ClimateX / Hive WebSite: Accessibility Notes

By Mary Ziegler and Rich Caloggero, May 9, 2017

Review of Site under development at http://climatexv2.mit-dev.penzias.com/

We use the industry standard of the WCAG 2.0 AA (Web Accessibility Content Guidelines) and our own experience as our guide in reviewing the accessibility of your website for individuals with disabilities. Please don't hesitate to ask questions of Mary or Rich at maryz@mit.edu or rjc@mit.edu

1. Screen Reader Feedback, by Rich

Site-wide

Add main element
Each page should have at least three distinct sections, denoted by HTML5 sectioning elements:

- main : main page content (missing on all pages)
- footer (exists on all pages)
- header (exists on all pages)

Inside these tags, we can add other sectioning elements (most frequently nav) which is done here inside the header.

- Add main to all pages or to page templates.
- if there are several nav elements, consider adding aria-label to each to distinguish them (<nav aria-label="site wide"> for instance on top nav - similar for subnavs)

Redundancy
There are two links to my user profile: one contains the text "R" and the second the text of my full name. This is confusing and redundant for screen reader and keyboard-only users.

add aria-hidden="true" tabindex="-1" to the "user initials" link to hide it from screen readers and remove it from tab order for keyboard-only users. Sighted mouse users will be unaffected by the change.

Main menu
The invisible heading which introduces the main menu on all pages has all spaces removed from its text -- screen reader sees it as "mainmenu".

The following CSS rule seems to create this effect:
    overflow-wrap: break-word;

If I remove this rule, spaces return.

Videos
http://climatexv2.mit-dev.penzias.com/videos

Redundancy
Each video has two links pointing to its landing page:
- Embedded thumbnail for Combining Experts and Online Crowds to Address Climate Change
- Combining Experts and Online Crowds to Address Climate Change

The first is the altText of the image inside the first a tag, the second is the text inside the second a tag.
   add aria-hidden="true" tabindex="-1" to the links containing the thumbnail images! This will hide them from screen reader and keyboard-only users, but leave them visible for sighted mouse users.

{critical} Where's the video?
When I click one of the video links, I'm taken to a page which contains the description of the video, but I see no link to the video itself and no embedded player!!!

User profile

Add h1 tag
Wrap user name in an h1 tag.

Members
http://climatexv2.mit-dev.penzias.com/members

Add "go" button
Its helpful to have a "go" button or similar to execute the filters / member search.

Country??
The second column of results table is labeled "country", but it contains city and state info as well. Perhaps relabel "location" instead!

Resources
http://climatexv2.mit-dev.penzias.com/resources

Add headings
Add headings beneath the current h3 tags to set off the various subsections. For instance, under "Open Courseware" there seems to be the following subsections:

- Climate science
- Mitigation technologies
- Governance, economics and adaptation
- Humanities perspectives

These should be introduced by corresponding h4 tags.

Similarly beneath the other top-level h3s ...

Projects
This section seems to have no content.

Get involved

This section seems to be incomplete. Last bit of text reads:

**Recommended fields for form: First Name, Last Name, email address, phone number (as an optional field) and comment section.

2. Additional Accessibility Findings, by Mary

Insufficient Color Contrast

One of the main theme colors used repeatedly for text, #00A77A, does not pass for sufficient contrast on either background color #EFEDEF or #FFFFFF. It has a contrast ratio of 2.65 or 3.08, respectively. WCAG recommends a ratio of at least 4.5.

Recommendation:

Recommend changing the text/foreground color to increase constrast.
Use the Tanaguru Contrast Finder tool to see very close colors that pass:

http://contrast-finder.tanaguru.com/result.html;jsessionid=C4094A8629CF70CBA86957BADC39AA42?foreground=%2300a77a&background=%23efedef&ratio=4.5&isBackgroundTested=false&algo=Rgb&distance=asc

Videos
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This video implementation could prove problematic for many users:
- As Rich noted, screen reader users cannot find the video
- For sighted users, it is not readily apparent that the video thumbnail, embedded in the image tag, is a video or a clickable element.
- After you click on the video thumbnail, you are presented with a video that is more apparent - and a user can start with either keyboard or mouse. This is very accessible – EXCEPT for the fact that the video controls are hidden from view (and perhaps the reason the screen reader does not find them). These hidden controls are also problematic for closed caption users – as they must start the video to find them and miss the beginning captions and need to go back.

-> Recommend using a more standard embedded video implementation.

3. Accessible Findings!

- Site is navigable and items operable with keyboard only.
- Site is responsive and can be magnified to 200% without loss of function or text.
- Video is subtitled. I did not check all the video, but the ones I did, had subtitles. We recommend all video have subtitles.
- Alternative text is present for images. Usability improvement, however, would be to not state "picture" as all screen readers will dictate either "image" or "graphic" as part of what is read. You could state photo or drawing to delineate the image if you want a qualifier.