

Accessibility Inspection

Socketbit Sweet & Swedish
<http://www.socketbit.com>

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
TERMINOLOGY & CONVENTIONS USED	5
PRIORITY LEVELS.....	8
ACCESSIBILITY INSPECTION GUIDELINES.....	9
Simplicity & Clarity.....	9
Supporting Visual & Non-Visual Navigation.....	11
Proper Text Markup & Phrasing	13
Proper Structural Markup.....	15
Providing Content & Context.....	17
Device Independence.....	18
Graceful Degradation	19
Allowing User Control.....	20
Respecting the User	21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An expert review was conducted of the sockerbit.com website, examining the Homepage and Shopping Cart as well as the other pages that comprise the website. The inspection focused on identifying any and all accessibility issues, while also pointing out strengths of the website that should be maintained. The most significant accessibility issues identified in this evaluation include:

- **Html Markup needs to be thoroughly examined and reiterated to ensure proper tags, labeling and phrasing.** This site has only a single example of an <h1> tag. Global navigation is comprised of tags, instead of and headline, <h> tags. Every <alt> tag was left blank on images within the website. Screen readers have little to no properly formatted data to draw from, to aid visually impaired users. Form input boxes, when read by Voice Over (Mac OS), are heard only as “edit text blank”, for every field. This gives the user no possible way to identify the needed information to continue deeper into the site. Recommendations provided, describe various modifications that will enhance the overall accessibility of this website for a wide variety of users.
- **Keyboard navigation alone is not possible for the site, in its current configuration.** In user tests, the tab index has no logical/ linear path to advance through the website. On most all sub-page, users who tab through local navigation can become caught in an infinite loop, between Search, Mailing List and Search Icon. Having a logical and intuitive tab index provides greater access to non-mouse using customers.
- **Accessing input areas and certain point in the site related to ecommerce limit users ability to fully navigate the site and complete user tasks.** For users without the ability to use cursor control tools (i.e. a hand held mouse), keyboard methods of navigation do not allow impaired user to use features such as login, purchase and cart items. The restriction on users without these input based tools greatly limits the user's ability to use the site at all.
- **Non-responsive websites alienate users and limit potential reach.** Having the ability to maximize our design and successfully interact with the site, no matter what browsing device you choose, will allow for greater customer reach, greatly improved SEO and accessibility. Mobile web access has surpassed the traditional desktop access for the past two years, industry wide and shows now sign of deviating from that trajectory. Users expect to be able to access their desired content on a multitude of devices, without much deviation in design and function.

While these issues are among the most pressing accessibility concerns for the sockerbit.com website, a number of additional accessibility issues that also deserve attention are detailed in the inspection, with recommended solutions.

TERMINOLOGY & CONVENTIONS USED

Different terms are often used when referring to the same part of the browser window or web page. To facilitate understanding of this analysis, one term was used consistently for each browser/web page element. The terms are:

Hero Image: The term hero image describes a large image, that often cycles through multiple images that is located at the top (or above the fold) of the home page and subsequent lower level pages. The hero image offers a user of the site a first impression of the sites purpose and content.

Tabs and Tabbing: Tabbing navigation within a document or user interface refers to the ability to focus on elements using the tab key. A site can be built with a chosen order of tabbing, by assigning elements a tab number.

Browsers: The software found on computers (i.e. mobile devices and laptops) that access, display and interact with resources on the web.

Header: A header refers to the area of a web page that is most commonly found at the top of the home page, contains the sites logo, Global Navigation, search tool and sign in functions. The header of a page will commonly be visually separate from the rest of the page and remain static regardless for the page body content.

Footer: the footer of a page is typically found at the very bottom, containing sitemaps, reiterated navigation and lower tiered site links.

DOM: Document Object Mole refers to the tree of objects created and displayed by the browser. The DOM is the standard from accessing and manipulating (X) HTML documents.

Classes: Classes within the DOM are attributes that make it possible for a single style to be applied to multiple elements. Classes are also more easily used within the DOM because they are not limited to a single use per element as with Divs.

Mark Up: refers to the style and/or method of which characters, elements and figures are inserted into a file to influence how the document is visual and behaviorally set up.

Flesch-Kincaid grade level: the Flesch-Kincaid grade level test a readability tests designed to indicate the difficulty level of a passage in English is to comprehend. Generally users will score a reading level between 7 and 8.

Tables: Tables are an HTML element that can contain table headers, table rows and table cells. Tables commonly contain data pieces that are placed within table cells, which can be described within table row attribute and table header attributes to avoid confusion.

CSS: The Cascading Style Sheet is created to describe the presentation of a file with markup language, a CSS file is created to separate presentation from content of a page.

(X)HTML: (X)HTML refers to Extensible Hypertext Markup Language, which is the language from which web pages are written, providing the basic text based content and structure of a web page.

Aria Label: Aria Labels are attributes used to identify / describe the element that they are associated with to give a user better accessibility to the site, especially if the user has a visual impairment. Screen readers have been developed to detect aria labels, as well as other identifying attributes to inform users about the site.

Screen Readers: screen readers are software that present a web site in an audible fashion rather than a visual method, allowing users to navigate and experience the web page by listening rather than visually scanning a page.

Field name: Field names are the labels that go with text input boxes, drop-down menus, and other form elements.

Global navigation: Links/buttons available from every page, leading to major sections of the website and/or significant pages.

Link label: The label in this case is the word or words that are linked. These words can be in graphical form (such as the graphical buttons at the top of the sampleclient.com interface) or HTML text that is linked.

Local navigation: Links/buttons for moving between pages within a section of the website (such as within a module).

Page name: The primary heading for the page, often shown in larger text and located between the global navigation buttons at the top of the layout and the text content of the page.

Window name: The text at the upper left of the browser window, specified through the (X) HTML <title></title> tags.

Body Text: the text forming the main content of a page or a distinct area on a page.

JavaScript: is a programming language most commonly used in tandem with HTML, which allows site to change dynamically in terms of content and visual layout, as well as connecting the site to backend applications.

Alt tag: More concisely the ALT attribute, is an attribute given to images and other elements that provides a user with a text based description of the element.

Lang(uage) Attribute: Specifies the language of the element's content, most commonly the page itself is given a single language attribute.

Accessibility: making a web site/page accessible refers to designing it in such a way that people using a site with impairments are able to navigate and use a site without being restrained by barriers.

Form (elements): Forms in a web page are containing elements <form>, that hold input elements such as text fields, radio buttons submit buttons, etc. that differentiate between basic page content and an interactive portion of a page.

Responsive: A method of web page production that uses resizing images, text and layouts with CSS media specific instructions that create a page that adapts to the screen size of a user's computer.

Single quotes are used to indicate link labels, page names, and window names. Double quotes indicate non-linked body text, field names, alt text, and are used when generally referring to a page. Any divergence from these conventions is noted in the analysis and is done for the purpose of improving clarity.

PRIORITY LEVELS

The issues identified in this evaluation are grouped into three levels of priority:

High priority: These issues are likely to impact a large number of users significantly. They should be resolved as quickly as resources allow.

Medium priority: Issues at this priority level are also likely to affect a large number of users but generally are less disruptive to the user experience, relative to the high priority issues. If resources are available to address these issues, they should be addressed.

Low priority: Low priority issues typically impact a small subset of the overall user base, although they may impact a larger group. Regardless of the number of users affected, these issues carry only a minor negative impact. Low priority issues are generally easy to resolve. There is less time pressure to fix low priority issues, compared to medium priority issues and especially high priority issues.

ACCESSIBILITY INSPECTION GUIDELINES

Simplicity & Clarity

Simplicity & Clarity refers to ease of understandability of content on the site.

Practices to Continue:

The layout is consistent with contemporary design norms and conforms to the Gestalt rules of visual perception. Excellent use of white/negative space, resulting in clean, impactful visual design.

Suggested Changes:

High Priority:

- **Create a Tabbing index that allows users to move through the page in a more systematic method that also allows user to tab past larger sections.** Within the markup of the page, each separate part of the page (i.e. header, global navigation, page content containers and footer) should be given a tab index number with an increasing multiple of ten.
- **Create more accessible contact information that does not generate a separate window without notifying the user and offering an alternative.** This is especially important with the email and contact us page that generate a separate window without forewarning or description of the new page.

Medium Priority:

- **Disable links on current pages.** To avoid reloading a page, disable link to current page within the navigation. Reloading a page can restart the screen reader of a visually impaired user.
- **Ensure that all links are viable.** Check and address links that users are using the back button on aren't deposited onto a 404 page without recourse.
- **Extend the time between shifts in content on the hero image located on the home page.** Currently, the Hero image on the homepage has a two second shift rate, not allowing users to absorb the content ad no way to alter the rate manually.

Low Priority:

- **Create a more easily accessible email and Contact information.** Currently, contact information either generates a new window or is mostly inaccessible via screen reader.

Supporting Visual & Non-Visual Navigation

Both visual and nonvisual navigation refers to the efficiency which users move through the site with or without visual cues.

Practices to Continue:

- Maintaining the location of the global navigation regardless of which subpage a user clicks to help give the user a sense of dependable structure when they navigate the site.

Suggested Changes:

High Priority:

- **Develop accessible global navigation, content descriptions and lower level navigation menus even if images on a user's computer are disabled.** Currently, images serve as visual menu items, navigational links and form elements, which are not accessible without image support.
- **Add a higher contrast on subpage breadcrumb trails, as well as body text on light colored backgrounds.** Page indications on product pages have a low contrast rate, increasing the contrast would help low vision users without impacting the average user.
- **With required fields within forms and input based tasks, Give users error notification that may include an audible alert.** If a user tabs out or onto the next input field without proper input, both a visual notification that can be interpreted by accessibility software and an audio based alert should be triggered.

Medium Priority:

- **Use more consistent HTML5 elements, distinct page areas should be easily distinguished with a screen reader.** Usage of elements such as Header, Nav, Etc. offers users with disabilities an easier method of navigating and usability of the site.
- **Provide users with a recourse when they encounter a failed search.** Display related terms or similar products that can give a user a way out of an unsuccessful search. For example, upon reaching the failed search page, offer users reiteration of the word they typed in, common misspelled search terms and most

commonly searched term.

- **Rewrite the Global navigation as a 'nav' element that contains well described links.** A more text based description rich navigation links create a more easily understood menu for the visually impaired.
- **Visually distinguish important text by altering more than two features, as well as adding a detailed description of the issue(s).** If a portion of a word within a text area should be flagged as important, provide an alt tag, or describe the nature of the highlighted text, do not depend on visual differentiation alone.

Proper Text Markup & Phrasing

Proper markup and phrasing is how the page is structured for accessibility, including labels, text readability and elements such as <abbr> applied to elaborate for users benefit.

Suggested Changes:

High Priority

- **Refine and reorganize markup on the home and all subpages of the site, adhere to an HTML5 style guide.** Simplify markup of the page with clearer element semantics, titled content areas and table headers and descriptions. Give the users clear dividing lines on a web page based on content.
- **This site rates a 9.2 grade on the Flesch- Kincaid Grade level, Simplify body text and item descriptions to a grade 7 to 8 level to clarify for users.** By removing or simplifying body text and descriptive text, users with cognitive impairments will find the site much easier to navigate.
- **Give links proper labels.** Users employing screen readers will not be able to access the site easily without link descriptions, links that are image based and links within tables.
- **Allow users to access links with tabbing and also allow users to access links to subpages even if JavaScript is disabled on the user's device.**

Medium Priority:

- **Give Classes within the markup descriptive tags and names that help the user to determine with whichever accessibility software, where in the site they are located.** As an example, the search tool on the home page header is contained within a container labeled 'controllcontainer'. This label should contain descriptive language like 'search bar' to inform the user.
- **Apply a Language Attribute to the HTML tag.**
Proper mark up is as follows:
`<html lang = "en">`
- **Adding a 'Print-Friendly' media call to the page markup.** offering users an optimized hard copy of the site may help address varying types of impairments.

Proper markup example:

`<print-friendly media@call/>` (include media specific styles)

- **Remove tags found with screen readers that do not indicate a structural or behavioral significance.** As an example, miscellaneous 'help' tags can be found in the 'Inspiration' page that can not be chosen as a clickable item, leading to confusion in users of screen readers.

Proper Structural Markup

A well developed structural markup is a logical structure that assistive technologies can interpret and give the user a working understanding of the site structure and usage.

Suggested Changes:

High Priority:

- **Create page markup that uses headers in a meaningful way.** Use headers to identify content areas and related subheadings, for example. H1 headers for page headings and h2 through h6 for subsequent sub content areas.
- **Give tables headings and create a table layout that linearizes in a way that facilitates a proper reading order without excessive table formatting.**
- **Add useful description to table cells and give each table section a label.** To inform impaired user about what they are focusing on, each table cell should contain reference to related headers and/ or headers, as well as connected table cells.
- **Consolidate information within table cells that are directly related.** Tables on the site typically divide sub category contents into separate cells, separating linked images and textual labels. Related table cells and rows lack any sort of indication that the content is related.
- **Create descriptive alt tags for images on the site.** Add alt attribute to image links that inform users about the link and the image itself.
- **Remove form elements from Tables and create a form element to contain said elements.** Input elements on the site are located within a table, making the checkout task and ecommerce function of the site mostly inaccessible to a non-visual user.

Medium Priority:

- **Rename all image files on the site with descriptive names that can help a user navigate the site without visuals.**
- **Apply proper crosslink labeling to enhance impaired users ability to navigate the site.** To avoid generalizing link properties

for example, a screen reader will inform the user of the links nature if markup follows this structure:

```
<a class="shop" href="https://www.sockerbit.com/shop.html">SHOP</a>
```


Providing Content & Context

Providing users with content and context on a site allows those users with impairments access to a web page that otherwise would restrict users to visual information only.

High Priority:

- **Develop the 'Press' subpage to contain multiple images of the media that the company is depicted in.** Each image should be able to expand and should contain alt tags with descriptive text or a transcript of the images content.

Medium Priority:

- **Provide users with text based location descriptions and map based location for the visually impaired.**
- **Provide users with alt text and detailed description of gift item offerings and images on 'Sweet idea' Page that show images without descriptions of gift baskets, party offerings and holiday sales.**

Device Independence

Device independence allows users without means to interact with specific input devices to still remain able to use the site efficiently.

Suggested Changes:

High Priority:

- **Include ecommerce function in tabbing indexes, create a tabbing index that follows an easily understood steps to complete the purchasing tasks.** Facilitate users' ability to fully use the site, which may include form input, multi-page form layouts and cart function.
- **Support users that do not allow for JavaScript support.** If JavaScript is disabled by a user's computer, all ecommerce functions on the site become deactivated. Alert user that purchasing on the site will require JavaScript.
- **Develop responsive site pages that adhere to accessibility standards.** ensure that impaired users have access to the site regardless of screen size by offering responsive pages that contain easy to read or translatable text, text alternatives for images and navigation that the user can easily employ.

Medium Priority:

- **Include key board methods of input for login, purchase and other functions based on navigation through the site and commerce.** currently, accessing portions of the site are restricted to input from cursor devices, allowing users to proceed through the site using keyboard operations is necessary for accessibility.

Graceful Degradation

Graceful degradation refers to how well the site functions both visually and non visually when a users device fails to support specific technologies and how well adaptive technologies are able to function.

Suggested Changes:

High Priority:

- **Restructure markup for graceful degradation in case a user's computer does not support css files or other style sheets.** for instance, unstyled markup on the site causes images to repeat as a tile on the home page. limiting the number of images or adding a no-repeat style to the image.
- **Structure markup for graceful degradation in case user's computer does not support images.** Allow the sites layout to accommodate users without images support by giving the sites layout meaningful structure based on the accessible content.
- **Notify users about restricted functions if users device does not support javascript.** Offer users alternative methods to navigate the site and/or the primary function of the site without JavaScript. In the case for e commerce, offer users an explanation or trouble shooting options related to disabled javascript functions on the device.

Allowing User Control

Allowing users control over a sites layout and behavior is important for users who must dictate their web experience in order to access its content, disallowing user control could make a sites content inaccessible.

High Priority:

- **Recreate Logo, introductory paragraphs and all other images of text as elements that allow users to access them directly, and not solely via alt tags.** Text areas in some instances are contained within an image file, including the logo and introduction content above the fold that describes in short hand what the page contains, but not giving users direct access.
- **Allow users to determine the rate of shift in carrousel.** The hero image on the home page and a number of the subpages shifts content within a two second time frame, taking away focus on highlighted items and not giving users time enough to read the content.

Respecting the User

High Priority:

- **Enlarge the body text and Navigational link text.** Body and navigational text on the site is bordering on too small for some users, enlarging the text with a user's browser does not address the issue.
- **Increase Body text color contrast against varying background colors.**