

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE CENTER

SERVICE RECIPIENT: College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

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PERSONS INVOLVED: Vet Med Webmaster Committee members, Marla Roll,
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CONSULTATION GOAL: To provide legal background, suggestions and
recommendations for making web pages accessible.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Universal Design principles
- Pertinent laws
- Useful design and validation links

INFORMATION PROVIDED/EQUIPMENT TRIED:

- See attached sheets

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- See attached sheets

Universal Design:

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design (ie: text only pages that often omit content).

Screen Readers:

Screen readers are computer programs that use external synthesizers or more commonly, sound cards to read text aloud from left to right. Their functionality for web pages tends to be only as good as the design of the page.

A recent lawsuit by the National Federation of the Blind highlighted AOL's inaccessibility because of their rampant use of graphics and frames.

Laws affecting accessible web design:

Telecommunications Act of 1996, Section 255- States, " A provider of telecommunications services shall ensure that the service is accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, if readily achievable. Manufacturers and service providers must develop a process to evaluate the accessibility, usability, and compatibility of the covered services and equipment, and incorporate such an evaluation throughout the product design, as early and as consistently as possible."

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990- "No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity."

Rehabilitation Act, Section 508- "Section 508 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which requires that electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used by the Federal government be accessible to people with disabilities."

Web accessibility validation services:

Of the few validation services, Bobby is the most user friendly though it does not offer as thorough of an accessibility review as the World Wide Web Consortium validator does. The addresses for both are listed below.

Web Accessibility Resources:

Web Design-

<http://weber.u.washington.edu/doit/Resources/web-design.html>, U of Washington, Accessible web page design

<http://www.trace.wisc.edu/world/web/index.html>, Trace Center, Designing more usable websites

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>, W3C, Web accessibility Initiative

<http://www.igs.net/~starling/acc/index.htm>, Starling Access Services, Accessible web page design

<http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/dmd/access/welcome1.htm>, Public Service Commission of Canada, Designing universal web pages

<http://cmos-eng.rehab.uiuc.edu/what/>, U of Illinois, HTML web accessibility tool

Web Page Validators-

<http://www.cast.org/bobby/>, Center for Applied Assistive Technology

<http://validator.w3.org/>, W3C

<http://www.nist.gov/itl/div894/vvrg/webmet>, National Institute of Standards and Technology

CVMBS Web page Accessibility

Homepage

- ✓ Picture: uses java script to rotate images and does not contain alternative text.

Suggestion: Place "alt tags" on all graphics making them readable by a screen reader or label by giving a descriptor.

- ✓ Background: white background difficult for those with visual processing difficulties.

Suggestion: Use color other than white, such as tan or yellow.

Accessible measures taken:

- ✓ Good consistent layout and organization making navigation easy.
- ✓ Most images have alt text tags.
- ✓ Content has been separated from the style of the page.
- ✓ Site map is well defined
- ✓ Links make sense when read out of context.
- ✓ Color is not used to convey information.