



MEDIA  
ACCESS  
AUSTRALIA  
INCLUSION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY



# Service Providers Accessibility Guide

**A quick reference guide for accessible communications**

[digitalaccessibilityservices.com.au](http://digitalaccessibilityservices.com.au)

## About Media Access Australia

We believe that all Australians have the right to access all forms of media and information, through technology, so they can participate fully in society.

Media Access Australia is Australia's only independent not-for-profit organisation devoted to increasing access to media for people with disabilities.

At the core of our work is the understanding that exclusion from mainstream media has profound effects on educational outcomes, workforce participation and social inclusion.

Access to media through technology empowers people to be independent, gain knowledge, make their own choices, and be active members of our society.

## About this Guide

The original version of this Guide was funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs as part of the Practical Design Fund and was released at the launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in August 2013. This Guide has been significantly updated to reflect changes in technology, operating systems, apps, equipment and approaches to accessibility.

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Whilst the Guide is designed around the needs of service providers who deliver support to participants in the National Disability Insurance Scheme, it works equally well for those organisations that want to ensure that their communications and content are accessible to people with a disability. This is especially relevant to organisations that interact with a general audience, which includes people with disabilities.

The opinions, comments and/or analysis expressed in this Guide are those of the author and Media Access Australia and do not necessarily represent the views or approaches of the National Disability Insurance Agency and cannot be taken in any way as expressions of government policy.

## Support from service providers

As always, Media Access Australia grounds its research and solutions in the real-world. The information in this Guide is based on the extensive experience and interaction that we have with a wide range of organisations, including a number of current service providers. The structure and topics discussed in this guide are based on that experience and interaction and we thank those organisations for their contribution and support.

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This Guide has been significantly updated to reflect changes in technology, operating systems, apps, equipment and approaches to accessibility.

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## About the author

Dr Scott Hollier is the Director, Digital Accessibility for Media Access Australia. Scott's work focuses on making computers and internet related technologies accessible to people with disabilities. Scott also represents Media Access Australia on the Advisory Committee of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the organisation primarily responsible for developing web standards that ensure the long-term growth of the web. Scott is recognised as a world expert on digital accessibility issues.

Scott has completed a PhD entitled *The Disability Divide: an examination into the needs of computing and internet-related technologies on people who are blind or vision impaired*, and has a background in computer science and a wealth of experience in both the information technology and not-for-profit sectors. Scott is legally blind and as such understands the importance of access at a personal level.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this Guide

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a major change in the way people with disabilities are funded and access services by:

- Moving away from a centralised services contract model where the service provider secures a contract for servicing many people to one where the service is delivered to an individual.
- Seeking to maximise independence, and social and economic participation where all participants receive reasonable and necessary supports based on their needs.
- Ensuring that the NDIS is controlled by the individual with a disability and their family. They have the power to choose which services and which service providers they use.

This Service Providers Accessibility Guide is designed to help service providers ensure your content and communications are accessible to people with disabilities.

### Why is it important for you?

- People with disabilities are your customers and it is important that you provide services, content and communications they can access themselves, rather than relying on the assistance of carers, families and friends. This is part of the person-centric approach of the NDIS and will help you with all communications with people with disabilities.
- By providing accessible content and communications you are showing that your organisation is responsive and inclusive to people with disabilities and worthy of consideration as a service provider of choice for this important market.
- You are demonstrating to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and other funders that you are an inclusive and responsive service provider that understands the requirements of people with disabilities.
- By providing accessible content and communications you are also addressing the needs of other people with disabilities who are outside of the NDIS funding scheme but may be considering using your products and services.
- You are ensuring that people with disabilities within your organisational support structure have the necessary accessibility features and assistive technologies to work with their clients and colleagues.

This Guide is designed to provide you with a practical, hands-on, step-by-step way to effectively prepare and deliver content and communications to people with disabilities via computing and mobile devices.

### Examples of where this Guide may provide useful information include:

- Setting up a new computer for a person with a disability.
- Internal documents being formatted in an accessible way to help employees with a disability.
- Creating an accessible website.
- Ensuring that people with disabilities can access important social media messages from a service provider.

The Guide supports these scenarios and many others by taking a holistic approach and assisting service providers to adapt their office and communications systems to meet the needs of people with disabilities, as well as providing information on how you can engage directly with your clients to ensure they can access information on your services, pricing and any special incentives or offers.

## 1.2 Identifying your needs

This Guide is primarily for service providers and individuals that will need to provide accessible information and communications to people with disabilities as part of the NDIS through a variety of computer and internet-enabled mediums. A familiarity with basic computing concepts, such as how to navigate around an internet-enabled computer or mobile devices including smartphones and tablets, is recommended.

In identifying the approaches and priorities that you should take in using this Guide, it is useful to look at the size of your organisation and which audiences you are targeting. Ultimately you should aim for all of your content and communications to be accessible, including those for a general audience, which will always include people with disabilities. However, in practical terms it is important to get started in making content and communications accessible and this Guide will help you take those steps.



**Table 1: Evaluating your digital accessibility requirements**

TYPE OF ORGANISATION	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE
<b>Typical characteristics</b>	Operating in single location, specialist dealing in single disability, under 100 NDIS participants.	Operating in multiple locations (including state wide), dealing with more than one disability, supporting 100-1,000 NDIS participants.	Operating nationally or in multiple states, dealing with more than one disability, more than 1,000 NDIS participants.
<b>Website accessibility minimum requirements</b>	Ensure main issues have been addressed from checklists and any specific needs for targeted disabilities are fully met.	Undertake basic assessment to ensure general accessibility and strategies to address outstanding issues.	Undertake assessment and strategy to ensure that website meets benchmark standards (WCAG 2.0 AA level).
<b>Documents, forms and electronic information</b>	Ensure main issues have been addressed from checklists and any specific needs for targeted disabilities are fully met.	Ensure that all documents, forms and electronic information meets benchmark standards and accessible templates and forms are created.	Ensure that all documents, forms and electronic information meet benchmark standards and accessible templates and forms are created.
<b>Communications</b>	Ensure that communications are accessible to targeted disabilities and/or alternatives are provided.	Ensure that all communications are accessible.	Ensure that all communications are accessible.
<b>Training</b>	Undertake basic training in document accessibility and learn how to set up office computers and mobiles for accessibility.	Ensure that communications team undertakes accessible content training. Ensure that web person or supplier is trained in web accessibility. Ensure that staff are trained in setting up office computers and mobiles for accessibility.	Ensure that all content-related staff are trained in accessible content production. Ensure that web development staff are trained in web accessibility. Ensure that staff are trained in setting up office computers and mobiles for accessibility.
<b>Social media including audio-visual content</b>	Ensure that checklists and tips are followed for social media that you use.	Ensure that communications team has basic training in social media accessibility, including video accessibility.	Ensure that all communications are accessible and client services staff have training in accessible social media. Train staff in video accessibility or organise supply arrangements with professional access supplier.
<b>Customer service</b>	Ensure that your customer service staff are aware of the basics of accessible documents, communications and social media.	Ensure that your customer service staff are trained in creating accessible documents, communications and social media.	Ensure that your customer service staff are trained in creating accessible documents, communications and social media and all customer service information and interactions meet benchmark accessibility standards.

# Chapter 1: Introduction continued

## 1.3 Accessibility by role

There are also some sections which have been optimised for people in particular organisational roles. For example, section 3.3 *Building accessible websites and apps* will help an information and communications technology (ICT) professional to incorporate the necessary accessible programming techniques into an organisation's website. Sections 3.4 to 3.6, which discuss content creation and social media, are for people who work in document production and communications roles.

People with disabilities or people who interact directly with people with disabilities such as key client liaison, direct service providers and customer service staff will also benefit from this Guide. Chapters 2 and 4 in particular provide an introduction to how people with disabilities access information online, and highlight the accessibility features that are available for popular computer operating systems. Overcoming social media barriers can provide general benefits to the online independence of people with disabilities beyond the NDIS-specific requirements.

## 1.4 How to use this Guide

This Guide is structured in accordance with the requests and research associated with a number of organisations that are providing NDIS services or services to people with disabilities in general. As a result, the Guide has been structured to follow common organisational work processes and roles of staff in the creation of information, distribution of information and the provision of specific guidance directly to people with disabilities so that they can effectively receive accessible communications.

Chapter 2, *How people with disabilities access online information*, is designed to provide an overview of how people with disabilities will interact with your online information and services. This includes the diversity of people with disabilities online and the types of assistive technologies that are likely to be used in accessing your NDIS-related information and services. There is also an opportunity to experience first-hand how these technologies work.

Chapter 3, *Producing and distributing your messages to people with disabilities*, is designed to step you through all the organisational requirements to ensure that information being created and distributed by your organisation is created in an accessible way. This includes web-based content, document creation, email distribution and social media preparation.

Chapter 4, *Helping people with disabilities receive your messages*, returns to the user requirements perspective by providing practical advice to people with disabilities, carers and associates on how a computer or mobile device can be set up with the necessary accessibility features or assistive technologies. It includes explanations of the main accessibility features in popular operating systems and guidance on how their accessibility can be maximised.

The remaining Chapter 5, *Next steps*, outlines the services Media Access Australia provides which can assist you in making your content and communications accessible. These include practical training, assessments and audits, document accessibility and dealing with specific accessibility issues. The appendix to this Guide is a checklist of important points to consider when providing support to people with disabilities through the NDIS.

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Ultimately you should aim for all of your content and communications to be accessible, including those for a general audience, which will always include people with disabilities.

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# Chapter 2: How people with disabilities access online information

## 2.1 Diversity of web users: benefits, barriers and legal requirements

In order to understand how to prepare the online resources of your organisation to support people with disabilities, it is first necessary to explain – and to some degree experience – how people with disabilities will interact with NDIS-related information.

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The reason why accessing information online is so important to people with disabilities is due to the potential for independent access to information.

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The Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that there are approximately 4 million Australians, or 18.5% of the population, who have some form of permanent disability. This includes approximately 2.2 million Australians in the working age 15-64 years age group. As Australia continues to move towards high online participation rates due to increased mobile broadband use and the rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN), the online community is becoming increasingly reflective of the diversity in our own community.

The reason why accessing information online is so important to people with disabilities is due to the potential for independent access to information. For example, someone who is blind or vision impaired who needed NDIS-related information available in print only, would need assistance to obtain the resource and convert the information into an accessible format, such as large print or braille, involving several people in a relatively time-consuming process.

Accessing and receiving the resource via online means, however, significantly reduces the time and effort required by both the individual and the supporting staff. With the right accessibility features enabled or assistive technology installed on a computer or mobile device, information communicated between NDIS service providers, employees with a disability, family members, carers and people with disabilities themselves can be effectively received and used. With the rapid improvements in mobile accessibility and the use of social media, people with disabilities also have a greater variety of choice in which device they use to access content, providing even greater independence.

However, simply converting printed material into online content is not enough to ensure that your messages are received or that the benefits discussed can be enjoyed by people with disabilities. In order for information to be available, it must first be made accessible.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) provides information on how people with disabilities use the web and some of the challenges they may face.<sup>1</sup> They:

- may not be able to see, hear, move, or may not be able to process some types of information easily or at all.
- may have difficulty reading or comprehending text.
- may not have or be able to use a keyboard or mouse.
- may have a text-only screen, a small screen, or a slow internet connection.
- may not speak or understand fluently the language in which the document is written.
- may be in a situation where their eyes, ears or hands are busy or interfered with (e.g. driving to work, working in a loud environment, etc.).
- may have an early version of a browser, a different browser entirely, a voice browser, or a different operating system.

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With the rapid improvements in mobile accessibility ... people with disabilities have a greater choice in which device they use to access content, providing even greater independence.

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While it may seem initially daunting to consider the needs of all these groups when creating and communicating NDIS-related information, there are many practical techniques you can use to ensure that the information produced is done so in an accessible way, and effectively conveyed to people with disabilities. Guidance will also be provided on how you or your organisation can work effectively to ensure that the required accessibility tools are enabled.

## Chapter 2: How people with disabilities access online information continued

The diversity of Australian web users with disabilities and their significance is also recognised by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in its accessible web design and development resources.<sup>2</sup> The AHRC reinforces the importance of providing equal access to the web as both an essential service and human right. It also provides a reminder that failure to cater for the diverse needs of people with disabilities online can be interpreted as a breach of Section 24 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*<sup>3</sup> as was the case in the *Bruce Lindsay Maguire v Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) case*.<sup>4</sup> Information relating to specific techniques required to meet government requirements is discussed in Chapter 3.

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The diversity of Australian web users with disabilities and their significance is recognised by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

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### 2.2 The use of assistive technology

The flexibility of the internet means that people with disabilities can use a variety of accessibility tools, often called assistive or adaptive technology, which include both software and hardware. Until recently, assistive technology software was only sold by specialist providers and generally retailed for thousands of dollars. In recent years, however, there has been a growing trend in building accessibility features directly into the operating systems of computers and mobile devices. There are also free and open source alternatives available, such as the NVDA screen reader.<sup>5</sup>

There are many accessibility features found in popular operating systems such as Microsoft Windows, Apple OS X, Google Android and Apple iOS. There are also accessibility features emerging in wearable devices such as the Apple Watch and Android Wear products.

Some examples of assistive technology include:

- Screen readers: Text-to-speech applications that read out computer and internet-related information to assist people who are blind or vision impaired.
- Screen magnifiers: Magnification tools for enlarging sections of screen content.
- Themes: High contrast themes allow people with a vision impairment to change the colours to a more comfortable setting such as white-on-black, and increase the size of mouse pointers and text.
- On-screen keyboards: Enable people with a mobility impairment to 'type' by using a pointing device to select letters and words on the screen.
- On-screen alerts: Visual messages can appear in place of audible sounds to help people who are Deaf or hearing impaired.

Further information on these tools, including their functions, limitations and basic operation, is located in Chapter 4.

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Gaining a personal insight into how people with disabilities access the web can be helpful in the creation and distribution of NDIS-related information.

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Many people who are blind or vision impaired become very proficient in using such tools. They can increase the reading speed to the point where it becomes difficult to comprehend for the untrained ear. However, accessibility issues can render these tools useless if content is not developed in an accessible manner.

Gaining a personal insight into how people with disabilities access the web can be helpful in the creation and distribution of NDIS-related information and may be a good way for others in your organisation to gain additional knowledge of how people with disabilities are likely to interact with your digital content.



## 2.3 Practical exercise: using a screen reader

While reading about how people with disabilities use a computer helps to understanding its importance in relation to the NDIS, experiencing it is another thing entirely. In this practical exercise, you can briefly experience how a person who is blind or vision impaired would navigate web pages or mobile apps using a screen reader. The tool works by using a text-to-speech process which reads out information using a synthesised voice. As a person who is blind or vision impaired is unable to clearly see the screen, the tool is designed so that the screen is not required, nor is the use of a mouse as a blind person would not be able to see the mouse arrow. Keyboard commands are the most common way to interact with a screen reader on desktop operating systems, and touch-screen gesture movements are generally used to input commands on mobile devices.

To start the screen reader, follow the instructions for your computer or mobile device:

- **Microsoft Windows: using the Narrator screen reader**

1. Navigate to the Ease of Access section in Control Panel. You can also display the option by holding down the 'Windows' key and pressing the 'U' key.
2. Select Narrator from the list of accessibility features. Alternatively if you are using Windows 8.x or Windows 10 you can open Narrator directly by holding down the 'Windows' key and pressing the 'Enter' key.
3. Once enabled, Narrator will tell you how to use its commands.

- **Mac OS X: enabling the VoiceOver screen reader**

1. Navigate to the Accessibility section in the System Preferences. You can also display a quick settings option by holding down the 'Function', 'Command' and 'Option' keys and press the 'F5' key.
2. Select VoiceOver in the menu. You can also launch VoiceOver directly by holding down the 'Command' key and pressing the 'F5' key.
3. Once enabled, VoiceOver will tell you about its commands.

- **iOS on iPhone and iPad: using the VoiceOver screen reader**

1. Navigate to Settings, then to General. Here you will find the Accessibility section.
2. Navigate to VoiceOver, and then enable it by swiping the option to 'on'.

- **Android smartphones and tablets: using the TalkBack screen reader**

1. Navigate to Settings. Here you will find the Accessibility section.
2. Open the TalkBack option and swipe the feature to 'on'.
3. You will be presented with an on-screen tutorial. Follow the tutorial to learn how to explore the device by touch.

For desktop users, open your organisation's website and use the 'tab' key to jump from link to link without looking at the screen. For mobile users, open an important app to your organisation and move your finger around it without looking at the screen. Consider the access implications for a person with a disability that relies on such tools to access your content.

# Chapter 3: Producing and distributing your messages to people with disabilities

## 3.1 Accessibility and organisational roles

The previous chapter provided a good insight as to how people with disabilities are likely to access your content. While different people will have different requirements for incorporating accessibility in their work practices, it is vital that accessibility is approached as an organisation-wide initiative and ongoing support is provided in an effective team environment.

To achieve this, the information provided in this chapter is designed to help you make sure that your web presence, apps, documents, emails and social media distribution usage can be created and distributed in ways that best support people with disabilities and their support networks.

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...make sure that your web presence, apps, documents, emails and social media distribution usage can be created and distributed in ways that best support people with disabilities...

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The chapter sections have been divided according to recommendations from service providers to make it easier to allocate the responsibilities based on the roles of staff and their responsibilities:

- *Government policies and legislative requirements* provides a more specific overview of the Federal Government's expectations of accessibility required for online content and the standards on which they are based. This is particularly relevant to policy officers and can help incorporate accessibility information into an organisational Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP).
- *Building accessible websites and apps* provides programming and design techniques that ICT professionals such as web designers and developers can implement to ensure your web presence or app is compatible with screen readers and other assistive technologies.
- *Publishing content online* provides content authors with guidance on how to make selections regarding which document format to use, and then specific guidance on content creation in HTML, Microsoft Word and PDF files.

- *Preparing accessible emails and Engaging with accessible social media* provide support to staff in marketing-related roles so they can ensure that their email and social media communications are effectively distributed in an accessible manner.

## 3.2 Government policies and legislative requirements

In November 2009, the Online and Communications Council (OCC) endorsed a mandatory requirement that all Australian Federal, state and territory government websites conform to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, as highlighted in Chapter 2, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* requires agencies to ensure that people with disabilities have the same fundamental rights to access information and services as others in the community. The initial implementation of this requirement by government agencies was known as the National Transition Strategy (NTS) and is currently supported by the Digital Transformation Office (DTO).

The *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD)<sup>7</sup> also specifically recognises (under Articles 9<sup>8</sup> and 21<sup>9</sup>) that access to information, communications and services, including the internet, is a human right. As an NDIS service provider, it is imperative that all web content complies with the WCAG 2.0 standard.

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The NTS committed to having all Federal government websites meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA by the end of 2014.

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WCAG 2.0 is recognised as the world standard for creating accessible websites and has wide international adoption. It is classified as the ISO/IEC 40500 standard<sup>10</sup> and contains three implementation levels, 'A', 'AA' and 'AAA'. The NTS committed to having all Federal government websites meet WCAG 2.0 Level 'AA' by the end of 2014. At the conclusion of the NTS, the WCAG 2.0 Level 'AA' compliance level remained, established as the mandatory requirement by the DTO ensuring that all Federal agencies meet this accessibility requirement.<sup>11</sup> Local and state governments also require the adoption of the WCAG 2.0 standard in online content.



As such, it is recommended that NDIS service providers also strive to meet WCAG 2.0 Level 'AA' compliance for their web presence and related content.

In relation to document accessibility, the Federal Government conducted a study into the accessibility of the portable document format (PDF) for people with a disability.<sup>12</sup> This found that while PDF accessibility is improving, like most tools, it cannot compensate for poor design. Content authors need to design accessibility into their documents from the outset.

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...people with disabilities required assistance to implement workarounds and alternative portals to effectively use social media tools.

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The Federal government also highlighted the importance of social media accessibility as part of the Government 2.0 Taskforce in 2010.<sup>13</sup> The *sociABILITY* report<sup>14</sup> published in 2012 by Media Access Australia identified that while social media offered significant potential to people with disabilities in gaining access to information, the most popular social media tools were not compliant with the WCAG 2.0 standard. As a result, additional support was required in the preparation of social media messages as discussed below, and people with disabilities required assistance to implement workarounds and alternative portals to effectively use social media tools. While the accessibility of social media tools have significantly improved in recent years, there are a number of ways organisations can support the accessibility features of social media as discussed in Chapter 4.

### 3.3 Building accessible websites and apps

To ensure that people with disabilities can access your websites and apps, ICT professionals involved in the development and maintenance of content should be familiar with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 published by the W3C.<sup>15</sup> WCAG 2.0 is based on four design principles containing 12 guidelines which are summarised in the 'WCAG 2.0 at a glance' document provided by the W3C:<sup>16</sup>

#### Perceivable:

- 1.1 Provide text alternatives for non-text content.
- 1.2 Provide captions, audio description and other alternatives for multimedia.
- 1.3 Create content that can be presented in different ways, including by assistive technologies, without losing meaning.
- 1.4 Make it easier for users to see and hear content.

#### Operable:

- 2.1 Make all functionality available from a keyboard.
- 2.2 Give users enough time to read and use content.
- 2.3 Do not use content that causes seizures.
- 2.4 Help users navigate and find content.

#### Understandable:

- 3.1 Make text readable and understandable.
- 3.2 Make content appear and operate in predictable ways.
- 3.3 Help users avoid and correct mistakes.

#### Robust:

- 4.1 Maximise compatibility with current and future user tools.

The 12 guidelines contain success criteria that outline how ICT professionals such as web developers and designers can implement the guidelines to one of three levels: the minimal Level 'A' standard, Level 'AA' or Level 'AAA'. As discussed in the government policy section 3.2 above, it is recommended that organisations strive to achieve a Level 'AA' standard.

For specific information relating to the success criteria required to achieve Level 'AA' compliance, please refer to the full WCAG 2.0 standard, located on the W3C website.<sup>17</sup> An additional resource providing comprehensive practical guidance on implementation techniques can be found on the Access iQ website.<sup>18</sup>

For ICT professionals focusing on the development of NDIS-related apps on mobile devices, W3C has produced an advisory note relating to Guidance on Applying WCAG 2.0 to Non-Web Information and Communications Technologies (WCAG2ICT).<sup>19</sup> While WCAG2ICT is not a mobile accessibility standard as such, it can be helpful in determining which WCAG 2.0 success criteria are applicable to the development of mobile apps.

# Chapter 3: Producing and distributing your messages to people with disabilities continued

## 3.4 Publishing content online

### 3.4.1 Selecting a document format

There are several common document formats published on the Web, but in most cases there are three options to choose from:

1. Webpages in HTML, generally considered the most accessible.
2. Microsoft Word document.
3. Portable Document Format (PDF) file.

Content authors generally publish content directly on a webpage in HTML if:

- The layout and style is relatively simple.
- The information is clear and concise.
- Keywords are considered important.
- The document is short or contains multiple short sections that can be spread over multiple web pages.
- The document is non-linear.
- The document requires editing and updating.
- The document needs to link to additional online information resources.
- A social media component is required.

HTML web content is generally considered the most accessible of the three formats with significant accessibility guidance from the WCAG 2.0 standard and associated techniques.

Microsoft Word documents are also popular and commonly published online if:

- The document needs to be edited.
- It is lengthy, such as a report.
- It needs to be self-contained.
- It is linear.
- It provides an accessible alternative to a PDF.

In recent versions of Microsoft Office such as Office 2010 and Office 2013, significant improvements have made it easier to incorporate a number of accessibility features, including an accessibility checker, into this format.

PDF documents are also common on the web and are generally used if:

1. The document no longer requires editing.
2. It is lengthy, such as a report.
3. Layout and style needs to be perfectly replicated when a hard copy is printed.
4. It needs to be self-contained.
5. An equivalent Word document is too large to be emailed and the smaller file size is required.
6. It is linear.

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When creating and publishing HTML web content, it is important to ensure that all content is in compliance with the WCAG 2.0 standard.

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While PDF files are popular and are beneficial in particular circumstances, it is important to note that while there are techniques available to assist in their accessibility, many people with disabilities still consider the format to be inaccessible.

Accessibility techniques for other document formats such as Excel, PowerPoint and other popular formats can be found at the Accessible Digital Office Document (ADOD) Project.<sup>20</sup>

### 3.4.2 HTML web documents

When creating and publishing HTML web content, it is important to ensure that all content is in compliance with the WCAG 2.0 standard.<sup>21</sup> While not all elements of the standard will apply to content authors, the guidelines can provide you with links to specific techniques to assist in structuring and formatting your content.

Parts of the guidelines that are of particular benefit to content authors include:

- Provide alternative text for all images.
- Ensure that headings are used correctly and nested appropriately.
- Use descriptive labels for links and avoid terms such as 'click here' or 'read more'.



- Make sure that sequences and relationships between content parts are clearly represented. Examples include clear structure and labelling for a list of numbered instructions, an Australian map divided into states and territories or a sports medal tally.
- Use descriptive page titles.
- Use simple language by avoiding unusual words and acronyms.
- Ensure that all content has good colour contrast.
- Label table headings.

### 3.4.3 Microsoft Word documents

Microsoft has published a guide to creating accessible Word documents.<sup>22</sup> To ensure that a Word document is as accessible as possible, create your document using the latest version of Microsoft Office and include the following techniques in your document authoring:

1. Add alternative text to images and objects.
2. Specify column header rows in tables.
3. Use styles such as headings in long documents.
4. Use short titles in headings.
5. Ensure all heading styles are in the correct order.
6. Use hyperlink text that is meaningful.
7. Use simple table structure.
8. Avoid using blank cells for formatting.
9. Structure layout tables for easy navigation.
10. Avoid using repeated blank characters.
11. Avoid using floating objects.
12. Avoid image watermarks.

Once you have completed the document, check that it is accessible using the built-in Microsoft Office Accessibility Checker.<sup>23</sup> This can be found in Office 2010 or later. This tool will verify the accessibility of your document and provide additional information about making it more accessible if required. Additional detailed information regarding accessible Word documents can be found on the Access iQ website.<sup>24</sup>

### 3.4.4 PDF documents

While there remains significant debate as to the overall accessibility of PDF files, the W3C provides a series of PDF Techniques for WCAG 2.0<sup>25</sup> which can be helpful in addressing specific accessibility issues.

In addition, Media Access Australia recommends the following practical techniques:

1. Always tag PDF files.
2. Make sure any source files are well structured.
3. Avoid scanned PDFs.
4. When creating a PDF document from a Word document, follow the above techniques to make the Word document accessible. This will significantly enhance the accessibility of the PDF if it is created from a Word document.
5. Follow the recommendations provided in the Accessibility section of the Adobe website.<sup>26</sup>

## 3.5 Preparing accessible emails

Emails provide an effective way to advertise your services to people with disabilities, including special offers and promotions. The techniques for preparing an email for accessibility depend largely on whether the email is being sent in plain text, rich text or HTML. If an email is being sent in plain text or rich text, it is generally accessible to assistive technologies such as screen readers.

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Then techniques for preparing an email for accessibility depend largely on whether the email is being sent in plain text, rich text or HTML.

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However, most communication messages sent out by organisations are sent in HTML so that styles, formatting and structure can be used to enhance the presentation of the information. As HTML-based emails are essentially a web page that is being distributed, the same rules apply as those discussed for web documents. Please refer to section 3.4.2 and follow the same techniques to maximise any HTML-based email communication.

# Chapter 3: Producing and distributing your messages to people with disabilities continued

## 3.6 Engaging with accessible social media

### 3.6.1 Social media accessibility overview

Social media allows anyone with an internet connection to publish their own content and connect with others. Through it, people and organisations receive a wealth of information and interaction.

While social media is an effective way to distribute information and get your target audience to participate in conversation, social media websites and applications can present some barriers for people with disabilities despite significant accessibility improvements in recent years. To minimise the impact of these barriers, you may have to adjust your organisation's process for publishing content on social media by adding some details to your content.

To ensure that NDIS-related social media messages reach people with disabilities, it is necessary to:

- Ensure that the person with a disability and their support network have a computer and/or mobile device that is set up with the most appropriate accessibility features.
- Provide assistance to navigate around the accessibility barriers present in popular social media tools.

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### Social media and websites can present some barriers for people with disabilities.

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Detailed information on the user experience and how individuals can navigate around social media accessibility barriers is provided in Chapter 4. This section provides you with support for the most common issues people with disabilities and their support networks raise with service providers and how information can be effectively prepared to minimise accessibility issues.

### 3.6.2 Facebook

Prior to 2012, research published in the Media Access Australia *sociABILITY* report indicated that the primary Facebook website contained a number of accessibility issues which were most likely to affect people with a vision or mobility impairment. Issues included difficulties with keyboard navigation and missing text alternatives. For Deaf and hearing impaired users, videos uploaded to Facebook directly did not support closed captions at the time. While many of these issues have been addressed in recent years, including the inclusion of captions for video content, the key features of labelling images and captioning videos are often overlooked due to the internal processes used to publish content, such as the use of tools that automatically upload content to multiple social media platforms.

To help address these issues, consider the following tips when maintaining your organisation's Facebook presence:

#### Adding captions to Facebook photos

For people who are blind or vision impaired, adding a caption label to a photo will enable screen readers to read out information about the photo. A good caption for screen reader users is one that describes the meaning conveyed in the image. For example 'Tony Smith' is not as meaningful as 'Tony Smith, Marketing Director of Five Incorporated'. By including this information, you provide context and screen reader users don't miss out on information that could be important to the message.

Specific instructions on how to add captions to photos can be found in the '*How do I add a caption to my photos?*' article on the Facebook Help website.<sup>27</sup>

#### Adding captions to Facebook videos

In 2014, Facebook introduced the ability to add captions to videos. To ensure that your videos are accessible to people who are Deaf or hearing impaired, it is imperative that all videos feature captions.

Specific instructions on how to add captions to videos can be found in the '*How do I add captions to my video?*' article on the Facebook Help website.<sup>28</sup>



### 3.6.3 YouTube

Since YouTube was launched in 2005, the website has been criticised for its lack of accessibility. In particular, the criticism was focused on its challenging interface for keyboard users and its lack of captioned content. YouTube has responded to the criticism in recent years by supporting captions and introducing various accessibility features including automatic captions, the ability to edit automatic captions, the ability to change the colour and font of the caption text and the ability to translate captions into other languages.

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To ensure that your videos are accessible to people who are Deaf or hearing impaired, it is imperative that all videos feature captions.

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The automatic captions tool uses voice recognition software. As such, the captions produced by this feature are often inaccurate. Using automatic captions is a great starting point, however it is important to use an editing feature to correct the often inaccurate captions on your YouTube videos.

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There are also other free caption editors such as Amara which provide additional features which can make the captioning process easier for online video content.

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The ability to adjust the colour of text used for captions is useful for people who have a vision impairment such as colour blindness. The ability to adjust the font used for captions is also beneficial for people with vision impairment as it allows them to choose a font that suits them.

Information regarding the step-by-step process of adding, editing and saving captions can be found on the Media Access Australia website.<sup>29</sup> There are also other free caption editors such as Amara<sup>30</sup> which provide additional features which can make the captioning process easier for online video content.

### 3.6.4 Twitter

The text-based nature of Twitter should provide for an accessible interface, yet the Twitter website had been widely criticised for being inaccessible. In research by Denis Boudreau published on AccessibiliteWeb, Twitter was rated as the worst website among the popular social media tools when assessed against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0.<sup>31</sup> Issues include inconsistent layout, lack of keyboard navigation options and font size issues. As a result, an alternative web portal to Twitter was created independently to address the issues, called Easy Chirp. While many people with disabilities still prefer alternative portals, Twitter has significantly improved the accessibility of its website and most people with disabilities are now able to use the main Twitter portal.

#### Twitter hashtags

Hashtags or '#' on Twitter provide a way for people to discover your content. Hashtags enable people with disabilities and other service providers to specifically identify your tweets as being related to a particular area of interest.

Popular accessibility-related discussions use the #a11y hashtag, while broader discussions generally use the #disability hashtag. Additional NDIS-related hashtags may also be helpful.

Information about ways people with disabilities can navigate around the accessibility features of Twitter can be found in Chapter 4.

### 3.6.5 Blogging

The blogging platform Blogger has undergone several revisions in recent years with its accessibility steadily improving. This was in part due to an opportunity in 2009 to formally raise accessibility issues with Google, which bought the service in 2003. Some of the accessibility issues raised included unlabelled Flash content, the use of CAPTCHA present during sign up (widely seen as inaccessible) and lack of alternative text for images.

While the access situation has broadly improved since then, many accessibility issues remain. According to its own forums, Wordpress.com, another blogging tool, is often viewed as being more accessible for people who are blind or vision impaired.

If you are using blogs to update people with disabilities regarding NDIS-related information, use the following suggestions to maximise the accessibility of your messages.

## Chapter 3: Producing and distributing your messages to people with disabilities continued

### **Provide a link to videos rather than embedding them**

It is often difficult to embed a video in your blog and maintain the accessibility features of the video, such as captions. Embedded videos can also provide challenges to screen reader users who try to play videos using inaccessible controls. By providing a link to the video rather than embedding it, users can go directly to a website that contains a potentially accessible version of it. Examples are discussed in Chapter 4.

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The blogging platform Blogger has undergone several revisions in recent years with its accessibility steadily improving.

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### **Describe your images using alternative text**

In order to make sure your images are accessible, add some alternative text to them. In many tools the user is prompted to enter some text about an image when it is added, but people using Blogger will need to follow some additional instructions.

### **Label links**

When sharing a website link in your blog, make sure that the link is labelled with a description. Text such as 'click here' can make it difficult for people using screen readers to understand the nature of the link. An accessible link label should give screen reader users an idea of where the link will take them once it has been activated.

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Using accessible link text might require you to think more carefully about the way you structure your sentences for NDIS-related information...

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For example, if you want to link to contact information on a company blog, an accessible link would be "Find out how to contact us on the About page", where 'how to contact us' is the link. This link text describes the nature of the webpage the person is about to activate.

Using accessible link text might require you to think more carefully about the way you structure your sentences for NDIS-related information, and there are many techniques you can use to ensure your links are accessible. Detailed information about how to make your links accessible can be found on the Access IQ website.<sup>32</sup>

### **Choose a simple blog template**

Most blogging tools provide a number of different templates to make your blog look unique. Consider using a template that only has one column with a simple layout. This will be helpful for people using assistive technologies to access your blog.

### **Choose your font carefully**

There are often many different fonts to choose from. Consider using a sans-serif font like Arial and make it a standard size. If you have the ability to choose how the font is represented in HTML code, select a font size that is variable like 'em' rather than a fixed font size like points or pixels.

### **Open links in the same window**

A common accessibility issue faced by bloggers is making a link that opens in a new window. Bloggers often prefer this option as it opens a new website while still keeping the blog on the screen. However, for people using assistive technologies a new window opening can make it very confusing. Allow users to go to your link without opening a new window as the user can always return to your blog using the 'back' button in their web browser.

# Chapter 4: Helping people with disabilities receive your messages

## 4.1 Planning your approach

In Chapter 2, the diversity of people with disabilities online was highlighted and an opportunity was provided to use a screen reader. As discussed, in order for people with disabilities to access NDIS-related information, it is first necessary to ensure that the individual has access to effective assistive technologies that can provide assistance.

This chapter provides a basic user-centred support mechanism in which you or staff in your organisation can work directly with people with disabilities and their personal support networks to help them set up a computer or mobile device with the necessary accessibility features, and overcome the challenges faced in obtaining or receiving information.

This information is also applicable to organisations employing people disabilities who wish to set up an accessible working environment. The benefit of using the tools built into popular computing operating systems is that there is no additional cost. Should additional specialist products be required, information can be found on the Media Access Australia website.<sup>33</sup>

These sections outline the key accessibility features of computing operating systems such as Microsoft Windows and Apple OS X, and popular mobile operating systems, such as iOS which runs on the iPod and iPad, and Google Android-based phones and tablets.

To maximise the opportunities for people with disabilities to gain access to NDIS-related information and resources and resources, keep the following questions in mind when assessing specific individual needs:

- Should the computer or mobile device's operating system be upgraded to maximise the quality and availability of accessibility features?
- Will the individual with a disability require multiple input methods if the computer or mobile device supports it? For example, should a keyboard be plugged into an iPad or a Windows computer be supplied with a touch screen?
- Is one platform better than another for a specific individual's needs?
- Are there free or low-cost apps available that can improve accessibility?
- If additional support is required, are there specialist products that can help?

In relation to social media accessibility, key questions to consider include:

- Is this social media tool the most appropriate for the individual to gain the necessary information?
- Does the current device provide effective support to access social media?
- Are there accessible apps available for a particular device that can assist in getting access to social media?

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Most popular computers and mobile devices come with accessibility features built in, or enable free accessibility tools to be downloaded and installed on the device.

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Additional information, including step-by-step instructions on how to enable and use accessibility features and social media accessibility, can be found in the 'Digital technology'<sup>34</sup> and 'Web'<sup>35</sup> sections on the Media Access Australia website.

## 4.2 Accessibility features in popular computer operating systems and mobile devices

### 4.2.1 Accessibility features overview

Most popular computers and mobile devices come with accessibility features built in, or enable free accessibility tools to be downloaded and installed on the device. This section summarises the accessibility features freely available on popular computers, mobile devices and wearables. The operating systems featured here include the most common Microsoft Windows operating systems currently in use, OS X used on Apple computers, iOS used on the iPhone and iPad and Google Android smartphones and tablets. Other freely available assistive technology products and apps are also discussed.

### 4.2.2 Microsoft Windows

Microsoft Accessibility<sup>36</sup> highlights a variety of accessibility features that can be found in Microsoft products. Current versions of Windows such as Windows 7, Windows 8.x and Windows 10 contain many accessibility features which can make computers easier and more comfortable to use.

## Chapter 4: Helping people with disabilities receive your messages continued

All these versions of Windows include tools that can assist people who are blind or vision impaired, including the ability to adjust the desktop font, icon size and screen resolution, and to change the colour theme, a full-screen Magnifier screen enlargement application and the Narrator screen reader program. For people who are hearing impaired there are accessibility features such as ShowSounds and SoundSentry, which present a visual equivalent of audio alerts and captioned video playback, and for people with a mobility impairment there are features such as StickyKeys, which allows someone to press one key at a time instead of having to hold multiple keys to issue a command, and an on-screen keyboard with predictive text.

Although all current versions of Windows have these accessibility features, Windows 8.x and Windows 10 provide significant additional improvements by incorporating touchscreen support to Magnifier and the Narrator screen reader. This means that these accessibility features can be used via a traditional keyboard and mouse interface or by touching the screen on a touch-enabled device. Windows 10 has additional benefits including the ability to toggle between a desktop and tablet mode, improved speech recognition and the Cortana digital assistant which is available in some regions.

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Other apps provide a wealth of additional accessibility features designed to support a range of disabilities related to vision, hearing, mobility and learning.

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One significant limitation to the Microsoft Windows platform is its built-in Narrator screen reader. While Narrator has been significantly improved in recent versions, its limited functionality has been widely criticised as being ineffective for the needs of people who are blind or vision impaired. Alternative screen readers are generally installed in Windows to compensate. One viable free alternative to Narrator is the NVDA screen reader, which provides significantly improved access to all currently supported versions of Windows. Commercial screen readers are also available.

### 4.2.3 Apple OS X

Apple<sup>37</sup> accessibility has highlighted a variety of accessibility features that can be found in Apple products. The OS X accessibility feature set has remained largely unchanged in recent versions.

The tools in OS X are similar to those found in Windows. Tools that can assist people who are blind or vision impaired include the ability to adjust the desktop font, icon size and screen resolution, and change the colour theme, the Zoom screen enlargement application, support for braille displays and the VoiceOver screen reader program. For people who are hearing impaired there are accessibility features such as a visual equivalent of audio alerts and captioned video playback, and for people with a mobility impairment there is an on-screen keyboard feature.

### 4.2.4 Apple iOS

As highlighted on the Apple accessibility website, recent versions of iOS found on iPhone and iPad models contain a number of accessibility features. These features include a simplified version of the VoiceOver screen reader, a Zoom function, reversible colour scheme and captioned video playback. Other popular beneficial features include the Siri voice-activated digital assistant and Switch Control Recipes to improve switch key support.

Other apps provide a wealth of additional accessibility features designed to support a range of disabilities related to vision, hearing, mobility and learning.

One of the main complaints about devices running older versions of iOS is that VoiceOver and Zoom cannot be used at the same time which can make it difficult for users with low vision. Upgrading to the latest version of iOS will resolve this problem in most cases. Users have also recommended enabling the quick launch accessibility feature that allows any accessibility function to be launched by pressing the home button three times.

One of the benefits of using an iOS device for receiving NDIS-related information is that most of the popular social media tools have their own app, and the apps are often compatible with the accessibility features of the device.

### 4.2.5 Google Android

Google Android is the most popular operating system available on smartphones and tablets, running on devices by companies such as LG, Samsung and Motorola as well as most less-known brands. Android devices running version 4.2 Jelly Bean or later contain many accessibility features including the Talkback screen reader, zoom functionality and captioned video playback. More recent versions of Android including 4.4 KitKat, 5.0 Lollipop and 6.0 Marshmallow have seen a number of accessibility improvements including switch key support, colour inversion options and support for people with colour vision



difficulties. While Apple iOS-based products are generally considered to be more accessible, Android products have evolved to a point where they can meet the accessibility needs of most users and devices are generally considered more affordable. Android is also generally considered more customisable with apps such as BIG Launcher providing a simplified, accessible interface for most Android devices.

#### 4.2.6 Wearables

Current accessibility features in wearable devices are fairly limited with only the Apple Watch and Android Wear-based products having any notable options. The Apple Watch provides a number of accessibility features when paired with a supported iPhone, while very recent Android Wear devices also have some limited accessibility features. While the accessibility on both platforms is likely to improve in time, wearables currently offer little benefit over the use of a smartphone or tablet.

### 4.3 Social media accessibility

#### 4.3.1 Benefits and barriers of social media

In addition to ensuring that people with disabilities have their computers and mobile devices optimised for accessibility, it is also important to ensure that NDIS-related social media content can be accessed. For the general public, social media can be a highly beneficial and effective communication tool for creating, modifying, sharing and discussing things online.

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... social media ... for people with disabilities ... can often become an even more important means of communication due to some of the challenging social situations they face.

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Yet for people with disabilities the benefits have the potential to be even more profound. Research published in the *sociABILITY* report by Media Access Australia discusses how social media not only provides an avenue for participation for people with disabilities, but can often become an even more important means of communication due to some of the challenging social situations they can face. An example of which may include a person who is blind or vision impaired using Twitter to communicate with friends instead of a crowded

social situation where eye contact is difficult, or a person using Facebook and blogging tools to keep people informed of a condition. Social media can also be used as a non-threatening way for people with a mental health issue to engage with others.

The common element between all of these scenarios is participation. In the context of the NDIS, social media provides great opportunities for service providers, carers, families and individuals to work collaboratively in addressing the specific needs of a person with disability.

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... social media provides great opportunities for service providers, carers, families and individuals to work collaboratively in addressing the specific needs of a person with disability.

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Yet despite the benefits, popular social media tools can be challenging for people with disabilities, as discussed in Chapter 3. As a result, service providers that intend to provide information to people with disabilities via social media need to ensure that the individual is able to overcome those barriers. The following information provides a number of accessibility tips and tricks that people with disabilities can use to either overcome or work around accessibility issues to ensure NDIS-related information can be received from service providers. Further analysis and step-by-step guides on using popular social media tools can be found in Media Access Australia's *sociABILITY* report.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Facebook

Social interaction on Facebook can be especially beneficial for people who have a vision or mobility impairment. In the context of the NDIS, Facebook can be useful in providing a quick and easy way to communicate and share information without the need for travel. For people who are hearing impaired, Facebook can be an effective communication platform as most of its key features do not have an audio component and captioned video is now supported.

Additionally, Facebook can provide great community support for people with disabilities through the Facebook community groups. It may be beneficial for your organisation to join or follow these groups in order to become familiar with the barriers that people with a disability may face when using the social network.

## Chapter 4: Helping people with disabilities receive your messages continued

Understanding these barriers will better equip you with ensuring the NDIS-related content you post on your organisation's Facebook page is accessible to people with a disability.

### Mobile Facebook website

Many blind or vision impaired users have found the standard Facebook website challenging and have recommended using the mobile Facebook website as an alternative.<sup>39</sup> The mobile website version of Facebook provides basic functions through an HTML-only interface. It is important to note though that while the mobile website is generally considered more accessible, it only provides basic profile editing, messaging, wall posts and friend searching options.

### Apps

Media Access Australia has tested a number of Facebook apps and, based on this and user feedback, recent updates to the default Facebook app have significantly improved its accessibility on both iOS and Android. However, some minor issues remain.

The free Voicebook VO and the low-cost Facely HD apps on iOS provide more accessible options for people using the VoiceOver screen reader on an iPhone or iPad. While both apps have some minor quirks, they perform much better than the website in Safari or the standard Facebook website. Further information on the accessibility of iOS apps can be found on the AppleVis website.<sup>40</sup>

### Navigation landmarks

The main Facebook website also offers some navigation help if the user is using a recent version of a screen reader and web browser. Web Accessibility Initiative - Accessible Rich Internet Applications (WAI-ARIA) landmarks provide additional accessibility information, and the Facebook website has some WAI-ARIA landmarks set up. This means that a screen reader is likely to read out more information and provide additional help in navigating between the Facebook functions. Further information on WAI-ARIA and the screen readers that support it can be found on the Media Access Australia website.<sup>41</sup>

### Facebook resources

Facebook has created an accessibility team to provide support to users of assistive technology, including JAWS and ZoomText, and can be contacted through the Facebook accessibility and assistive technology feedback form.<sup>42</sup> Facebook also has some online accessibility resources on its Accessibility help page.<sup>43</sup>

### 4.3.3 YouTube

The popularity of YouTube and its clips has made the website a useful entertainment portal, available on a variety of different computer platforms and mobile devices. For people with disabilities, YouTube also provides an opportunity to watch videos on how disability-specific issues have been addressed, and can provide an opportunity to share similar ideas with others. Many YouTube videos also feature captions, providing access to the content for people who are Deaf or hearing impaired. The captions can also be instantly translated to a number of other languages. While keyboard navigation remains an issue, closed caption playback is supported. The implementation of HTML5 in recent years has also significantly improved access to the main YouTube website.

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Many YouTube videos also feature captions, providing access to the content for people who are Deaf or hearing impaired.

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### Apps

User feedback has indicated that the YouTube app on Apple and Android devices is far more accessible than the YouTube mobile website, and aside from some occasional quirks with comments, the YouTube app is an effective option.

### Turning on closed captions

If captions are available, they can be toggled on or off by selecting the 'CC' button. The button is located just under the bottom-right area of the video when using the main YouTube website. The YouTube app also provides caption support, and recent versions of Android include a global caption video setting in the accessibility settings section.

### 4.3.4 Twitter

Twitter can be a great way to seek disability-specific information on how to overcome potential issues or to provide support through shared experience. Twitter can also be used to unite with others in the form of a protest or as a mechanism to receive quick answers to particular issues. Research conducted by Media Access Australia and feedback from Twitter users have provided a number of accessibility tips to help you get your Twitter account up and running.



### Easy Chirp accessible Twitter portal

While the main Twitter website has improved its accessibility in recent times, people may still want to try using Easy Chirp.<sup>44</sup> This website operates in a similar way to the main Twitter website but provides a more consistent layout, good keyboard navigation and better support for assistive technologies such as screen readers.

### Mobile Twitter website

In addition to Easy Chirp, many blind and vision impaired Twitter users have recommended using the mobile Twitter website.<sup>45</sup> This allows you to perform a limited number of Twitter-related tasks through a simplified interface.

### Apps

Media Access Australia has tested a number of Twitter apps and based on our testing, user feedback and reviews from Apple app reviews website AppleVis, there are many accessible Twitter apps available for iOS-based devices. The most popular accessible Twitter apps include the free YoruFukurou, which has many features, and the default Twitter app. Android also offers a number of Twitter apps.

### Accessibility hash tags

Popular accessibility discussions can be identified by the #a11y hashtag. Broader disability discussions can be identified with #disability. In any NDIS or disability related communications, using these hashtags will make it discoverable by the community.

### Twitter support and contacting Twitter directly

Additional support can be found at the Twitter Help Center, which contains a large amount of tutorials and information on how to make the most of Twitter.<sup>46</sup> It is also possible to contact Twitter directly.

### 4.3.5 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is primarily used to share professional information with others online and to keep in touch with professional contacts. LinkedIn can be highly beneficial when looking for a job and may be used as a companion tool with employment-related NDIS services.

One of the greatest benefits of LinkedIn for people with disabilities is that it provides an easy way to promote an individual's skills online and direct employers to a résumé. In addition to keeping in touch with current and previous workplace contacts, it can also provide

access to disability-related discussion groups. Research conducted by Media Access Australia and feedback from LinkedIn users have provided a number of accessibility tips to help users set up their LinkedIn accounts.

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One of the greatest benefits of LinkedIn for people with disabilities is that it provides an easy way to promote an individual's skills online...

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### Searching for connections made easier with Google search

Searching for people to connect with on the LinkedIn website can be cumbersome if there are several people with the same name. This becomes less of an issue as more contacts are added as LinkedIn can start to predict which contacts users are seeking based on location and work. An easier way initially may be to search for the person's LinkedIn profile using Google. By searching in Google, additional keywords can be used to narrow down the correct person and then go straight to their LinkedIn profile. To do this, users can:

1. Go to the Google website.<sup>47</sup>
2. Search for the name of the person and the word LinkedIn with spaces between each word, e.g. 'Joe Smith LinkedIn'. They can also add additional keywords such as the person's occupation or location to narrow the search.
3. Go to the search result of the person.
4. On their LinkedIn page, select 'Add to your network'.

### Apps

Media Access Australia and users from AppleVis suggest that the LinkedIn app appears to work effectively with the VoiceOver screen reader and other built-in accessibility tools on iOS and the Android app is largely accessible despite some quirks.

### Contacting LinkedIn Support

LinkedIn provides a number of online support resources to help new users and contact information.<sup>48</sup> LinkedIn is also active on Twitter and can be contacted by sending tweets to @LinkedIn.

# Chapter 5: Next Steps

This Guide has outlined a range of areas that you need to address in successfully communicating with, promoting your services to, and providing information for, people with disabilities, including NDIS participants.

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Media Access Australia provides a wide-range of training, consulting services, task-specific guides and technical information covering the main areas of accessibility.

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Appendix A to this Guide is a handy checklist designed to confirm that you have addressed the main accessibility requirements. In some cases these are simple to implement and may only take a few minutes for you to address. Other areas are a little more complex and depending on your resources and skill levels, you may need some external assistance to complete these tasks.

Media Access Australia provides a wide-range of training, consulting services, task-specific guides and technical information covering the main areas of accessibility. As the not-for-profit organisation devoted to ensuring that media and information is accessible to people with disabilities we are a specialist, practical real-world expert with the latest information on accessibility requirements and solutions using mainstream technologies. We work with commercial organisations, not-for-profits and government agencies in Australia and internationally. The revenue we generate from this work goes back into supporting our organisation and improving access.

## 5.1 How Media Access Australia can help



### 5.1.1 Assessing priorities: the Digital Accessibility Maturity Assessment

Our Digital Accessibility Maturity Assessment (DAMA) is a low-cost review of your methods and processes assessed according to management best practice, against a clear set of external benchmarks. The detailed report examines the risk associated with these levels and puts forward key priority actions for these risks. This is a very effective tool for gaining senior management support and action.



### 5.1.2 Auditing existing web and app content

For a more formal audit of existing websites and apps, across a range of browsers and devices, we provide testing against the international WCAG 2.0 standards ('A', 'AA', 'AAA'). Our testing includes looking at key processes, as well as static content on the website.



### 5.1.3 Training

We offer a range of training programs that are all practically-based and use real-world situations. This includes creating accessible content in Word, PDF and InDesign. There are specific modules for accessible social media, video content, Excel and forms.

For web professionals, we offer higher-level training, including our Professional Certificate in Web Accessibility.



#### 5.1.4 Document accessibility

If you have documents, forms and maps that need to be made accessible our document remediation service can provide this for you in a range of formats, always meeting benchmark accessibility standards. We can also help you create accessible templates for documents and forms.

Visit [accessibledocumentservice.com.au](https://accessibledocumentservice.com.au)



#### 5.1.5 Digital accessibility consulting

For more specific issues or dealing with broad accessibility requirements we provide a specialist consulting service covering your digital needs. This can range from helping you manage and implement your digital accessibility strategy, including governance issues, to working with specific team members on accessibility issues. Our expertise covers a wide range of industries and situations and includes promotion and communication of your accessibility strategy to key stakeholders. Our consulting staff are world experts in their fields and have extensive experience in providing practical, real-world solutions to digital accessibility issues.



#### 5.1.6 Accessibility resources

As a specialist digital accessibility organisation, we are always up-to-date with the latest information and developments in accessibility. Our Access iQ website<sup>49</sup> provides an extensive online information repository offering content that equips individuals and organisations with information to ensure their websites, web applications and digital experiences are accessible. Our premium specialist guides are based around different organisational roles and provide pinpoint, relevant information to solve accessibility issues in that area.

Our main Media Access Australia website<sup>50</sup> provides a vast array of resources and information for consumers and organisations needing to know about broader media access issues. Whether it be information about technology access, cinema, TV, DVD or video on demand (VOD) access, education access or social media accessibility, the Media Access Australia website provides easy-to-understand information for consumers and providers.

## For more information

Web: [digitalaccessibilityservices.com.au](https://digitalaccessibilityservices.com.au) Call: 02 9212 6242

Email: [accessibleservices@mediaaccess.org.au](mailto:accessibleservices@mediaaccess.org.au)

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# Appendix A: Checklist for accessibility

This checklist is designed to provide a simple way to confirm that the key accessibility requirements have been addressed.

## User Experience

- Completed the example of using a screen reader?  
 Yes  No  N/A

## Government policy

- Familiar with government strategic and legislative frameworks relating to accessible online content?  
 Yes  No  N/A

## Website and app accessibility

- Text alternatives for non-text content?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Captions, audio description and other alternatives for multimedia?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Content can be presented in different ways, including by assistive technologies, without losing meaning?  Yes  No  N/A
- Easy for users to see and hear content?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- All functionality available from a keyboard or gestures?  Yes  No  N/A
- Users have enough time to read and use content?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Ensured that no content causes seizures?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Helped users navigate and find content?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Made text readable and understandable?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Made content appear and operate in predictable ways?  Yes  No  N/A
- Helped users avoid and correct mistakes?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Maximized compatibility with current and future user tools?  Yes  No  N/A

## Document accessibility

### HTML Web pages

- Provided alternative text for all images?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Ensured that headings are used correctly and nested appropriately?  Yes  No  N/A
- Used descriptive labels for links and avoided terms such as 'click here' or 'read more'?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Made sure that sequences and relationships between content parts are clearly represented?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Used descriptive page titles?  Yes  No  N/A
- Used simple language by avoiding unusual words and acronyms?  Yes  No  N/A
- Ensured that all content has good colour contrast?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Labelled table headings?  Yes  No  N/A

### Word documents

- Added alternative text to images and objects?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Specified column header rows in tables?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Used styles in long documents?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Used short titles in headings?  Yes  No  N/A
- Ensured all heading styles are in the correct order?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Used hyperlink text that is meaningful?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Used simple table structure?  Yes  No  N/A
- Avoided using blank cells for formatting?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Structured layout tables for easy navigation?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Avoided using repeated blank characters?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Avoided using floating objects?  Yes  No  N/A
- Avoided image watermarks?  Yes  No  N/A

## Appendix A: Checklist for accessibility continued

### PDF files

- Files tagged?  Yes  No  N/A
- Source files properly structured?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Avoided scanned PDFs?  Yes  No  N/A
- Created from an accessible Word document?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Incorporated additional accessibility guidance from Adobe?  Yes  No  N/A

### Social media

#### Facebook

- Added descriptive captions to photos?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Added captions to videos?  Yes  No  N/A
- Checked caption quality and accuracy?  
 Yes  No  N/A

#### YouTube

- Added captions to videos?  Yes  No  N/A
- Checked caption quality and accuracy?  
 Yes  No  N/A

#### Twitter

- Used accessibility hashtags?  Yes  No  N/A

### Blogging

- Provided a link to videos rather than embedding them?  Yes  No  N/A
- Described your images using alternative text?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Labelled links?  Yes  No  N/A
- Selected a simple blog template?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Selected a sans-serif, relative sized font?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Links open in the same window?  Yes  No  N/A

### Setting up computer and mobile devices

- Should the computer or mobile device's operating system be upgraded to maximise the quality and availability of accessibility features?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Will the individual with a disability require multiple input methods if the computer or mobile device supports it?  Yes  No  N/A
- Is one platform better than another for a specific individual's needs?  Yes  No  N/A
- Are there free or low-cost apps available that can improve the accessibility?  Yes  No  N/A
- If additional support is required, are there specialist products that can help?  Yes  No  N/A

### Setting up social media tools

- Is this social media tool the most appropriate for the individual to gain the necessary information?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Does the current device provide effective support to access social media?  Yes  No  N/A
- Are there accessible apps available for a particular device that can assist in getting access to social media?  Yes  No  N/A





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