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## “10 Ways to Make Your Website Accessible”

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In a world where information and services move quickly and develop rapidly, the importance of having an accessible and useable website becomes paramount. The success of any website, whether it is a small, personal site or a large corporate site for services etc., is reflected by the number of users to your site and how easy it is for them to use your website.

Ensuring that your website is accessible to people with disabilities will result in a greater number of visitors to your site and will provide users with a better, richer experience.

Many people with who are blind or have a visual impairment find websites with a lot of visual content difficult to use. Many blind computer users will have screen reading software to allow them to hear information presented onscreen. For such computer users, ensuring that a website works with a screen reader is the only way they can use a particular site. People with a physical disability sometimes find sites with small buttons or forms difficult to navigate and for people with learning difficulties or literacy problems the language used in some websites can make it difficult to read.

For designers and developers of websites, thankfully there is a range of resources available to support them, many of which are available online.

There are many guidelines available, including the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0), published by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/>. Many countries also provide their own guidelines to assist web developers and other software designers to create websites, content and online services that can be used effectively by people with a disability.

Usability is just as important as compliancy to guidelines. Keeping the user in mind throughout the design process is one of the best ways of attracting users to visit and re-visit your website. It is also important to test your web pages with various Assistive Technologies and follow the W3C WCAG 2.0 guidelines for making websites universally accessible to everyone.

As a quick guide for those interested in building or designing a website, the following hints and tips are a useful starting point. Following the tips outlined here will allow you to create and maintain websites that can be accessible to a broad range of disabled Web users and will make the overall experience for general visitors easier and more enjoyable.

1. The website must be **operable with a keyboard** for people who cannot use a mouse.
2. All **non-text content must have a text equivalent** and make sure linked documents are accessible.
3. All content and user interfaces must be in a **logical reading order**.
4. Website layout, navigation, content and function must always be **consistent**.
5. **Website formatting structure** is used appropriately.
6. Identify information and relationship **between content and structure**.
7. Use **scalable sizing and positioning** of Text and Visual layout.
8. **Color should be used appropriately** with high visual contrast and not used alone to convey a meaning, prompt an action or response.
9. Use **CSS web technology for layout** and avoid using tables.
10. Use **simple language, meaningful link phrases and identify foreign languages** through web programming.

A full range of e-accessibility services and information is available from the MADA Center, including site-auditing, training in accessible design and information regarding compliance.

For further information contact the MADA Qatar Assistive Technology Center, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Al Nasr Tower B, Al Corniche Road, West Bay, Doha, Qatar. P.O. Box 24230. Ph: +974 44594050

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