Accessibility in color

By Melissa Utomo

January 7, 2020

Did you notice? Our link and button colors have changed at esource.com!

Accessibility has been an ongoing goal here at E Source, and our efforts over the years have ranged from writing in plain language to including detailed alt text for screen-reading technologies. The design team is excited to continue that effort with this visible change to the color contrast of our links and buttons. We're following the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG) wherever possible, and one of the things those guidelines point out is that text and buttons become much easier to read when the contrast ratio between the foreground and background is higher. People with visual impairments especially benefit from this rule.

We love our E Source green, but as a text link color against a white background, it falls short with a contrast ratio of only 2.7:1.0 (**figure 1**)—WCAG recommends a ratio of at least 3.0:1.0.

Figure 1: Old link and button color

How Are Utilities Designing Bills for the Visually Impaired?

An Ask E Source Answer

Lauren Potter, Lisa Schulte

FEBRUARY 4, 2019

PDF this page   Print this page   Email this page   ★ Remove from My Favorites

Q: How can we design bills that our blind and visually impaired customers can access?

A: Customers with visual impairments have unique needs when it comes to bill delivery, and utilities should offer bills that easily communicate charges and other billing information to this audience.

Different solutions can work for delivering accessible bills, depending on the degree of vision loss. This Ask E Source answer focuses on the braille system of writing, although there are a variety of format options for delivering content to the visually impaired and blind.

Braille. With this writing system for the blind, you have the advantage of being able to convey complex information. Unfortunately, braille literacy in the US has been estimated to be as low as 10%, so it doesn't serve a large portion of the visually impaired population.

Large print. This format is ideal for visually impaired customers with less-severe sight loss. Rather than provide a variety of options of font sizes and styles, most utilities and other service providers that provide large-print bills standardize with a 16- to 18-point font size and a line spacing of 1.5 lines.

Audio. Using text-to-speech software, you can deliver bills as audio files or CDs. However, these formats

ASK E SOURCE

Through our Ask E Source service, you can ask our experts questions related to any of the subject areas your organization has access to.

Submit an inquiry

Our design team solved this issue by using our other favorite E Source color, blue, which gives a healthy ratio of 4.5:1.0 (**figure 2**).

Figure 2: New link and button color

But we still wanted our E Source green to have a presence on our site, so going forward, we'll use it for decorative elements that aren't essential to readability, including icons, sidebar borders, and large pull quotes.

This change might seem small, but it's the start of something bigger. We'll continue to make changes to our website so it's more accessible to all our members, and we hope you follow along as we go. Tell us what you think!