Digital Accessibility and Recruitment: A guide to getting started and best practice

This resource is designed to assist HR managers, recruitment and hiring managers, along with diversity and equity teams, with what can be done to help make the hiring process fully accessible on the web and in digital environments.

The impact on people experiencing disabilities

In today's increasing digital world, it's impossible for any job seeker to find and apply for a job without some form of digital or online interaction. Online recruitment sites have replaced print media as the most up-to-date and popular method for job searching.

Imagine the experience for a person with disability. The process is made just that more difficult.

• Users of assistive technology screen readers may be unable to read through a website and locate the page with the employment vacancies.

• Users may misunderstand the contents of a position description if it is poorly structured, there is a lot of jargon, or the sentences are long and difficult to read.

• Recruitment videos with no captions or transcripts mean that users with hearing loss, blindness or low vision may not understand the content and key messages.

• Information with poor colour contrast may not be able to be read by users with uncorrected or low vision.

With some consideration and application of inclusive and accessibility principles, the recruitment process can be opened up to a much wider talent pool.

The benefits of workplace diversity

Making the recruitment process fully accessible enables employers to reach more highly qualified applicants, it reduces the possibility of disability discrimination in the hiring process, portrays a positive and inclusive organisational culture; and helps diversify the workforce.

For some employers with a strong customer focus, having a diverse workforce that reflects their customers and the broader community means they can better understand their customer's experience and improve service delivery.

Digital accessibility checklist for accessible recruitment

The checklist below provides guidance on what to consider when making the recruitment process accessible in digital environments.

Position descriptions

- **Is the document template accessible?** Has the document template been created using accessibility principles and checked?

- **Have accessibility principles been used?** Are you using accessible styles to create an accessible heading structure, good colour contrast, alternative text for images and meaningful link purpose?

- **Is the document accessible?** Have you used the Accessibility Checkers in Word and Adobe Acrobat Professional to check that your final document is accessible?

- **Does accessibility knowledge feature in appropriate roles?** For positions that create content for the web or digital environments, has knowledge of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) or accessibility principles been included in the position description? Check if that knowledge is required?

Online promotion

Ideally, placing the position description on accessible websites, platforms and applications is the best way to ensure engagement with the most job seekers.

- **Placing the job vacancy on the intranet or website?** Ask staff if the intranet was developed with accessibility principles and complies with WCAG 2.0 Level AA. Can the position description be provided in multiple formats like HTML, Word and PDF?

- **Using an external recruitment site?** Ask the vendor to provide evidence their platform is accessible and meets WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliance.

- **Using a recruitment agent?** Request that they provide information to potential candidates in multiple formats, in addition to any information you may provide regarding inclusion and diversity.

- **Does the recruitment process work for people experiencing disability?** Check the entire process of finding and accessing the position description by conducting a usability test by users experiencing disability.

Social media promotion

- **Are the Social Media platforms accessible?** Undertake and inventory of internal and external Social Media platforms used for recruitment and assess them for their compliance with accessibility.

- **Are recruitment videos accessible?** Ensure any recruitment videos contain quality captions, a transcript, and if required, audio description.

- **Is alternative text included with images?** Make sure that meaningful alternative text is included where photos and images are included in posts, and avoid images of text that cannot be read by assistive technologies.

Interviews

- **Conducting telephone interviews?** Provide an online audiovisual alternative such as Skype, which is largely accessible.
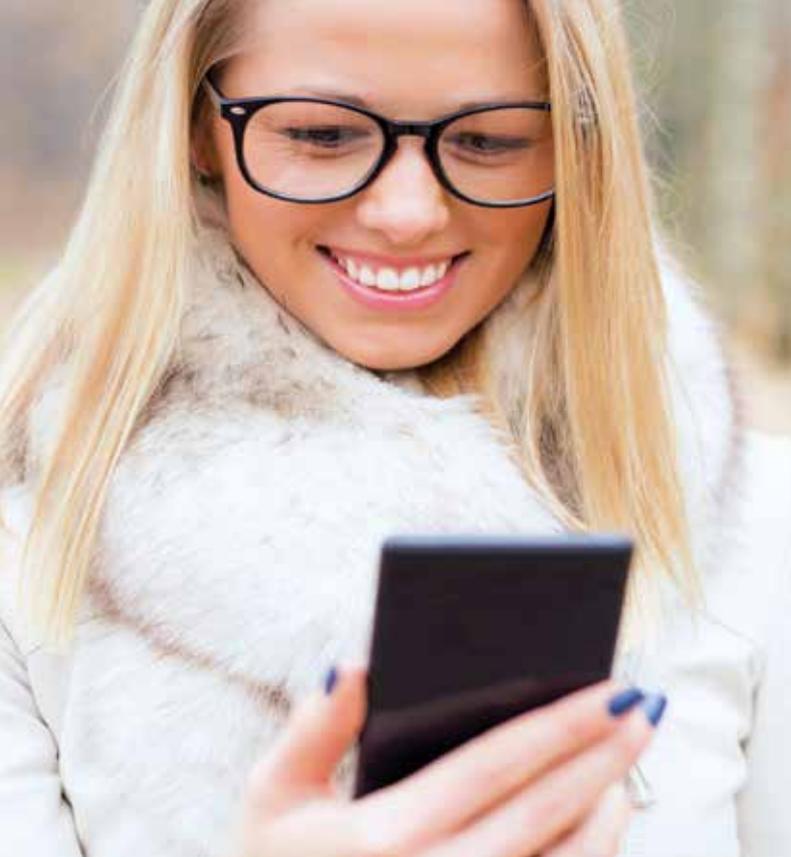
Tips for improving accessible recruitment in digital environments

• **Promote document accessibility:** If position descriptions are being created to be accessible, why not create a statement at the end of the document acknowledging that the document has been created using accessibility principles and encouraging contact with the organisation if any further assistance is required.

• **Create alternate formats:** If content in one format is not accessible, create multiple formats. For example: If a position description is not accessible in PDF, create a version in Word or HTML, as they are easier to make accessible.

• **Create goals to achieve digital accessibility:** Ensure the organisation's Access and Inclusion planning documents incorporate goals for checking and making digital environments accessible and compliant.

• **Test the user experience:** If you already have people experiencing disability in the workplace it may be feasible to enlist their help to check or test the process. A more thorough usability test will uncover issues across all forms of disability.

• **Accessible videos improve everyone's experience:** Adding captions and a transcript to recruitment videos improves Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) as well as improving accessibility.

• **Avoid images of text:** If text is presented as an image, it means that users of screen readers cannot access and read the words that are superimposed on to that image.

Useful tools and resources

Accessible technology in the workplace

• Affordable Access - the Affordable Access guide at work by Media Access Australia (Free) http://affordableaccess.com.au/resources/

Social Media accessibility

• Social Media for people with a disability by Media Access Australia (Free) https://mediaaccess.org.au/web/social-media-for-people-with-a-disability

Audio and video accessibility

• Accessible online audio and video by Media Access Australia (Free) https://mediaaccess.org.au/practical-web-accessibility/media

Cognitive Disability

• Cognitive Disability Digital Accessibility Guide – A practical resource for organisational support by Media Access Australia (Free) https://www.mediaaccess.org.au/digitalaccessibilityservices/cognitiveguide/

Automated tools for webpage accessibility

• AChecker by the Inclusive Design Research Centre (Free) https://achecker.ca/checker/index.php

• SortSite Desktop by Powermapper (free 30-day trial) https://www.powermapper.com/products/sortsite/

Colour contrast

• Paciello Group Colour Contrast Analyser (Free) https://www.paciellogroup.com/resources/contrastanalyser/

Document accessibility

• Word Accessibility Checker (Free and built in to Microsoft Word)

• Document Accessibility Toolbar by Vision Australia (Free, Windows only) https://www.visionaustralia.org/dat

• Acrobat X Pro by Adobe (Licensed) http://www.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/accessibility/products/acrobat/pdfs/acrobat-x-accessibility-checker.pdf

Where to go for help

The Digital Accessibility Services team at Media Access Australia can help provide your organisation with information and guidance on how to make the recruitment process digitally accessible.

The team provides consulting, web accessibility testing, usability testing and customised training workshops delivered flexibly on-site in the workplace. Training workshops cover topics including: Creating Accessible Content for the Web, Word and PDF, Social Media, InDesign, and Creating Accessible Video.

Accessibility statement

This document was created from an accessible Microsoft Word template using accessible content principles. The document was checked for accessibility and is verified as being accessible to users of assistive technology. Its intended use is in print and electronic formats. If you experience any issues accessing the content contained within this document or have usability feedback you would like to share, please contact the authors at Media Access Australia by phone on **(02) 9212 6242** or by email on **accessibleservices@mediaaccess.org.au**

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