Enhancing Diversity and Inclusion in eLearning:

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR DECISION-MAKERS

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Introduction

Embracing Diversity and Inclusion in eLearning is not just ethical—it's essential for reaching and effectively engaging a diverse learner audience. Over the many years of creating accessible eLearning solutions with our client partners, we've come across some trips and traps that can be avoided with good design planning, and a thorough understanding of the benefits and limits in achieving accessible eLearning experiences.

In this little guide you will find some actionable steps and up-front considerations to ensure your eLearning solutions are accessible and engaging for all your learners.

Embrace diversity!

01
Choosing the right eLearning authoring tool

Selecting the right authoring tool for your accessibility requirements is a critical first step in developing accessible eLearning content.

Authoring platforms like Articulate Storyline offer extensive configurability, making them ideal for tailoring learning experiences to diverse needs. Articulate Rise is another tool that, while more structured, still offers significant accessibility features.

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Checklist: Which authoring tool suits your needs? ✔

Articulate Storyline

- Desktop app
- Adapts to any device, responsive player
- Extensive colour palette
- Custom theming
- Custom navigation
- Custom interface
- Slide-based interface
- WCAG AA (inbuilt and customisable)
- Single or menu driven courses
- Review 360

App-eLearn[1]

- Web app
- Adapts to any device, responsive authoring
- Custom theming
- Custom navigation
- Custom interface
- Linear interface
- WCAG AA (inbuilt and customisable)
- Single or menu driven courses

Articulate Rise

- Web app
- Adapts to any device, responsive authoring
- Limited theming
- Limited navigation
- Limited customisation
- One theme colour
- Linear interface
- WCAG AA (inbuilt)
- Course: multi-lesson course for comprehensive learning
- Microlearning: bite-sized content focused on a single learning objective
- Review 360

Not sure what to choose? Ask the experts!

We know that the world of eLearning authoring and accessible eLearning design is highly specialised, technical, and therefore can be confusing for L&D teams who have a broader focus to meet the needs of all learners and stakeholders.

That's why our Liberate team offers you our honest guidance and support, be it from helping to choose the best authoring tool for your team and learning requirements, to offering you our best-practice advice on accessible learning content design within the native capability of an authoring tool, to custom-coded technical solutions to expand beyond the limitations of the tool.

[1]App-eLearn : https://www.app-elearn.com/

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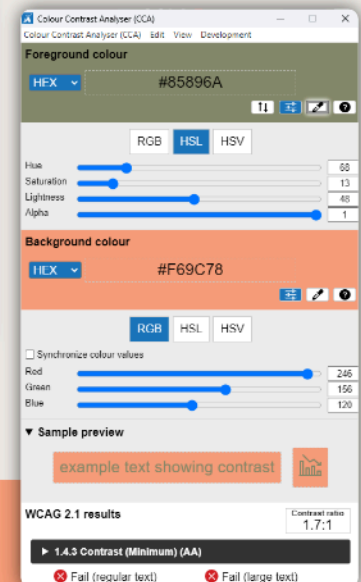# Designing for accessibility
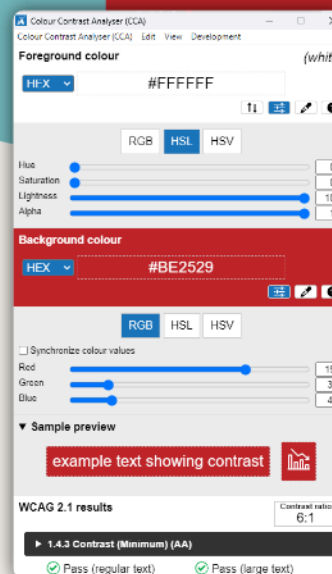
Visual design and colour use

Whilst your organisation may have a strong visual corporate identity with a branding style guide for your communications and marketing purposes, this may not mean that those same colours will work in an accessible learning design context.

Effective visual eLearning design goes beyond aesthetics or brand identity, focusing on accessibility. The choice of colours in your eLearning piece can greatly affect learners with visual impairments. Using tools like Coolors[2] can help select accessible colour palettes that comply with accessibility standards, and the WEBAIM[3] contrast checker can help you test them.

Imagery and alt text

Any images used in eLearning should enhance understanding, not just decorate the content. For every image, especially diagrams, alt text is essential to describe the visual content for those who rely on screen readers.
In more complex visuals, providing a transcript of the diagram can make the information accessible to all users.

Accessible

Not Accessible

How will your Learner experience this chart?

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03
Engaging and accessible content creation

Storyboarding and reviews – Begin with accessibility in mind

Before development begins, storyboarding with accessibility in mind to the degree you need it for your learning piece, will ensure that all accessibility considerations are integrated from the start. Given the technical nature of eLearning design and development, collaborative reviews with developers and designers early on will identify potential accessibility issues early, and avoid additional time and cost spent on corrections further down the development track.

Interactive elements

For a high degree of accessibility, interactive elements like carousels or accordions should be used judiciously. They must be navigable by keyboard and screen readers, with clear instructions provided for all users.

Another example are dropdown menus; it's important to ensure they are fully accessible to keyboard users and do not overwhelm the learner with too many options.

Tips for text and typography

- Choose fonts that are easy to read and available in various weights and sizes to accommodate visual impairments.
- Avoid placing text over images as it can reduce readability. Instead, use solid colour backgrounds for text sections to enhance contrast, and to ensure the image text is not skimmed over.

Helpful resources:

- App-eLearn Authoring Tool: https://www.app-elearn.com/
- Coolors: https://coolors.co/
- WEBAIM: https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

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Need more help?

We are just a phone call away!

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