

## Commissioning accessible PDF documents

**This Guidance is for anyone who commissions reports to be included on the BIS website. PDFs which do not meet the minimum accessibility criteria outlined may not be allowed onto the website.**

### Introduction

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is working to make the information on its website accessible to all users regardless of disability

The Department is committed to achieving level double-A accessibility on its website, as defined by the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#)<sup>1</sup> (WCAG) produced by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

Many of the PDF (portable document format) documents on the site are produced by outside agencies. This document provides guidance on how to specify to these agencies the Department's requirements for accessible content.

### Background

Accessibility is about making sure that our information and services are available to anyone, regardless of any disability.

In addition to the ethical reasons for doing this, we have an obligation under the law. The [Disability Discrimination Act](#)<sup>2</sup> makes it unlawful for access to goods and services to be inaccessible.

Guidelines on accessibility for government websites are also issued by the Central Office of Information (COI).

### What you must do

All PDF documents created for BIS by outside agencies must be accessible to a standard equivalent to WCAG level double-A. PDF is not a technology specifically covered by WCAG, but Adobe has designed Acrobat 8 and 9 to conform to the principles of WCAG version 1.0 and has stated its intention for future versions to uphold WCAG 2.0.

### How to get it

Please ensure the following **standard text** (i.e. all the text in the grey box) is included in the terms of reference when procuring publications.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag.php>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/PublicWebsite/public\\_legalcase.hcsp](http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/PublicWebsite/public_legalcase.hcsp)

## Accessibility

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is working to make the information on its website accessible to all users regardless of disability.

HTML pages on the site should achieve level double-A, under the Web Accessibility Initiative's (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

PDF documents hosted on the site, though not specifically covered by WCAG, must meet a similar level of accessibility.

Agencies commissioned to produce PDF documents for BIS must therefore familiarise themselves with the following guidance:

- **Delivering inclusive websites**

[Delivering inclusive websites](#) is the guidance issued by the Central Office of Information (COI). There is a [section dealing specifically with PDF documents](#).

- **Adobe accessibility training resources**

[Guidance on creating accessible PDF documents using Adobe Acrobat 8 or 9](#)

The draft guidance produced by the Web Accessibility Initiative may also be useful:

- [PDF Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 and 2.0](#)

## Checklist for PDF accessibility

PDF documents supplied to BIS will be assessed for accessibility upon receipt. **Documents which do not meet one or more of the following checkpoints may be returned to you for re-working at your own cost.**

- Document reads logically when reflowed or rendered by text-to-speech software;
- Structural elements of document are properly tagged (headings, titles, lists etc);
- All images/figures have either alternative text or an appropriate caption;
- Tables are correctly tagged to represent the table structure;
- Text is left aligned, not justified;
- Document avoids excessive use of capitalised, underlined or italicised text;
- Hyperlinks are spelt out (e.g. in a footnote or endnote).

## Titling PDF documents

Please ensure that the title of the document in 'File > Document properties > Title' matches that on the front page. This enables the BIS website search engine to display results correctly.

## Assessing the results

You can check the accessibility PDF documents you have commissioned yourself or you can ask the Digital Media team to take a look.

Accessibility can be evaluated using a combination of automated testing and manual checking.

Within Acrobat you can perform either a Full Check or a Quick Check. Acrobat Reader also has an Accessibility Quick Check function (Document > Accessibility Quick Check).

Manually, you can [reflow the document](#)<sup>3</sup> (View > Reflow) to check the reading order. If a document containing formatting such as columns and sidebars doesn't make sense when reflowed into a single column, then it won't make sense when read aloud by a screen reader (you can use View > Read Out Loud to hear how the document reads).

You can also check that any captions or alternative text provide accurate descriptions of the images with which they are associated.

**For assistance in evaluating a PDF document for accessibility – or to ask any other questions about accessibility – please contact the BIS Digital Media team, [cmshelp@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cmshelp@bis.gsi.gov.uk)**

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<sup>3</sup>

[http://help.adobe.com/en\\_US/Acrobat/8.0/Professional/help.html?content=WS58a04a822e3e50102bd615109794195ff-7d19.html](http://help.adobe.com/en_US/Acrobat/8.0/Professional/help.html?content=WS58a04a822e3e50102bd615109794195ff-7d19.html)