

nd Co-Founder of Disability & Jesus, to share his knowledge on how

There are two important, even crucial, considerations in any form of communication.

First, there's what we want to share. We need clarity about the information we want to send out.

However, this is only half the story. Content is important, but so is the packaging of the message - it needs the best chance of being received and understood. Until that happens, there has been no communication!

In developing an accessible website, we need to pay attention to both of these key considerations. Getting clarity on what we want to say will help us prioritise elements of the message, and bring order to how we structure it. Getting a clear presentation of the message will make it easier to receive, making it more accessible.

The more accessible the presentation of our message, the more people will engage with it - the less accessible, the fewer people will engage. It would seem sensible then when we're putting a lot of effort into what we want to transmit, that we make a similar effort to make sure it can be received!

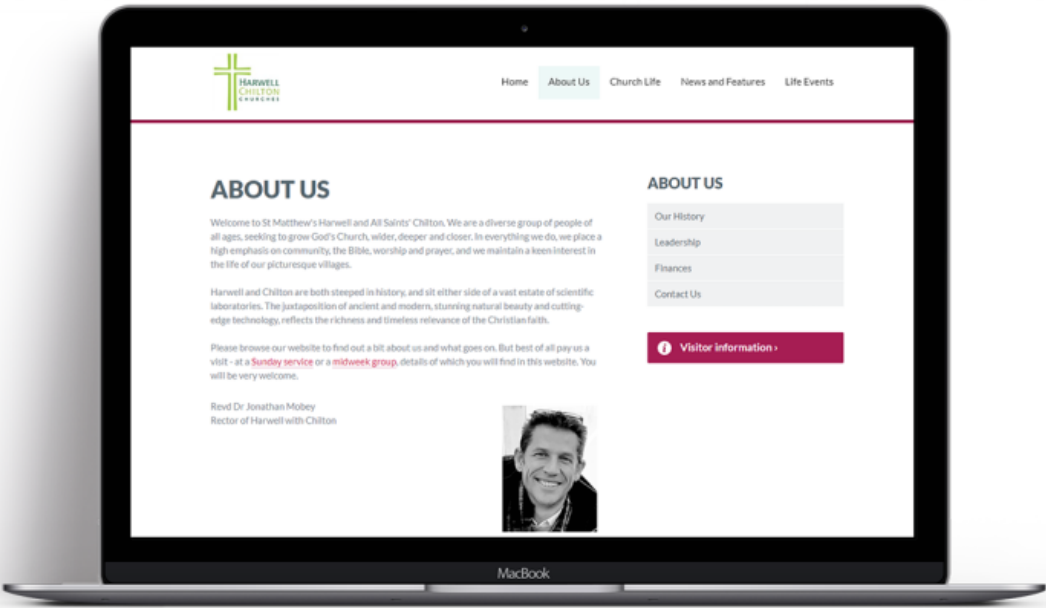
Here are some essential guidelines we developed at **Disability & Jesus**, to help you think through how to make your website more accessible.

Clear Layout and Design

Keep different parts of the web pages easy to locate and identify - e.g. menus with buttons that stay the same and in the same place, whichever page you're on. There should be consistent presentation and behaviour of web pages across a website.

Don't wrap text around images, as this makes the text harder to read. It's best not to place text alongside images either, but where this is unavoidable, images should be on the right-hand side of text in order to preserve a consistent left-hand margin for text, and there should be a good margin of space around the picture.

t, with a left-hand margin for text.



Good Colour Contrast

Use strong colour contrast to distinguish easily between text and background. Try reading it in sunglasses, that will help to show whether contrast is adequate. This includes text on icons, buttons, menus, etc, as well as any text placed over images (though this is to be avoided if at all possible).

Do the colours on your website make it easier or more difficult to read? Check them on this accessibility colour wheel, [here](#).

Text to Speech compatibility

Some people use specialised screen-reader software to help navigate through headings, image alt-tags, and links, etc. Content needs to be properly formatted (as headings, links, etc) for such text-to-speech software to work fully as intended.

Captioning for video content (AKA “subtitles”)

Captions are a textual form of the audio information in video items. This includes not only the words that are spoken, but also information about who is speaking, important sounds like music, laughter, and noises, and other contextual information. Please ensure that any video content is captioned.

Do you know how do you put subtitles on a video? Take a read of our blog [here](#).

Customisable Text

Some users need to be able to change the way text is displayed so that they can read the text. This includes changing the size, spacing, font, colour, and other text properties. When users change these properties, no information or functionality should be lost, and the text should re-flow, so users don't have to scroll horizontally to read sentences.

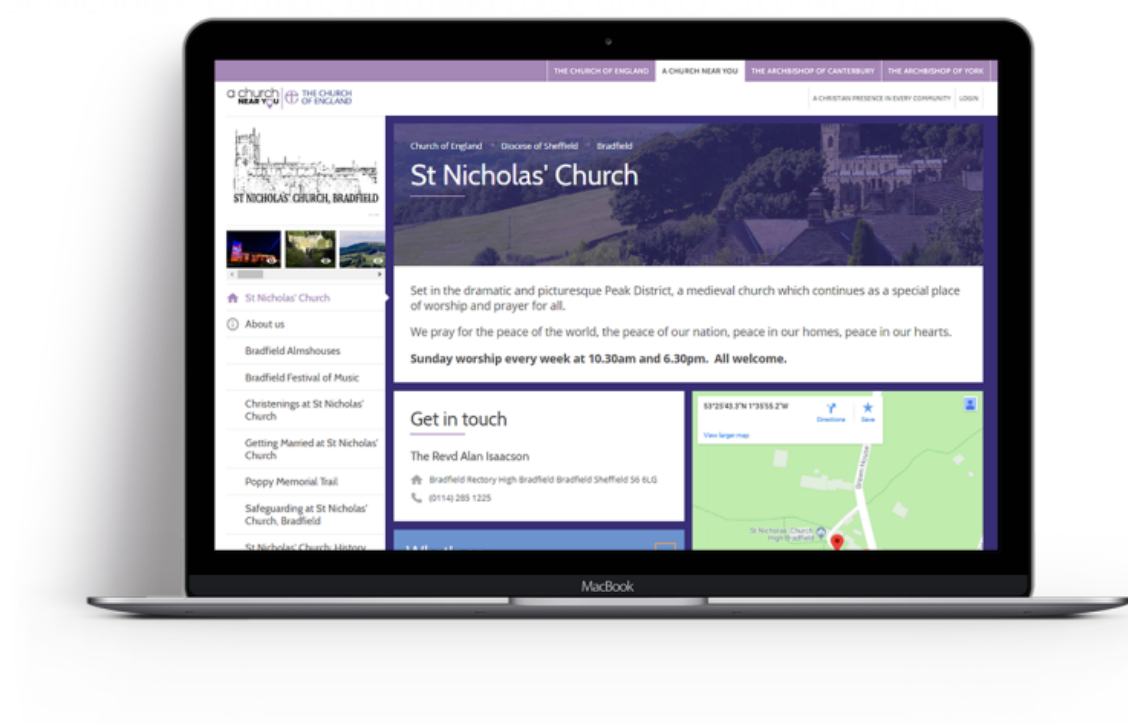
Text customisability does not replace the need for the default design to conform to clear print guidelines regarding text size, spacing, etc.

Understandable Content

Content should be easy to follow and understand for all users. For most content, this means simply avoiding overly complex sentences and jargon, and providing clear layout and design. Always avoid abbreviations and acronyms or provide explanations when they need to be used.

Accessible websites

Every Church of England church has a page on [A Church Near You](#), offering the ability to create a free website for your church, which is both responsive and accessible. Is your church making the most of their page? Read our blogs on A Church Near You [here](#) to find out how you can make the most of this resource.



Take a look at these websites for examples of accessible websites.

- [St Nicholas' Church Bradfield](#)
- [Harwell and Chiltern Churches](#)
- [Holy Trinity Parish Church](#)
- [St Peter's Stockton](#)

Finally, remember to run your site through the basic accessibility validator tools to find how you can improve your website, for example this [free plugin from Microsoft](#), which will highlight areas to improve on your web pages. Take a look at the [W3C checklist here](#) for a full list of tools to consider.

For further information, including free clear print guidelines, visit www.disabilityandjesus.org.uk.

Revd Bill Braviner

Disability and Jesus

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