

Accessibility Evaluation Report: Kanopy Platform

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Summary of Kanopy Accessibility Findings

Accessiblü conducted a high-level accessibility evaluation of the Kanopy streaming platform to assess its usability for individuals with disabilities. This evaluation follows up on previous testing conducted in 2021 to determine if the identified issues have been resolved. The review was conducted using the JAWS screen reader, keyboard-only navigation, and manual inspection for conformance to select WCAG 2.2 AA success criteria.

Kanopy Key Findings

The Kanopy platform continues to present several accessibility barriers that impact users relying on assistive technologies. While improvements have been made since the 2021 evaluation, several critical issues persist, especially regarding keyboard navigation, proper structure, and screen reader compatibility.

Screen readers and keyboard-only users will encounter significant challenges when navigating the site, searching for videos, using filtering options, and accessing video content. These issues create unnecessary barriers that make the platform challenging to use independently for people with disabilities.

Addressing these concerns would significantly improve the experience for persons with disabilities and users of assistive technology by providing equal access to educational and entertainment content through the Kanopy service.

Top 3 Issues Identified

1. Inaccessible Browse Menu Navigation

- a. The browse menu has inconsistent keyboard navigation, with different behaviors when using tab versus arrow keys, and a partial keyboard trap where users can get stuck in the menu.
- b. Impact: Users with motor disabilities who rely on keyboard navigation and screen reader users with visual impairments cannot effectively navigate the browse section.
- c. WCAG Success Criteria: 2.1.1 Keyboard (A), 2.1.2 No Keyboard Trap (A), 4.1.2 Name, Role, Value (A)

2. Improper Carousel Implementation

- a. Carousels lack proper region announcements, list structure, and slide selection capabilities. Interactive elements within carousels often lack proper labeling.
- b. Impact: Screen reader users cannot understand carousel content organization or efficiently navigate through carousel items. Users with cognitive disabilities may struggle to understand the carousel content and controls.
- c. WCAG Success Criteria: 1.3.1 Info and Relationships (A), 4.1.2 Name, Role, Value (A), 2.4.6 Headings and Labels (AA)

3. Inadequate Filter and Search Results Functionality

- a. Search filters lack a submit button, automatically update results without notification, and are not properly structured as form controls with appropriate grouping.
- b. **Impact:** Screen reader and keyboard-only users cannot easily apply filters or understand when search results have changed. Users with cognitive disabilities may be confused by the automatic updating of content.
- c. WCAG Success Criteria: 3.2.2 On Input (A), 4.1.3 Status Messages (AA), 1.3.1 Info and Relationships (A)

Disabilities Impacted

Blind and Low-Vision Users

- **Issues:** Missing alt-text for images, improperly structured headings, inaccessible carousels, unclear button labels, and lack of status messages when content changes.
- **Impact:** Screen reader users cannot understand the meaning of graphics and images throughout the site. The lack of proper heading structure makes navigating the content difficult. Automatic content changes without notifications make it challenging to understand when new search results or filtered content appears.

Users with Motor Disabilities

- **Issues:** Partial keyboard trap in browse menu, inconsistent keyboard navigation patterns, lack of visible focus indicators in some areas, and automatic content updates without a submit button.
- **Impact:** Keyboard-only users may get trapped in certain sections of the site, and inconsistent keyboard navigation patterns make it difficult to predict how to move through the interface. The lack of a filter submit button requires unnecessary tab navigation to apply changes.

Neurodiverse Users

- **Issues:** Inconsistent heading structure, lack of clear status messages for content changes, and poor organization of related content within proper containers.
- **Impact:** Poor content structure and organization may disorient users with cognitive disabilities. The lack of clear feedback when content changes makes it difficult to track the results of user actions. Inconsistent patterns across the site increase the cognitive load required to use the platform.

Page-Specific Findings and Impact Analysis

The following section lists the accessibility findings by URL and WCAG violations and describes their impact on users.

Kanopy Homepage

<https://www.kanopy.com/en/umich>

Issue	WCAG Success Criteria	Description	Example
Missing Skip Link	2.4.1 Bypass Blocks (A)	No skip link is provided to bypass repetitive navigation.	Users must tab through all navigation items on every page to reach main content.
Auto-playing Content	2.2.2 Pause, Stop, Hide (A)	Content auto-plays without easily accessible controls.	Video content begins playing automatically without obvious controls to pause.
Improper Heading Structure	1.3.1 Info and Relationships (A)	Heading levels are inconsistent and do not follow a logical hierarchy.	H1 is followed by H3, skipping H2, making content structure unclear.
Carousel Accessibility	4.1.2 Name, Role, Value (A)	Carousels lack proper region announcements and controls are not properly labeled.	Previous/next controls in carousels are announced simply as "button" without clear purpose.
Missing Alt Text	1.1.1 Non-text Content (A)	Many graphics and images lack meaningful alternative text.	Film thumbnails are announced only as "graphic" or with filename instead of descriptive content.

Impact Summary:

Screen reader users may struggle to navigate the homepage efficiently due to the lack of a skip link and proper heading structure. The unlabeled carousel controls and missing alt text make it difficult to understand the available content. Keyboard users may become frustrated by the need to tab through all navigation elements to reach the main content, and the auto-playing content may be disruptive for users with cognitive disabilities.

Login and Home Page Screenshots

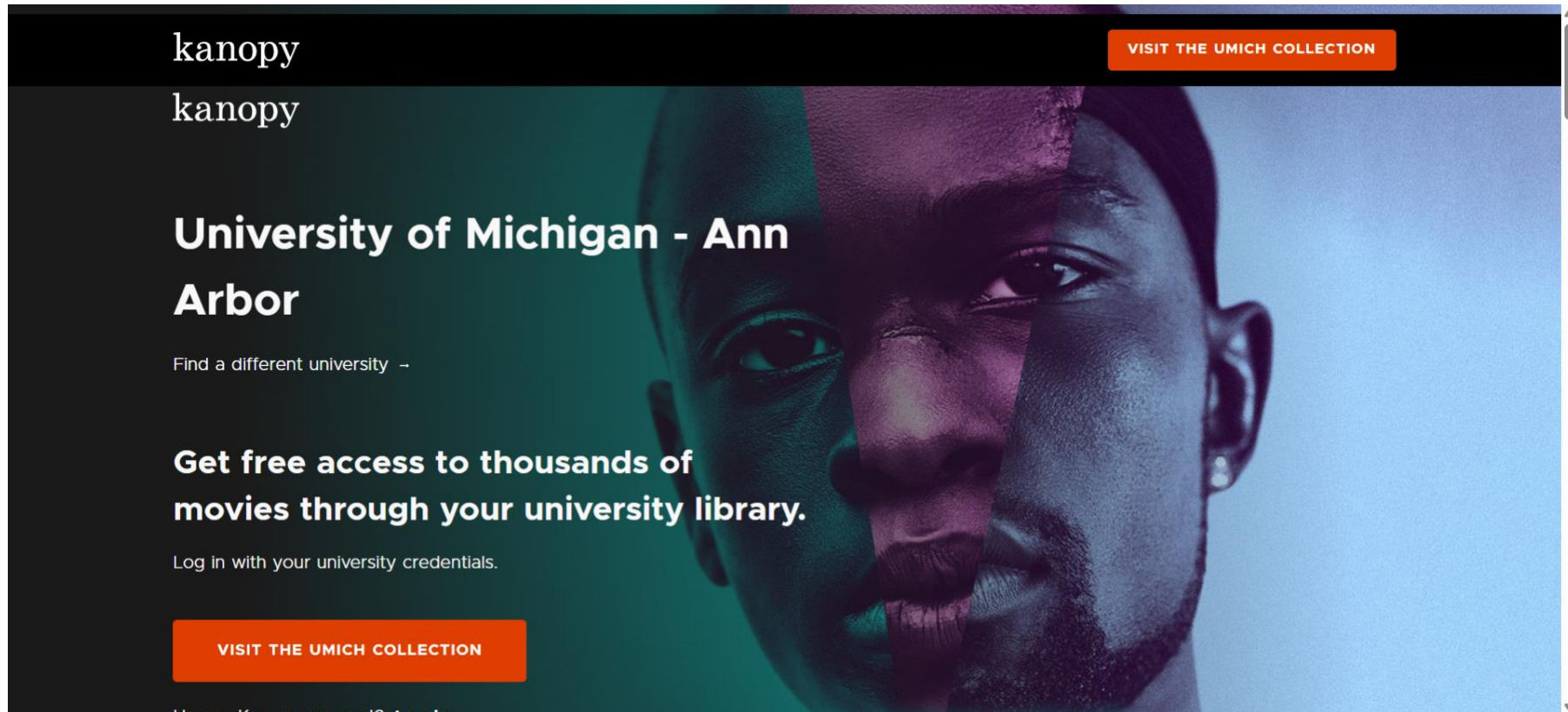


Figure 1. Login page for the Kanopy platform at UMICH Collection.

Kanopy Home Page

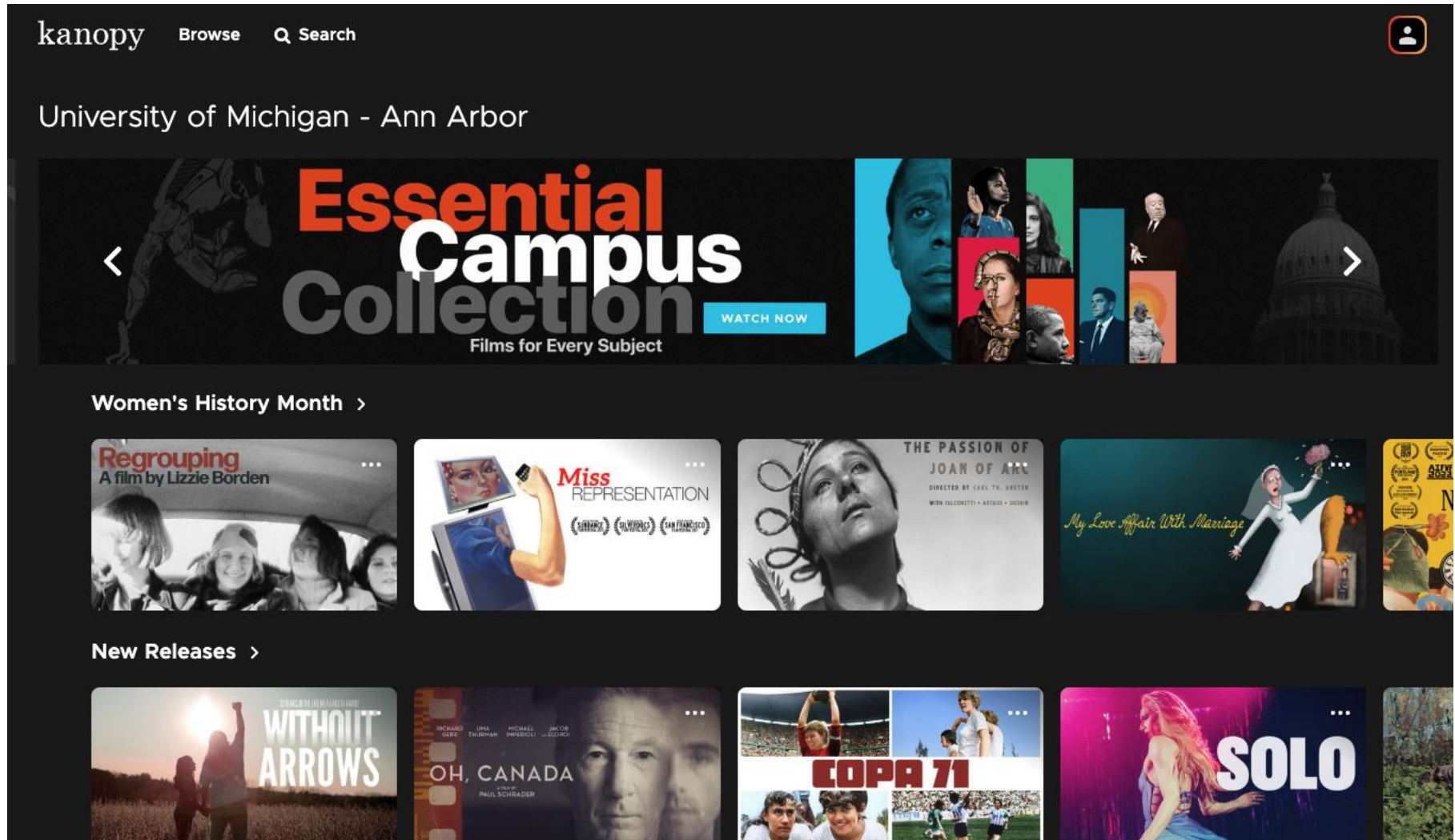


Figure 2. The UMICH Kanopy homepage features browse and search options, image carousels, and various topics.

Kanopy Search Page

(<https://www.kanopy.com/en/umich/s?query=Father%20Brown>)

Issue	WCAG Success Criteria	Description	Example
Filter Controls Implementation	1.3.1 Info and Relationships (A)	Filter options are not properly implemented as form controls with appropriate grouping.	Language filters should be radio buttons within a fieldset but are implemented as clickable elements without proper structure.
No Submit Button	3.2.2 On Input (A)	Filters automatically update results without user confirmation or a submit button.	Users must tab away from filters to see updated results rather than explicitly submitting their selections.
Missing Status Messages	4.1.3 Status Messages (AA)	No status announcements when search results are updated after filtering.	Screen reader users aren't notified when results change after applying filters.
Inconsistent Tab Order	2.4.3 Focus Order (A)	Focus moves unpredictably when navigating filter options.	Tab order doesn't follow a logical sequence through filter options.

Impact Summary:

The search results page presents potential barriers for screen reader and keyboard users. The lack of proper form controls for filters makes it difficult to understand available options. The absence of a submit button, combined with automatic updates, creates confusion when results change. The missing status messages mean screen reader users cannot know when their filter actions have resulted in updated content.

Kanopy Search Page Screenshot

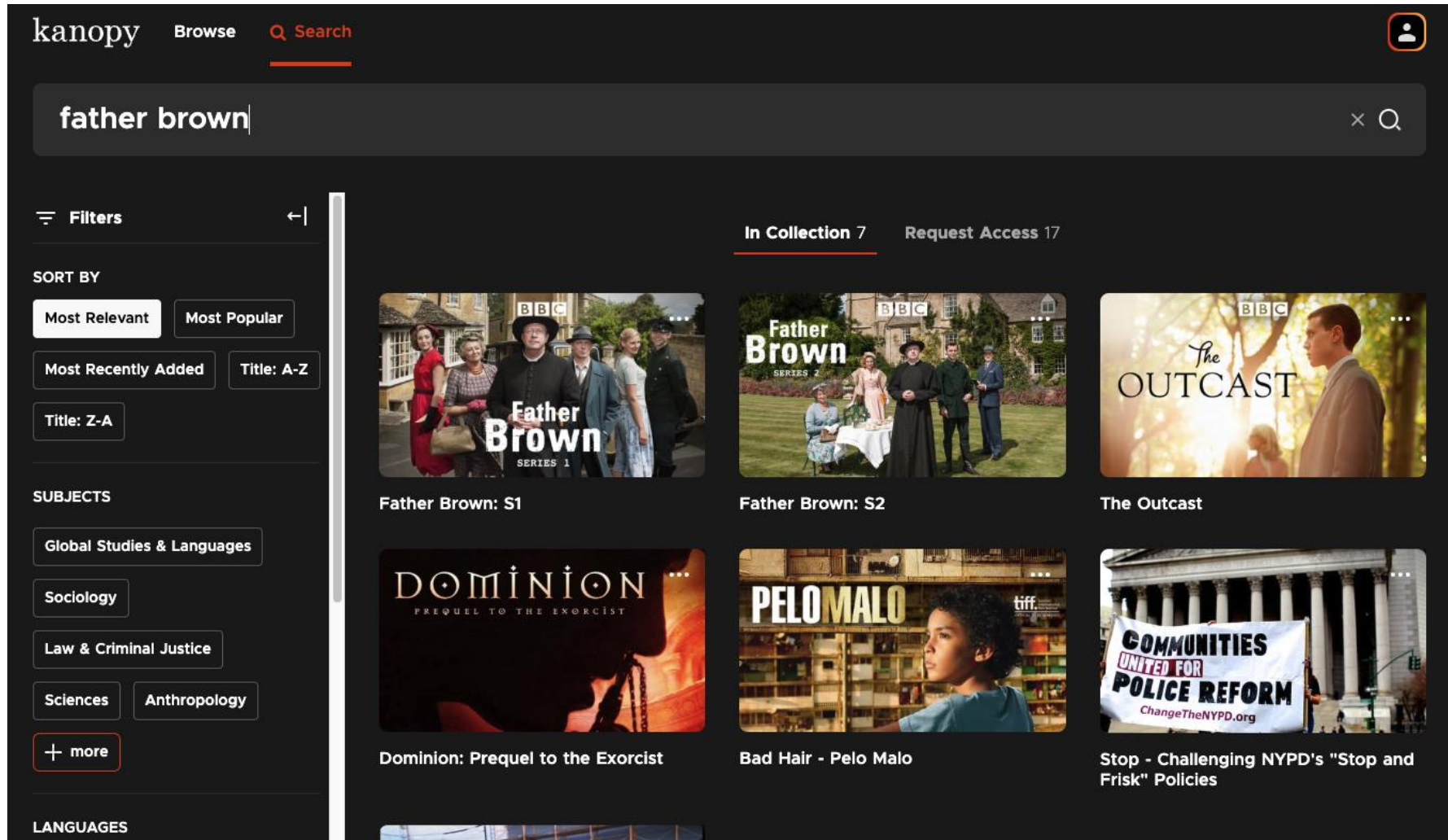


Figure 3. The Kanopy search page displaying the results of a search for "Father Brown."

Father Brown Landing Page

Issue	WCAG Success Criteria	Description	Example
Improper Tab Panels	4.1.2 Name, Role, Value (A)	Device selection options use visual tabs without proper ARIA tab and tabpanel structure.	Tab selection doesn't follow proper ARIA patterns, making it unclear which panel is active.
Video Player Controls	2.1.1 Keyboard (A)	Some video player controls are difficult to access with keyboard alone.	Keyboard users cannot easily access all video player functions.
Heading Hierarchy	1.3.1 Info and Relationships (A)	Inconsistent heading levels make content structure unclear.	Episode information uses heading levels that don't reflect their relationship to the main content.
Related Content Carousel	4.1.2 Name, Role, Value (A)	Related content carousel lacks proper list structure and clear controls.	Screen reader users cannot determine how many related items exist or navigate efficiently among them.

Impact Summary:

The video content (Father Brown) page has several issues that negatively affect the user experience for people with disabilities. The improper implementation of tabs for device selection confuses screen reader users, while keyboard users may struggle with certain video player controls. The inconsistent heading structure and inaccessible related content carousel make comprehending the page organization and navigating between related videos difficult.

Father Brown Video Content Page Screenshot

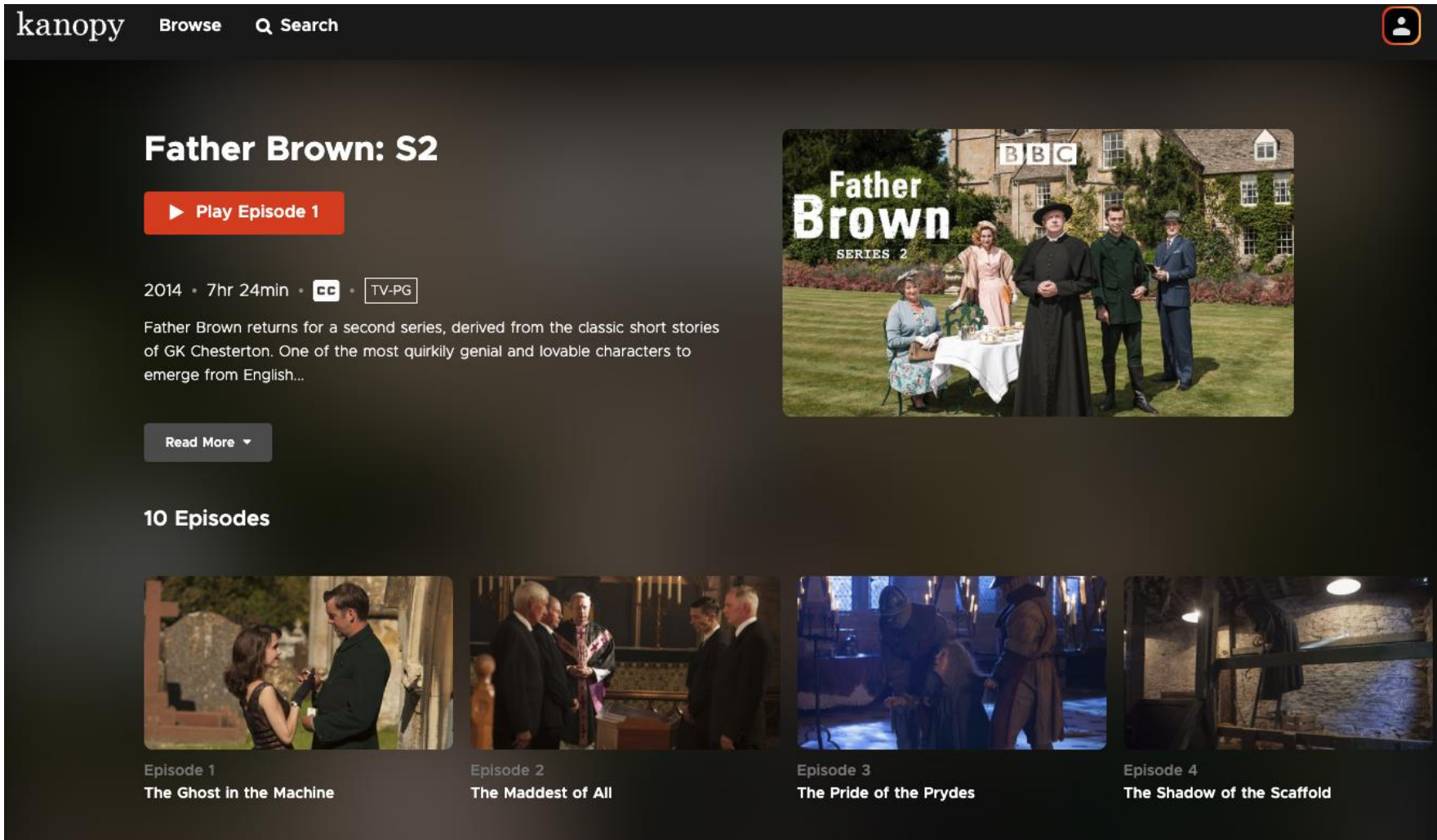


Figure 4. The Father Brown landing page features season 2, episode 1, along with a carousel display for 4 episodes.

Kanopy Browse Menu

Issue	WCAG Success Criteria	Description	Example
Keyboard Trap	2.1.2 No Keyboard Trap (A)	Partial keyboard trap in the browse menu makes navigation difficult.	Users can get stuck in submenu navigation when using keyboard.
Inconsistent Navigation	3.2.4 Consistent Navigation (AA)	Navigation behavior differs when using arrow keys vs. tab key.	Arrow keys provide different navigation options than tab key in same menu.
Missing List Structure	1.3.1 Info and Relationships (A)	Related items are not grouped in proper list structures.	Film categories are not structured as a proper list for screen readers.
Unlabeled Interactive Elements	2.4.6 Headings and Labels (AA)	Interactive elements lack clear labels describing their purpose.	Button functions are not clearly identified, making their purpose unclear.

Impact Summary:

The browse page presents some navigation challenges for keyboard users because of the partial keyboard trap in the menu system. The inconsistent behavior between the arrow keys and the tab keys adds unnecessary complexity to the navigation experience. Screen reader users will have difficulty understanding the relationships between content items due to the lack of a list structure, while the unlabeled interactive elements complicate the understanding of available actions.

Kanopy Browse Menu Screenshot

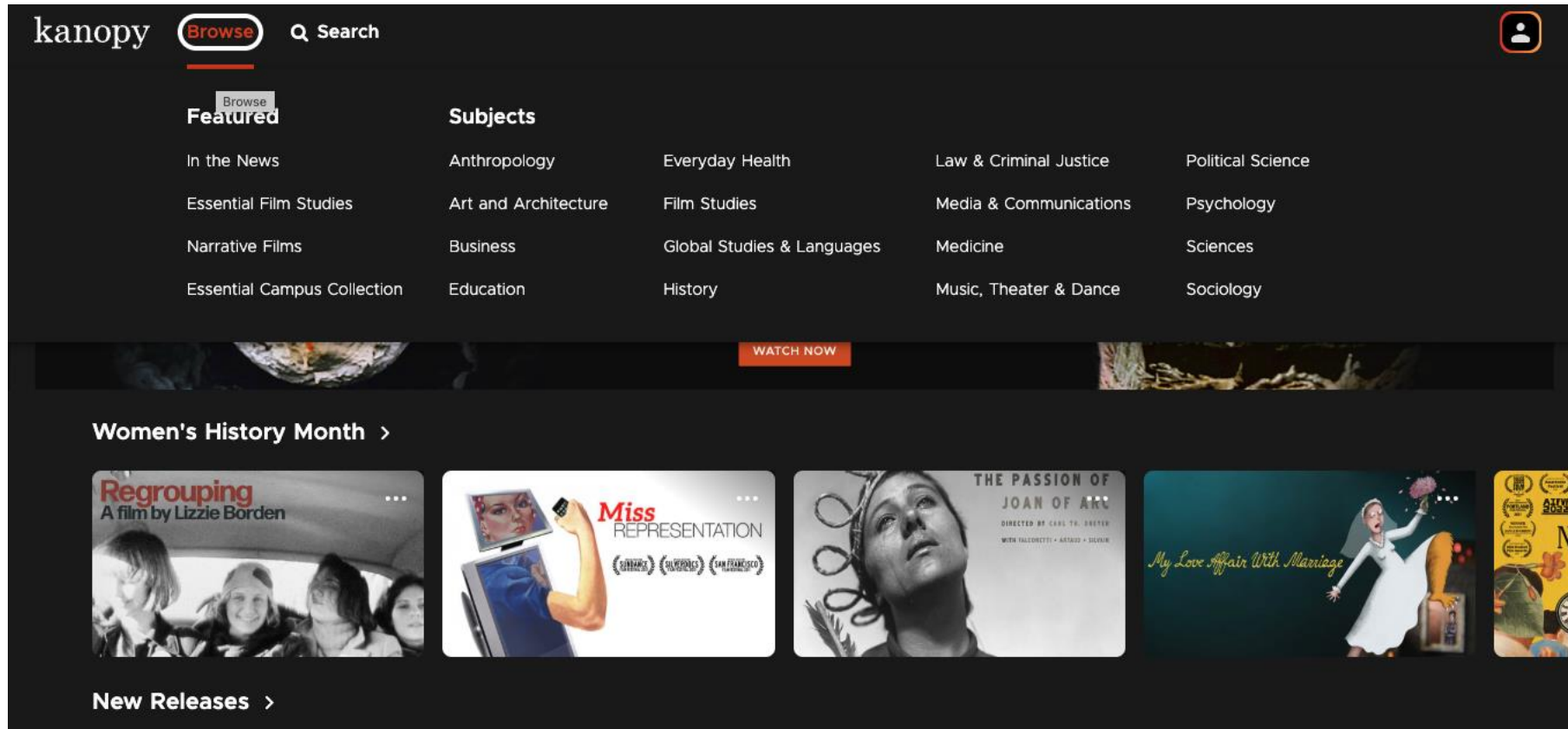


Figure 5. The Browse menu as expanded to reveal the browse options, which include ' featured" and' subjects."

Kanopy Browse Result Screenshot

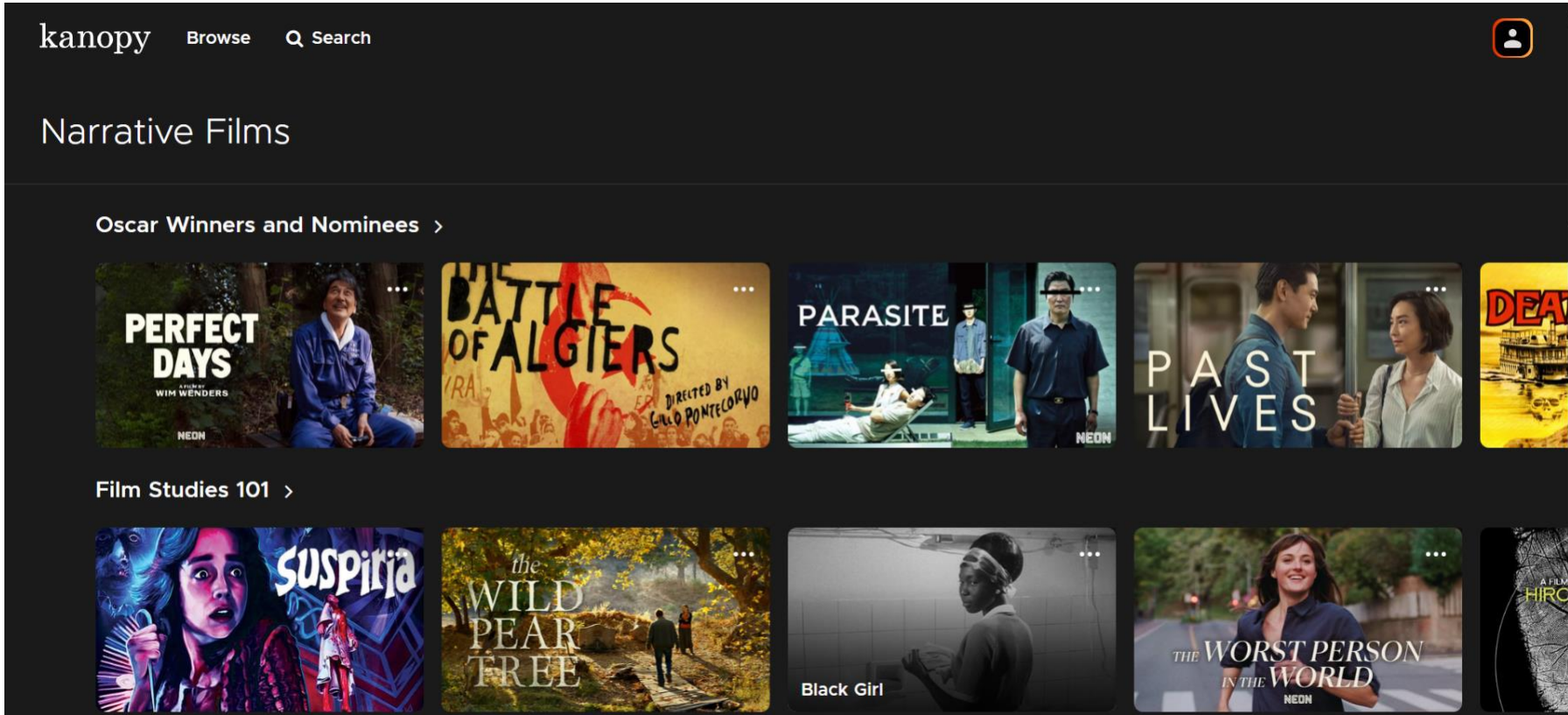


Figure 6. Narrative Films appear when using the Browse option and selecting "Narrative Films."

Kanopy Code Snippets & Possible Fixes

The following are code snippets and suggested fixes for addressing those issues.

1. **Carousel Accessibility Fix (WCAG 1.3.1, 4.1.2)**

2. `<!-- Current implementation -->`
3. `<div class="carousel">`
4. `<button></button>`
5. `<div>Carousel item 1</div>`
6. `<div>Carousel item 2</div>`
7. `<button></button>`
8. `</div>`
- 9.
10. `<!-- Recommended fix -->`
11. `<div class="carousel" role="region" aria-label="Featured films">`
12. `<button aria-label="Previous slide"></button>`
13. ``
14. `Carousel item 1`
15. `Carousel item 2`
16. ``
17. `<button aria-label="Next slide"></button>`
18. `</div>`

19. **Filter Controls Fix (WCAG 1.3.1, 3.2.2, 4.1.3)**

20. `<!-- Current implementation -->`
21. `<div class="filters">`
22. `<div class="language">English</div>`
23. `<div class="language">Spanish</div>`
24. `</div>`
- 25.
26. `<!-- Recommended fix -->`
27. `<form class="filters">`
28. `<fieldset>`
29. `<legend>Language</legend>`
30. `<div>`
31. `<input type="radio" id="lang-en" name="language" value="en">`
32. `<label for="lang-en">English</label>`
33. `</div>`
34. `</div>`

```
35. <input type="radio" id="lang-es" name="language" value="es">
36. <label for="lang-es">Spanish</label>
37. </div>
38. </fieldset>
39. <button type="submit">Apply Filters</button>
40. </form>
41.
42. <!-- Add status message announcement -->
43. <div aria-live="polite" class="sr-only">
44. <!-- Updated dynamically -->
45. 10 results found for your search.
46. </div>
```

47. Skip Link Implementation (WCAG 2.4.1)

```
48. <!-- Add to beginning of page -->
49. <a href="#main-content" class="skip-link">Skip to main content</a>
50.
51. <!-- Add id to main content section -->
52. <main id="main-content">
53. <!-- Main content here -->
54. </main>
```

55. Tab Panel Structure (WCAG 4.1.2)

```
56. <!-- Current implementation -->
57. <div class="tabs">
58. <div class="tab">Mobile</div>
59. <div class="tab">Web</div>
60. <div class="panel">Mobile content</div>
61. <div class="panel">Web content</div>
62. </div>
63.
64. <!-- Recommended fix -->
65. <div class="tabs">
66. <div role="tablist" aria-label="Device options">
67. <button id="tab-mobile" role="tab" aria-selected="true" aria-controls="panel-mobile">Mobile</button>
68. <button id="tab-web" role="tab" aria-selected="false" aria-controls="panel-web">Web</button>
69. </div>
```


70. <div id="panel-mobile" role="tabpanel" aria-labelledby="tab-mobile">Mobile content</div>
71. <div id="panel-web" role="tabpanel" aria-labelledby="tab-web" hidden>Web content</div>
72. </div>

73. Proper Heading Structure (WCAG 1.3.1)

74. <!-- Current implementation -->
75. <h1>Kanopy</h1>
76. <h3>Featured Films</h3>
77. <h2>Categories</h2>
78.
79. <!-- Recommended fix -->
80. <h1>Kanopy</h1>
81. <h2>Featured Films</h2>
82. <h2>Categories</h2>

Final Thoughts and Recommendations

The Kanopy platform continues to present substantial accessibility barriers for users with disabilities. Although some improvements have been made since the 2021 evaluation, numerous critical issues remain. The most significant issues are related to keyboard navigation, proper structural relationships, and insufficient support for screen readers.

To achieve WCAG 2.2 AA conformance and provide a usable experience for all users, Kanopy should prioritize resolving keyboard navigation issues in the browse menu, implementing appropriate ARIA patterns for interactive components, and ensuring that all content changes are adequately announced to screen reader users.

The most critical improvements include implementing proper form controls for filters, fixing keyboard traps, and ensuring carousels follow accessible patterns. These changes would greatly enhance the platform's usability for people with disabilities.

Recommended Fixes

- Implement a proper skip link to bypass navigation and reach main content
- Fix the browse menu navigation to eliminate the keyboard trap and provide consistent keyboard behavior
- Restructure carousels to use proper list markup and provide clear, labeled controls
- Add a submit button for filters on the search results page and provide clear status messages when results update
- Implement proper tab and tab panel structure for device selection options
- Fix heading level hierarchy throughout the site to follow a logical order
- Improve alt text for graphics and images across the site
- Add proper status messages for search results and filter changes

Disclaimer

Accessiblü prepared this report as a high-level accessibility evaluation of the Kanopy 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 concerns and usability barriers, this evaluation was limited in scope and may not encompass all accessibility issues 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 disabilities.

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.