

MYTH: Accessibility is 'blind people'

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Accessibility is often viewed as making your site work on screen readers. In reality, web accessibility is a subset of UX focused on making your websites usable by the widest range of people possible, including those who have disabilities.

Four Categories of Accessibility

Accessibility can be broken down into four key categories¹ ([#fn:fn1](#)).

Visual

This can be non-sighted users, users with low-vision, users with obstructed vision, or even simply your aging parents.

Associated Conditions

- Myopia
- Colour blindness
- Glaucoma
- Albinism

Auditory

The web is a visual medium, but captions and fallbacks for sound-necessary media need to be considered for hearing impaired users.

Associated Conditions

- Presbycusis
- Acoustic trauma
- Auditory processing disorder
- Otosclerosis

Motor

People with motor impairments typically use a wide range of assistive technology from specialized keyboards, to eye trackers, to using single buttons to navigate their computer.

- RSI
- Cerebral palsy
- Parkinson's
- Muscular dystrophy

Cognitive

Relates to the ease processing of information.

- Down's syndrome
- Autism
- Global developmental delay
- Dyslexia

Temporary Disabilities

While each of these disabilities is usually permanent, there are often situations in which even fully-abled people are 'temporarily disabled' such as having an arm injury may prevent you from being able to use a mouse. Robin Christopherson (an accessibility expert who is blind) once spoke about how people that are driving but use hands-free sets or have their phone connected to the car radio are 'temporarily disabled' as they use the phone differently to how they normally

would. Of course, no one should browse websites while they are driving but it is important to understand different situations like that, where the user may not have special software installed that a disabled user might.

As you can see, there are a variety of different users with different needs and concerns across the web. We will cover each category further in detail as they relate to accessibility on the web.

1. Simple Introduction to Web Accessibility (

<http://www.creativebloq.com/netmag/simple-introduction-web-accessibility-7116888>) by Ian Hamilton (.net Magazine) ↩([#fnref:fn1](#)).