

Making Sure Everyone Can Use Your Web-based eRecruiting Tools

A Tip Sheet for HR Professionals and their Technology Teams



So you've made the decision to ensure that your eRecruiting tools are accessible

Smart move. You obviously understand that accessible eRecruiting technology equates to better talent acquisition. Because if your online job advertisements, applications, screening tools, and digital interviewing platforms are inaccessible to job seekers with disabilities, you are effectively excluding certain individuals from applying for jobs at your company in the first place. This can expose you to legal risk, and more importantly, it limits the pool of talent you'll be able to consider for open positions.

On the other hand, if your virtual door is open to job applicants with disabilities, you widen your recruitment pool and everybody wins. You and your technology team can help ensure that door is open through a number of common accessibility solutions.

What Accessibility Challenges Might Some Job Applicants Encounter?

If you're not familiar with the different ways people can interact with eRecruiting tools (and web-based technology in general), you probably have some questions. This tip sheet describes some common accessibility issues faced by people with several types of disabilities—including those affecting vision, hearing, physical, and cognitive skills. It highlights tips and exemplary practices that HR professionals can share with the technology designers and developers who are purchasing, building, modifying, and improving their eRecruiting tools, websites, and mobile applications.

Remember: While sensory disabilities (such as blindness or low vision) are often what first come to mind when one thinks about a job applicant with a disability, it's important to keep in mind that not all disabilities are visible. In addition, some people can experience functional limitations on a temporary or intermittent basis, due to an illness or injury, or due to aging. These tips and practices are also useful in those situations, and can be key to retaining valuable employees – not just to hiring new talent. Whatever the case, HR professionals should work with their technology teams to ensure that all of their organization's eRecruiting tools and activities—from [social media](#) to online job applications—are accessible and usable by the widest range of users possible.

Perception Challenges

People with sensory disabilities such as blindness, low vision, hearing impairments, and color blindness typically require that information be presented in alternative forms. This means providing text descriptions of information that is presented visually, since many users depend on screen reading software that converts text to audio through a speech synthesizer or refreshable Braille display. Similarly, when information is presented using audio, providing captions or transcripts is critical.

Best practices for your technology teams:

- Provide descriptive text alternatives for images.
- Use structure such as headings, tables, and lists correctly.
- Use HTML5 regions and ARIA landmarks.
- Label buttons and form controls.
- Use consistent and predictable layout and navigational structures.
- Use descriptive and unique link text.
- Provide captions.
- Provide transcripts or audio descriptions for recruitment videos.
- Ensure your web design follows best practices with regard to contrast and use of color.
- Ensure that text content can be resized and that it adapts to different screen sizes and devices.

Dexterity/Operational Issues

People with certain physical disabilities or conditions that result in reduced dexterity or functional limitations— such as arthritis, muscular dystrophy and paralysis—often rely on specialized hardware or software in order to effectively interact with their computers. In addition to sometimes needing more time to complete tasks, some people will need to navigate by using a keyboard rather than a computer mouse. This means that if websites and online applications cannot be navigated with a keyboard, they may be inaccessible to certain users.

Best practices for your technology teams:

- Ensure that your content can be used by keyboard alone and that the keyboard focus moves logically through the content.
- Use structure or provide mechanisms that allow users to skip over blocks of content such as headers or navigational menus.
- Provide large clickable areas for buttons and form controls.
- Do not impose time limits on user interaction or allow users to request additional time to complete tasks.
- Clearly indicate focus on navigation, menu items, or form controls.

Barriers to Understanding

Cognitive and learning disabilities include conditions ranging from attention deficits and dyslexia to traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and seizure disorders. Users with disabilities in this category may use text-to-speech software to listen to web content, or may otherwise customize their browsers in order to minimize distraction or assist with reading.

Best practices:

- Use plain language to make text readable and understandable to a variety of users.
- Provide expansions for abbreviations.
- Define uncommon terms or jargon.
- Provide suggestions for misspelled search terms or invalid text input.
- Provide multiple paths to similar information.
- Provide summaries for complex content.

Compatibility and Interoperability Challenges

Keeping up with the latest and greatest technologies can be difficult. For certain individuals with disabilities who use assistive devices (such as screen readers) to access online content, the constantly changing landscape of software features and upgrades can be challenging. This can be equally challenging to assistive technology vendors who

must work to ensure their products remain compatible with hardware and software as new versions hit the market.

Best practices for your technology teams:

- Use markup according to specification.
- Make use of progressive enhancement techniques to ensure that users with older or restricted technologies can access functionality.
- Use responsive design techniques to allow content to adapt according to the device in use.
- Choose technologies that are supported by a wide range of devices and assistive technologies.
- Use ARIA to make complex interfaces, custom controls, and dynamic scripted content accessible.

What to Look for When Evaluating an eRecruiting Product or Service

When considering adding a new tool to your eRecruiting toolbox, be sure to do your homework first. Here are a few things to investigate to ensure that the tools you're considering will be usable by all job seekers. You can learn a lot by asking a few questions in the right places.

- Does the service or product have an accessibility statement or claim conformance to any accessibility standards?
- If the product or service has a publicly available list of reported issues or support site, how has the company responded to accessibility-related requests and feedback?
- Are there reviews of the product available online that include information about accessibility?
- Does the software follow best practices and use components or frameworks in their technology stack that are accessible?
- How does the service perform when you run it through common evaluation tools?
- Refer to [Buying Accessible eRecruiting Technology: The Search is On](#) for more information.

Learn more:

- [Accessibility \(W3C\)](#)
- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG 2.0\)](#)
- [Accessible Rich Internet Applications \(WAI-ARIA\) 1.0](#)
- [WebAIM Site Evaluation and Reporting](#)
- [Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools List](#)