

Review Four Different Websites



For this task, you will need to review four different websites. For each site, you will need to identify good or bad features. You will need to look at the content, the navigation, the design as well as any interactive features and how well the site caters for disabled users. Although you can state your personal opinion, your judgement on the features of a site should be based on by whether they are **appropriate for target audience**.

How to Tackle this Task

The four websites you choose to review do not have to be the same as the four you used for a previous task; it is entirely up to you.

To start off, you will need to think about the main purpose of each of your sites; you will need to determine the target audience for each site. For example, the site could be aimed primarily at children, or adults, or say people interested in music, or people with limited knowledge of English, and so on.

Once you have determined a target audience, you should consider specific aspects of the site. Aspects such as the language it uses, the images it contains, the navigation facilities provided or the speed that it downloads at. All the while, you must remember to consider the target audience and how they would feel about each aspect.

The term '**review**' means voicing your opinion on the site, saying what is good or bad. Make sure you relate your opinions to the purpose of the site, so, for example, you might say 'the navigation provided on the home page is not very good because children might not realise this is the way you get to other pages on the site'. Also think about the disabled, do you think they will be able to access the information on the site in a fairly straightforward way.

The Task

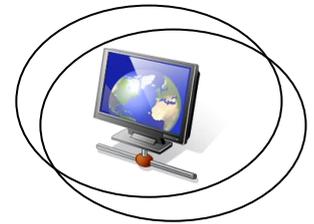
Task 3 (P2, M2)

Your client has indicated they are happy with your performance so far, but then the MD telephones you and says:

Your presentation on the different purposes of websites generated a lot of interest but we need to have a little more confidence that you could provide the sort of website we need. We have seen a lot of websites which don't look good, but we can't really pin-point why they look bad. We would like you to show us some websites (of your choice), and explain what improvements you would make to the sites if you had the opportunity, this will help us judge if you know what you are talking about!

- a) In response to this request, write a review of the four different websites. You should focus on the purpose of each website and explain if and how they have achieved their purpose. (P2)
- b) For at least two of the websites you chose, think about how the sites could be improved. Explain your ideas using screenshots and diagrams where appropriate. (M2)

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Reviewing a Website

When reviewing each site, you can consider the points listed below. There are a lot of different points so perhaps you should make a checklist, setting out the points you wish to consider.

Content

- Is the information on the website in an order that is easy to follow?
- Is the right amount of information given on each page?
- Is the main information in the centre of the screen?
- Is the language used appropriate for the target audience?
- Are pictures, colours and sounds used to help people understand the information on the website - are they relevant?

Navigation

- Is there a consistent navigation system throughout the site? Are buttons and links in the same place on each page, so that people know where to find them?
- Does the visitor always know where they are on the site?
- Is there a visual layout of the website i.e. a site map?
- Are all pages easy to get to, say no more than two or three mouse clicks away?
- Is there a search engine which accepts key words and are the results displayed in easy to understand form?

Design Features

The WAT tool can test this

- Does the site work at different resolutions? The minimum screen requirement should be for an 800x600 resolution. Remember, some people may prefer larger resolutions, if they older graphics cards or monitors or have visual problems.
- Does the site work in different browsers?
- Are a limited number of simple, uncluttered, legible fonts used e.g. Arial or Comic Sans Serif or Verdana? It is best to use common fonts that people will have on their systems.

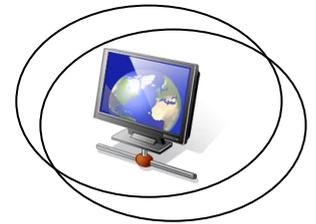
The WAT tool can test this

- There may be animations such as Macromedia Flash, bear in mind that some people have old, slow performing machines and may find it difficult to use these applications. Bear in mind the affect on download speeds.

Interactivity

- Are there features where user input is required? If so, are the features easy for the target audience to understand and use. Don't forget to consider the disabled.

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Disabled Access

- If the site is mainly aimed at people who are not used to reading very much, then a page should have a max of two or three easy to read sentences per page.
- For the visually impaired, is there audio equivalent of text or are ALT tags provided for screen readers.
- Is the site suitable for people who are visually impaired? What about older people or people who are colour blind?
- Can font size be increased (using the zoom on the browser?)
- For the hard of hearing, is written alternative to audio content provided?

The WAT tool can test these

Testing a Site Using the Web Accessibility Toolbar

The Web Accessibility Toolbar can be used to test a website for accessibility. It can give you lots of information about a web page, such as it's download speed, whether ALT tags are present, it can also show you how a page would look to visually impaired or colour blind users. There are many tests you can run, so I have listed some of the more useful ones below, after the installation section.

Installation

The toolbar can be easily installed in Internet Explorer. First download the toolbar from [Folder101](#) or from the creators of the tool [here](#). Save it to disk. To start the installation, double-click the file. It will ask you if you want to install it into your browser. Say yes and accept all the defaults. Once it is installed, **CLOSE your browser and then re-open it.**

Next you need to add it to your browser's top bar. Right-click the top bar, then select 'Accessibility Toolbar' in the popup menu.



The toolbar should then appear. It should look like this...

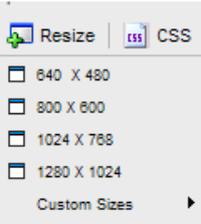
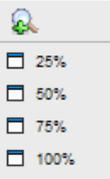
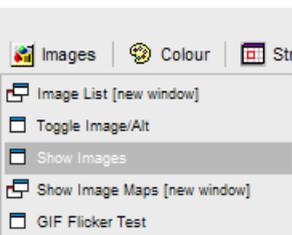
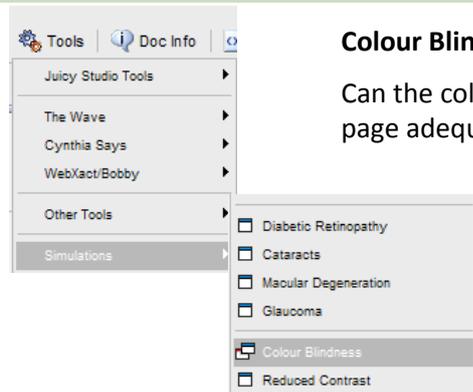


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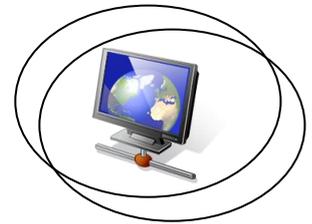


Some Useful Accessibility Tests

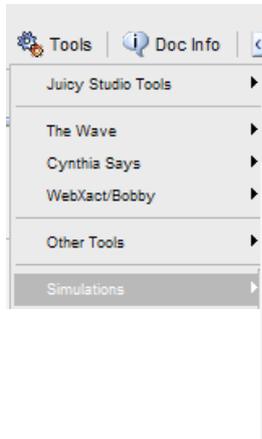
Here are some of the more useful tests:-

Test 1		
	Resize Does the page display OK under different screen resolutions.	<i>You can test that users with different screen resolutions can still read the page properly.</i>
Test 2		
	Magnify Does the page still display reasonably well at different magnifications?	<i>This will show you the page under different magnifications. Does the structure of the page remain reasonable as you zoom in and out?</i>
Test 3		
	Show images Are there Alt Tags on images?	<i>This will display any hidden alternative text next to images. If an image does not have any alternative text, a 'NoAlt!' is displayed.</i>
Test 4		
	Colour Blindness Can the colour blind view the page adequately?	<i>This will show the page as a person who is colour blind would view it.</i>

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Test 5

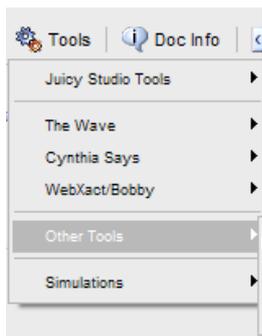


Reduced Contrast

Can aging or visually impaired people view the page adequately?

This will show the page as a person with ageing eyes or who is visually impaired would view it.

Test 6

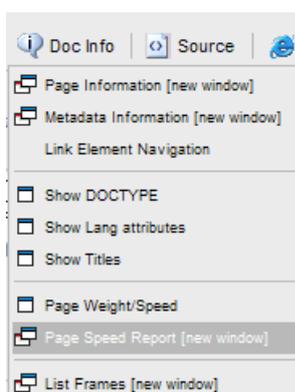


Lynx Viewer

Is the web page readable when displayed as Text Only?

This test will show what the page looks like if viewed in a 'Text Only' browser. This will give you some idea of how readable the page is for visually impaired users who use screen readers.

Test 7



Page Speed Report

Is the download speed of the page reasonable?

A new page will load with information about the download speed. Scroll down till you find the 'Download Times' table. Check the time for a 56K connection rate? 15 seconds is reasonable.

There are many other tests you can run using the Accessibility Toolbar. Feel free to experiment!