

## **What is accessible web design?**

Accessible web design entails ensuring that your web pages are "user-friendly" in the broadest sense for all those visiting your site. This includes layout, readability, colour choice and browser-independence, as well as considering the requirements of those using adaptive or alternative technology.

A useful introduction to good practice is "Accessible Website Design - A practical and strategic guide", available from the Employers Forum on Disability (<http://www.efd.org.uk>) at a cost of £15 for members, £20 for non-members.

The following are a list of on-line sources of information and utilities concerned with good practice in web design.

## **Information sites**

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is the body at the forefront of the development of standards in good design on the world wide web (including accessibility). These are outlined in the "Web Accessibility Initiative" (WAI) pages which can be found at:

**<http://www.w3c.org>**

The Web Design Group is an organisation that promotes good web design - including non-browser specific, non-resolution specific design that is accessible to all. They offer free expert advice as well as several awards for good practice. Find them at:

**<http://www.htmlhelp.com>**

For guidelines on accessible design visit the home page of the Trace Research and Development Center (part of the University of Wisconsin). Their URL is:

**<http://www.trace.wisc.edu>**

A campaign to encourage designers to comply with the published guidelines of the Trace Center has been launched by the National Center for Accessible Media. Their site is located at

**<http://www.wgbh.org>**

WebABLE hosts a site that offers a wealth of disability-related internet resources, including an extensive (North-American biased) database on all aspects of accessibility. They are at:

**<http://www.webable.com>**

### **Checking your site is accessible**

What if you have already written your pages and want to know if they comply to accessible web design standards?

If you have not yet uploaded your code you may wish to visit the Web Design Group site that comprises a list of links to sites offering free HTML validation services. These will check your code for syntax errors, style and conformance to standards.

**<http://www.htmlhelp.com/links/validators.htm>**

If your website is already uploaded, the accessibility can be checked against W3C standards. A site called "Bobby" features an automatic Web page accessibility test. Type in the URL of the site to be tested and Bobby will display a version of each page, identifying those elements that require adjusting. The Bobby Web page testing utility is at:

**<http://www.cast.org/bobby/>**

If your site conforms to accessible web design standards you will be able to display the authorised Bobby logo and be included in their database of Bobby-approved sites.



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