

## 7 KEEP ACCESSIBILITY WITHIN THE SITE

While Manchester United ([www.manutd.com/access](http://www.manutd.com/access)) and Tesco ([www.tesco.com/access](http://www.tesco.com/access)) have created separate accessible sites, most businesses can't commit the resources needed to run two websites effectively. And if the accessible site contains less information than the main site, users feel slighted.

"Even if there's a text-only site, users feel that it may not present all the information or the same information as the main site," says Coyne. "These users are often right as many text-only sites provide pared-down information. Even if the sites do have the same information, it's still an issue that the users feel the sites might be different."

## 8 GIVE YOUR USERS CHOICE

Make sure your site responds to browser controls to increase the font size and consider providing instructions or embedding your own font controls in your web page. "Not all users who would benefit from these controls know how to use them and many do not even know they exist," says Donna North, head of creative production Europe at TWI Interactive ([www.twi.net](http://www.twi.net)), which built the Manchester United

accessible site. "Font size controls within the page are seen as very useful, and the possibility to change the site colour scheme but still retain the branding and identity of the site is well received."

## 9 USE WEB PAGE STYLESHEETS

Stylesheets enable you to separate your website's design, which disabled users can tweak, from your structurally marked-up content. "Someone with extremely poor vision might need a black background with brilliant yellow text," explains Trenton Moss, managing director of design consultancy Webcredible ([www.webcredible.co.uk](http://www.webcredible.co.uk)). "They can program in their own stylesheets, which override yours. They can't, though, override any formatting effects you put in the HTML."

Webcredible produces a handbook that delivers more practical advice on making your site accessible. For more details and a chance to win a copy turn to page 30.

## 10 HELP VISITORS WITH CONSISTENT DESIGN

Make sure your design is consistent from page to page. Leonie Watson works as an accessibility consultant at Nomensa ([www.nomensa.com](http://www.nomensa.com)) and is a screenreader user. She says, "Consistency is important for users who are not able to take in the entire page at a glance. As a screenreader user becomes familiar with



a site there is an expectation that elements will be located at the same point on every page. This speeds up the process of moving through a website both for sighted and for non-sighted users."

## 11 FIX THE NAVIGATION

"Try to refrain from using images for navigational links," recommends Watson. "For users with minor visual impairment not sufficient to require a screenreader or magnifier, reading images can be very difficult, particularly if the font is small or elaborate. Because the images cannot be resized it's quite possible the link will become inaccessible." She suggests you set text that appears in navigation buttons in a clean font and at a size of 16 points.

Another tip that's obvious once you know it is to provide a 'skip navbar' link so screenreader users don't have to listen to the same list of links on every page before getting into your content.

Assistive software can summarise web pages by looking at the headings and links. Structure your information using heading tags and make sure links make sense out of context and uniquely describe their destination. Don't have links that say 'click here' or 'more'.



"Users worry that text-only sites may not include all the information that's on the main site"

KARA PERNICE COYNE NIELSEN  
NORMAN GROUP

## THREE SITES THAT GET IT RIGHT

Visit these shining examples of web accessibility



### WWW.NMM.AC.UK

The National Maritime Museum has two versions of its website. Users of the main version can resize all the text and read meaningful alternative descriptions for the pictures. There is also a low graphics version. The links to skip over each section make this much easier to navigate using a linear interface such as a screenreader.



### WWW.ONEANGLIA.COM

Rail operator One Anglia's website has won the RNIB's See It Right award for accessibility. The site has added labels to form fields in the HTML and formatted tables using headings. This is invisible to most users, but screenreader users can understand the site even though they can't easily see what surrounds a form element or table cell.



### WWW.WRITE-AWAY.ORG

Write Away is an online directory of pen pal clubs. The site has easily resizable text and provides instructions on how to increase the font size in a range of browsers. The site uses access keys to navigate between the main sections without a mouse and warns users before opening new windows to avoid confusing those using screenreaders.