



Response to the LAA assessment of JSTOR

Feb 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

ITHAKA (parent of JSTOR) thanks the Library Accessibility Alliance for their assessment of JSTOR.org, including the home page, search results, and an item detail page. JSTOR is committed to ensuring digital accessibility for persons with disabilities. We apply Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and Section 508 standards to improve the user experience for everyone.

In recent years, we've conducted several training sessions with our platform teams as well as hosted an organization-wide presentation about why web accessibility matters, who it impacts, and the types of barriers that they may encounter on the web. We're including accessibility annotations in our design-to-dev handoffs, using accessibility checklists earlier in our development lifecycle, utilize axe-core test suites in our CI/CD pipeline, and have an Accessibility Guild that serves as a champions network to advocate accessibility within each of those teams. The accessibility team has been contributing to the federated model of [Pharos](#), [JSTOR's design system](#) to ensure that accessibility is baked in so consumers of this design system are able to create accessible products more efficiently.

We've also recently published our most recent [Accessibility Conformance Report](#) based on the International edition of the VPAT v2.5 that includes our conformance to WCAG 2.2 AA, revised Section 508, and EN 301 549 criteria. This version makes a further distinction between the web platform and the Content that is hosted on JSTOR. For more information, visit our [Accessibility Policy](#) to learn more about our approach and steps taken to ensure access to all our users.

Regarding the results of the high-level assessment taken in 2023, we've taken action to remediate the issues found and have provided an update on each below. The following will show the status of all identified issues from the previous assessment along with notes about why something is or isn't fixed.

Thank you again for your dedication to equitable access to library services and electronic resources! ITHAKA welcomes additional feedback or questions to accessibility@ithaka.org or support@jstor.org.

Top 3 problems for the JSTOR Platform:

1. Name, Role, Value - **FIXED** - All items identified in the assessment have been fixed, both by a revision to the layout of the pages that removed the issue as well as updating our design system to better provide accessible names to interactive elements.
2. Info and Relationships - **FIXED** - All items identified in report have been fixed, with one exception for the filter items on the Search Result Page and a ticket is currently in the relevant team's backlog for a fix.
3. Parsing - **NO LONGER APPLICABLE** - This is no longer relevant as we've adopted WCAG 2.2 and this success criteria has been deprecated.

Global Accessibility findings

Automated findings using Axe

Issues found through automated testing come from the Axe plugin, an open source accessibility testing tool that is available for Chrome, Firefox and Edge. Details here: <https://www.deque.com/products/axe/>.

- ~~1. **SC 1.3.1 A** - Info and Relationships - Google language selector is set to hidden but contains focusable elements~~
 - ~~a. **FIXED** - Google translate widget removed~~
- ~~2. **SC 4.1.1 A** - Parsing - Document has multiple elements referenced with ARIA with the same id attribute: pds-menu~~
 - ~~a. **FIXED** - Issue no longer present~~
- ~~3. **SC 4.1.1 A** - Parsing - Document has multiple static elements with the same id attribute: pds~~
 - ~~a. **FIXED** - Issue no longer present~~

Additional manual findings using NVDA screen reader

- ~~1. **SC 1.1.1 A** - Non-text Content - Washington logo alternative text does not accurately describe the logo~~
 - ~~a. **FIXED** - Logo now has appropriate alternative text~~
- ~~2. **SC 2.1.1 A** - Keyboard - Submenus cannot be reached with the keyboard. When spacebar or return key are pressed to open the menu the first item in the dropdown menu is activated taking the user away from the page.~~
 - ~~a. **FIXED** - In all instances, the dropdown menu has been refactored to allow users to activate the top level to expand the menu, instead of navigating to a linked destination.~~
- ~~3. **SC 4.1.2 A** - Name, Role, Value - Washington Logo menu does not have a role.~~
 - ~~a. **FIXED** - The "provider designation statement" (PDS) modal trigger has the role of button~~
- ~~4. **SC 4.1.2 A** - Name, Role, Value - The logo opens a menu but lacks the expand/collapse state~~
 - ~~a. **FIXED** - When activating the PDS trigger, this opens a modal rather than an~~

inline dialog. Focus is moved to the modal and is trapped appropriately; users shouldn't encounter the trigger in the "expanded" state.

1. Landing Page

Source: <https://www-jstor-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/>

Test case: Test initial interface/landing page to ensure menus, search box, images, icons, etc. are accessible.

Automated findings using Axe

- ~~1. **SC 4.1.2 A** – Name, Role, Value – Arrow buttons use an invalid aria attribute aria-controls="thematic-carousel" and aria-controls="hero-slider"~~
 - FIXED** - The slider has been refactored to remove the invalid ARIA
- ~~2. **SC 4.1.2 A** – Name, Role, Value – Hero slider does not have a role but uses the aria-roledescription attribute.~~
 - FIXED** - The slider has been refactored to remove the invalid ARIA
- ~~3. **SC 1.3.1 A** – Info and Relationships – Hero Slider and book slider have the set with a role of group which is not allowed~~
 - FIXED** - The slider has been refactored to remove the invalid ARIA

Additional manual findings using NVDA screen reader

- ~~1. **SC 1.1.1 A** – Text Alternatives – The book images in the book slider are repeat info and are decorative so they should be set with alt=""~~
 - PARTIALLY FIXED / IN PROGRESS** - Working on a fix via [Github \(#353\)](#) to create an image card that doesn't include a link around the image. Currently, the image requires alternative text to calculate the wrapping links link text / accessible name.

2. Search Results – Algae Blooms

Source: <https://www-jstor-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/action/doBasicSearch?Query=Algae+Blooms>

Test case: From the initial interface, perform a search of "all content". Search for: Algae Blooms. Test search results page, including Refine Results – Access Type: Content I can use, Book Chapters. Test Sort by option by changing Relevance to Newest.

Automated findings using Axe

- ~~1. **SC 4.1.2 A** – Name, Role, Value – From and To text fields do not have a role of textfield and use the aria-label attribute.~~
 - FIXED** - These fields now have appropriate accessible names.
- ~~2. **SC 4.1.2 A** – Name, Role, Value – Save buttons do not have a role and they use the aria-label attribute.~~
 - FIXED** - Design system Pharos was updated to allow for appropriate usage

of ARIA to give valid accessible names.

Additional manual findings using NVDA screen reader

1. ~~SC 1.3.1 A Group Related Form Elements~~ Access type, primary source content, and academic content have a group label but the checkboxes and radio buttons are not associated with the group labels.
 - a. **PARTIALLY FIXED** - A fix for this was implemented, but introduced a new issue related to the same SC. There is now a UL element that has been reassigned as role="group" which leaves the List Item children without that list semantics (orphaned child elements).
2. ~~SC 2.4.6 AA Descriptive Labels~~ Multiple download, save, and cite buttons which all serve a purpose specific to the search result but they have the same accessible name. Accessible names need to include the book or article title. For example "Download Relation of Phosphorus Content to Algae Blooms"
 - a. **NOT NEEDED** - Each item on the search results page is wrapped within a List Item element along with a Heading that will aid in communicating the grouped nature of each item and its association with the available actions, Download, Save, etc.

3. Search Results Details

Source: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25032921>

Test case: Select a book chapter/result from the search results page. Test the book chapter landing page including menus, buttons, and embedded reader.

Automated findings using Axe

1. ~~SC 4.1.2 A Name, Role, Value~~ Book page is contained in a DIV with no role set and has an aria-label. Role must be set to use an aria-label.
 - a. **FIXED** - The PDF viewer now has a valid named region, "item content viewer".
2. ~~SC 4.1.2 A Name, Role, Value~~ Save button does not have a role set but has an aria-label. The save button needs role="button" added.
 - a. **FIXED** - Update to Pharos design system allowed buttons to properly add ARIA attributes.
3. ~~SC 4.1.2 A Name, Role, Value~~ Info button does not have accessible name. An aria label needs added to the button.
 - a. **FIXED** - Update to item detail page removed this issue from being present.
4. ~~SC 4.1.2 A Name, Role, Value~~ Question mark buttons do not have accessible name. An aria label needs added to the buttons.
 - a. **FIXED** - Update to item detail page removed this issue from being present.
5. ~~SC 4.1.2 A Name, Role, Value~~ Magnifying glass button does not have an accessible name. An aria label needs added to the button.
 - a. **FIXED** - Update to item detail page removed this issue from being present.
6. ~~SC 4.1.2 A Name, Role, Value~~ Copy button does not have an accessible name.

~~An aria label needs added to the button.~~

- a. **FIXED** - Update to item detail page removed this issue from being present.

4. PDF download of Book Chapter

Source: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/25032921.pdf>

Test case: Quickly test PDF download of Book Chapter.

Automated findings using Axe

1. Error while parsing the PDF Document (Operator 'k' not allowed in this current state.)
 - a. **IN PROGRESS** - Confirmed, may have issue with addition of cover letter, still investigating with platform teams.

5. Advanced Search

Source: <https://www.jstor-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/action/showAdvancedSearch>

Test case: Test Advanced Search link if time

Automated findings using Axe

- ~~1. **SC 1.3.1 A** - Info and Relationships - Second Keyword text field is missing a label~~
 - a. **FIXED** - Each text field has a unique accessible name.
- ~~2. **SC 4.1.2 A** - Name, Role, Value - Add a search box button is missing a proper role. Should be set as role="button"~~
 - a. **FIXED** - Issue no longer present.