

Q&A Follow Up

- **How can I check if my website is currently using Semantic HTML or not?**

Semrush has a [great article detailing what to look for in semantic html](#) and there are a number of tools available online such as [WAVE](#) which I covered in the live demo that can help you identify your site's semantic HTML problems. It is also worth looking at tools such as [Lighthouse](#) and [Axe Dev Tools](#) which can sometimes be preferred if you have a more technical background.

- **How can you correct a historical legacy of incorrectly assigned headers, especially if there is a high volume of content to update?**

This will be tricky due to the scale of the change needing to be made. First I would form an audit to understand what content needs to be changed. This can be created using tools such as [Semrush Site Audit](#) or if you have a technical team automations can be put in place using Lighthouse to scan your website and generate a report across all pages.

Once you have an idea on the true scale of changes required, You can opt to make the changes manually or this can potentially be scripted by a developer to be done programmatically saving you time.

My honest advice would be to speak to your web team / agency to understand the cost of an automated approach and to leverage their skills directly as this could save you alot of time and money in the long run.

- **With the improvements to AI, do you envisage speech-navigation taking over from things like skip links?**

I think when it comes to navigating experiences there is a long way to go before AI will be able to be used efficiently to aid disabled individuals using our websites. Although there are amazing innovations like [Be My Eyes](#) already leveraging AI and a disabled individual could ask for assistance when navigating a site, It is still quicker and much more familiar/comfortable to use a screen reader and keyboard navigation. This might change in the future but for now I would say the fundamentals like Skip Links are still important for us to add and optimise across our journeys.

- **And then follow-up, what excites you in the world of accessibility when it comes to AI technologies?**

Great Question! There is a lot that excites me in the world of AI when it comes to accessibility. Whether it be the early signs coming from [Neuralink](#) of solutions that can restore independence for individuals with paralysis or the awesome work being completed by startups like [One Court](#) who are using haptic feedback to make sporting events more immersive for individuals with visual impairments by allowing them to track the ball and players throughout the game. I also see the awesome work being done by [Be My Eyes and Open AI](#) to utilise the conversational approach of AI assistants to describe the world in real time to individuals with sight impairments.

- **I did a design course recently that suggested if you're able to test your own website by using it fully with a keyboard only (no mouse, no touch) then this can be a good stand-in for other assistive technologies like screen readers. It's potentially a way to do some of this accessibility testing directly. Is there much truth in this? And if so is there any good guidance on keyboard navigation? Or any other ways to help the person testing a web experience to put themselves in the shoes of people relying on assistive technologies?**

Yes you can 100% complete some of the accessibility testing you need to do using methods of keyboard navigation and screen readers already available in your operating system. I recommend checking out [Rob Dodsons A11ycasts](#) video series which will provide some help with performing testing and understanding what to look for.

I would always advise testing with lived experience as it can be hard to step into the shoes of our disabled customers. The best advice I can provide in trying to do so is to reach out to your disabled customers and understand their experiences, this will help you create scenarios that you can apply yourself when performing your own testing. Collaboration is key!

- **For theatres/cinemas, our booking system requires users to select their seats. I'm presuming now that this might cause major issues for screen reader users? How would you mitigate this so screen reader users can choose their own seats?**

Throughout my career I have been asking a similar question and to be honest when it comes to seat maps this area is very complex and depending on the size of your venue trying to make a map that relies on visual context accessible can often be very difficult.

What I have found can be really helpful is to provide guidance to users up front on the areas that are best for them to sit for easy access to disabled restrooms and other accessible facilities. If the front row seats are best for them we should highlight this and make it simple for them to find those items using assistive technology.

If you have a large map there are other alternatives such as best seat selection which could be a button that will select the best seats for the user from the map based on their needs.

I think the best way to approach this would be to understand your accessible customers needs and what they are looking for and work backwards. Interview a few attendees with vision impairments and understand how they book, This will provide you some starting points to investigate with your team to improve the experience.

- **I use Wix to design my website. Will it have options to navigate through a screen reader and options to add all the necessary solutions that Craig has described. Thank you**

When it comes to screen readers and the accessible tags that we need to apply it can be complex for website builders like Wix. With the benefits of drag and drop visual editing we lose some of the control over accessibility needed to create fully inclusive experiences. I happen to know that Wix has invested a lot into accessibility over the last few years and there are a few really great accessibility advocates associated with them.

I would recommend checking out their [articles and guides on accessibility](#) as a starting point which are full of helpful tips and tricks to make your site as accessible as possible in their ecosystem.

- **Are there any types of text that cause issues for screen readers? I've heard emojis are annoying on social media as it reads out the emoji. What about text that's in capitals or dates written like Tue 14 Jan? Are there any other examples of annoying text formats for screen readers**

This is a great question. Emoji's can be problematic when we use too many and using capital letters indicates shouting to screen reader users. There can also be issues when we use fancy fonts within our digital experiences. The RNIB has a great page on [social media accessibility](#) that covers all of this and should help provide some insight into other enhancements that can be made.

- **We will be creating a new website soon. Does Different Breed do an audit of a draft site to suggest improvements to accessibility?**

Unfortunately we currently don't offer audits as a service. We prefer to concentrate our time on producing tools and software that can help you connect with and understand your audience and we leave the audits to the specialists who do them best. I'm sure the DCN can recommend a few individuals who can help and if not I highly recommend [Caspian Turner from Accessible By Design](#).

- **How do you rate built-in accessibility tools, such as those found in Canvas? We rely on these when creating learner-facing content, but we want to ensure it is enough.**

I think relying on these tools can be positive and they have been created with good intent to help you. As long as you apply the fundamentals with correct heading structure you should be in a good place. I would avoid relying on these for Alt Text suggestions though as I find they describe the image and often miss the important context that aligns the image to the content it is associated with.

The best way to test what is working is to reach out to your audience and ask them how they find the accessibility of the resources you produce. By engaging with your audience you will gain valuable insights and allow you to figure out what tools work great and what ones require slightly more manual effort.

- **Do you have any suggestions of cooperative/socially-engaged companies (or groups or individuals) that will be able to redevelop a website with a lot of multimedia contents in terms of accessibility, green hosting for environmental sustainability; and ethical use (or avoidance) of AI?**

I sure do, I have high respect for the work [Micheal Smith](#) at [Cog Design](#) produces in the arts and culture space and also the work produced by [Clive Loseby](#) with [Access By Design](#). Cog are a great all rounder and Access By Design are brilliant specialists in accessibility. If it was myself approaching this these two would be my starting point.

- **How do you keyboard navigate?**

Great question, [Perkins School For The Blind has a brilliant article](#) that helps explain how to navigate a computer using keyboard shortcuts.

- **Our ticketing system isn't integrated into our website, what are the best ways to make pop up windows accessible for someone using assistive technology?**

There is 2 things i would recommend, #1 is to ensure you tell users via accessible text what a button will do when it is used to open the pop up window to book. If you have a button that says “Book Now”, ensure you have some accessible text that provides the context of what the action will do, i.e. “Book Now: Open booking modal overlay”.

I would then work with your web team to ensure the correct accessible tags have been used in the code. There is [a great blog post from Hides](#) that runs over this subject area in detail.

By making these small changes you will create a good accessible experience even though you don't directly control the ticketing system.

- **Is there AI technology that can be used for Alt Text? Thank you**

I have seen many attempts at creating AI solutions for alt text but describing an image's contents is 50% of what makes up effective Alt Text. Alt Text relies heavily on the context of where the image is used and this is difficult to get right when using AI. So i would say at this current moment in time AI is not a great solution for this and it's better if we learn to write Alt Text for the user as we know our content best. RNIB [has a great article](#) to help with this.

- **I know it's not been covered today, but how much is the right amount of alt text? I've seen some people do the bare minimum, and others write essays with every detail explained...**

[RNIB has a great article](#) that can help with this. Personally when writing Alt Text I try to keep it concise while detailing the important parts of the image that relate to the context the image is being used for. As an example if you have an article on festival wristbands being used for daily access that shows an image of a family with wristbands in front of a crowd, You would describe the image as “A family standing in a festival field with blue wristbands representing access to the festival on a friday.”, What they look like and what the crowd looks like matters less than than the point your trying to convey which is the use of the wristbands.

- **This contrast tool only compares two colours, if I'm building a graphic/chart how do I check 3, 4 or 5 colours working together? We**

have a board member who is colour blind and I'm struggling to check if a graphic for example a pie chart, is accessible.

As long as the contrast between any text on the charts and the background colours meet passing levels the combination of colours shouldn't matter too much unless they overlap with each other. Harvard has [a great article](#) on how to make charts and graphs accessible which I think might help here. If you have concerns around legibility it can be beneficial to provide alternative versions such as a simple table for people who might struggle with the charts.

- **Are there tools available or examples of best practice to ensure social media channels are also accessible?**

When it comes to inclusive social media best practices I can't recommend RNIB highly enough. They have an [accessibility checklist](#) to help ensure your social media is using best practices and even have [guides with accessibility tips and tutorials](#). RNIB also offer a [masterclass](#) which is quite affordable and can be a great training tool for your team. Outside of RNIB, GOV.UK has some [great articles on inclusive social media](#) which they use internally and share publicly.