Ofcom homepage

Accessibility evaluation

Introduction

Accessibility issues are identified by their importance, as set out by the W3C and Webcredible's own in-house research. The four levels of importance are:

- **Priority 1** – A website *must* satisfy these checkpoints. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it impossible to access the website. These checkpoints are a basic requirement for some groups to be able to use web documents.

- **Priority 2** – A website *should* satisfy these checkpoints. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it difficult to access the website. These checkpoints will remove significant barriers to accessing web documents.

- **Priority 3** – A website *may* address these checkpoints. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it somewhat difficult to access the website. These checkpoints will improve access to web documents.

- **Priority W** – These checkpoints are recommended by Webcredible and aren't covered by the W3C guidelines. Generally speaking, they're the equivalent of Priority 2 guidelines in terms of their importance.

Homepage
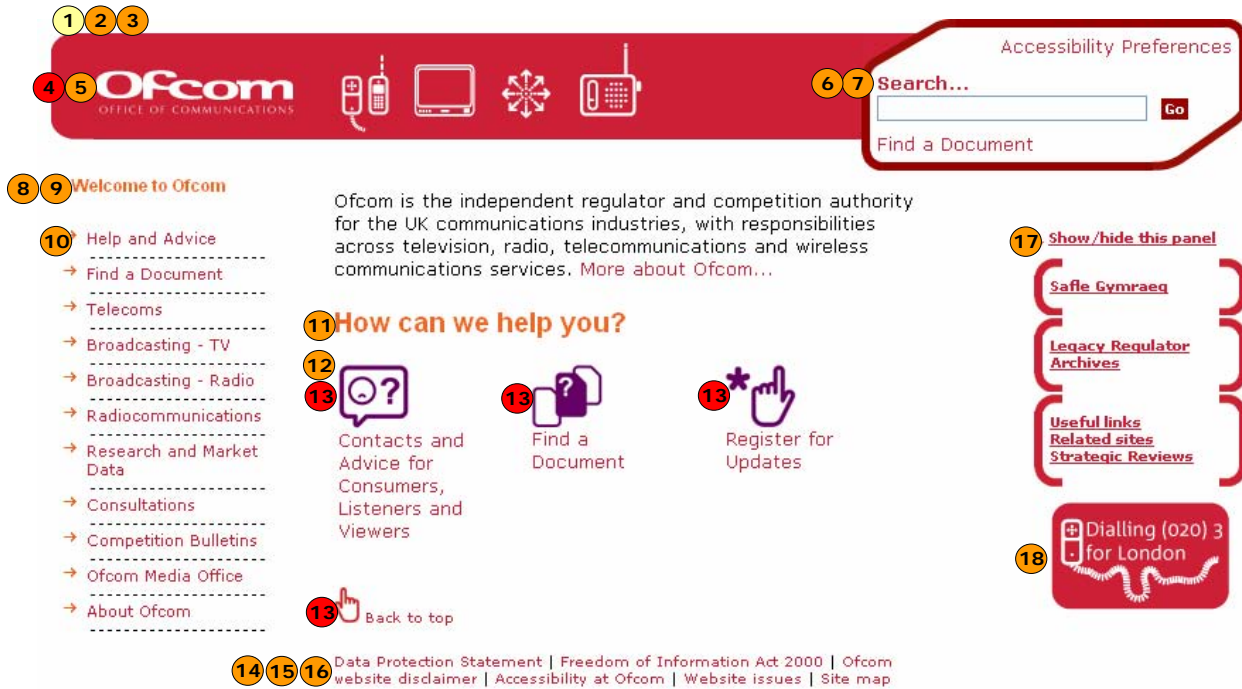
The points on this page have the following importance level:

Priority 1	Priority 2 / W	Priority 3
4, 13	2-3, 5-12, 14-18	1

1. Skip links have been placed into the very top of the page and made invisible through the CSS document. These relative links allow screen reader users to jump straight to the main content or navigation so are very useful (**Priority 3**).

2. This is a minor point, but we recommend changing the text of one of the skip links from "Jump to content" to "Jump to main content". By using the former, screen readers mis-pronounce the word "content", so that it sounds like the word akin to happiness. Inserting the word, "main" fixes this problem (**Priority W**).

3. Accesskeys have been assigned to these skip links, along with some of the other links on the page. Accesskeys are a Priority 3 guideline but are now thought to hinder accessibility, rather than help. There is no convention for using them across websites and they can override shortcut commands for screen readers. As such, we recommend removing accesskeys from the website (**Priority W**).

4. Well done for using image `alt` text, or alternative text, on all images on this page (**Priority 1**). It's crucial that images on the website have alternative text that accurately conveys the meaning of the image, which this image does:

5. Although the Ofcom logo appears in the top-left corner of the screen, it's actually placed after the website content in the HTML code. This means that screen reader users will hear the image `alt` text well after the main content. As such, we recommend moving the Ofcom logo so that it comes first in the HTML code (**Priority W**).

6. The label for this search function must be assigned to the input field (**Priority 2**):

```
<label for="search">Search...</label> <input id="search" />
```

To assign a label to a form item, the `label` value must be identical to the `id` of the form item.

7. This is a minor point, but we recommend removing the dots from here. The three dots will get read aloud to screen reader users as "dot dot dot", adding to the on-page noise (**Priority W**). To maintain the visual appearance of the page, the dots can be inserted as a background image through the CSS document.

8. "Welcome to Ofcom" has been marked up in the code as level 1 heading, or `<h1>`. This would suggest that this heading is the main page heading, when in fact, "How can we help you?" is the main heading on this page. As such, we recommend labelling this heading as a level 2 heading, or `<h2>` (**Priority 2**).

    The use of heading tags is crucial for screen reader users as they allow them to better understand the page structure. As such, all headings should be appropriately nested. The main heading on the page should be labelled as `<h1>` and each subsequent heading should be labelled `<h2>`. Any sub-heading would be labelled as `<h3>` and so on.

9. Headings are also useful as screen reader users can call up a list of page headings and quickly jump to any of these headings. This is something that's highly user-friendly as screen reader users don't have to listen to the entire page to find what they're looking for.

    This is the headings list box for screen reader users:
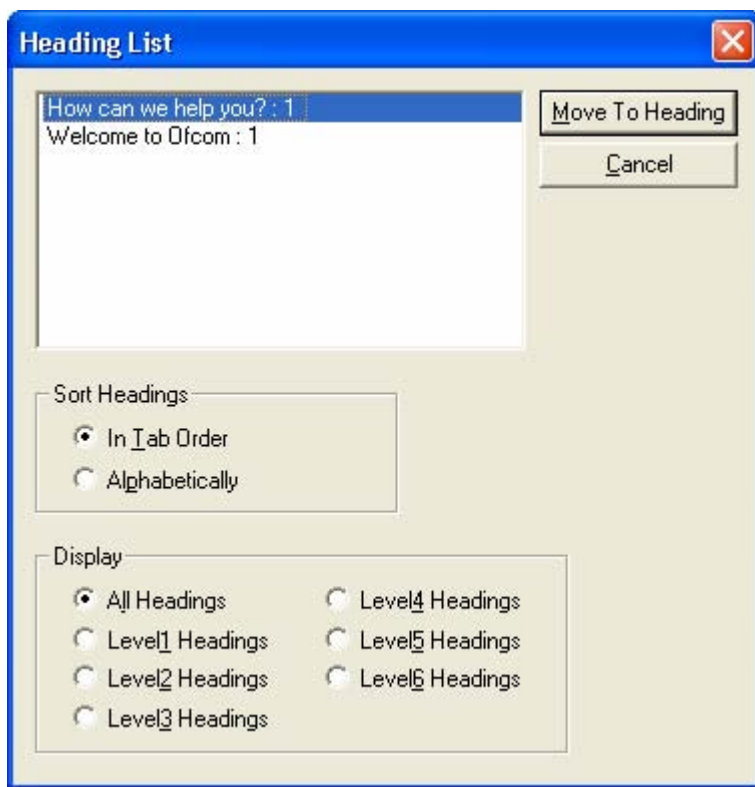
"Welcome to Ofcom" doesn't really make much sense out of context so we recommend changing it to "Site navigation". The heading can then be made invisible to sighted users through the CSS document (**Priority W**).

10. This navigation group has been marked up as an unordered list within the HTML document. This is very useful for screen reader users as the reader will announce the number of items in the list, before reading them out (**Priority 2**).

11. As per point 8, "How can we help you?" has correctly been correctly marked up as a level 1 heading, or `<h1>` (**Priority 2**).

12. As per point 10, these three links should be marked up as an unordered list within the HTML document (**Priority 2**).

13. The image `alt` text for these images could be slightly improved on. Currently they more or less repeat the link text that follows them, causing unnecessary repetition for screen reader users.

These images should therefore have null `alt` text assigned to them (**Priority 1**), which can be achieved through `alt=""`. By assigning null `alt` text to decorative images such as these, screen readers will totally ignore the images.

14. Ideally there should be a heading at the start of this footer, so screen reader users can instantly be told what this section is about. The heading should be a level 2 heading, or `<h2>` (**Priority 2**) and can be made invisible as per point 1.

15. As per point 10, these three links should be marked up as an unordered list within the HTML document (**Priority 2**).

16. The vertical bars should be removed as screen reader users will hear, "vertical bar" after each navigation item (**Priority W**). Instead, the vertical bars should be inserted as a right border on to each of the navigation items through the CSS document. This will ensure the same visual appearance.

17. It might be an idea to use JavaScript to display this link, so non-JavaScript users, who would be unable to activate this link, aren't informed of its existence (**Priority W**).

18. Where possible it's best to use real text instead of text embedded within images (**Priority 2**). Using real text means that the text can be resized and re-styled by site visitors and won't become blurry and pixelated when blown up with a screen magnifier.