

Lorraine Ball

Welcome to More than a Few Words a marketing conversation for business owners. MTFW is part of the Digital Toolbox from Roundpeg and this is your host Lorraine Ball.

Today I'm sitting with Simon who is our "web guy". Although we have several people on our web team, Simon focuses on some of the more technical issues of web design. Simon, welcome to the show.

Simon Efroymsen

Great to be back, Lorraine, Thanks for having me.

Lorraine

It is always good to have you because I always learned so much when you drop in.

Today what I want to talk about is this e issue of ADA compliance. You know, we're seeing a lot of trends in buildings where people are modifying the physical structures to make their environments more welcoming. Now we're also seeing a trend in web design.

Simon

Right? You're familiar with, braille signs and those blue rimmed parking spots in traditional physical brick and mortars, but now as the web world continues to grow, abled body, people aren't the only ones using the internet. Those of us who can, need to make up for some of the things that differently abled people aren't able to do.

Lorraine

I was on the board of the Indiana School for the Blind for a short period of time. And I was absolutely fascinated, because the webmaster was someone who legally blind.

I was absolutely knocked out that he could do that. He did have limited vision, but he really gave me this perspective on what it's like to experience a website when you can't see it.

Simon

Sure. And if anything that's indicative of the ability for disabled people to use just the internet, generally speaking, and the tools that are available for people such as myself who are hard of hearing, so that we can enjoy kind of the same experience as just a non-disabled person.

Lorraine

So, as a business is thinking about this and you have heard a lot about ADA compliant websites, but what does that kind of mean?

Simon

ADA compliance looks a little bit different than it does in the physical world. There are no set standards of compliance for ADA on the web. This doesn't mean that you can't be handed down a ruling

for noncompliance. The best thing that you can do look at other websites and see what they're doing as goodwill.

Lorraine

When you start thinking about improving your website, there are some simple things that you can do in terms of just how you name things, looking at pictures, putting titles on pictures, paying attention to some of the colors that you choose. What else can do to make websites more friendly?

Simon

Think about what people are able to access and are not able to access. For instance, if you have a podcast, perhaps including a transcript, or even with a video a transcript of the video. People use tools that read HTML when they're browsing a site so just having a good schema markup can also help.

Lorraine

I'm going to suggest a very non-technical thing. Think about what you name your pictures for someone who is visually impaired and is scrolling through your website. When they roll over a picture, the software that they're using will tell them there is a picture here, and it's going to read whatever the title is.

Imagine scrolling through a page that has 10 pictures, there's some corresponding copy and it says, JPEG one, JPG two JPG three. Think about how that's going to impact someone who's really trying to appreciate the story that you're telling, and how much better it can be. If it says, gorilla with a banana or monkey pretending to read a book. Suddenly the pictures come alive for everyone.

Simon

Right. And it's already frustrating enough being a disabled person, not enjoying that experience and as a business owner not conveying that part of your brand is really huge.

Lorraine

As you're thinking about this, trying to figure out what else you can do to cover your basis, is there anything else that you should think about to build into the planning of your website so that you don't get all the way to the end and go, oops.

Simon

So not everyone needs to be a DA compliant, although, as mentioned, it's a goodwill gesture kind of thing. And it looks good on the part of your business if you are setting the standards and making the effort for accessibility. Businesses with about 15 plus active employees need to have the standards in place. And if you're worried about this, you can always consult a disability lawyer They'll have the best idea of what you can do to kind of maintain that standard of accessibility.

Lorraine

And that 15 number is kind of a dividing line for a lot of legislative issues. Your human resource management changes at 15 employees. So you're getting to a size where you need to be thinking about creating a welcoming environment across the board. And certainly, extending that into your website.

If you have that older website, how much you risk are you

Simon

It depends on what kind of business you're operating, but even still, the chance being picked from the pile and find are not that high. But the fines can be as large as \$50,000. So that's nothing to laugh at. If you see yourself in a position where you may be scrutinized, it's a good idea to kind of cover your bases.

Lorraine

Absolutely. Simon, this is really good information. Thank you so much

Simon

A pleasure, Laura, and thanks for having me on.

Lorraine

If you have enjoyed Simon's conversation about ADA compliance and you're interested in some of the other things that he writes about be sure to look for his blog posts on Roundpeg.biz.

And look for More Than a Few Words wherever you listen to podcasts. If you liked the episode, listen to another one, they're short. Share it with a friend or post a review on iTunes. This has been another episode of more than a few words. Thanks for listening