

Updated Response to LAA audit of Academic Search (EBSCOhost) – May 2021

EBSCO Information Services (“EBSCO”, “our”, “we”) is pleased to provide an updated response to the 2020 Library Accessibility Alliance audit of EBSCO Academic Search on EBSCOhost. EBSCO strives to provide equal access to all our products, and to provide a positive experience for all users. We monitor U.S. and international accessibility laws and regulations, so that we can take reasonable steps to proactively address accessibility issues in our products.

In the past year, EBSCO has resolved nearly all issues identified in the 2020 audit relating to search results, advanced search, detail record and journal viewer pages. In addition, many issues were resolved beyond the scope of the LAA audit, as identified in other internal and third party audits.

Remaining issues that are scheduled for the current calendar quarter (April-June 2021) relate to the Cited References, Thesaurus/Subjects, and Publications search pages in EBSCOhost. We expect all issues identified on these pages by the Library Accessibility Alliance audit to be resolved during this timeframe.

Unresolved issues identified in the audit relate to semantic tagging of PDF content. EBSCO is working with publishers to promote adoption of tagged PDFs and accessible content generally. There is no concrete timetable for mass adoption of this level of content accessibility. As an aggregator we have limited control over accessibility of full text content. EBSCO is also working to increase coverage of HTML full text journal content, which has superior accessibility.

Thanks again to the Library Accessibility Alliance for this audit. EBSCO welcomes questions and feedback around accessibility at accessibility@ebSCO.com.

Issues fixed

- Headings are not appropriately structured throughout the site. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.3.1](#)]
 - On the Advanced Search page, "Choose Databases" should not be tagged as a heading – Fixed as of April 2021
 - On the Advanced Search page, "Search Options" should be tagged as an h2, not an h3 – Fixed as of April 2021
 - On the Search Results page, "Current Search" should be tagged as a heading (h3) – Fixed as of January 2021
 - On the Search Results page, "Find all my search terms:" should be tagged as an h4, not an h3 – Fixed as of November 2020

Keyboard Support

- On the Advanced Search and Search Results pages, "+" and "-" buttons cannot be activated via keyboard (hitting the Enter key incorrectly submits the search form). [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.1.1](#)] – Fixed as of April 2021
- On the Search Results page, PlumX Metrics tooltips cannot be reached via keyboard. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.1.1](#)] – This feature is deprecated
- On the Search Results page, selections in the Sort dropdown cannot be changed using the arrow keys. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.1.1](#)] – Fixed as of January 2021

- In the PDF Viewer, expanders (e.g., "Full Text Contents", "Choose Another Issue") cannot be reached via keyboard. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.1.1](#)] – Fixed as of January 2021
- Focus does not move to the main menu expander immediately when it is opened. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.3](#)] – Fixed as of March 2021
- The main menu expander incorrectly receives focus at the end of the page. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.3](#)] – Fixed as of March 2021
- Focus incorrectly goes to the page behind the main menu expander when it is open. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.3](#)] – Fixed as of March 2021
- On the Search Results page, focus incorrectly goes to the page behind the Sort, Page Options, and Share lightboxes when viewport width is narrow and page content is not visible. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.3](#)] – Fixed as of January 2021
- On the Cited References page, invisible "PlumX" graphics receive focus. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.3](#)] – This feature is deprecated
- On the Advanced Search, Search Results, Article, and Basic Search pages, focus is not sufficiently visible on the Search button. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.7](#)] – Fixed as of April 2021
- On the Advanced Search, Search Results, and Article pages, focus is not sufficiently visible on the "+" and "-" buttons. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.7](#)] – Fixed as of April 2021
- On the Advanced Search page, focus is not sufficiently visible on radio buttons, checkboxes, or multiple-select boxes. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.7](#)] – Fixed as of April 2021
- On the Search Results, Article, and PDF Viewer pages, focus is not sufficiently visible on "<<"/">>" buttons (to expand or collapse sidebars). [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.7](#)] Fixed as of April 2021
- On the Search Results and Cited Reference pages and in the Choose Databases lightbox on the Advanced Search page, focus is not sufficiently visible on checkboxes. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.7](#)] – Fixed as of April 2021
- On the Search Results page, the page unexpectedly refreshes when Refine Results inputs are modified. This is particularly noticeable and problematic when trying to change both Publication Date limits (start and end) to set a range of years via text inputs. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 3.2.2](#)] – Fixed as of January 2021

Forms and Data Submission

- On the Advanced Search page, the "Create Alert" error ("Please enter search term(s).") is not programmatically associated with inputs, and is not read out when it appears. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 3.3.1](#)] – Fixed as of November 2020
- On the Advanced Search page, "Published Date" input labels are not sufficiently specific (e.g., should be "Start Month" and "End Month"). [[WCAG 2.1 SC 3.3.2](#)] – Fixed as of April 2021
- On the Search Results page, contents of the Page Options dropdown are not programmatically associated with grouping labels (e.g., "Standard" with "Result Format:"). [[WCAG 2.1 SC 3.3.2](#)] – Fixed as of January 2021
- In the Save section on the Article page, dropdowns are not programmatically labeled. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 3.3.2](#)] – Fixed as of January 2021
- In the Save section on the Article page, inputs are not programmatically associated with grouping labels (e.g., "Include when saving:"). [[WCAG 2.1 SC 3.3.2](#)] – Fixed as of January 2021

Images

- "EBSCOhost" image at top of pages does not have appropriate alternative text. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.1.1](#)] – Fixed as of June 2020
- On the Search Results page, the Academic Journal icon is decorative, and should have a null alt attribute (the alternative text is identical to the text that immediately follows the image). [[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.1.1](#)] – Fixed as of January 2021

Color and Visual Characteristics

- Grey symbols and graphics on light grey background (e.g., "+" and "-" buttons on Advanced Search, Search Results, and Article pages) have insufficient contrast. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.4.11](#)] – Fixed as of April 2021
- White text on light grey background (e.g., "Search" button on mouse hover), black text on dark grey (e.g., "Share" button when focused on Search Results page), dark grey text on dark grey (e.g., buttons throughout the site when focused; including "Save" and "Cancel" in Save section on Article page; "Related Records" on Cited References page; "Save Alert", "Cancel Alert", "Save Alert and Create Another" in Create Alert lightbox on Search Results page; "OK" and "Cancel" in Choose Databases lightbox on Advanced Search page), white text on light blue (e.g., "Add to folder" icons on Search Results and Cited References pages) have insufficient contrast. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.4.3](#)] – Fixed as of April 2021

Custom Elements and Dynamic Content

- "EBSCOhost" logo disappears when page content is zoomed or viewport width is reduced. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.4.4](#)] – Fixed as of June 2020
- On the Search Results page, PlumX Metrics tooltips are not dismissable without moving the pointer. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.4.13](#)] – this feature is deprecated
- The current value of the "Languages" dropdown (e.g., "English") is not available to screen readers (the value is skipped in the list) when the full navigation bar is visible (i.e., not when it is accessed via hamburger menu icon). [[WCAG 2.1 SC 4.1.2](#)] – Fixed as of April 2021
- On the Advanced Search, Search Results, and Article pages, incorrect roles are provided for "Select a Field (optional)" and boolean dropdowns (i.e., they are incorrectly identified as buttons), and dropdown options (i.e., they are incorrectly identified as radio buttons). [[WCAG 2.1 SC 4.1.2](#)] – Fixed as of April 2021
- On the Search Results page, incorrect roles are provided Page Options dropdown options (i.e., they are incorrectly identified as links, instead of radio buttons). [[WCAG 2.1 SC 4.1.2](#)] – Fixed as of January 2021
- On the Search Results page, screen readers are not notified when "Add to folder"/"Remove from folder" buttons are activated. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 4.1.2](#)] – Fixed as of January 2021

Issues not fixed

- Headings are not appropriately structured throughout the site. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.3.1](#)]
 - On most pages, invisible, inappropriate headings (h1s and h2s that don't organize content) are present, particularly near the start of pages. – This issue has been fixed on many pages and will be completely fixed by June 2021

- In the Choose Databases lightbox on the Advanced Search page, "Choose Databases" should be tagged as a heading (h1) – This issue will be fixed by June 2021
 - In the Create Alert lightbox on the Search Results page, "Create Alert" should be tagged as a heading (h1) – This issue will be fixed by June 2021
- PDF is untagged, and provides no structural information to assistive technologies. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.3.1](#)] –
 - EBSCO is working with publishers to increase the amount of tagged content available. As an aggregator we have limited control over content. We are also working to increase coverage of HTML full text, which has superior accessibility.
- The language of the PDF is not defined. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 3.1.1](#)] – EBSCO is planning to address this issue in 2022

Keyboard Support

- In the Choose Databases lightbox on the Advanced Search page, database info tooltips cannot be reached via keyboard. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.1.1](#)] - This issue will be fixed by June 2021
- In the Choose Databases lightbox on the Advanced Search page, focus cannot be moved backwards from the start of the lightbox to reach the bottom (i.e., focus does not wrap backwards). [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.3](#)] - This issue will be fixed by June 2021
- On the Search Results page, the Refine Results section should be reached before the list of search results. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.3](#)] – This is an intentional design and will not be fixed. The new generation (roll out 2021-2022) of EBSCOhost uses a different filtering paradigm that has enhanced accessibility based on usability research
- On the Search Results page, Related Information links are incorrectly broken into two links (e.g., "Cited References" and "(37)" are reached separately, instead of "Cited References (37)" being a single link). [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.3](#)] - This issue will be fixed by June 2021
- On the Cited References page, focus incorrectly goes to the page behind the Page Options lightbox when viewport width is narrow and page content is not visible. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.3](#)] - This issue will be fixed by June 2021

Navigation

- On the Search Results and Article pages, incorrect h1 placement (invisible h1s at the start of the page) interfere with the ability to bypass repeated content. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.1](#)] – Partial fixes around heading semantics but core issue is deferred indefinitely. This was done by design for screen reader users. There is additionally a skip link for keyboard users with vision.
- The title of the Cited References page and the Image Preview popup (Search Results page) do not describe page contents. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.2](#)] - This issue will be fixed by June 2021
- The PDF is not titled. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.4.2](#)] - EBSCO is planning to address this issue in 2022

Forms and Data Submission

- On the Search Results page, dropdowns in the Create Alert lightbox are not programmatically labeled. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 3.3.2](#)] - This issue will be fixed by June 2021
- On the Advanced Search, Search Results, and Article pages, dropdown and text input widths change unexpectedly when moving through options in "Select a Field (optional)" and boolean dropdowns. [[WCAG 2.1 SC 3.2.2](#)] – In our judgement this does not qualify as a [change of context](#)

as defined in the 3.2.2 understanding page. It has been noted as a usability issue, but is deferred indefinitely as we prepare to move to a new generation EBSCOhost (roll out 2021-2022).

Images

- On the Search Results page, image previews do not have appropriate alternative text (e.g., "Chart" is not appropriate alternative text for a picture of a book cover). [\[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.1.1\]](#) - This issue will be partially fixed by June 2021. Note that image descriptions are publisher content and we can only provide when available.
- On the Search Results page, images in the Image Preview popup do not have appropriate alternative text. [\[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.1.1\]](#) - This issue will be fixed by June 2021
- On the Article page, "Transaction" publisher logo does not have appropriate alternative text. [\[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.1.1\]](#) - This issue will be fixed by June 2021

Custom Elements and Dynamic Content

- User sessions and pages time out without providing the opportunity to extend time limits. [\[WCAG 2.1 SC 2.2.1\]](#) – This is deferred with no plan to fix for the existing EBSCOhost platform. The new generation EBSCOhost platform (roll out 2021-2022) will be compliant. Currently this can be worked around by changing session settings in EBSCO admin
- In the Choose Databases lightbox on the Advanced Search page, database info tooltips are not dismissable without moving the pointer. [\[WCAG 2.1 SC 1.4.13\]](#) - This issue will be fixed by June 2021
- On the Advanced Search page, the "Chose Databases" lightbox extends past underlying page background. - This issue will be fixed by June 2021

Usability Observations

- On the Cited References page, users cannot undo "Add (1-37)" in a single action (they can add all in one action, but reverting the action requires removing each item individually). - This issue will be fixed by June 2021
- Returning to an Article page from a page other than Search Results (e.g., Cited References) breaks the search inputs at the top of the page (the "Search" button is visible, but search inputs are missing). – We were unable to reproduce this behavior

EBSCO Response to LAA Audit of Academic Search

EBSCO Information Services (“EBSCO”, “our”, “we”) welcomes the audit from the Library Accessibility Alliance. EBSCO strives to provide equal access to all our products, and to provide a positive experience for all users. We monitor U.S. and international accessibility laws and regulations, so that we can take reasonable steps to proactively address accessibility issues in our products. However, readers of this response should know that all the enclosed comments and statements are not, nor should they be considered, standards, guarantees or promises.

In order to understand and continually improve our accessibility, EBSCO works with multiple third-party experts in the accessibility space to evaluate and validate our work. This includes regular audits by unbiased third parties, site reviews by accessibility partners and user research usability studies. This helps us to supplement our internal audits and controls as well as understand and improve the user experience for a range of users with disabilities.

As a result of these processes, most of the issues identified in the audit were items that were already identified in previous reviews. At least one of the issues found in the Library Accessibility Alliance Audit was completed in our current development quarter and is pending release. Nine additional issues were already planned for the next development quarter. Some of the issues identified pertain to WCAG 2.1, which was released in 2018. EBSCO has scheduled our first WCAG 2.1 AA compliance audit for May of 2020. We are working through scheduling with the vendor now. Finally, the report identified issues with a specific page in EBSCOhost (Cited References) that had not been within the scope of our previous audit. These issues have been added to the accessibility tracking backlog. We would like to thank Library Accessibility Alliance for providing this information.

EBSCO takes reasonable steps to conform to current accessibility laws and regulations applicable to its products and services. However, since we are a content aggregator, we do not create or control all content. Most of the content we provide is publisher-supplied. We continue to actively engage with publishers to collaborate on accessibility conformance. Additionally, upon request we can provide remediated documents to customers. Customers may contact accessibility@ebSCO.com for more information about this service, or for other queries relating to access for users with disabilities.

Again, thank you to the Library Accessibility Alliance for providing this invaluable audit information.