

# Is your Website a Closed Door?

Submitted by: The Wolf Network Ltd

Monday, 19 July 2004

---

85% of UK websites today are not accessible to web users with sight difficulties, according to the Royal National Institute for the Blind,. Liam Wickham, editor of the influential Wolf Talk internet ezine, observes, "The internet presents a window on the world for all of us who use it. Website designers have an obligation to advise their clients how to make their sites accessible to the widest range of people."

He recently conducted an interview with Lis Angle, web accessibility consultant of the RNIB. "Demonstrating your commitment to helping customers, clients and investors can make a tremendous difference to the way in which your company is perceived by the public. Experience of closed doors on websites can have a negative influence on the way people perceive your company or organisation," she said.

Businesses that provide services to the public already know by now that, in order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), they must provide access for the disabled. However the internet has lagged a long way behind in making websites as accessible as real-time shops and offices.

Blind or sight-impaired people are able to surf disability access enabled websites using features built into regular browsers, like Microsoft Internet Explorer, or by using specialised browsers which read out the content on each page. If a website has not incorporated specific disability access codes into its design, these features will, quite simply, not work.

"Creating a new accessible website is far easier than modifying an existing website. Making the necessary changes to code and site architecture is a skilled job, especially if the client wants to maintain the original look of the site. Fortunately for more complex sites, there are acceptable levels of compliance - you do not have to meet every guideline. Modifying a website to fit compliancy guidelines is a positive experience for any company. Not only can it be achieved with no disruption to services, but once in place there is the added benefit of a better structured architecture and layout," explains Wickham.

Lis Angle adds the bottom line, "The law has been in force since 1999. Websites should have been complying since then, and websites should be complying now! - if they are not they may be in breach of the DDA, which could lead to high profile, embarrassing court proceedings."

--END --

- NOTES FOR EDITORS -

Wolf Talk has been published by the Wolf Network Ltd since 1999. The free ezine goes out weekly to businesses all over the UK, covering internet news, views, articles, tips and tricks.

<http://www.wolfnetwork.net/wolftalkezine.htm>

The Wolf Network Ltd has been building quality websites for a diverse range of clients since 1997. Its site is triple A access compliant, and offers a free accessibility test for companies which wish to check

if their own website is compliant with the DDA.  
<http://www.wolfnetwork.net/disabilityaccess.htm>

-- CONTACT --

For further information, full text of the interview or other enquiries contact:

Jan Shepherd, Marketing Manager, The Wolf Network Ltd  
Claygate House, 150 Mickleburgh Hill, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 6JZ  
Tel: 01227 370546  
Fax: 01227 741864  
[jan@wolfnetwork.net](mailto:jan@wolfnetwork.net)  
[www.wolfnetwork.net](http://www.wolfnetwork.net)