

Web Service tutorial

Important web accessibility tips

Sep 2020 (Accessibility)

Web Accessibility

There are numerous techniques in web site development to make content accessible for people with disabilities, particularly visual disabilities. In web site creation, it's called web accessibility.

Accessibility is part of the web team development process. It's our duty to make accessible everything we publish online. It's also the law. The college has to be compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Responsibility

There are many responsibility levels in web accessibility, but the easiest way to understand them is by the division between webmasters and the content team. Webmasters include the web source code team, such as developers, web designers, third party tools and the WordPress engine itself.

The content team includes the editors, web site administrators and WordPress users. Any person that edit and create a page on WordPress.

Although the web team periodically goes over accessibility issues on all pages, it's nearly impossible to catch up with all page creations and editions made by content team users. The college website has about 10.000 pages. Besides, some accessibility issues are semantic and aren't found by accessibility scan tools.

Content accessibility

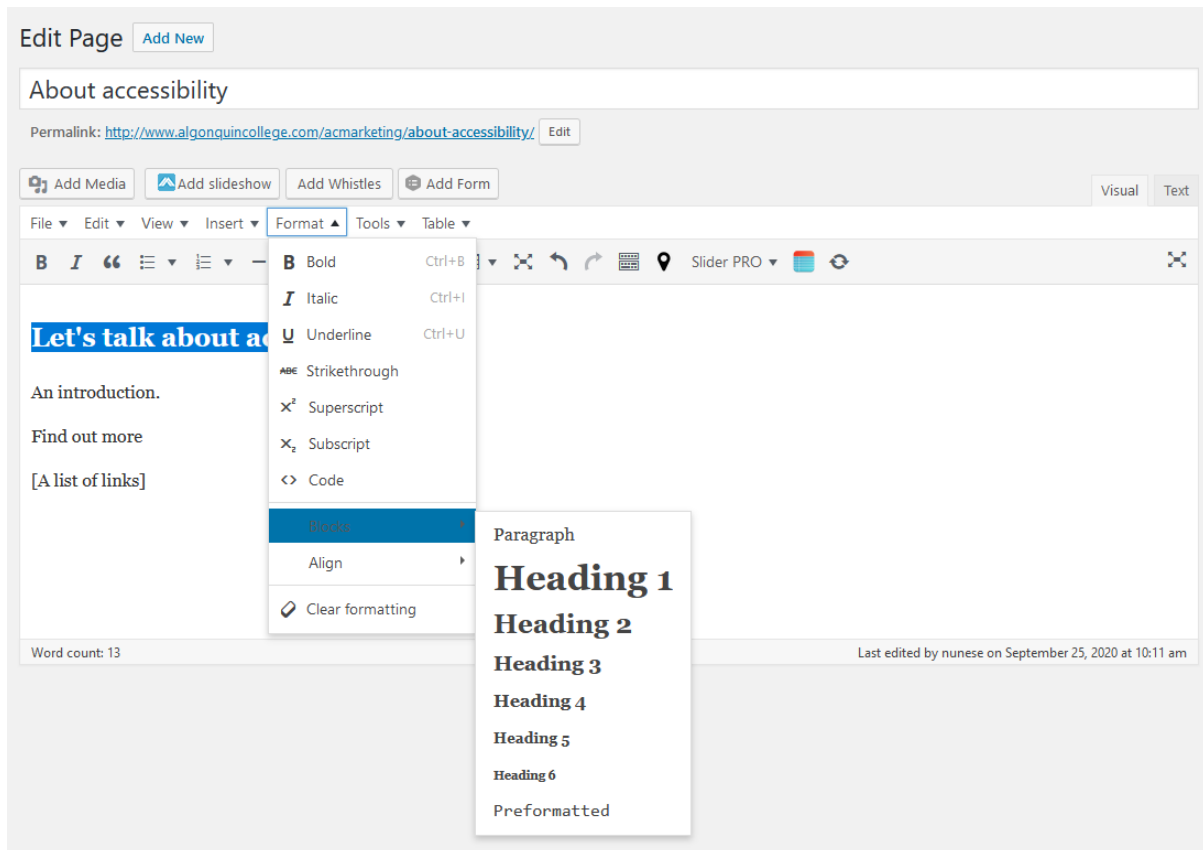
Even if you don't write HTML, you still need to be mindful about accessibility. There are four essential topics to know about:

- Headings
- Images
- Links
- Sliders

Headings

Any bolded title in an article is a heading and they're very important. They provide hierarchy to the article and it's very useful on web accessibility assistant tools used by readers with disabilities.

When editing a page or post, setting bold to make headings is not best practice. Use the headings that you find on Format > Blocks.



As you can see, there are 6 heading levels and they must be used accordingly. You can't set a heading 3 under a heading 6. The correct way is demonstrated below:

- Heading 1
 - Heading 2
 - Heading 2
 - Heading 2
 - Heading 3
 - Heading 4
 - Heading 2
 - Heading 3

You can only have 1 heading level 1. It's the main heading. All the other important headings must be level 2 or below. Under a level 2, goes level 3. Etc.

One important thing to notice is that the title of the page is the Heading 1. That means that you can only use level 2 and below inside your article content. The level 1 is only used on the article if the

template allows it. If you feel that you need to use Heading 1 inside the content, contact Web Services.

Another important thing is to add titles to widgets that are displayed on the page sidebar, such as Text and Links. Widgets usually have Title fields and sometimes they're displayed on the page. When a widget is added to the sidebar and it displays a title, it's essential that a title is added so that it works as a heading. Find out more about widgets on our Widgets tutorial.

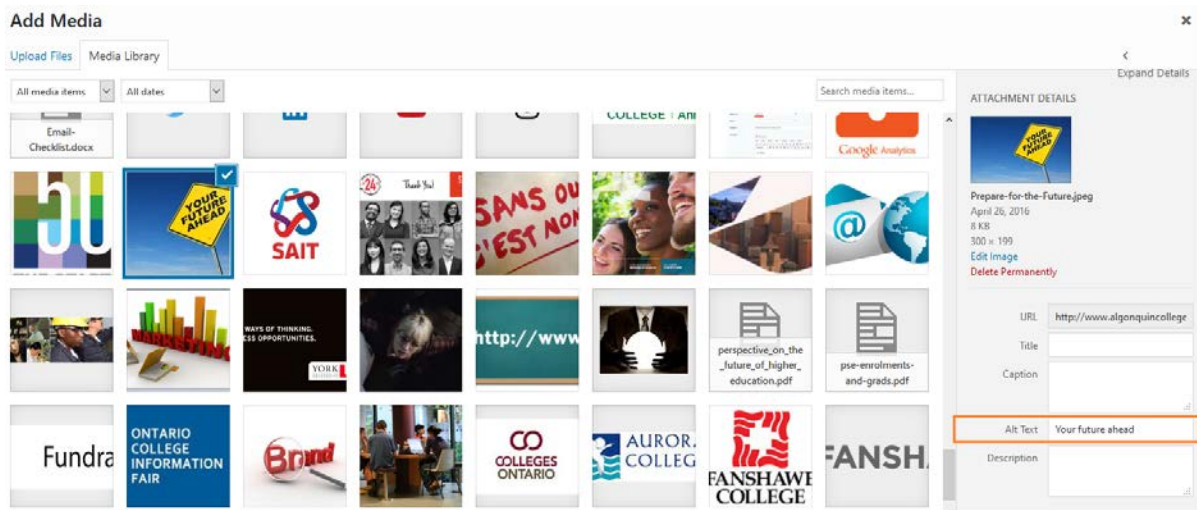
Review:

1. Don't use bold to create headings.
2. Use proper WordPress headings under Format > blocks.
3. Headings have to be used following hierarchy.
4. Don't use Heading 1.
5. Add titles to the page sidebar widgets.

Images

All non-decorative images require an alternative text. Web assistive tools will read out loud image texts.

Whenever you add images to a page/post, make sure the Alt text field is filled.



All meaningful images requires a short description. Is it an image depicting two men shaking hands? The alternative text could be "Men shaking hands".

Whenever there's text, and the text is the important part, just use the own image text. For example, for the Algonquin College logo, just "Algonquin College" is enough. You don't need to add "Logo of the Algonquin College".

When the image shows a situation where text is involved and the situation is important, both an explanation and the text should go together. For instance: "Two girls smile at the sign that reads Free ice-cream".

The only exception is purely decorative images. They don't need alternative text. Let's suppose you have an article about the Outdoor Adventure program and you decided to add an image of a

beautiful tree above the text. This image doesn't need an alternative text. The same for texture background images. Adding alt to those images just creates noise.

Context is also important. The same image can have different meanings in different articles. Defining the alternative text is almost the same as defining figure captions in an academic paper.

To edit the caption of an image, click on the image and look for the pencil button.



Review:

1. All non-decorative images require an alternative text.
2. Keep it short.
3. Whenever there's text, and the text is the important part, just use the own image text.
4. Purely decorative images don't need alternative text.

Links

They consist of a text and a URL. Sometimes they also have images or they're just an image link with no text. The URL is never part of the problem, just the text and the image.

Text

The link text has to be meaningful in itself and must not imply computer input actions. Wrong examples:

- **Click here** – It's not meaningful in itself and it implies click. Users don't click on mobile devices. People with hand disabilities don't click either.
- **Find out more; Get access; Details here; Learn more; Get the info** – Not meaningful in itself.

- **Click here to apply** – It might be meaningful in a program page but the “Click here” should go.

They also should be short, the user already knows that the link goes to somewhere else that has the full information.

Avoid prefixing your link text with words like “How to”, “Get” or “Learn” or using “about” constructions such as:

- **Get information about the form 7** – Better: “Form 7 information”
- **Learn how to pay/How to pay** – Better: “Payment instructions”
- **Read more about recruitment** – Better: “Recruitment information”

Those examples are not only unnecessarily long but they’re more difficult to scan using assistive technology and they break assistive alphabetical sorting.

Sentences can and should be links in a paragraph, but try to keep them clear and direct to the asset/page description that the link sends to.

The form 7 on our website is required to applying.

Instead, it could be:

The form 7 on our website is required to applying.

Conflicting text with other link texts

More than one unique link texts can’t link to different pages. You must not have two “form 7” links linking to two different URLs.

This is also valid for links that are outside your article, such as navigation links. Every page on AC website has a “Future Students” link. It’s at the top main navigation. You must not create a “Future Students” link on your article linking to, for example, a different page about services for future students. In theory all “Future Students” links in any page must link to [“https://www.algonquincollege.com/future-students”](https://www.algonquincollege.com/future-students)

Let’s suppose the Food Services website has a list of tips for future students. So it might be tempting to create a Future Students titled page on the Food Services website and on this same website add “Future Students” links to this local page. It does make sense in the context of the Food Services website, however that’s not ideal and it’s not considered accessible. It should be avoided as much as possible.

In a Food Services website, this page should be something in the lines of “Food Services introduction for Future Students”.

Images

Some links don’t have text, but an image. For example, Social Media buttons are usually image links. To make those links accessible you just need to add alternative text to those images.

Read more about image alternative text on Images chapter of this tutorial.

One important note is that the alternative text of image links must contextualise the link. It’s acceptable to add “Algonquin College” as an alt text to the college logo. However, for a link, the correct alt text would be “Algonquin College home page”.

Images and text

Those type of links are not as common, but it's possible to have text and image together on the same link.

When the text is enough, the image doesn't need alt, except when the image is replacing some wording. One classic example is a text link to a form with the PDF icon:



The text itself doesn't tell it's a PDF form. It is the PDF icon that suggests the PDF format. In that case, the PDF icon must have an alt text: "PDF format".

An easier way would be to just add "PDF" to the link text, avoiding image alt text.

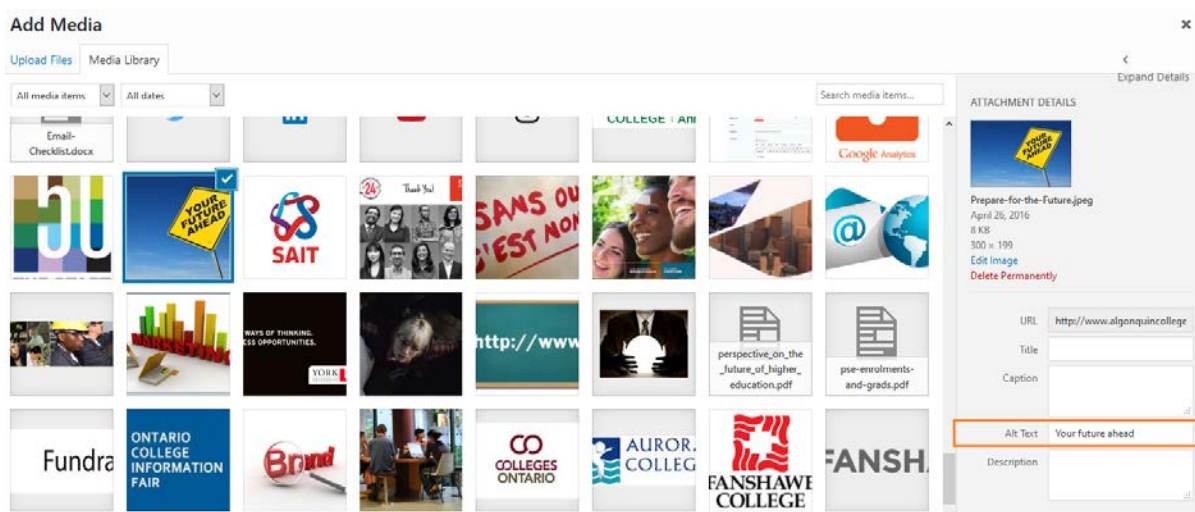
Review:

1. The link text has to be meaningful in itself and must not imply computer input actions, like click here.
2. Make them as short as possible.
3. You must not have more than one link with the same text linking to two different URLs.
4. Image links require alternative text. Write the alt text the same way you would write a link text.
5. Links with both image and text may require alt text for the image when the image complements the meaning of the link.

Sliders

For both Slider Revolution (when created by Web Services) and AC Template sliders, you don't need to worry.

MetaSlider requires attention, though. The image set as a slide has to have the alternative text. The alt text is added when selecting the image on the WordPress image library pop up that opens on image selection.



The screenshot shows the 'Add Media' interface in WordPress. It features a grid of various images, including logos for 'SAIT', 'COLLEGES ONTARIO', 'AUROR. COLLEG', and 'FANSHAWE COLLEGE', as well as a sign that says 'YOUR FUTURE AHEAD'. On the right side, there is a panel titled 'ATTACHMENT DETAILS' for the selected image 'Prepare-for-the-Future.jpeg'. The 'Alt Text' field in this panel is highlighted with an orange border and contains the text 'Your future ahead'.

The alternative text has to have the same text that is on the image slide. If the image slide is just a background and the text is added to Slide Revolution is a caption, you don't need the alternative text unless the image complements the idea contained on the caption text.