

The following excerpt is from “Accessible Web Sites” (ISBN 1-90415-100-0).

Accessibility - Usability Synergy

Accessibility is a subset of a more general pursuit: usability. Put simply, usability means designing a user interface that is effective, efficient, and satisfying. Important elements of web site usability are:

Learnability: Can visitors use the web site effectively the first time they visit it without becoming frustrated?

Memorability: Will visitors remember how to use the web site the next time?

Effectiveness: Can visitors easily navigate through the web site, determine what to do next, and understand the content? Is the design consistent and predictable?

Efficiency: Can visitors find what they need and accomplish their goal in a reasonable amount of time?

Satisfaction: Do visitors have a good feeling about using the web site? Will they use it again? Is the content presented effectively?

Certainly all of these usability elements are good for accessibility, as well. In the context of usability, accessibility means designing a user interface to be effective, efficient, and satisfying for more people in more situations. However, satisfaction is much less an issue with accessibility. Accessibility is more concerned with making web sites perceivable, operable, and understandable. That web interaction is effective and efficient becomes more important when it is part of education and employment.