

Creating Accessible Forms

To create an accessible online form, you must ensure that all form fields have accurate labels or prompts so screen reader users know what each field is asking for. Forms typically have labels or prompts that are obvious to sighted users, but their association with particular form fields is made based on visual cues, such as relative position and proximity to the field. Since screen reader users don't have access to these same visual cues, labels and prompts must be explicitly associated with form fields within the HTML.

Making PDF Forms Accessible

Interactive forms in Adobe PDF have many of the same issues as those described above. Labels and prompts must all be created in a way that explicitly associates them with their corresponding form fields. Also, PDF form fields have a tendency to be out of order, so you must be sure to test the tab order of your form, to be sure that users will move through the form in a logical sequence when jumping between fields using the keyboard.

Providing Accessible Time Limits

Some people require more time than others to complete a task. For example, it generally takes people with physical disabilities or vision impairments more time to complete a web form than people with fast typing skills and perfect vision. Given this diversity among people, it's difficult to predict how much time to allow for a given task. However, if security concerns or other factors require a time limit to be enforced, it's important to be sure users are warned in advance before the time limit expires and offered an opportunity to extend their time.

Techniques

The following are among the techniques recommended by the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0:

- **Turn off:** The user is allowed to turn off the time limit before encountering it
- **Adjust:** The user is allowed to adjust the time limit before encountering it over a wide range that is at least ten times the length of the default setting
- **Extend:** The user is warned before time expires and given at least 20 seconds to extend the time limit with a simple action (for example, "press the space bar"), and the user is allowed to extend the time limit at least ten times