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Virginia Libraries' Disability Services and Website Accessibility

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Virginia Libraries' Online Services*

While some libraries do offer disability services, they are **not well advertised** to the public. Typically, services can only be found buried at the bottom of an accessibility sub-page.



Not a single library system examined identify any types of disability services on their home-pages

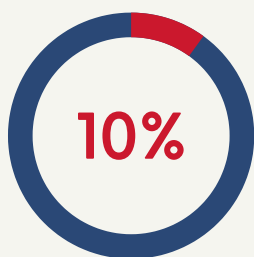


We need to make every single thing accessible to every single person with a disability.

Stevie Wonder

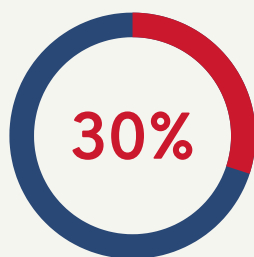


4/10 libraries offer digital card sign-up, but they are either temporary or can only access online catalogs/databases; therefore, still requiring a physical library card to access the entirety of resources



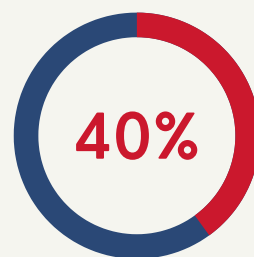
Sign Language Interpretation

Only 1 library examined in Virginia advertises SLI services for those unable to use audiobooks or Talking Books



Braille Services

3/10 Virginia public libraries advertise Braille services for translation and navigation



Talking Books Program

4/10 libraries advertise Talking Books, a Library of Congress program that offers free materials to qualifying patrons

"The one argument for accessibility that doesn't get made nearly often enough is how extraordinarily better it makes some people's lives. How many opportunities do we have to dramatically improve people's lives just by doing our job a little better?"

Steve Krug, *Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability*

*this data is based on a representative sample population of ten Virginia libraries collected between January and March 2021

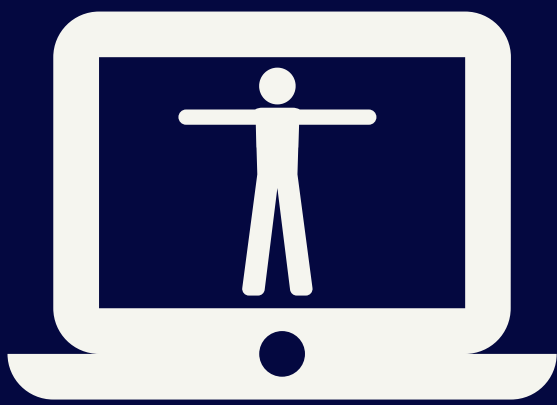
quotes source: <https://buffer.com/resources/accessibility-quotes/>

sources: <https://tinyurl.com/22frf7vy>

WAVE Analysis of Virginia Library Websites*

100%

10/10 library websites examined had critical alerts, contrast issues, and structural element errors that contribute to a non-accessible user experience



WAVE (Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool) is an open-source suite that tests the accessibility of any website with a functioning web address. This tool can identify errors according to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), helping creators make better content more accessible to users.

82

most alerts found on a single library home page. alerts can include redundant title text, broken same-page links, skipped heading level, and more.

106

most color contrast issues found on a single library home page. color contrast issues occur when the color of a text or image is hard to discern from its background color.

33

most structural errors found on a single library home page. structural errors can include missing alternative text, broken ARIA (Accessible Rich Internet Application) menus, and more.

The creation and maintenance of websites and various pages is not a one-time task, but rather an ongoing process.

By consistently using WAVE, or another tool like it, developers can better monitor their website accessibility, providing a consistent experience to all users.

*this data is based on a representative sample population of ten Virginia libraries collected between January and March 2021

sources: <https://tinyurl.com/22frf7vy>

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Money Spent on Libraries in Virginia*



\$4.47B

largest municipal total operating budget

\$711.9M

smallest municipal total operating budget



\$91,428,747

largest amount spent on libraries

\$801,745

smallest amount spent on libraries



8%

highest percentage of budget dedicated to local libraries

0.7%

lowest percentage of funding dedicated to local libraries

2.7%

average percentage of funding dedicated to local libraries



Library spending varies between municipalities and is only one of several factors that affect the quality and quantity of accessibility services and disability resources across Virginia public library websites

While it can be noted that some libraries receive far less funding compared to others, the amount of money spent does not directly correlate with the quality and quantity of services available to special needs patrons; therefore, increased funding is not necessary to accommodate all users and patrons.

*this data is based on a representative sample population of ten Virginia libraries collected between January and March 2021

sources: <https://tinyurl.com/22frf7vy>

Recommendations for Increased Accessibility Across Digital and Physical Virginia Library Spaces

Home Page Identification

MORE THAN JUST ADULTS, TEENS, AND KIDS

Many Virginia library home pages identify activities, resources, and services for adult, teen, and child patrons. Part of the home page should clearly identify activities, resources, and services intended for special needs patrons. No one should feel left out or have to click through several subpages.

Digital Card Sign-Up

POTENTIAL FOR MATERIAL DELIVERY

Few Virginia libraries offer digital library card sign-up, and when they do, they are often temporary or only allow access to limited online catalogues. In 2021, library card sign-up should be offered online in full. Many may have difficulty in travelling to a library. When possible, materials should be open for home delivery.*

Website Accessibility

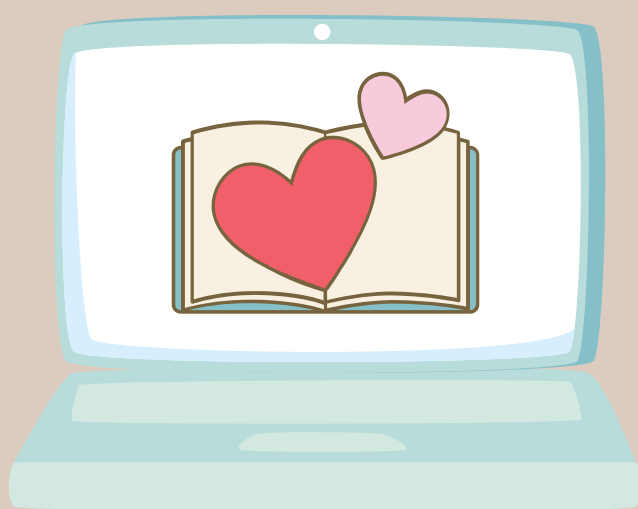
UPDATED CONTENT FOR EVERYONE

Virginia libraries can strive to be leaders in website accessibility by consistently using free evaluation tools. Suites like WAVE (<https://wave.webaim.org>) can enable Virginia libraries to regularly analyze their websites and correct errors related to color contrast, missing hyperlinks, and more.

Sensory Books

NURTURING DEVELOPMENT

While some libraries may offer them in-person, no sensory books were found in online catalogue searches during research. Sensory books can serve as an incredible tool for helping non-verbal, blind, young, or other individuals engage in books and storytelling. The Interlibrary Loan (ILL) system could make it easier for libraries to acquire and share these books.



*SEE [HTTPS://THELIBRARY.ORG/SERVICES/WALKBOOK.CFM/](https://thelibrary.org/services/walkbook.cfm/)

SOURCES: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/22FRF7VY](https://tinyurl.com/22FRF7VY)

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