

EVIDENCE

Evidencing ethical motivations for accessibility beyond compliance with legislation.

- [The Principles](#)
- [Requirements Gathering](#)

The Principles

These Principles serve as a statement of our ethical values concerning accessibility within small publishing organisations. They are high level and idealistic, rather than prescriptive or technical requirements, and can serve as drivers of behaviour or justifications for decisions. They may help you to make customised plans for accessibility goals that are alternatives to compliance and go beyond the legal minimum.

1. Access has not been fully provided to a research output unless it is accessible.
2. Accessible means the research output is perceivable, operable, understandable and robust (i.e. interoperable with assistive technology).
3. All professionals involved in the production of research outputs have a part to play in achieving accessible content.
4. Scholarly communications professionals should seek to remove all barriers to access, including paywalls, accessibility barriers and others.
5. Research outputs should be born accessible by default, rather than accessible on demand or requiring a separate version that is available at a later time or through a different channel.
6. No accessibility standard can capture the accessibility needs profile of an individual; it is therefore important to respond to individual accessibility requests.
7. Accessibility enables usability and is not just for the print disabled, but is for everyone to customise their reading experience.
8. Accessibility is not just aimed at humans exclusively; it also enables machine readability and ensures robustness/interoperability with all automated systems.
9. Accessibility helps a research output to reach its true audience, not just those who can perceive/operate/understand it, or access it.
10. Disabled people have economic disadvantages that Open Access initiatives focused on removing paywalls can help with.
11. Open access has advantages in terms of accessibility that closed access does not, in particular through the absence of DRM technology interfering with assistive technology, the prior consideration of copyright restrictions that might prevent producing accessible versions, and other lack of restrictions on re-use enabling maximised usability.

You also might like to look at the [The little book of accessibility](#)

Requirements Gathering

While [auditing](#) for legal minimum levels of accessibility can produce quantitative data about how accessible your content is, there are other options. If your press is exempt from legislation, or your values and mission includes a fuller consideration of a research community's requirements that may go beyond legal minimum, you will want to inform your accessibility planning through other means. Meaningful requirements gathering activities, detailed below, can produce qualitative data that can ensure the plans are fully in line with your user's needs.

Inclusion, not accessibility

Accessibility is not quite the same thing as full inclusion, whereas accessibility focuses on compliance to standards, legislation and making individual requests, inclusion is more person and community focused, pro-active (rather than reactive) and has a focus on usability for everyone. Instead of asking what you need to do to achieve compliance, you can ask what you need to do to maximise usability for all of your readers which will include some accessibility goals.

Accessibility requests

An important mechanism for achieving accessibility is your process for handling one off requests from individual users. Within your [accessibility statement](#) it is often a legal requirement to have some way of contacting you to make these type of requests, which can include providing a different format, or something the specific user requires that is beyond the legal minimums e.g. enhanced levels of contrast. Best practice is to have a named person and email address, and to have some agreed service level of responding within a certain time period and giving a full response. The content of these requests are a useful source of information about what your readership's accessibility requirements are.

End user testing

See our guidance on [End user testing from print disabled people](#)