

1

00:00:11.670 --> 00:00:19.609

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Hey! Welcome everyone to the webinar. I see people coming in. We'll just give it a few more seconds here, and then we'll get started

2

00:00:21.180 --> 00:00:24.930

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): hoping everybody's having a great Thursday.

3

00:00:29.100 --> 00:00:40.339

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Just give it a couple more seconds and then we'll jump in because we got a lot to cover today, and hopefully, you all have your learning hats on, which is what you know. Teachers say, nowadays.

4

00:00:45.420 --> 00:00:47.820

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Okay, well, let's just go ahead and jump on in.

5

00:00:48.350 --> 00:00:56.160

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Hello, everyone, and welcome to the February Sandstorm webinar Beyond the Tools: Mastering Web Usability and Accessibility.

6

00:00:56.450 --> 00:01:02.579

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): My name is Jana Fiester, and I am the Vice President of UX and Creative at Sandstorm, and I am your host today.

7

00:01:02.920 --> 00:01:10.420

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): My pronouns are she/her. I am a Caucasian female, with gray curly hair pulled up into a bun and wearing a black sweater.

8

00:01:11.320 --> 00:01:17.889

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): The goal of this webinar is to share with you the best tips for improving website accessibility and usability

9

00:01:18.320 --> 00:01:26.769

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): during the webinar. Please submit any questions for the speakers in the Q&A channel. We'll address as many as we can toward the end of our time today

10

00:01:27.170 --> 00:01:30.259

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): for general comments, please share those in the Chat channel.

11

00:01:30.960 --> 00:01:38.929

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): If you are game and would like your website to be part of our accessibility review, please add your URL to the chat, and I'll make sure the speakers get it.

12

00:01:39.930 --> 00:01:45.509

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): To make this presentation more accessible, this session will have audio captions, and will be recorded

13

00:01:45.660 --> 00:01:50.420

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Next week, we'll provide a human corrected transcript and a link to the recording

14

00:01:50.990 --> 00:01:54.090

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Immediately after the presentation, we'll share today's deck.

15

00:01:55.330 --> 00:02:04.320

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): So without further ado, let's get started with Beyond the Tools and learning how to master web usability and accessibility. Over to you, Alma and Joanna!

16

00:02:05.000 --> 00:02:25.870

Alma Meshes: Hello, everyone! My name is Alma Meshes. I am a Senior UX Architect at Sandstorm. My pronouns are she/her, I'm a Caucasian female, I have 2 French braids today, and I have blue glasses, and I'm wearing a black dress, and I'm really excited to share all that we have today. Joanna.

17

00:02:26.120 --> 00:02:39.209

Joanna Jackson: Hi, everyone! I'm Joanna Jackson. I'm a UX Specialist. I'm CPACC certified. My pronouns are she/her and I'm wearing a black and white top. I am a Caucasian female. I've curly hair and glasses.

18

00:02:43.700 --> 00:03:07.219

Joanna Jackson: Alright, so a little more about Sandstorm. Sandstorm has been in business for over 25 years and headquartered in Chicago. But we have teams all over the United States. We've been building digital experiences for associations, nonprofits, and healthcare organizations. We believe in research. And we've conducted a lot of it with over 4,600 hours of usability and UX research that we bring to every project.

19

00:03:07.220 --> 00:03:27.369

Joanna Jackson: So we already come to the table, knowing what many users need, and we can make great decisions together, based off of that research. Many of our staff are CPAC-certified for accessibility. We also have specialists in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and we have a WBENC Certification which is a women-owned business.

20

00:03:28.560 --> 00:03:42.540

Alma Meshes: We'd like to start with some fun facts before we're going to jump into our examples. So our 1st fun fact is that 1 in 4 US adults, or about 27% of the population have a disability.

21

00:03:42.720 --> 00:03:45.522

Alma Meshes: So what does that tell us?

22

00:03:45.990 --> 00:04:09.369

Alma Meshes: there's a lot of audience out there for us to think about when we're looking at accessibility. And a not so fun fact is, unfortunately, only about 2% of all websites meet accessibility standards. So we're hoping today that we can help bring up some of those numbers with you all who are going to be our champions in your organizations. And so at Sandstorm, when we think about accessibility,

23

00:04:09.370 --> 00:04:32.449

Alma Meshes: we focus on those who have a disability, people who are using assistive technology and anyone with a temporary disability. So this could be things as simple as "I broke my hand and now I'm wearing a brace". It could be someone holding a child or helping someone. It could be someone who's distracted or in a high-stress situation, or someone who is aging and experiencing loss of dexterity and vision.

24

00:04:33.454 --> 00:04:45.320

Alma Meshes: We also want to ensure that users have an optimal experience, no matter what device they are on. So we don't just think about it from one perspective. We kind of think about accessibility from all of those perspectives.

25

00:04:47.580 --> 00:05:15.650

Joanna Jackson: A few more not so fun facts: So there has been an almost 300% increase in website accessibility lawsuits since 2017. And these are the ones that go to court. Cases that settle are often even more so. It is a legal requirement for websites to maintain a certain level of accessibility. But the unfortunate truth is, we've seen many organizations run into legal trouble because someone did a scan of their website and initiated a lawsuit because they were not in proper compliance.

26

00:05:18.300 --> 00:05:27.060

Joanna Jackson: and over 20% of lawsuits are using widgets in 2024. So as of July 2024, 503 lawsuits

27

00:05:27.522 --> 00:05:54.919

Joanna Jackson: against websites with active widgets compared to 449 suits in 2023. And we're speaking about this in light of the current FTC lawsuit against a very popular overlay in this space. And so the purpose of today is to really say that there are manual checks that you can do, and we're gonna walk you through some of those so that you're not relying on those accessibility overlays that are being highly scrutinized at the moment.

28

00:05:58.520 --> 00:06:10.169

Joanna Jackson: And there is some good news! So building, testing, and updating your website following WCAG guidelines will remove the need for overlays and help reduce the risk of legal action.

29

00:06:11.940 --> 00:06:32.280

Alma Meshes: All right. So let's get going on looking at how we assess these. So at Sandstorm, we use a mixture of automated tools and human testing to get the best results. So there are lots and lots of tools out there that can help us make sure that our site is accessible. But in the end

30

00:06:32.330 --> 00:06:50.589

Alma Meshes: it's really people who are using computers. That's who our users are. And that's who we make websites for and apps for. So we need to make sure that humans are checking, that the computers are doing all of their work properly, and sometimes the computers miss things. So we want to make sure that we're collecting those and making our site as accessible as it can be.

31

00:06:50.890 --> 00:07:18.349

Alma Meshes: So here we like to use again, like I said, automated tools. So these are really code level review that give you a pass-fail on particular elements. So some of those tools that we use are axe core devtools. This is a tool provided by Deque. It's an in browser tool that allows you to install an extension on Chrome and various other devices to look at the code of your page and see how it's performing.

32

00:07:18.990 --> 00:07:39.530

Alma Meshes: Pa11y is another tool that is an automated scan of individual pages and the same thing with Wave. So these are all different tools that we use to look at on a page-by-page basis, how our site is performing, and we'll show you a couple of these today during our examples. But what we really want to focus on our human testing.

33

00:07:39.530 --> 00:08:07.190

Alma Meshes: So the automated tools are really great at giving us a high level of what things are broken, giving us a list to send over to our developers of things that we can enhance and improve. But at the end, we need to make sure that we're collecting all the things that the tools missed. So in our manual review of a site. We look at things like the visuals, the content of the site, how the site is navigating, and if navigation is accessible to everyone, and the functionality of the site.

34

00:08:07.420 --> 00:08:21.809

Alma Meshes: So today we're going to jump in and show you some of those things that we look for and give you ways that you can start creating that list of opportunities for enhancing the accessibility of your site. So, Janna, do we have any

35

00:08:21.910 --> 00:08:24.890

Alma Meshes: volunteers in our group here?

36

00:08:25.150 --> 00:08:29.170

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): No, our 1st thing. -Oh, we're not so.

37

00:08:29.170 --> 00:08:29.819

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): But if anyone.

38

00:08:29.820 --> 00:08:40.690

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): please add your URL to the chat. We'd love to have some live websites. If not, we have other ones ready to go. But add your URL if you'd like for us. Oh, Stella! Of course, Stella!

39

00:08:40.690 --> 00:08:42.470

Alma Meshes: Thank you so much, Stella.

40

00:08:42.470 --> 00:08:47.450

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Awesome. So as a reminder, Stella is from aspgh.org.

41

00:08:47.720 --> 00:08:48.310

Alma Meshes: Excellent.

42

00:08:48.310 --> 00:08:49.389

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Thanks. Stella.

43

00:08:50.010 --> 00:08:58.359

Alma Meshes: All right. So I just want to preface this by saying, I'm going to be looking over here at the right hand screen. I have a second window open, so I can

44

00:08:58.490 --> 00:09:07.179

Alma Meshes: wizard both of these screens I'm not trying to ignore, I love making eye contact, and also the spirit of today is to be

45

00:09:07.180 --> 00:09:30.840

Alma Meshes: collecting things that we can improve. So none of this is meant in a mean spirit if we use your site. And there are things that are opportunities for improvement. All we can do is go up and increase the accessibility and usability of everyone's site. So we really appreciate that you are offering your sites today. I know it can be very vulnerable space. But this is a safe place. We want to look at the opportunities that we have

46

00:09:30.840 --> 00:09:33.929

Alma Meshes: and give you ways that we can help enhance those.

47

00:09:33.930 --> 00:09:41.739

Alma Meshes: So we really appreciate it. It makes it more fun when we can look at real websites instead of us just having a bunch of examples all ready to go.

48

00:09:41.740 --> 00:09:45.570

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): And we all right more that I've offered up if you want those.

49

00:09:45.570 --> 00:10:02.300

Alma Meshes: I'm actually going to jump to a second one. I'm going to jump to Nelson Jameson instead, because I know that we are going to use ASPPH for a later one. So, Stella, thank you so much for being our 1st volunteer and opening the door for us. And let me just copy this really quick.

50

00:10:02.610 --> 00:10:11.920

Alma Meshes: Oh, there we go, perfect, all right. So the 1st thing that we're going to look at is navigation. So navigation is the way that users can explore our site.

51

00:10:11.950 --> 00:10:35.859

Alma Meshes: And this is really important, because, you know, we want them to be able to get to every page of our site. And so navigation is this little area right here at the top. That is a list of all of the different pages that are available. And so the 1st thing that we like to do is we like to do a tab test. So what I'm going to do right now without having clicked on anything else on the site. I'm just going to hit the "tab" key on my keyboard

52

00:10:36.180 --> 00:10:41.490

Alma Meshes: and see what it does. So I'm not seeing it do anything here.

53

00:10:41.600 --> 00:11:03.939

Alma Meshes: Oh, I'm sorry I need to be clicked into the browser. There we go. I was in the Zoom. Sorry about that, so at the bottom you can see, there's a little yellow tab that opens up down here that, says nelsonjameson.com/about-us, so it has highlighted something on this page, and we can see over here that it's highlighted this button at the bottom

54

00:11:04.450 --> 00:11:07.040

Alma Meshes: as the 1st thing in the page.

55

00:11:07.200 --> 00:11:23.580

Alma Meshes: So I'm going to refresh one more time, just to make sure that I didn't do anything goofy here. Okay. So we've started up here at the top. Instead, I had clicked over to the page. So the browser thought that I was trying to make some kind of interaction. So it skipped me to that about

56

00:11:23.580 --> 00:11:38.910

Alma Meshes: button down here at the bottom. But 1st we start off here at the 'Contact Us', that's great. It is kind of the 1st thing on the page. And then when I tab again, you can see that there is an outline around the logo. So that's excellent. We're giving users the ability to see that logo

57

00:11:39.707 --> 00:12:07.559

Alma Meshes: and then next it kind of skips around a little bit. It's moved into the search box, but it's a little bit difficult to see that, because you can see there's an icon kind of bouncing in there, but it's pretty subtle, so we might want to increase the accessibility of that by putting that same outline that we saw around the logo. We might want to also include that around the search bar. Just so that people know that's the thing that's active.

58

00:12:07.710 --> 00:12:35.019

Alma Meshes: As we continue to tab, you see that we've gone over to the 'My Account', and the 'My Account' now has an outline around it. We've got an outline around the shopping cart, and then we've moved into the page down below. So what we really want is for the icon to move down to these product sections and dairy solutions services so that we're following the order of the navigation throughout the page.

59

00:12:35.020 --> 00:12:37.999

Alma Meshes: One other thing that we typically look for

60

00:12:38.230 --> 00:12:54.279

Alma Meshes: when we're reviewing a navigation to make sure that it's highly tabbable, is we want to make sure that when it highlights on our navigation items, we can see here that there's an arrow indicating that there's additional pages here. And if I click with my mouse, I can see that that expands open.

61

00:12:54.490 --> 00:13:14.770

Alma Meshes: Typically when you're using a keyboard to interact with things (and not a mouse or tapping on the screen), the space bar would be the indication for those to open up and then

using your arrows or the tab button to navigate through those. So there are some opportunities here to improve the accessibility of this navigation

62

00:13:15.060 --> 00:13:32.460

Alma Meshes: just in making some of those changes, so updating the tab order so that we're kind of following the logical order of the elements on the page and then providing highlights around each of the navigation items and allowing users to tab through all of these different pages that we have underneath.

63

00:13:34.110 --> 00:13:46.089

Alma Meshes: Next, we'd like another URL. It looks like I have one here from wftc.wa.gov. So thank you for that. I'm going to click that one open.

64

00:13:46.740 --> 00:14:11.239

Alma Meshes: Perfect. Okay. So for our next item that we look at. We want to look at our buttons. So buttons and links need to have more than color to be clickable and understood as clickable to users. So what we're looking for is we're going to go look for some buttons here. So I see some buttons right here at the very beginning. So this is nice because we have 2 buttons. They're a little bit different colors

65

00:14:11.740 --> 00:14:22.940

Alma Meshes: from each other. But we want to hover over them with our mouse to see. Do they do anything? Do they have any kind of change or interaction when I make

66

00:14:22.940 --> 00:14:30.679

Alma Meshes: a hover action? So just putting my mouse over those so we can see that this 1st button does turn into a white button.

67

00:14:30.974 --> 00:14:55.109

Alma Meshes: So that's nice. There are a few things that we could do here that maybe could give us a little bit more visual cues to indicate that this button is even more clickable so we could change it. It's going from an outlined to a solid color. So that's pretty good indication that it's a text. We could also think about rounding the corners of this button to really make it stand out and make it look a little bit different.

68

00:14:55.220 --> 00:15:00.620

Alma Meshes: We could also provide an underline under this, but this one is looking pretty good.

69

00:15:01.170 --> 00:15:26.059

Alma Meshes: For this one over here, we do have a subtle color change. It might be hard to see through the Zoom here, but we're going from kind of a leafy green to a darker, leafy green. So this one we'll talk about contrast in our next little segment here. This one could use maybe a little bit more bump up, or maybe a change in shape to indicate that something's happening here. We've also seen other things where

70

00:15:26.130 --> 00:15:53.740

Alma Meshes: there are more branded opportunities for doing things so they could reflect more of your brand styling. We could do something. Fancy with the button. They could have kind of a little backdrop behind them, and then the backdrop goes away. So there are lots of different ways that we can indicate that buttons are making a change. We want to make sure that we're using those visual indicators like shape changes, underlines and definitely color changes to indicate that these are buttons and that they are clickable.

71

00:15:54.660 --> 00:15:57.340

Alma Meshes: Joanna over to you.

72

00:15:57.860 --> 00:16:22.590

Joanna Jackson: Awesome, all right. So moving on to the next one here. So, many users struggle with contrast. So we are going to move over to the adea.org website here, and just talk a little bit more about poor contrast. So poor contrast can lead to essential or helpful information being missed not only by users who experience colorblindness or low vision,

73

00:16:22.700 --> 00:16:51.570

Joanna Jackson: but also by people who have perfect vision. So the lower the contrast, the more difficult it is to see elements and text that are important to that successful digital experience. So what are we looking for? What is the benchmark color contrast ratio? For normal text between 18 and 24 pixels, you want to meet the minimum ratio of 4.5:1. And for regular text, that is 24 pixels or larger, that ratio is going to drop to a 3:1 ratio.

74

00:16:51.680 --> 00:17:19.009

Joanna Jackson: So we use some online tools that, like the WebAIM color contrast checker or Wave to evaluate a website's contrast ratio quickly and kind of on the fly. Alma's going to be using the Wave in this instance. But the WebAIM is also a really helpful one. So some of the

things that we manually look for to see if the content has a high enough contrast, and if there is text over an image we really want to check for that contrast as well.

75

00:17:19.109 --> 00:17:28.920

Joanna Jackson: So, looking down at this Application Services section, we can see with the Wave tool that we've got some flagged for contrast. So

76

00:17:29.230 --> 00:17:52.620

Joanna Jackson: that text, that whiter text over that orange background is not passing that ratio that we're looking for. So that ratio is a 2.68:1. And again, we're shooting for at least a 3:1 for that large text size. And then you can see again on the little buttons with the link text, it's not

77

00:17:53.020 --> 00:17:58.900

Joanna Jackson: passing that contrast ratio there. So this blue and white one in the middle,

78

00:17:59.100 --> 00:18:25.249

Joanna Jackson: off to the left, just a little bit is passing. And so we're not kind of getting that signal, but, the rest of the other ones are. So what we can do here is once you hover, especially that hover state, it's gonna lose even more contrast. And that's a common thing we see is even sometimes the text over a background will pass contrast. But the hover state will not. And so you want to be checking at all different

79

00:18:25.810 --> 00:18:32.380

Joanna Jackson: states that your text could be at. So we could either darken the background here or,

80

00:18:32.850 --> 00:18:44.820

Joanna Jackson: you know, brighten some of the colors. And so looking, and we can kind of just, as you can see, almost actually able to play with that color picker there to see what that better contrast might look like in these instances.

81

00:18:47.880 --> 00:19:11.400

Joanna Jackson: Alright. So the biggest tip here is that you know again what we're providing you is WCAG AA. But you really want to aim to at least do AAA which are even more you know, just more stringent, higher standards. And if you're aiming for AAA odds are, you're at least gonna pass AA, which is really what we want to shoot for to make sure that our websites stay in compliance.

82

00:19:12.330 --> 00:19:29.230

Joanna Jackson: So another helpful tool that we use is a contrast grid. So often we will see that an organization's brand colors can make it difficult to have that wide variety of color combinations that pass that AA standard. So we'll often utilize this more advanced contrast grid

83

00:19:29.230 --> 00:19:45.269

Joanna Jackson: to evaluate and now Alma's pulling it up here, and Janna has dropped the link as well. But we'll use this more advanced contrast grid to evaluate all color combinations and identify which ones we can use in an accessible manner on the website while still reflecting that brand identity.

84

00:19:45.610 --> 00:20:01.369

Joanna Jackson: So on this example, particularly, you can see the ones that are passing and the ones that are not passing. And so you'll see even that AA 18, that is, in some of that in that little yellow bar

85

00:20:01.700 --> 00:20:06.310

Joanna Jackson: that's saying this will pass if your text size is 18.

86

00:20:06.550 --> 00:20:16.810

Joanna Jackson: And so you want to make sure, too, that we're being very careful about our font size here as well. Originally their brand color was this magenta, this brighter pink,

87

00:20:16.840 --> 00:20:43.789

Joanna Jackson: and that was not as accessible. It wasn't passing the ratios like we'd really like to see. So we darkened that brand color just a little bit for links specifically so that we could get more use out of that. Get a little bit of higher contrast there, and still reflect the brand color. So we highly recommend this tool, as you kind of play with your brand colors, and maybe expand that palette to be more accessible for all your audiences.

88

00:20:44.280 --> 00:20:54.229

Joanna Jackson: So biggest takeaway here: leverage free tools. Understand your target contrast ratios and test all of your colors to make sure that they're passing contrast.

89

00:21:00.300 --> 00:21:14.969

Joanna Jackson: all right, moving on to the next one. So this is the ASPPH homepage. And, as you can see, they have a rotating hero image

90

00:21:15.340 --> 00:21:35.069

Joanna Jackson: a lot of times. Users unfortunately, see this auto rotating image and think that it's an ad, and that they're advertising something instead of really taking the opportunity to leverage the space to talk more about your organization and what you're doing. Users start to just scroll right over it and breeze by it.

91

00:21:36.480 --> 00:21:46.630

Joanna Jackson: So even as it is rotating, even if they do try to read it, Often, it's rotating too quickly for them to even read it, even if they want to.

92

00:21:46.890 --> 00:22:11.619

Joanna Jackson: Again, the hero section of your homepage is one of the most important, and one of the very few opportunities with limited attention spans these days that you have to quickly introduce your site and it's mission from an accessibility perspective. Auto rotators are not accessible because the user also cannot stop it from changing. So what was once an opportunity to showcase a lot of content has now quickly become

93

00:22:11.620 --> 00:22:26.329

Joanna Jackson: a section that is inadvertently increasing a cognitive load and not giving the users that one the level of control that we want them to have. Now, this is a really great example, because they actually do employ an accessibility overlay

94

00:22:26.460 --> 00:22:39.759

Joanna Jackson: which is something that we've been talking about. So down in this left hand corner you can see that if you expand that accessibility, overlay and hit 'pause animations', that it will pause some of the motion on the site.

95

00:22:40.289 --> 00:23:00.970

Joanna Jackson: But you can see it's pausing the video below it, and it's not actually pausing that auto rotating hero image. So we're still getting some movement in there. It may have slowed it down a little bit, but this is not a completely accessibility compliant approach, even with using this overlay.

96

00:23:01.950 --> 00:23:09.389

Joanna Jackson: So that's something that you know, it's a really great example that the effort is there with the overlay, but how we still have to be really mindful.

97

00:23:09.440 --> 00:23:35.379

Joanna Jackson: So what are some of the ways that we can help improve a hero section like this? If we do want rotating content, or you've got a lot of people on your team saying "we need to feature a lot in this hero section". You can still do that in a way that gives users control. So we never want this to start rotating automatically. You'd want to provide arrows. And only once the user activates movement,

98

00:23:35.380 --> 00:23:40.439

Joanna Jackson: do we allow for movement. So Alma's kind of showing here on the right and the left.

99

00:23:40.460 --> 00:23:44.520

Joanna Jackson: we could put arrows there, and let users scroll and rotate through it.

100

00:23:44.660 --> 00:24:00.349

Joanna Jackson: There are also options where you have a more static hero on your left or your right, and then you could have some news or some announcements with arrows that kind of scroll up and down with more featured content. That's a little more static until that user activates it.

101

00:24:01.640 --> 00:24:30.120

Joanna Jackson: So that's one of the big things. And the other thing is making sure that those arrows, if you add them, that they have good contrast. It's something else we see is maybe arrows are available, but we can't always see them, especially as things move. The colors might change, and you have to make sure that that arrow is always visible and always meeting that contrast ratio, no matter what the background is. It's a really great way to use the contrast grid that we were just talking about as well to say "this is

102

00:24:30.120 --> 00:24:34.079

Joanna Jackson: the color of all the different backgrounds that this arrow will be on."

103

00:24:34.310 --> 00:24:35.640

Joanna Jackson: "Is this working?"

104

00:24:35.940 --> 00:25:04.850

Joanna Jackson: Does this pass?" And then the last thing is, if we look down at these dots here at the bottom, it is showing how many things are in this rotation. But again, it's increasing my cognitive load for me to have to count and figure out how many there are, where I was, to go back and forth versus changing those to numbers. Let's say 1 of 5, 2 of 5, etc. Users quickly know which one they're on and how to get back to the number that they were trying to read.

105

00:25:06.160 --> 00:25:27.389

Joanna Jackson: So the big takeaway here is to make sure that your rotators are user-activated and that the controls are easy to use. And again, looking forward to making those improvements in the future, make sure that any arrows you add or numbers to show the order are always gonna pass. That contrast ratio that we just talked about.

106

00:25:28.840 --> 00:25:29.540

Alma Meshes: Thanks Joanna.

107

00:25:29.710 --> 00:25:46.660

Alma Meshes: So for our next example, we want to move over to another organization that has graciously allowed us to take a look at their site, and that is the site here. American Public Power Association. So thank you. Shout out to them for helping us out with this.

108

00:25:47.160 --> 00:25:49.709

Alma Meshes: So in this

109

00:25:49.710 --> 00:26:12.510

Alma Meshes: area. We want to take a look at content. So we've looked at buttons. We've looked at tabbing. We've looked at contrast. But now we want to get into the actual content of the page. And one thing to keep in mind is that users don't read so as much as we spend a lot of time thinking about the content and writing very careful words. Unfortunately, users are just in a hurry.

110

00:26:12.510 --> 00:26:22.669

Alma Meshes: They tend to scan blocks of content and look for things based on a visual hierarchy. So what that means is just a fancy word of saying how it's organized on the page.

111

00:26:23.120 --> 00:26:50.900

Alma Meshes: So we're going to take a look at this page here on Public Power Association website. And we picked this page because it's a little bit different than a typical content page. So a typical content page is going to have, you know, blocks of words with some subheadings, headings, maybe some bulleted lists, things like that. But we wanted to pick a page and show you that even pages that don't have those blocks of content on them still need to be organized in a hierarchical fashion.

112

00:26:50.900 --> 00:27:03.250

Alma Meshes: So typically users on the web read in what's called an F formation. So you can think about that as drawing just kind of a big letter F on the page. So they read up and down, and then they read right to left.

113

00:27:04.080 --> 00:27:28.070

Alma Meshes: And so we want to make sure that the content that's most important is up here in the left hand corner, and then decreasing priority as we move down the page, and we can do that with having a clear hierarchy. So what that means is we want to make sure that there's Bolding. There's subheading. There's bulleted lists and things that allow users. I to kind of flow through the content of the page.

114

00:27:28.520 --> 00:27:35.270

Alma Meshes: So in this page, if we take a look at it, we can see that we've got some headlines here, and a little subhead

115

00:27:35.460 --> 00:27:54.099

Alma Meshes: like Joanna said last time. There's a little bit of opportunity here, because we've got some text over an image. Some of these colors might be a little bit difficult to read, so we could maybe increase some contrast there. But overall this is good from a hierarchy standpoint. We know that the page is called education and events, and we've got a little subhead here.

116

00:27:54.100 --> 00:28:11.359

Alma Meshes: This is also a little bonus thing here. We've got a breadcrumb excellent to have on your site. This helps users navigate through when they can't access things like our top level navigation, or any other links or things throughout the page. This allows them to quickly know where they are. Within the website.

117

00:28:11.750 --> 00:28:35.970

Alma Meshes: beginning to the layout of this page. It has a lot of nice things happening for it. So we've got 2 kind of promoted events up here at the top. So this featured meeting and featured

conference and we've got some great things here that are showing some hierarchy, giving us a way for our eye to kind of navigate through each of these things. So we've got the date in this corner over here. That's a very bold color.

118

00:28:35.970 --> 00:28:56.440

Alma Meshes: We've got some text here, and the title of the event. So these are very large, easy for us to see again. One thing that we might want to think about in the future, for some of these featured ones is we've got text over an image. So again, we could run into some contrast issues there. But again, these are looking pretty good. So far.

119

00:28:56.440 --> 00:29:01.600

Alma Meshes: we've got a way for users to interact with this grid of

120

00:29:01.600 --> 00:29:30.649

Alma Meshes: items below it, allowing them to really take control over how this is organized. So that's really nice, too. And we've got the date icons or this date style happening again with the title over a white background. Much better for contrast. And then we have some of them that have some additional labels. So down here, you know. Again, we want to keep the labels consistent. So if they have labels, we probably want to use labels on all of them, so that we know that this is a

121

00:29:30.650 --> 00:29:43.500

Alma Meshes: virtual event, or is it an in-person event? We're not really sure as a user what the difference is between them. So if we're going to include it, we should include it for all, or if we're not going to include it, then we should remove it from the ones that have them

122

00:29:44.065 --> 00:30:08.349

Alma Meshes: and then, as we move down this page, we can see that there's some additional content. This is all lovely formatted as well. We've got bulleted lists. We've got some italic things we've got links that are a different color, some bolding, and then headlines. So this left side of the page is looking very nice from a hierarchy perspective. But then, when we look at the right side of the page, we start getting into some things that have some opportunities for improvement here.

123

00:30:08.370 --> 00:30:31.689

Alma Meshes: So one, we've got navigation here in kind of an unexpected place. So typically navigation happens either at the top of the page in the center of the page, or on the left hand side of the page. So this over here on the right hand side, is a little bit unusual. We could do

some testing with users to see if they understand that this is navigation and it's working for them.

124

00:30:31.760 --> 00:30:44.949

Alma Meshes: And maybe this site has done some of that testing and proven that this location works for navigation. But typically, that is an unusual spot for navigation. So we want to be careful about putting nav in an unusual place.

125

00:30:45.350 --> 00:31:11.709

Alma Meshes: Another thing to think about as we start scrolling down this right hand column is, we're now introducing a secondary logo here. That's a little bit different than our primary logo for the website. And so this could start to cause some confusion about, where are we? Are we looking at the right thing, you know. Is this an advertisement, or is this some other organization? You know, users might question, why are we having this extra logo here.

126

00:31:11.710 --> 00:31:36.130

Alma Meshes: and then we can start to see some of the same items in this list down here that have similar names to the items that are in this sub navigation over here on the right hand side, and then, if I dig a little bit further and I start looking at some of the event types. I also see some of those listed in here as well. So here's where we've run into a little bit of an issue that could use some improvement and cleanup.

127

00:31:36.140 --> 00:31:53.369

Alma Meshes: because we're giving users multiple ways of finding the same kind of information in the same page. But then it starts to confuse. And there could be users that get upset because is the full list of meetings here

128

00:31:53.380 --> 00:32:17.690

Alma Meshes: under meetings under events by type. When I click on this and it updates the list, or do I get the fullest of meetings by clicking on this link over here on the right hand side? Or do I need to go to one of these up here, because some of these could maybe mean meetings as well. So we want to be really intentional with how we are displaying content to users and try to avoid things that could cause confusion with

129

00:32:17.690 --> 00:32:39.480

Alma Meshes: links to the same type of content. So if we're going to use this grid over here. We want to make sure that users can have access to all of the content types that are available for

this grid. And then, if we really need a different navigation. The navigation to be should be to other pages within the site, or try to integrate the 2 navigations with each other.

130

00:32:39.740 --> 00:32:55.460

Alma Meshes: So maybe providing a left hand navigation. That shows all the sub pages in the section, perhaps meetings is its own page. But when I click on that I would anticipate that I would get the exact same items as I get here in this little results table.

131

00:32:56.280 --> 00:33:17.069

Alma Meshes: So as we think about hierarchy and users reading, we just want to make sure that we're breaking up the copy with scannable headlines, subheads, bullets, and other visual aids, so that there's a clear structure. And when we review the content, we want to make sure that we're not causing confusion by adding additional words that could have the same meaning on the page.

132

00:33:18.760 --> 00:33:38.490

Alma Meshes: And then an additional thing that we want to look at for content is we're going to look at another page on this American Public Power Association site. So this site has some resources. A lot of websites out there have resources very, very popular, and many organizations like to put their content on their website as a PDF.

133

00:33:38.530 --> 00:34:04.210

Alma Meshes: so one thing that we try to encourage all of our clients and people that we talk to is to try and avoid PDFs if we can. So if we can take that content out of a PDF and have it be content on the website that makes it the most accessible, then it doesn't matter what device I'm on or where I'm trying to access the content. If I have a browser and I have an Internet connection, then I should be able to get to that content.

134

00:34:04.543 --> 00:34:24.230

Alma Meshes: A PDF. Unfortunately creates a bit of a barrier. Now we know that we can't turn all content from a PDF into an HTML. There are some things that are just too large, or there's a lot of formatting that adds additional context to that content, or we just don't have the resources to convert all of our PDFs

135

00:34:24.230 --> 00:34:42.400

Alma Meshes: into that online content. So we understand that PDFs are a necessity of the web right now, but we try to advocate for converting as many of those to HTML as we can. But when

we can't, then what we want to do is we want to create a page like this which would be a PDF landing page

136

00:34:42.810 --> 00:35:06.389

Alma Meshes: or portal page. And so what's really nice about this page is that it gives us some introductory content, so that users can understand exactly what kind of content they're going to be getting in the PDF. Before they take the action to download it. So this is really considerate of users that may be on limited bandwidth. They may not have the right resources to access and view

137

00:35:06.390 --> 00:35:16.899

Alma Meshes: the PDF content. And we're giving them a chance to say, this may not be the exact thing that I want, so they're not taking up space on their computer because maybe they have limited space as well.

138

00:35:17.300 --> 00:35:42.060

Alma Meshes: So all of those things allow the user to have more control over what they are downloading and accessing, and to make sure that they are prepared with whatever assistive technology they might need to be able to access that content for themselves. So here we've got that little introduction text. We've got some bullet points telling us what's inside of the report, and then our only opportunity for enhancement here is that we've got this link here that says download the report.

139

00:35:42.060 --> 00:35:54.719

Alma Meshes: but we also have kind of a stylized call out over here on the right hand side that says, related downloads, and then has a text link that says, "2024 Public Power Statistical Report".

140

00:35:54.720 --> 00:36:07.460

Alma Meshes: these 2 links both link to the same place. So unfortunately, this could cause a little bit of confusion for users, because they might not be sure if they're supposed to download this one, or if they're supposed to download this one. So

141

00:36:07.520 --> 00:36:28.419

Alma Meshes: the opportunity here would be to just create one link. Pick the style that we're going to use, and then make sure that's consistent across all of our resources. So if we're going to use this stylized version over here, then we want to make sure that all of them use the

stylized version, or if we're going to have download, then we want to put that down here and then remove this over here.

142

00:36:28.970 --> 00:36:33.769

Alma Meshes: A couple of other ways that we can plus this up to make it even more accessible and usable

143

00:36:33.990 --> 00:37:00.620

Alma Meshes: is to add that the report that we're downloading is a PDF file type again, some users don't necessarily have access to all the things that they need to view. A PDF. So, letting them know in advance that they may need to download some kind of additional software or a viewer in order to be able to see that content is really helpful. And then, finally, we would want to include the file size again for someone who might be on a low bandwidth

144

00:37:00.620 --> 00:37:13.450

Alma Meshes: or on a limited connection. Giving them this information allows them to know how much of their bandwidth they might be using. Typically, PDFs are pretty small. But sometimes we've seen some reports that are very, very large.

145

00:37:13.947 --> 00:37:18.759

Alma Meshes: And you know, can can take a while to download. So

146

00:37:18.920 --> 00:37:25.909

Alma Meshes: it's giving users more of that information so they can make a good decision when they're downloading and accessing content.

147

00:37:26.790 --> 00:37:33.020

Alma Meshes: And then, Janna, do we have another URL in our list here that we can use?

148

00:37:33.200 --> 00:37:35.110

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): We do not yet so.

149

00:37:35.110 --> 00:37:35.510

Alma Meshes: Okay.

150

00:37:35.510 --> 00:37:35.990
Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Go ahead!

151
00:37:35.990 --> 00:37:43.009
Alma Meshes: Okay. I think, Joanna, do we want to go back to one of the other sites that we were at previously?

152
00:37:43.160 --> 00:37:44.410
Joanna Jackson: Yeah, let's do it!

153
00:37:44.410 --> 00:37:49.079
Alma Meshes: Okay. I think we wanted to go to the ASPPH sites.

154
00:37:50.140 --> 00:38:04.959
Joanna Jackson: Yeah, so we can look at this one. So the next one. And this is a bonus tip we are giving you all today. So just one more is that all images need all text.

155
00:38:04.960 --> 00:38:22.099
Joanna Jackson: and we say the word alt text. I'm sure you all have heard it a ton. But there's a lot that goes into alt text. There's a lot of different types of alt text. And before we dive into that, we're going to actually look at the ASPPH site and see if we can find some on the site here.

156
00:38:22.100 --> 00:38:35.630
Joanna Jackson: So let's just keep scrolling. And we see we've got these really nice images for these testimonials. And so the way we can quickly check for all text is by going right clicking, hitting that 'inspect' button.

157
00:38:36.680 --> 00:38:44.630
Joanna Jackson: And that's gonna open up in here, and we're gonna be able to see in the highlighted section if there's alt text.

158
00:38:45.050 --> 00:38:53.779
Joanna Jackson: and as we can see, and you can kind of look, it'll say alt. And then there's typically a description that follows, we do not have alt text for this image.

159

00:38:54.875 --> 00:39:05.110

Joanna Jackson: And so this is a really great opportunity. And I'm gonna actually answer a question that we receive while I answer, this

160

00:39:05.480 --> 00:39:32.918

Joanna Jackson: this next step. So one of the questions we got was, "how can we improve the website UX, to reduce bounce rates, but also optimize SEO for better search rankings?" One of the best ways that you can do that is by using SEO key terms and key search phrases in your Alt text images when appropriate. So the way that we would look at this image we could describe.

161

00:39:33.460 --> 00:39:55.369

Joanna Jackson: this person and say, you know, we could just say, this is a girl smiling for a headshot, but that doesn't really give us much context about the meaning behind this image, or how it plays into the larger ASPPH ecosystem and the value here. So another an alt text that would be better would to say, be, you know

162

00:39:55.920 --> 00:40:00.017

Joanna Jackson: "ASPPH, member and masters of public health, student"

163

00:40:00.800 --> 00:40:05.820

Joanna Jackson: and then give her name, and then a short description, you could say "smiling, for a headshot"

164

00:40:06.220 --> 00:40:09.437

Joanna Jackson: and that would be a much more effective

165

00:40:09.950 --> 00:40:34.860

Joanna Jackson: alt text that ties in and bridges that gap between that testimonial on the right, the image, and then also bringing in the ASPPH Brand mission into that, and saying that they feature students that they've got masters of public health students and and their faces here as well. So it's a really great opportunity to, as you go throughout the site and have images to look at some of your keyword

166

00:40:34.860 --> 00:40:52.190

Joanna Jackson: research that you've done phrases that are frequently searched and find ways not just shoving them in, because we've all seen when people just shove in SEO keywords, or

you see people do it on recipe sites a lot where it tells you a million things about the recipe before you just get to it.

167

00:40:52.815 --> 00:41:04.640

Joanna Jackson: We don't wanna do that. But being strategic about it and saying, Are there opportunities for us to put keywords potentially into some of our Alt text images is a great way to help boost your SEO as well.

168

00:41:04.640 --> 00:41:29.429

Joanna Jackson: So a little bit more about alt text, and all the different types. So there are 3 different kinds of Alt text. There's standard alt text. It's less than 250 characters, and it conveys the purpose of an image. So, for example, like we were just talking about, if you had a magnifying glass in your search bar, the Alt text would want you'd want that to be.

169

00:41:29.430 --> 00:41:50.000

Joanna Jackson: 'Search', not 'magnifying glass', even though that is what it is. But we're more concerned with the meaning and what it's trying to convey to our users than the literal item and what it is because that's not gonna drive that connection that we're looking for. So something we see a lot. That's a kind of a common mistake that's made in our pursuit of creating alt text.

170

00:41:50.940 --> 00:42:02.640

Joanna Jackson: Next, we have short text, so short text is more than 250 characters, it still conveys the purpose of an image, but that image is more complex. It may involve a person or a group of people.

171

00:42:03.040 --> 00:42:19.059

Joanna Jackson: And then, finally, there's long text. So long text can be as long as you need it to be, because it's used for complicated images. So an example of a complicated image would be an infographic or a chart, and it's going to need that HTML equivalent. And it also requires alt text.

172

00:42:21.500 --> 00:42:46.319

Joanna Jackson: So now that you know the different types of Alt text. We still get a lot of "Joanna. How do I know when I need to write alt text?" What type of alt text, you know, like, or people just start kind of shooting in the dark, and we don't want you to shoot in the dark. So we made you this lovely decision tree, and we've got one for simple and one for complex images. So for simple images, a photo or an icon, you have to ask yourself, "is there a person in the image?"

173

00:42:46.320 --> 00:42:52.549

Joanna Jackson: Yes, then you write a short description, if no, and you can describe the word in 250 characters.

174

00:42:52.550 --> 00:43:01.280

Joanna Jackson: You would write all text if you could not write it in 250 characters. Then you write a short description. So this one really relies more on

175

00:43:01.881 --> 00:43:13.689

Joanna Jackson: actually, that length of the characters. And whether or not there's a person in the image, and those are really the 2 decision points that you rely on on whether or not you write a short description, or you write all text

176

00:43:15.140 --> 00:43:23.900

Joanna Jackson: for complex images. It's really simple. If it's a chart or a graph or an infographic. You write alt text, and you write that longer image description.

177

00:43:24.980 --> 00:43:27.819

Joanna Jackson: The ultimate, really, the key theme that we wanna

178

00:43:28.010 --> 00:43:31.149

Joanna Jackson: focus on when we talk about alt, text is just

179

00:43:31.350 --> 00:43:39.160

Joanna Jackson: we want it to be an equitable experience for everyone. And so whatever message that a user who can see the image

180

00:43:39.280 --> 00:43:47.240

Joanna Jackson: derives, and meaning from it. We want that meaning to be translated in all the ways that we communicate that image through our all text.

181

00:43:48.650 --> 00:43:51.280

Alma Meshes: You, Joanna, all right.

182

00:43:51.460 --> 00:43:59.099

Alma Meshes: So if you have your screenshot or ready to go, this is our slide here with our 5 takeaways for today.

183

00:44:00.560 --> 00:44:02.020

Alma Meshes: Hopefully, we

184

00:44:02.630 --> 00:44:22.179

Alma Meshes: presented you with some interesting things to think about and ways to approach, making your sites more accessible and more usable, feel free to share this on social tag us on it. If you have additional questions, we do have about 15 min left. So we were hoping that we could open it up to some additional questions.

185

00:44:22.290 --> 00:44:23.380

Alma Meshes: Janna.

186

00:44:23.380 --> 00:44:28.510

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Yes, actually, we do have a question. This is from Stella.

187

00:44:28.730 --> 00:44:42.950

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): "So how can UX improvements keep our website valuable and engaging these days where AI driven search results provide answers directly reducing traditional site visits?"

188

00:44:43.580 --> 00:44:44.940

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): That's a good question.

189

00:44:44.940 --> 00:44:45.570

Alma Meshes: Yeah.

190

00:44:45.620 --> 00:45:00.799

Alma Meshes: so AI is really encroaching upon every part of everyone's website these days, you know, AI results are being shown above traditional search results. So it's a little bit of the Wild West right now, while

191

00:45:00.800 --> 00:45:25.579

Alma Meshes: all of the different search engines change their algorithms and figure out where they're going to land. But our stance has always been that if you're creating a good user experience on your site and you are engaging with your users, continuing to make improvements and meeting their needs, that you will continue to get traffic on your site. So these things that we're providing today are ways that you can

192

00:45:25.580 --> 00:45:50.519

Alma Meshes: continue to improve your site, improve the accessibility. We also recommend doing things like usability, testing tree testing, card sorting, anything that you can do to show your users on your site that you're continuing to make improvements and enhancements. I know that doesn't really answer the question about what is going on with Google, but we can't really control Google, what we can control the things that we're doing. So if we can make an optimized

193

00:45:50.520 --> 00:45:55.790

Alma Meshes: experience and then use the channels that we have to get our message out. Then

194

00:45:56.330 --> 00:46:17.909

Alma Meshes: I think that that's the best we can do for right now until we get more information from Google about how their algorithms are working. Everyone is just kind of doing a little bit of guessing. There are some leaks out there and things like that. We've done a couple of webinars on those topics as well. But it's continually changing. So we got to control the things that we can control.

195

00:46:17.910 --> 00:46:41.980

Joanna Jackson: And I will jump in and say that we do know that Google flags sites that it considers to have poor UX and demotes them in their rankings from that leaked documentation that we saw early this year. So it's likely that Google's AI overviews at least reference the same ranking algorithm when generating AI responses. And so what you really want to kind of look at, too, is

196

00:46:42.590 --> 00:47:07.210

Joanna Jackson: if we know what common questions are being asked in a search engine, if we can get our, if we can start to answer those questions on our website. Sometimes Google will pull that answer into its AI generated answer, and link your website as the one that it pulled that information from. So that's a great way to still drive traffic that does have. You know, we start really dipping our toe into SEO

197

00:47:07.250 --> 00:47:15.789

Joanna Jackson: common search queries and things like that. But making sure that you have good UX, knowing that Google flags, sites with poor UX!

198

00:47:16.200 --> 00:47:25.669

Joanna Jackson: It's gonna prioritize you more when your UX is good and you're answering common questions that are being asked to Google. So it's kind of a 2 pronged approach. There.

199

00:47:27.180 --> 00:47:32.742

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): That was a great answer. Thank you both. Okay, another question we have is,

200

00:47:33.410 --> 00:47:44.240

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): "I am currently using an accessibility overlay today like accessibility or user way? Or what have you? What are the steps to moving away from it?"

201

00:47:46.790 --> 00:48:13.259

Joanna Jackson: All right, so I can tackle this one. So this is. There are quite a few steps in doing that, because you want to do it in a very holistic way that ensures that your website is going to meet all the accessibility requirements that exist in the world. And there are a lot. So the 1st thing that we kind of recommend is you want to assess your current accessibility so you can conduct a thorough accessibility audit of your website. And you can do this.

202

00:48:13.641 --> 00:48:32.409

Joanna Jackson: Using development tools that we've kind of talked about that do scan the site from a code standpoint. And then also a lot of manual reviews using the some of the takeaways we've talked about today, and more to really assess where your site is meet, you know, falling short visually from an accessibility standpoint.

203

00:48:33.585 --> 00:48:57.069

Joanna Jackson: So it's kind of a combination. And then, you know, we always recommend a lot of user testing. So if you're trying to test your accessibility. Finding an audience that has accessibility needs and using them as a group to test on is a really great way to uncover insights about that as well. So once you've established your baseline, then you want to prioritize the accessibility issues that need to be addressed.

204

00:48:57.120 --> 00:49:14.310

Joanna Jackson: focusing on the critical ones that impact user experience and compliance 1st and starting to work your way down to the less pressing and emergent ones. Again. This also, you know, includes a lot of updating your source work working with your developers to ensure the actual source code

205

00:49:14.390 --> 00:49:28.870

Joanna Jackson: using a proper HTML structure. So having your H ones and your h twos be very clear for screen readers. That's really important. Because screen readers read based off of that HTML structure. So if you have a user that's relying on that

206

00:49:29.522 --> 00:49:34.489

Joanna Jackson: that HTML structure becomes a lot more important than just visual hierarchy

207

00:49:35.580 --> 00:49:58.969

Joanna Jackson: and then working on using aria attributes. So aria stands for accessible rich Internet applications and then improving that keyboard navigation like Alma, talked about. That's going to be a development lift and then training your staff, educating your team, inviting them to our webinars about accessibility is a great way to help

208

00:49:59.286 --> 00:50:09.419

Joanna Jackson: just educating your whole team and making sure that when they're writing alt text, that it's, you know, correct when they're selecting buttons and button text that it's the right color combinations.

209

00:50:10.260 --> 00:50:34.669

Joanna Jackson: And then you want to document your accessibility efforts and definitely keep a record. And if you even just start with one page at a time, just keeping a record of that. And eventually it'll make a really big impact, including, you know, the steps taken, issues addressed and feedback received. This documentation is really helpful for future compliance checks, audits things like that really. Just make sure that you have your bases covered in that you're remediating

210

00:50:34.780 --> 00:50:36.740

Joanna Jackson: the accessibility is on your site

211

00:50:37.450 --> 00:50:40.829

Joanna Jackson: Very long winded answer, with a lot of steps.

212

00:50:41.250 --> 00:50:42.230

Alma Meshes: I would just

213

00:50:42.530 --> 00:51:02.490

Alma Meshes: kind of encapsulate all that by saying, Start small. You don't have to redesign your entire website and throw everything out and start from scratch if you can make one improvement on your site. That's 1 more than you had the day before, and then keep building on that. So there's lots and lots of steps to make your site totally accessible.

214

00:51:02.520 --> 00:51:17.389

Alma Meshes: But that's really hard to do. I mean, again, like we said at the top, only 2% of sites are really doing that. So there's a lot of room for improvement. And if we can just make those small incremental changes over time. Then it'll make the web better for everyone.

215

00:51:18.250 --> 00:51:42.299

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Yeah, it's definitely a journey. You can't just do it in a day. You have to like, set up those processes to do it for a while and then continue it like you can't just do it once and then get it done and think it's gonna happen and stay that way. So it's definitely good feedback. There. Alma and Joanna, we have another question. What AI tools can help can help me improve my accessibility.

216

00:51:43.340 --> 00:52:09.119

Alma Meshes: Yep. So we do recommend using AI tools to give you kind of a starting point for things. So, for example, when writing alt text. You can use some tools out there. Claude and Chat Gpt are pretty good tools at writing alt text, but remember that those tools don't necessarily have all the context for how that image is being used. So

217

00:52:09.120 --> 00:52:38.439

Alma Meshes: if you upload an image into one of these tools like Claude or Chat Gpt, they may just look at the image and then generate what they think they're seeing in the image, and not necessarily what Joanna was saying earlier, what the context of that image is so. For example, you might upload a picture of, you know, someone at your organization. And it may say, image of a woman speaking, or woman standing in front of a group of people. But

218

00:52:38.760 --> 00:53:07.379

Alma Meshes: that's not. That's not necessarily wrong. So it's good as a starting point for having an alt text. But again, like Joanna, was saying earlier, it would be more contextual and better if it said keynote speaker with their name talking at this conference, so that users when they're seeing this or hearing it being read to them, they have more understanding about what the purpose of that image is. If you have a large amount of images that need alt text on your site.

219

00:53:07.380 --> 00:53:17.190

Alma Meshes: Then, using some of these AI tools and getting them set up can be a good way to start getting more of those images with alt text. But for now

220

00:53:17.220 --> 00:53:22.780

Alma Meshes: try to write those as you're thinking about the images as you're planning content on your site.

221

00:53:23.259 --> 00:53:26.890

Alma Meshes: That's really the best way to do that, so that they have the most

222

00:53:27.250 --> 00:53:30.980

Alma Meshes: accurate context for how the image is being displayed.

223

00:53:31.330 --> 00:53:49.500

Alma Meshes: and I can share an article there was Dries, who is the creator of drupal, which is a content management system that we use often recently published an article about comparing, I think it was 12 different large language models to see which one was the best

224

00:53:49.500 --> 00:54:07.159

Alma Meshes: at creating alt text for images. And so you can go and read his article. It's very in depth. It talks about how he set things up with all the technology that was needed and how he's planning on using it to cycle through, I think, like 9,000 images that need all text. So

225

00:54:07.220 --> 00:54:09.510

Alma Meshes: some very interesting things to read out there.

226

00:54:10.860 --> 00:54:11.810

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Wonderful.

227

00:54:12.010 --> 00:54:15.649

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Thank you for that, Alma. Anything to add. There, Joanne, are we.

228

00:54:16.840 --> 00:54:38.279

Joanna Jackson: No, I think you know, it's almost spot on. We want to use it as supplemental supplementally. And you know definitely, if you have a large volume of images that don't have alt text. You want to make sure you get alt text in there as quickly as possible. But AI can really be a really great tool to help you get it in quickly. But being very mindful about

229

00:54:38.530 --> 00:54:42.020

Joanna Jackson: creating kind of an equitable experience in terms of meaning.

230

00:54:42.606 --> 00:54:44.589

Joanna Jackson: It's the biggest thing. So.

231

00:54:44.590 --> 00:54:52.920

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Wonderful great. Thank you. And then we have time for one more. If I wanted to make my website more accessible today.

232

00:54:53.070 --> 00:54:59.269

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): we already talked about his journey. But today, let's look at today. After my, after this, webinar, I want to go back. I want to get started.

233

00:54:59.390 --> 00:55:01.599

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Where do I start. What do I do?

234

00:55:02.320 --> 00:55:08.939

Joanna Jackson: Yeah, that's a great question. So and we like we, Alma was saying, start small. And even if you take one page.

235

00:55:08.940 --> 00:55:33.869

Joanna Jackson: look at it through the lens of accessibility. Run some of these scans and tools like that we've provided. Find out what those issues are. And then just take it a page at a time if

you have to. And some of the big things that you can look for are that color contrast meeting those Wcag 2.2 Aa requirements and ensuring all of that, like all of your images, have

236

00:55:33.870 --> 00:55:37.409

Joanna Jackson: color, contrast, and throwing kind of another one out here

237

00:55:37.470 --> 00:55:59.640

Joanna Jackson: that these scanner tools won't really pick up. But looking at your actual button language, and instead of something saying like, Learn more or read here, even just using more context in your Cta language is creating an accessible experience, and it's something that you can fix very quickly on the fly that requires no, no development work. So we would say, Really, look at those things

238

00:56:00.130 --> 00:56:08.390

Joanna Jackson: first and those are some quick wins that make a really that have a lot of return on their investment. They make a really big impact quickly.

239

00:56:10.040 --> 00:56:16.380

Alma Meshes: I agree with all of those I think the other thing to remember when you're thinking about accessibility is that

240

00:56:16.420 --> 00:56:41.219

Alma Meshes: there's always an alternative. So even if you're working with developers or you're locked into a system that has a lot of limitations from a programmatic perspective. Or maybe you can't content author or change colors of things. Think about alternative ways that you could maybe accomplish the same thing, using a different tool that you do have access to. So we've definitely done some studies and research into tools

241

00:56:41.220 --> 00:57:03.989

Alma Meshes: that the code was very locked down. We didn't have access to making a lot of changes. So then it was putting our brains together and figuring out, Okay, well, how can we accomplish this same thing? But using the tools that we do have? So I would just say, keep trying, you know, if you run into a roadblock, try to figure out a way to kind of flow around it, instead of it becoming a stopper.

242

00:57:04.290 --> 00:57:19.539

Joanna Jackson: Yeah, and a lot of content changes that you can make just on the front end allow a site to be a lot more accessible. So the development part is important for sure. But it shouldn't overwhelm you and stop you from making a lot of good content changes today.

243

00:57:22.550 --> 00:57:23.570

Alma Meshes: Okay.

244

00:57:23.830 --> 00:57:49.539

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Great. Well, thank you all very much for joining us today. If there are other topics that you would like for us to talk about. Please reach out and let us know, because we are building our continued webinar. Live our calendar for the rest of the year. So anything you want to know. That maybe we touched on a little bit today you want us to go deeper. Please let us know, and we'd be definitely would be able to create some new content for you.

245

00:57:50.320 --> 00:58:08.230

Alma Meshes: Also, later today, you're going to receive an email with the link to the slides that we presented today. There also be a little link to a survey in there. So if you have a couple of minutes and you'd like to fill out a survey to give us some additional information. That's another place that you can indicate topics that you'd like to

246

00:58:08.230 --> 00:58:22.319

Alma Meshes: see in the future. And then next week on Thursday, you'll receive a final email from us about this webinar that will have the link to the video. And any additional information that we have to provide. Oh, and the transcript, as well.

247

00:58:22.660 --> 00:58:39.760

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): Wonderful. Thank you, Alma, and as well, please go to our website and sign up for any of our newsletters. It's at the bottom, close to the footer. We do send out monthly newsletters that have rich content like this, more in blog forms, but also gives you updates of where we're speaking soon. So with that

248

00:58:39.900 --> 00:58:52.139

Janna Fiester (she/her/hers): we'll give you all 2 min back in your day. Thank you again for joining us. We really appreciate it, and definitely good accessibility is good. UX! So have a great day and enjoy yours. Enjoy yourselves.

249

00:58:52.610 --> 00:58:53.479

Alma Meshes: Thank you so much.

250

00:58:53.480 --> 00:58:54.360

Joanna Jackson: Thank you all.

251

00:58:54.360 --> 00:58:55.210

Alma Meshes: Take care!