

## State of the eNation Reports

### August 2007 – Tourism Websites

#### State of the eNation Reports – a summary

The AbilityNet State of the eNation Reports are a quarterly review of a number of websites in a particular sector. This report concerns tourism websites. The sites reviewed are:

- Edinburgh Castle
- Glasgow Science Centre
- Burns Heritage Centre
- London Eye
- Eden Project
- Kew Gardens
- National Museum Wales
- Portmeirion
- Giants Causeway
- Belfast Zoo

What level of access do these sites offer for the many millions of potential visitors who have a disability, dyslexia, literacy difficulty, or who simply find it a little difficult using a mouse?

#### Web Accessibility – why it's important

Today many services are only available, or offered at a discounted rate, on the Internet. Other sites provide vital information. If a website doesn't meet a base level of accessibility then it will be impossible for a large number of disabled visitors to use it. Many others with some sort of limiting condition will also have great difficulty.

It is illegal to bar disabled visitors from on-line services and information offered to the general public. No organisation would purposefully do this but many are either not aware of the problem, or don't know what to do to address it. In the UK there are estimated to be 1.6 million registered blind people, 1.5 million with cognitive difficulties, a further 3.4 million people who are otherwise IT disabled and 6 million that have dyslexia. The total spending power of this group is now estimated at £120 billion a year.

# A Commitment to Accessibility

All the parties reviewed were contacted several weeks before publication of this report and asked to make a public commitment to accessibility. To date the following have done this (please see Appendix C for the text of these statements):

- Belfast Zoo
- Kew Gardens
- London Eye

## The Results in Summary

A 5 star scale was used: \*\*\*\*\* = Very accessible.  
\*\*\* = Satisfies a base level of accessibility  
\* = Very inaccessible

10 sites were reviewed: 1 site had a \*\*\*\* ranking  
4 sites had a \*\* rating  
5 sites had a \* ranking

## Site Ranking

- Glasgow Science Centre \*\*\*\*
- Eden Project \*\*
- National Museum Wales \*\*
- Portmeirion \*\*
- Giants Causeway \*\*
- Edinburgh Castle \*
- Burns Heritage Centre \*
- London Eye \*
- Kew Gardens \*
- Belfast Zoo \*

For information on how we decide a site's ranking please see Appendix B.

## The Results in Full

All sites were audited in August 2007 for accessibility and usability using a wide range of in-depth manual checks. The testing process was assisted by the Bobby accessibility testing tool, the AIS toolbar and colour checking tools.

**Glasgow Science Centre – <http://www.glasgowsciencecentre.org/>**

**Ranking: \*\*\*\***

**This website scored a respectable 4 out of 5 stars:**

Text on the site is clear and large enough under normal viewing conditions and the text on every page can be resized by the user – so vital for many visitors who have a vision impairment or who are viewing the site on a small screen. The site uses sans serif text which will assist visitors with a vision impairment or dyslexia.

Often a text label appears when you put the mouse over an image. Blind and dyslexic visitors rely on the presence of text labels as a spoken description of the image. Without them the image is meaningless. On this site almost every image, including most importantly images that are also links are properly labelled. Without these labels getting around the site would be very difficult - imagine trying to make a journey where signposts at every roundabout are left blank!

Many people are not able to use a mouse. The Glasgow Science Centre website is able to be used with the keyboard alone and it is easy to follow the active link when moving through menu items and links.

There were no 'pop-up' windows that did not first inform the user - thus avoiding potential confusion for blind visitors, or those with a cognitive impairment or learning disability.

Many websites use mini programs called JavaScript embedded in their pages which can often cause difficulties for those using older browsers, those with vision impairments using some special browsers, and those whose organisations disable JavaScript for security reasons. This website seems to operate normally when JavaScript is not supported.

A sitemap is provided that allows users to see at a glance the overall structure of the site as well as find specific information.

Glasgow Science Centre have an accessibility page on the site which provides help on using the website, makes a clear commitment to providing an accessible service and encourages users to feedback any accessibility issues.

**The Eden Project** – <http://www.edenproject.com/>

**Ranking:** \*\*

**This website includes a number of issues with accessibility:**

Whilst the majority of text on each page can be resized by the user – so vital for many visitors who have a vision impairment or who are viewing the site on a small screen, there are some instances of images of text meaning that these cannot be resized, such as the main menu.

There are instances of inappropriate text labels being specified e.g. ‘arrow’ for navigational arrow icons, or where a text label has not been specified.

Users’ Windows colour scheme is reflected; however, in Windows High Contrast the main page banner is not displayed.

There are a number of instances of links sharing the same link text, e.g. ‘More info’, but which link to different pages. When read out of context, it is not clear where these links are pointing and this could be confusing to some users.

The Eden Project has an accessibility page on the site which provides help on using the website, makes a clear commitment to providing an accessible service and encourages users to feedback any accessibility issues.

This website seems to operate normally when JavaScript is not supported.

**National Waterfront Museum** – <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/swansea/>

**Ranking:** \*\*

**This website includes a number of issues with accessibility:**

Text on the site is generally clear and large enough under normal viewing conditions, although the news items may be too small for all users to read comfortably. The site uses sans serif text which will assist visitors with a vision impairment or dyslexia.

The National Waterfront Museum website is able to be used with the keyboard alone, however there are some instances where the onscreen tabbing order is inconsistent and the user would have to tab excessively between screen elements. It is not always easy to follow the onscreen tab focus.















Further than that we look for significant (in our opinion based upon broad experience of working with disabled users) priority level 2 issues - such as the scalability of text, the avoidance of frames and any positive steps a site has taken to benefit visitors with an impairment (such as accessibility info or offering a choice of colour/text size schemes).

Note - It is our opinion that the addition of a Text only parallel site to the exclusion of addressing the accessibility/usability issues of the main site is neither necessary or in the spirit of inclusion or the W3C WCAG standards.

### **\* and \*\* Rankings**

We award \* and \*\* to a site dependant upon how much it falls short of our definition of \*\*\* ranking.

### **\*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\*\* Rankings**

We award \*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\*\* to a site dependant upon how much it exceeds our definition of \*\*\* ranking.

For any further clarification please contact [accessibility@abilitynet.org.uk](mailto:accessibility@abilitynet.org.uk)

