sizes for better legibility and ensure the content flows logically when printed.



Providing options for downloadable, accessible versions of content helps individuals with visual impairments, learning disabilities or those who simply prefer offline reading to access the information in a format that suits their needs.

No Mouse Test

The 'No Mouse Test' is a method used to test the accessibility of websites by attempting to navigate and interact with all elements of a website using only the keyboard.



By performing the 'No Mouse Test,' website developers can identify any potential accessibility issues related to keyboard navigation and evaluate the website's compliance with the AODA standards. In doing so, the test helps to ensure a seamless experience for users with motor disabilities or other accessibility needs.

Resources

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Webpage: <https://www.aoda.ca/>

Breaking Down Barriers, Independent Living Resource Centre

Webpage: <https://breakingdownbarriers.ca/>

Canadian National Institute for the Blind Webpage:

<https://www.cnib.ca/en?region=on>