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PTC 601

Website Accessibility

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The New Yorker Website Accessibility

The New Yorker, a popular weekly magazine, has a website that is mostly accessible, but can be improved. Website accessibility is an increasing concern for website designers, including those of magazines like *The New Yorker*. According to Faye Newsham, in her informative video, “What Is Accessibility?” up to half of every 1000 people in the United States has difficulty using the web. One type of program designed to help people with disabilities is a screen reader, which reads the content of the page aloud to the user. Using the accessibility error detector website, www.wave.webaim.org, 47 errors were found on the magazine’s webpage. For the most part, www.newyorker.com/magazine contained content that may or may not present an issue to disabled individuals, indicated with a yellow icon, instead of a red icon, which is used for true accessibility errors.

Skip navigation refers to navigation using one key to skip to the main content of a webpage. On *The New Yorker* website, headings are present but are out of order or skipped. For example, the first heading is H5, the second is H3. Some headings are empty of content.

Tab order allows blind individuals or people with impaired motor skills to use the tab key to view and access elements of the page. The website was ordered in a way that would allow these users to easily navigate the page.

Alt tags describe images. Good alt tags describe what the image does as well as what it is. There are alt tags on the magazine’s website, but they are empty of content. This could easily be fixed by the website designers to provide greater accessibility.

Contrast is the difference between the background and text. For example, text and background should not be one color, nor should it be two colors that color blind people could not differentiate. *The New Yorker* has basic black text on a white background, easily read by color blind or other visually impaired individuals.

Color should not be the only way to provide information on a website. There is no image or caption on *The New Yorker* website pertaining to content that is not accompanied by black and white text. Some of the links, however, such as those to Twitter or Facebook, are provided using their respective colorful icons.

Content refers to the use of short phrases or paragraphs that will appeal to the largest audience. Since this is a magazine website, there is a potential for the use of large blocks of text,

which would turn away many readers. *The New Yorker* website provides no more than two lines of text, at most four inches across, for any one link to an article. This is very helpful for users who want to scan the page for certain articles, without having to sift through excess amounts of information.

The New Yorker website is mostly accessible to people with disabilities such as screen reader users or those with physical impairments. Although much of the content can be used by disabled individuals, it can also be improved and made more accessible. Providing content in the alt tags and using properly ordered headings would make this website a great deal more accessible.

References

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