Accessiblü

Managed Digital Accessibility Ops

Accessibility Evaluation Report:

Global Health

December 18, 2025

Conducted by: Accessiblü, LLC

For: Library Accessibility Alliance (LAA)

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Summary of Accessibility Findings for Global Health

Accessiblü conducted a high-level accessibility evaluation of the Global Health learning platform from CABI Digital Library to assess its usability for individuals with disabilities. The review was conducted using the JAWS and NVDA screen readers, keyboard-only navigation, and manual inspection for conformance to select WCAG 2.2 AA success criteria.

The Global Health platform serves as a comprehensive resource for public health research and education, offering extensive content collections and sophisticated search capabilities. Our evaluation identified accessibility barriers that may present challenges for users relying on assistive technologies, alongside areas where the platform already supports inclusive access. These findings represent strategic improvement opportunities that would enhance the research experience for all users while strengthening the platform's educational mission.

Key Findings

Our evaluation revealed several areas where accessibility improvements would benefit users of assistive technologies, particularly those using screen readers and keyboard-only navigation. While these issues may present challenges for some users, they represent systematic improvement opportunities rather than fundamental design flaws. Addressing these concerns would enhance the platform's accessibility for persons with disabilities while improving the overall user experience for all learners.

Top 3 Issues Identified

1. Heading Structure Enhancement

a. The platform's heading hierarchy begins with H6 and includes non-sequential heading levels that may create navigation challenges for screen reader users.

b. Impact: Users who rely on heading navigation may experience difficulty understanding page structure and locating content efficiently.

c. WCAG Success Criteria: 1.3.1 Info and Relationships (A), 2.4.6 Headings and Labels (AA)

2. Navigation Menu State Announcements

a. Dropdown menus and collapsible sections do not consistently announce their expanded or collapsed state to screen readers.

b. Impact: Users with visual impairments may not understand the current state of interactive elements, leading to confusion during navigation.

c. WCAG Success Criteria: 4.1.2 Name, Role, Value (A)

3. Form Element State Communication

a. Some form controls, particularly in the advanced search interface, do not clearly communicate their availability or constraints to assistive technology users.

b. Impact: Users may attempt to interact with unavailable controls or miss important form functionality.

c. WCAG Success Criteria: 3.3.2 Labels or Instructions (A), 4.1.2 Name, Role, Value (A)

Disabilities Impacted

Blind and Low-Vision Users

Issues: Non-sequential heading structure, inconsistent landmark regions, and missing state information for interactive elements may impact efficient screen reader navigation.

Impact: Users may need additional time to locate and understand content organization, potentially affecting their ability to efficiently research and access learning materials.

Users with Motor Disabilities

Issues: Some dropdown menus and interactive elements may present challenges for users relying on keyboard-only navigation or alternative input devices.

Impact: Keyboard users may encounter difficulty activating certain interface elements or understanding their current state without visual confirmation.

Neurodiverse Users

Issues: Inconsistent navigation patterns and unclear form element states may create cognitive load challenges for users with attention or processing differences.

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Impact: Users may experience increased difficulty understanding interface expectations and maintaining focus on learning objectives due to navigation uncertainties.

Business Advantages of Addressing Accessibility

Legal and Risk Management

Implementing accessibility improvements provides significant legal protection and risk reduction. ADA compliance reduces exposure to litigation, while Section 508 compliance ensures eligibility for government contracts and federal funding opportunities. Taking a proactive approach to accessibility demonstrates due diligence and good faith efforts to serve all users, which courts increasingly consider when evaluating accessibility lawsuits.

Market Expansion and Revenue Growth

Twenty-six percent of US adults have some type of disability, representing a significant and underserved market segment. Accessibility improvements benefit all users, not just those with disabilities. Enhanced keyboard navigation improves mobile usability, better semantic markup boosts SEO performance, and clearer form labels reduce user errors across all demographics. These improvements create a more robust and marketable platform.

Institutional Benefits for Academic Libraries

For academic libraries and educational institutions, accessibility improvements directly support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and goals. An accessible Global Health platform enhances institutional reputation as an inclusive, forward-thinking organization and demonstrates commitment to serving all community members. This can create competitive advantages in securing grants and funding that prioritize accessibility, while positioning the institution as a leader in serving diverse student populations.

Return on Investment (ROI) for E-Learning Platforms

Implementation ROI: Accessibility improvements often enhance overall platform stability and performance. Better semantic markup and code structure reduce long-term maintenance costs, while improved user experience decreases support tickets and user frustration. Enhanced search engine optimization through proper semantic markup increases platform discoverability.

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User Engagement ROI: Research completion rates improve through better navigation and comprehension features. Higher user satisfaction scores result across all user groups, not just those with disabilities. Reduced cognitive load benefits all learners, and enhanced mobile experience increases platform usage patterns.

Cost Avoidance: Implementing accessibility improvements now prevents expensive retrofitting when issues are discovered later. It reduces potential legal fees and settlement costs from accessibility lawsuits, while avoiding the risk of losing users to more accessible competing platforms.

Page-Specific Findings and Impact Analysis

The following section lists the accessibility opportunities by Page and WCAG criteria, describing their impact on users and the benefits that improvements would provide.

Global Health Main Landing Page

Opportunity Area	WCAG Success Criteria	Description	Example
Alternative Text for Images	1.1.1 Non-text Content (A)	Several decorative images and icons lack appropriate alternative text descriptions or are not properly marked as decorative.	Statistical graphics and icons announced with generic descriptions rather than meaningful alternatives.
Heading Structure Organization	1.3.1 Info and Relationships (A)	Page heading hierarchy begins with H6 instead of H1, creating navigation challenges for screen reader users.	'Global Health' announced as H6, followed by 'Global Health' as H1, then H3 headings.
Interactive Element States	4.1.2 Name, Role, Value (A)	Menu buttons and dropdown controls do not consistently announce their expanded or collapsed states.	Browse menu opens without announcing state change; escape key functionality not clearly communicated.

Impact Summary:

Addressing these opportunities would significantly enhance the user experience for individuals using screen readers and keyboard navigation. Improved heading structure would enable more efficient page navigation, while enhanced landmark regions would provide better context for page organization. Proper alternative text for images would ensure all users receive equivalent information, and clearer interactive element states would reduce confusion during navigation.

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Global Health Main Landing Page Screenshot

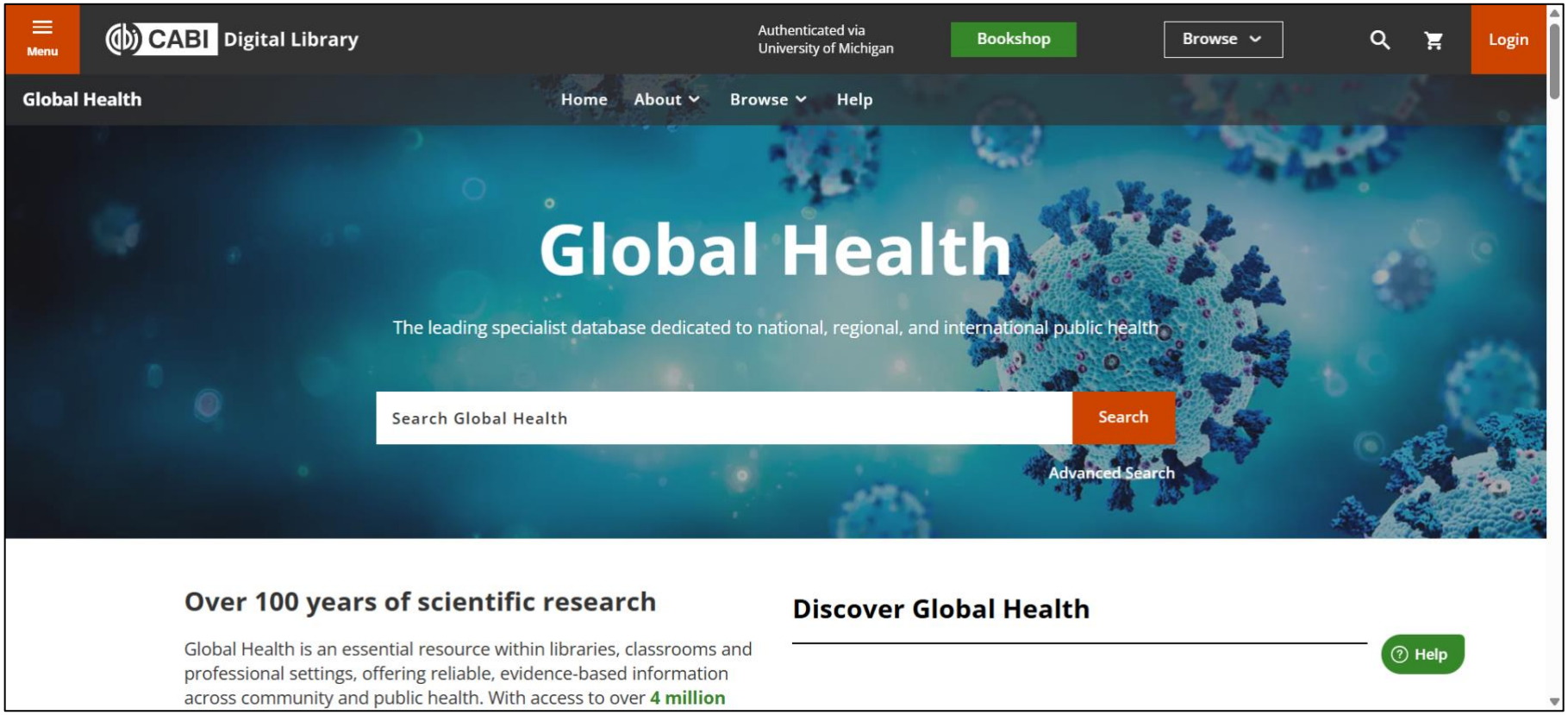

Figure 1. Global Health main landing page featuring search interface, navigation elements, and informational content sections.

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Search Results Page

Opportunity Area	WCAG Success Criteria	Description	Example
Filter Interface Organization	1.3.1 Info and Relationships (A)	Applied filters and search refinement options could benefit from improved structure and labeling for assistive technology users.	Filter sections may lack clear headings or groupings that help users understand available refinement options.
Search Result Navigation	2.4.3 Focus Order (A)	Focus management through search results and filtering options follows logical sequence but could be enhanced for efficiency.	Tabbing through results, filters, and pagination controls follows expected patterns.
Content Type Indicators	2.4.4 Link Purpose (A)	Links to different content types (Abstract records, Articles, Books) could provide clearer context about destination and content format.	Result type tabs show content counts but could better communicate purpose and format expectations.
Search Tools Communication	3.3.2 Labels or Instructions (A)	Search refinement tools and thesaurus links could provide clearer instructions about their functionality and benefits.	'CABI Thesaurus' link purpose and 'Save Search' functionality may need clearer explanations.

Impact Summary:

Enhancing the search results interface would improve research efficiency for all users. Better organization of filter options would help users quickly refine large result sets, while clearer content type indicators would set appropriate expectations before accessing materials. Improved search tool communication would help users take advantage of advanced features like thesaurus integration and search saving capabilities. These improvements would create a more intuitive research workflow that benefits both novice and expert users of the platform.

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Search Results Page Screenshot

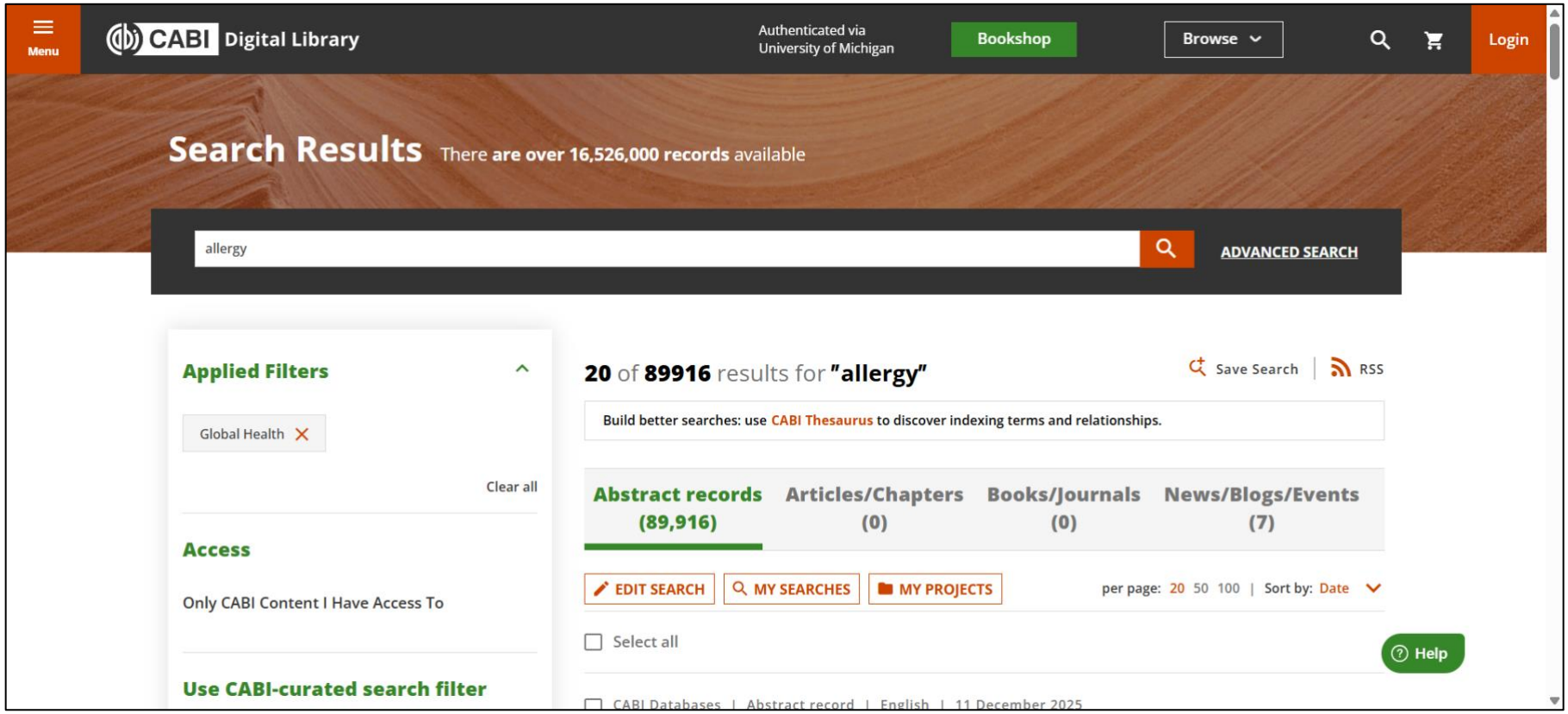

Figure 2. Search results interface displaying comprehensive filtering options and research refinement tools.

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Advanced Search Page

Opportunity Area	WCAG Success Criteria	Description	Example
Form Element Boundaries	1.3.1 Info and Relationships (A)	Tab panels do not clearly announce their end boundaries, making it difficult for screen reader users to understand when they've moved to sidebar content.	Advanced search form flows into sidebar content without clear structural separation announcements.
Field Label Associations	3.3.2 Labels or Instructions (A)	Some form fields rely on placeholder text rather than proper labels, and certain date range controls lack clear instructions.	Date selection combo boxes announced as 'Select' without context about expected input format or constraints.
Focus Management Clarity	2.4.7 Focus Visible (AA)	Some dropdown interactions may activate without clear visual indication, creating confusion between intended and actual focus location.	Database selection dropdown navigates options without visible focus indicator matching screen reader announcement.
Control State Communication	4.1.2 Name, Role, Value (A)	Form controls that become unavailable based on other selections do not consistently communicate their disabled state or the conditions for activation.	Date range combo boxes announced as 'unavailable' without explanation of required prerequisites.

Impact Summary:

Improving the advanced search interface would significantly enhance the precision research capabilities that power users rely on. Clearer form boundaries would help users understand the scope of available options, while better field labeling would reduce errors and improve completion rates. Enhanced focus management would create more predictable interactions, and improved state communication would help users understand form dependencies. These enhancements would make advanced search features more discoverable and usable for researchers who need sophisticated search capabilities.

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Advanced Search Page Screenshot

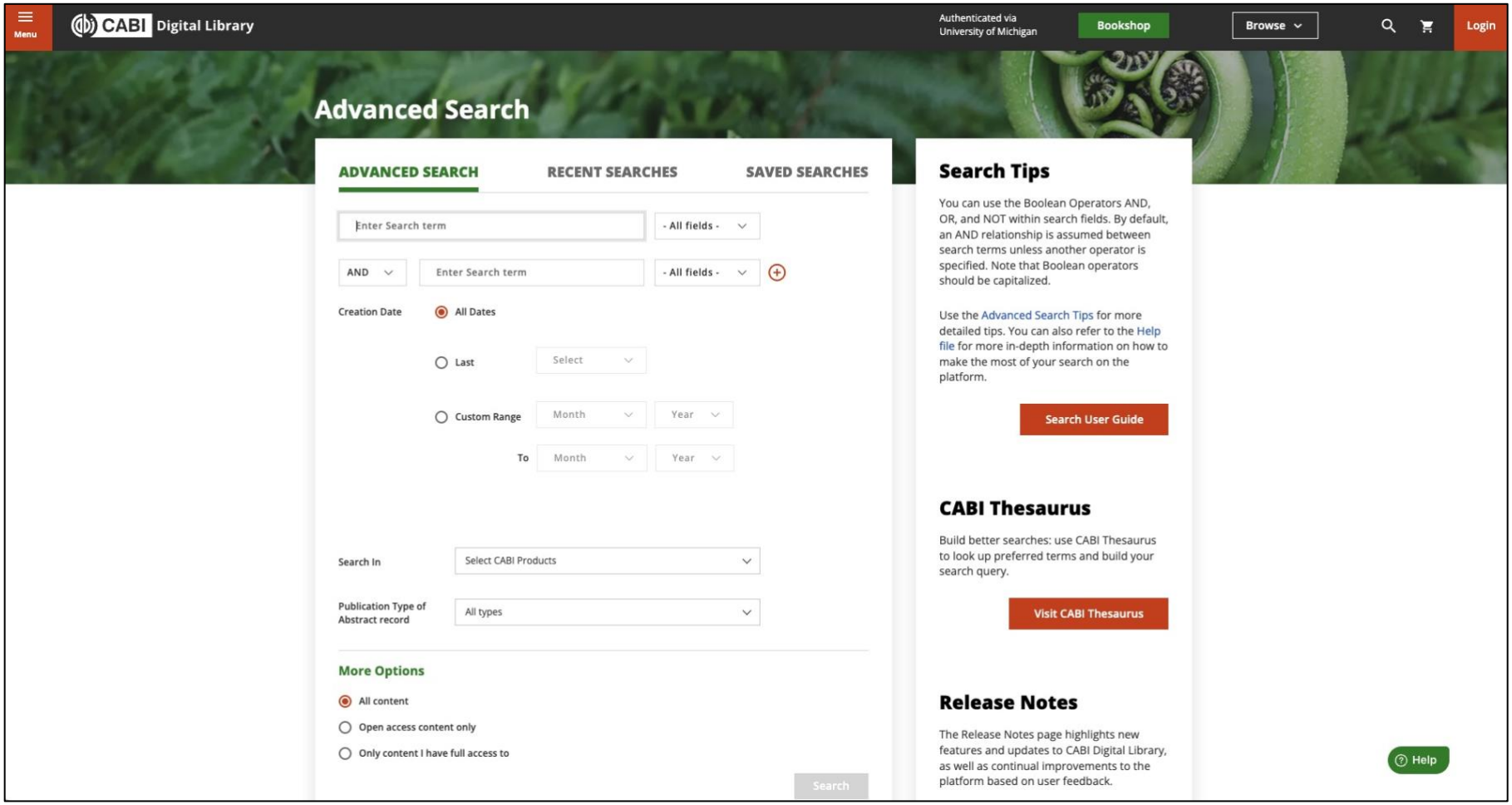

Figure 3. Advanced search interface with comprehensive filtering and refinement options for precision research.

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Individual Resource Page

Opportunity Area	WCAG Success Criteria	Description	Example
Content Structure Organization	1.3.1 Info and Relationships (A)	Article metadata and content sections could benefit from improved heading structure to help users navigate between abstract, author information, and access options.	Author affiliations and contact information presented in continuous text without structural markers.
Action Button Context	2.4.4 Link Purpose (A)	Access and sharing buttons could provide clearer context about their functionality and any access requirements or restrictions.	'FREE FULL TEXT' and sharing buttons may need additional context about format, requirements, or restrictions.
Contact Information Accessibility	3.3.2 Labels or Instructions (A)	Author email addresses and institutional contacts could be formatted to improve screen reader pronunciation and interaction.	Email links may need formatting adjustments for clearer pronunciation by assistive technology.
Navigation Context Clarity	2.4.8 Location (AA)	Breadcrumb navigation and 'Go back' functionality could provide clearer context about user location within the search and browsing flow.	'Go back' link without specific context about destination or search state preservation.

Impact Summary:

Enhancing the individual resource interface would improve the research workflow for users accessing specific content. Better content organization would help users quickly locate relevant information like author details and access options. Clearer action button context would reduce confusion about access requirements and sharing capabilities. Improved contact information formatting would facilitate professional networking and collaboration. These improvements would create a more efficient content consumption experience that supports both casual reading and detailed research activities.

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Individual Resource Page Screenshot

Figure 4. ˇIndividual resource page displaying comprehensive metadata, author information, and multiple access options for research content.

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Final Thoughts and Recommendations

The Global Health platform demonstrates a solid foundation for delivering comprehensive public health research content to academic and professional audiences. The platform's extensive content collection, sophisticated search capabilities, and thoughtful information organization create significant value for researchers and students. The accessibility opportunities identified in this evaluation represent strategic investments that would enhance this strong foundation while expanding access to underserved user communities.

Most of the accessibility barriers we identified are systematic rather than fundamental, meaning they can be addressed through coordinated implementation efforts without requiring major architectural changes. The improvements would not only benefit users with disabilities but would also enhance the overall user experience through more predictable navigation, clearer interface communication, and improved search functionality.

Complimentary Consultation Included

As part of this evaluation, Accessiblü's partnership with the LAA includes one hour of complimentary consulting with the team that conducted this evaluation. This session can be used to discuss implementation priorities, review technical approaches, or address questions about specific recommendations. To schedule this consultation, contact Jeff Rodgers directly at jeff@accessiblu.com.

Disclaimer

Accessiblü prepared this report as a high-level accessibility evaluation of the Global Health platform. The evaluation utilized industry-standard testing methodologies, including screen reader testing (JAWS 2025), keyboard-only navigation, and manual inspection for select WCAG 2.2 AA success criteria.

This report does not represent a comprehensive WCAG compliance audit and should not be seen as a certification of accessibility compliance. While we have identified significant accessibility opportunities and usability enhancement possibilities, this evaluation was limited in scope and may not encompass all accessibility considerations on the platform.

No Legal Liability:

Accessiblü offers this report for informational purposes only. It assumes no legal responsibility for accessibility violations or compliance failures resulting from its use. Organizations seeking formal certification should conduct a comprehensive audit and user testing with individuals with disabilities.

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Limitations of Testing:

This evaluation was conducted at a specific time, and platform updates may have occurred after testing was completed. Additionally, while automated tools and expert reviews were utilized, real-world users with disabilities determine the true measure of accessibility. We recommend involving users with disabilities in testing and validation processes to ensure the effectiveness of any implemented improvements.