Five Inclusive Design Principles

By the Civil Society Collaborative: Inclusive COVID-19 Data

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The Civil Society Collaborative: Inclusive COVID-19 Data jointly developed a set of inclusive design principles to prioritise inclusivity and accessibility as we developed the Unequal Pandemic report and associated materials. These principles bring together the experiences of over 20 organisations and communities, along with best practices from existing guidance materials.

We recognize that these principles are not comprehensive and will need to evolve over time, but we hope they increase the transparency of our decision-making and are helpful for others undertaking similar projects.

Read the 'Unequal Pandemic' report and find out more about the Collaborative
bit.ly/UnequalPandemic

1. Prioritize accessibility in visual design

a. Use contrasting colours

b. Use appropriate alt text for all images and tables

c. Don't rely on colour alone to convey meaning

d. Use InDesign's built-in accessibility checker

e. When using text, allow it to be scalable

f. Use scalable images where possible (ie. SVG/vector files)

2. Prioritize accessibility in text

a. Use 1-2 simple fonts and font size 12pt+

b. Ensure contrast ratio of at least 3:1 for text

c. Avoid using all caps, underlined or italicized text

d. Keep text left-aligned

e. Use distinct spacing between lines, between paragraphs, and between sections

f. Don't hyphenate words that are usually not split (i.e., don't hyphenate across lines)

g. Ensure that the text is clearly structured, using descriptive headings to break up the copy

3. Ensure ethical image and content use

a. Only use content generated with informed consent

b. Do not edit quotes substantively, when translating quotes strive to use language that captures the essence of the original quote.

    i. Ensure continuous feedback with the original contributor and sufficient review and approval processes

c. Ensure accurate and detailed attribution of quotes and captions of images, while managing risks in relation to disclosing someone's identity through sharing their name, location or circumstance.

    i. Strive to use correct first names, as long as this is available and does not put the individual(s) at risk

    ii. Never publish the exact location of the person, nor use images that are clearly identifiable of exact locations. Rather use general location information such as country and region.

    iii. If the name is anonymized it is possible to be more specific with location – for instance, a specific refugee camp.

Images

d. Do not use images of an individual or group to illustrate a story or an issue which has nothing to do with them.

e. Do not make any changes to an image which change its context or meaning.

f. Do not use images that perpetuate stereotypes or look down on someone with the intention of creating a greater sense of vulnerability or need

g. Use descriptive alternative text

4. Prioritize usability and accessibility of interactive platforms

a. Design for low bandwidth and different devices

b. Avoid autoplay functions where possible, and ensure that they are always pausable

c. Be mindful of additional software

    i. Consider how screen reader software will interact with content

    ii. Consider how screen magnification software (or use of browser zoom) will interact with content

5. Always use inclusive language and icons

a. Strive to use gender neutral colours, typography and icons

b. Do not use metaphors or figures of speech that are unique to any specific language

c. Ensure that any essential meaning conveyed by colours or icons is also referenced in text

d. Test readability of copy with Hemingway

Resources

Accessibility:

- CBM Digital Accessibility Toolkit
- Sightsavers' accessibility guidance

Ethical image and content use:

- Bond's ethical guidance for collection and use of content
- Wateraid's ethical image policy

Inclusive graphic design:

- Gender neutral design

Digital platforms

- Inclusive design for social media - Hootsuite
- Gender inclusive social media
- Storymap accessibility and language
- Getting started with accessible storytelling