Digital Accessibility Testing – Automated Tools

HUIT CS All Hands Meeting
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Google Chrome Audit Tool

Pros

– Audit while you develop, no waiting on a re-index of your website/application
– Works on locally developed websites, no need to publicly host website
– Can test website in Desktop or Mobile view
– Fastest option for results in most use cases
– Already built into Chrome, access via Inspector (Ctrl+Shift+i)
– Can run other audit tests alongside a11y testing (SEO, Page Performance, Best Practices)
– Gives a simple score to quickly gauge adherence to WCAG 2.1
– Gives easy recommendations on fixes/link to references of perceived issues
Google Chrome Audit Tool

Cons

– Still an Automated Testing Tool
– Possible to make a fully “compliant” website with a high score that is still inaccessible to screen readers/other accessibility devices
– Not as detailed in recommendations/remediations as SiteImprove
– Manual Testing still needed
Audit Tool Settings
Audit Tool – Initial Result
Audit Tool - Desired Result!
SiteImprove

Pros

- Pretty much the de facto standard for automated testing of websites
- Analyzes/crawls entire websites/collection of websites instead of page-by-page/site-by-site
- Makes great recommendations for fixing accessibility issues and links directly to W3C org’s website
- Has web browser extensions for one-off page testing as well
- Highlights where the issues are on page in terms of visually and in regards to HTML
SiteImprove

Pros

- Also gives recommendations on issues to focus on for biggest impact to an improvement in Accessibility. Helps hit low-hanging fruit/be efficient in targeting a11y issues
- Provides great historical details of changes in Accessibility to a website over time
  - Gives an idea of progress made by Accessibility oriented changes
  - Gives an idea of what changes to Accessibility surface when new features/changes are added to website/application
SiteImprove

Cons

- Requires a license (but Harvard has one! Email me for info on getting access)
- Can take some time to get familiar with website UI
- Scores CAN be misleading (but most of the time, SiteImprove knows what it’s talking about)
- Indexing happens on a set schedule, can take a while for large sites. Otherwise, you can use their extension while waiting for whole site scan updates
SiteImprove Tool

SiteImprove Dashboard