

# Accessibility Workshop Demo Guide

## Introduction

Welcome to the accessibility workshop demo. I'll be guiding you through this web page to give you insight into accessibility and what to check for when reviewing content. We're starting with probably the most complicated type of problem you can find when doing accessibility checks.

## Section 1: Tables

### What We'll Cover

- **Table headers** (proper use of `<th>` vs `<td>`)
- **Scope attributes** for complex tables
- **Table captions and summaries**
- **Screen reader navigation patterns**

### Key Point

We're not thinking about tables as just a way to organize content visually with merged cells. Tables need to provide actual structure for the content, not just visual organization.

### Demonstration: Inaccessible Table

When you look at the bad table example, you can't really tell what might be wrong visually. We need to test it using:

- **WAVE Accessibility Checker** (browser plugin)
- **Inspect Element** to examine the HTML code

#### Problems We'll Find:

- Header row coded as `<tr>` instead of proper table headers
- Headings incorrectly listed as `<td>` instead of `<th>`
- Missing scope attributes
- No table caption

### Demonstration: Accessible Table

When we inspect the good table example, we'll see:

- Proper `<th>` elements for headers
- Scope attributes (`scope="row"`, `scope="col"`)

- Table caption explaining the content
- Proper semantic structure with <thead> and <tbody>

### Note for Word/PDF users

While merged table headers can be made accessible in HTML using <th> and scope, Microsoft Word does not support these features. Exported PDFs from Word often lose table structure, especially when merged cells are involved. To ensure accessibility in Word, avoid merged cells, mark header rows using Word's Table Tools, and check the tagged PDF structure in Acrobat Pro.

## **Real-World Example: PDF Tables**

I'll show you examples from our hazard management training tool to demonstrate:

1. **First iteration:** Basic table structure but not fillable
2. **Second iteration:** Fillable but accessibility issues remain
3. **Final iteration:** Fully accessible with:
  - Proper H1 heading structure
  - Table description/alt text for context
  - Organized tab order
  - Proper field descriptions

### Technical Setup (InDesign Example):

- All fillable forms are buttons with descriptions
- Everything for screen readers goes in the Articles panel
- Tab order must be set correctly
- Layers window manages what gets read

## **Section 2: Content Structure**

### **What We'll Cover**

- **Heading hierarchy** and semantic markup
- **Color contrast** requirements
- **Alternative text** for images
- **Accessible color usage** beyond contrast

### **Demonstration: Inaccessible Content**

We'll inspect the HTML and find problems:

- Page starting with H2 instead of proper hierarchy
- H1 appearing after H2 (confusing structure)
- Fake headers using <div> elements instead of proper headings
- Images with no alt text
- Poor contrast text (light gray that fails WCAG requirements)

- Important information conveyed by color alone (yellow background with orange text)

## Impact on Users

- **Screen reader users:** Cannot navigate by headings, miss important sections
- **Low vision users:** Cannot read light gray text, even with magnification
- **Colorblind users:** May not distinguish warning text colors
- **Cognitive disabilities:** Poor structure makes content hard to understand

## Demonstration: Accessible Content

The improved version shows:

- Proper heading hierarchy (H1 → H2 → H3)
- High contrast text meeting WCAG standards
- Descriptive alt text for informative images
- Decorative images marked with `alt=""` and `role="presentation"`
- Important notices using proper markup (not just colour)

## Section 3: Alt Text Workshop

### Real Examples from Our Work

I'll share actual alt text from workplace documents with expert feedback.

#### Example 1: Construction Site

**Original:** "A supervisor with a hazard document in his hand, planning safe work. Two construction members are in the back picking up lumber building a house"

**Expert Feedback:** Please cut "planning safe work". What is the visual clue that helps the learner draw that conclusion in their mind: does the document have plans on it? In the same way, "building a house" should either be cut or rephrased. Is there a half-built house in the background that the learner should know about?

**Improved:** "A supervisor holds a blue folder with a hazard symbol on it. In the background, two workers carry lumber from the frame of a house."

#### Example 2: Person Thinking

**Original:** "A man is sitting down, facing the left in deep thought. He has thinking bubbles above him, on the right with a question mark in it."

**Expert Feedback:** I'd cut "in deep thought." I'm curious about the question mark: is it inside one of the bubbles? Or is there a question mark in every bubble?

**Improved:** "A man is sitting down, facing the left. He has a thought bubble above him on the right with a question mark in it."

### **Example 3: Group Meeting**

**Original:** "Four people stand in a circle facing each other, appearing to have a conversation. Starting on the left and moving clockwise, there is a person with long dark hair holding a blue folder, a person with short dark hair whose arms are folded with one hand on their chin, a person with short red hair and an artificial leg holding a folder with one arm outstretched towards the centre of the circle, and a person with short dark hair with both arms outstretched."

**Expert Feedback:** Instead of saying that they are "members of the IRS", you could tell your reader what the visual clues are that help you reach that conclusion, so that they can reach it, too. In the same way, instead of "discussing and issue", what concrete visual details could you include? How are these people positioned? Are they standing, seated at a table, or walking somewhere? Are they smiling or frowning? Also, are they dressed in a certain way? Do any of them have distinguishing features that the sighted learner would notice right away? There's probably not enough room for all those details, but if you picked a few of those visual details, it would help "translate" the picture more clearly!

**Improved:** "Four people stand in a circle facing each other, appearing to have a conversation. Starting on the left and moving clockwise, there is a person with long dark hair holding a blue folder, a person with short dark hair whose arms are folded with one hand on their chin, a person with short red hair and an artificial leg holding a folder with one arm outstretched towards the centre of the circle, and a person with short dark hair with both arms outstretched."

### **Key Alt Text Principles**

- **Be specific about visual details** rather than making interpretations
- **Avoid assumptions** about what people are thinking or feeling
- **Provide context** that sighted users would notice immediately
- **Keep it concise** while including essential information

### **Key Takeaways**

1. **Tables:** Must provide structure, not just visual organization
2. **Content:** Proper heading hierarchy and contrast are essential
3. **Alt Text:** Describe what you see, not what you think it means
4. **Testing:** Use tools like WAVE and inspect elements to find issues