



the accessible digital documents company

Transcript of: PDF accessibility and reading order

[Narrator]

This video will demonstrate that there are two reading orders available to assistive technologies when reading a PDF, and that for a PDF to be fully accessible, both need to be set correctly.

The following will demonstrate the difference between the two different reading orders using a screen reader, in this case JAWS, which takes its reading order from a PDF's tags, and the literacy, accessibility and dyslexia software, Read&Write Gold, which, as we will see, takes its reading order from elsewhere.

So, to start off with, this document is a relatively simple page with a couple of headings, three paragraphs, a logo and a bar chart.

On the left-hand side of the screen is the Acrobat tags panel. As I click on each tag in turn, a rectangle will appear around the corresponding block of content on the page opposite, confirming that the order of the tags matches the order of the content on the page.

For example: the heading 1 tag contains the main page heading. The Figure tag contains the logo, followed by a paragraph, a sub-heading, two more paragraphs and finally another Figure tag containing the bar chart at the bottom of the page.

I will now run JAWS to show that it follows this same reading order.

[JAWS screen reader starts to read the page content]

[Heading level 1]: Inaccessible graphic design is commonplace.

[Graphic]: Open book logo.

17th September 2017, by Ted Page.

Summary

Inaccessible graphic design is commonplace. So opens the report by Cornish et al. entitled Visual accessibility in graphic design: A client—designer communication failure.

We briefly outline here the report's key findings, as well as our solutions designed specifically to enable those commissioning accessible documentation, and the graphic designers they commission.

[Graphic]: A bar chart showing the extent to which clients agree or disagree with the statement: "Visual accessibility is important in all graphic design work". Strongly disagree: 1.8%. Disagree: 7.3%.

[JAWS fades out]

[Narrator]

And so on. As expected, JAWS reads the page content in the correct order.

However, if we now run Read&Write Gold on exactly the same document, it will be clear that the reading order is incorrect. Notice in particular, the reading order of the bar chart labels.

[Read&Write Gold starts to read the page content, but the reading order is incorrect]

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30%, 0%, 10%, 40%, 50%, 20%.

Strongly agree

Neither Agree agree nor disagree

Strongly Disagree disagree.

Inaccessible graphic design is commonplace.

[Narrator]

However, if we now run Read&Write Gold on an edited version of the document, the content will be read in the correct order, including the bar chart labels.

In this version, the tags remain exactly as they were previously, but the reading order has been corrected in Acrobat's Order Panel and Content Panel.

[Read&Write Gold starts to read the page content again, but this time the reading order is correct]

Inaccessible graphic design is commonplace

17th September 2017, by Ted Page.

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50%, 40%, 30%, 20%, 10%, 0%.

Strongly disagree.

Disagree.

Neither agree nor disagree.

Agree.

Strongly agree.

[Narrator]

So, to conclude, although fixing a PDF's non-tags reading order is not a requirement of the PDF/UA standard, doing so is clearly important in order to ensure that a PDF will be accessible to all assistive technology users.