Interactive Web Maps

Accessibility Quick Card

Follow these best practices to help create web maps that are well-designed and accessible. For full guidance and tools, including standards and the complete Accessibility Guide for Interactive Web Maps, visit the [MNIT Office of Accessibility website](#).

Define the map's purpose

Start with a clear goal and focus on delivering key elements that support the web map's purpose.

Organize content logically

Arrange content in a meaningful order. Organize elements in sequence and ensure keyboard focus follows the visual layout.

Use semantic HTML

Use semantic HTML elements first like <button> and <label> before adding ARIA. Avoid <divs> and <span>, like <div role="button">. Include attributes like id, name, title, type, and value, which support assistive technology (AT) users.

Use color and texture together

Use high contrast colors, textures, and patterns or shapes to distinguish essential map elements. This includes the map's symbology, navigation elements, links, and text. Don't rely on color alone to convey meaning. Color must also meet contrast standards. Normal text to background ratio is 4.5:1. Non-text elements and large text (a minimum of 14pt bold or 18pt) ratios are 3:1. Validate design colors with color vision checkers.

Create concise, distinct hyperlinks

Use clear, descriptive link text that tells users where the link goes—avoid "click here." Ensure links are keyboard accessible and don't rely on color alone to stand out.

Ensure full keyboard control

Design the user interface (UI) and map navigation so every interactive element is reachable by keyboard and shows visible focus.

Support dynamic content

Ensure dynamic content changes are apparent to all users, including AT users. This includes overlays, in-page updates, popups, and modal dialogs. For example, use an "ARIA-live" attribute in a map popup to notify a change to the AT user.

Design for full zoom capability

Set the size and position of the map elements to maintain functionality at full zoom to meet the 400% zoom reflow standard. Use of responsive design techniques can help. **Note:** An exception exists for "parts of the content which require two-dimensional layout for usage or meaning."

Test early and often

Follow best practices for digital accessibility testing by using a combination of automated and manual tools. Testing tools provide good feedback on your map's functionality.

Offer alternatives and contact information

Provide alternatives for the map, like a table, list, or static map, when possible. Include contact information so users can request map content in another format.

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