MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Usability/Accessibility Research and Consulting

To: Robert Van Rennes, Big Ten Academic Alliance
From: Graham L. Pierce, MSU Usability/Accessibility Research and Consulting
Subject: Kanopy Streaming Service High-Level Accessibility Evaluation
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MSU Usability/Accessibility Research and Consulting (MSU UARC) conducted a high-level accessibility evaluation of the Kanopy streaming service to evaluate its conformance with WCAG 2.0 AA Criteria. This evaluation did not include all functionality or content of the site or all WCAG 2.0 AA Criteria.

During this evaluation, a number of issues were found that will make the site and its content difficult or impossible to use for many individuals with disabilities.

Critically, no means to pause, stop, or hide the movie rotator on the Home page is present, creating significant issues for individuals with cognitive or visual impairments, as well as for screen reader users. Issues of this type can interfere with the ability to use any part of a page for some users.

Keyboard users, including screen reader users and users with dexterity impairments, will not be able to use a considerable portion of the site. Most importantly, some content cannot be reached or operated via keyboard. In addition, many interactive elements lack a sufficiently visible focus indicator, making it difficult or impossible for many keyboard-only users to effectively use them, as they cannot determine when they have reached the correct element. Focus order is also incorrect in places, further increasing the difficulty of using the site with a keyboard.

Individuals with visual impairments that rely on screen readers will have additional problems. Custom elements do not correctly announce themselves or provide appropriate feedback to screen readers, making them difficult to understand and use. Most images throughout the site have missing or incorrect alternative text, further impacting users with visual impairments. Some structural information, including headings and lists, is also not appropriately conveyed to screen reader users, making it difficult to understand content organization. Some form inputs are not appropriately labeled and form errors are not communicated appropriately, making inputs difficult or impossible to use for those that rely on screen readers.

A number of other issues were found that will make it difficult for users with a variety of disabilities to effectively use the system, including incorrect "Skip to Main" links, insufficient color contrast, incorrect reading order, insufficient button labels,

To improve access for users with disabilities, UARC recommends a full WCAG 2.0 AA evaluation and that the problems discovered be remediated.

Note: For the purposes of this high-level review, search results for "global warming" were used as an example of a Search Results page and "Mariachi High" was used as an example of a Video page.

High-Level Findings

Document Structure

- Headings are not correctly used to organize content. [WCAG 2.0 SC 1.3.1]
  - On the Home page, "Thoughtful Entertainment" shouldn't be an h1.
  - On the Search Results page, visual headings are not tagged as headings.
  - On the Video page, headings are not properly nested (heading levels are skipped, subheadings on the same level are not programmed to be at the same level, etc.).
  - On the Video page, non-heading text is tagged as a heading (e.g., "PBS").
- Lists are not correctly used to organize content. [WCAG 2.0 SC 1.3.1]
  - Subjects menu and footer items are not coded into programmatic lists.
  - On the Home page, the rotator movies are not coded into a programmatic list.
  - On the Search Results page, results are not coded into a programmatic list.
  - On the Video page, movie information (e.g., "Running Time", "Year", etc.), list of "Related videos", and list of videos to right of player are not coded into programmatic lists.
- On the Home page, rotator movies are read out in an unexpected order by screen readers. [WCAG 2.0 SC 1.3.2]
- On the Search Results page, buttons to remove filters have insufficient labels (screen reader users are not notified that the buttons will remove filters; only the filter name is read out). [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.4.6]

Keyboard Support

- "Subjects" menu dropdown cannot be opened via keyboard. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.1.1]
- Cannot change region dropdown in page footer via keyboard. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.1.1]
- Cannot reach "View all results" link in search suggestion dropdown via keyboard. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.1.1]
- On the Home page, cannot control rotator via keyboard. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.1.1]
- On the Search Results page, cannot change "Sort by" or content filters (e.g., "Suppliers", "Filmmakers", etc.) via keyboard. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.1.1]
- On the Video page, cannot use "More" dropdown via keyboard. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.1.1]
- On the Video page, cannot reach videos to right of video player via keyboard. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.1.1]
- On the Video page, cannot reach social media buttons in Share section via keyboard. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.1.1]
- On the Video page, cannot reach tabs (e.g., "Share", "Embed") in Share or Citation sections via keyboard. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.1.1]
- Users must move focus through all items in the Subjects menu, regardless of whether they are visible on screen. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.4.3]
- Focus order for items in page header ("Kanopy", "Subjects", "Log in", "Sign up", and search) is incorrect. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.4.3]
- On the Video page, focus doesn't immediately go to the Sign In lightbox when it is opened, and focus is not restricted to lightbox. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.4.3]
- Focus is not sufficiently visible on a variety of content. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.4.7]
  - Search button in page header and region dropdown in page footer

- Movies and control dots in rotator on Home page
- "Download on the App Store", "Get it on Google Play", and "Roku" buttons on Home page
- Video thumbnails on Search Results page
- Play button, video player controls, and video thumbnails on Video page
- "Copy text" button in Citation section on Video page
- Dropdowns, "Defaults" button, and "Done" button in Caption Settings lightbox on Video page
- "Facebook", "Google", close, and "Log in" buttons in Sign In lightbox on Video page

Navigation

- "Skip to main content" links are incorrectly placed after repeated content (skip targets should be after repeated content, but the skip links should be at the very start of the pages). [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.4.1]

Forms and Data Submission

- On the Video page, placeholder text in the Comments text input ("Share your thoughts") is not read out by screen readers. [WCAG 2.0 SC 3.3.2]
- On the Video page, errors in the Sign In lightbox are not announced by screen readers. [WCAG 2.0 SC 3.3.1]

Images

- Appropriate alternative text is not provided for a variety of visual content. [WCAG 2.0 SC 1.1.1]
    - Kanopy logo, search button, social media icons, and logos after "Now available on"
    - On the Home page, "Download on the App Store" button, "Get it on Google Play" button, "Roku" button, and "Featured in" logos
    - On the Home page, movie posters shouldn't have "on Kanopy" in their alternative text
    - Thumbnails on the Search Results page
    - On the Video page, star ratings, video thumbnails under "Related videos", and social media icons under "Post using"
    - On the Video page, close buttons in Sign In lightbox and expanded sections (e.g., "Share")

Color and Visual Characteristics

- White search icon on orange background, grey on white rotator control dots (Home page), grey text on dark grey (e.g., "SEE MORE" under expanded filters on Search Results page), light grey text on dark grey (e.g., video lengths to right of video player and production company names under "Related videos" on Video page), red asterisk on dark grey (Video page), and black text on dark grey ("More" button when focused with keyboard on Video page) have insufficient contrast. [WCAG 2.0 SC 1.4.3]

Custom Elements and Dynamic Content

- On the Home page, the movie rotator cannot be paused, stopped, or hidden. [WCAG 2.0 SC 2.2.2]
- No roles or values are provided for Subjects menu and submenus (i.e., that they expand and whether they are expanded). [WCAG 2.0 SC 4.1.2]
- No name or role is provided for region dropdown in footer (i.e., that it is to select a region and that it is a dropdown). [WCAG 2.0 SC 4.1.2]
- The search suggestions dropdown is not read out by screen readers, and screen reader users are not notified when it appears. [WCAG 2.0 SC 4.1.2]
- On the Search Results and Video pages, no roles or values (i.e., that they are tabs and whether they are selected) are provided for tabs (e.g., "Videos", "Subjects", "Share", "Embed", etc.). [WCAG 2.0 SC 4.1.2]
- On the Search Results page, no name, role, or value is provided for the Sort by dropdown, and screen reader users are not notified of content updates when values are changed. [WCAG 2.0 SC 4.1.2]
- On the Search Results page, no names, roles, or values are provided for filter expanders (e.g., "Suppliers", "Filmmakers", etc.), and screen reader users are not notified of content updates when values are changed. [WCAG 2.0 SC 4.1.2]
- On the Video page, no role or value is provided for the "More" dropdown. [WCAG 2.0 SC 4.1.2]
- On the Video page, screen reader users are not notified of content updates when the "Show more" button is used, when sections are opened or closed (e.g., "Share"), or when the Sign In lightbox appears. [WCAG 2.0 SC 4.1.2]

Audio and Video Media

- Audio descriptions of visual content in videos are not provided. [WCAG 2.0 SC 1.2.5]

Usability Observations

- On the Home page, rotator controls do not appear to function appropriately with the mouse (content is advanced to the dot prior to the one clicked).

Disclaimer: This high-level evaluation was conducted for the Big Ten Academic Alliance, and represents a good faith effort conducted within a limited time frame. It should not be assumed to be complete or free from error. No warranties or guarantees are implied. UARC is not responsible for direct, indirect, or incidental damages based on this work; its use or interpretation by any individual, group, or organization; or on conditions beyond our control.