



June 18, 2025

TO: Library Accessibility Alliance
c/o Robert Van Rennes, Big Ten Academic Alliance

FROM: Angelia Ormiston
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Project MUSE is proud to continue its longstanding commitment to accessibility and to once again participate in the third-party accessibility evaluation program organized by the Library Accessibility Alliance and supported by the Big Ten Academic Alliance and the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries. We value this partnership and welcome the opportunity to validate our efforts through formal audits by trusted experts such as Deque Systems, Inc.

We are pleased to report that the vast majority of issues identified in the 2025 audit were addressed swiftly and thoroughly by our development team. These included refinements to semantic structure for screen reader navigation, improvements to link labeling and keyboard focus, and the removal or correction of improperly structured markup. These fixes have already been released to the live MUSE platform.

Two items from the report remain open at this time. Both are related to the user experience within our search interface, where applying or changing filters currently results in a full page reload and an unexpected shift in keyboard focus. We recognize the importance of preserving context for users navigating with a screen reader or keyboard and are actively working on a more nuanced, accessible solution. Rather than patch these issues with a temporary workaround, we have prioritized a sustainable fix that will enhance long-term usability for all users and integrate seamlessly into our larger front-end architecture that are scheduled for release in the next production cycle.

Beyond the scope of the audit, we are also preparing for the European Accessibility Act's 2025 deadline. In collaboration with our publishing partners, we are aligning ingestion workflows, metadata requirements, and quality-assurance checks to ensure the content supplied to MUSE from our publishers are as accessible as our platform. This joint effort includes guidance on best practices, tools for alt-text generation, and support for EPUB and PDF remediation—work that continues to inform daily improvements across the site.

As in past evaluations, we are grateful for the clarity and actionable recommendations provided in the Deque report. Accessibility remains a core value for Project MUSE, and we will continue to invest in both remediation and forward-looking improvements. We encourage anyone interested in learning more about our accessibility practices to visit <https://about.muse.jhu.edu/about/accessibility/>. We welcome questions or feedback at any by emailing at muse@press.jhu.edu.

Empowering Your Next Discovery

MUSE.JHU.EDU

Project MUSE Response to 2025 LAA Accessibility Report

PROJECT WIDE ISSUES

Additional manual findings using NVDA screen reader

1. **SC 1.3.1 A** – Info and Relationships – The footer has what appears to be headings (About, Resources, What’s on Muse, Information for, Contact, and Policy & Terms) that are not marked as headings.

+ SOLUTION – Updated footer headings to H2 tags.

LANDING PAGE

<https://muse.jhu.edu/>

Additional manual findings using NVDA screen reader

1. **SC 1.1.1 A** – Non-text Content – The image with text reading “100+ Participating Journals. Sustainable Open Access...” does not have matching alternative content.

+ SOLUTION – We will work to ensure that text inside these images is reflected accurately in matching alt text.

2. **SC 1.3.1 A** – Info and Relationships – The text below each recent addition (Disciplining Democracy, Brilliant Modernism, etc.) is setup as a list but it is not a list. Each one is a single item and should not be a list.

+ SOLUTION – Updated erroneous list items to use a div tag instead.

3. **SC 1.3.1 A** – Info and Relationships – The text above each MUSE News Item appears to be a heading but is not marked up as such.

+ SOLUTION - Updated news headings to H3 tags.

4. **SC 1.4.3 AA** – Contrast (Minimum) – The white (#ffffff) text in the search field does not have at least 4.5:1 contrast with the semi-transparent gray (#7B8AA1) background.

+ SOLUTION – Updated search field to have a solid white (#ffffff) background with dark gray (#060606) text.

SEARCH RESULTS – “MINECRAFT EDUCATION”

<https://muse.jhu.edu/search?action=search&query=content:minecraft%20education:and&min=1&max=10&t=header>

Additional manual findings using NVDA screen reader

1. **SC 1.3.1 A** – Info and Relationships – Each search result appears to have a heading, but the content is not set as a heading.

+ SOLUTION – Search result titles now use an H2 tag.

2. **SC 2.4.3 A** – Focus Order – When filters are applied, edited or removed focus is lost and moves to the top of the page. Focus should remain on the selected filter input.

+ SOLUTION – We plan to address how the search filters lose focus in the near future.

3. **SC 2.4.4 A** – Link Purpose (In Context) – View, Download, and Save links are repeated on each search result but they all have the same accessible name. They do not contain information about which specific article they are for.

+ SOLUTION – Contextual text has been added to these repeated links, visually hidden but available to screen readers, to provide specifics on what each link is for.

4. **SC 3.2.2 A** – On Input – When filters are added, changed or removed the entire page reloads. There should not be change in context when inputs (checkboxes, radio buttons, etc.) are selected. The content in the right column can reload but the entire page should not.

+ SOLUTION – We plan to address how the search filters page reload causes a change in context in the near future.

5. **SC 3.3.2 A** – Labels or Instructions - Labels are not persistent for form controls as rely on placeholder text or visual location.

+ SOLUTION – The search filters have been updated where needed to have either a label tag associated or an aria-label that matches a visual label.

6. **SC 4.1.2 A** – Name, Role, Value – Some of the search results have an option called “Show Chapters” which functions like a button and allows content to be collapsed and expanded. The role should be changed to button and contain the aria-expanded attribute.

+ SOLUTION – Link is now a button with the aria-expanded and aria-controls attributes that change accordingly to the state of the collapsed/expanded content.

7. **SC 4.1.2 A** – Name, Role, Value – Each item within a search result is set as a list item. Visually the items are not a list so they should not be set as such.

+ SOLUTION - Updated erroneous list items to use a div tag instead.

SEARCH RESULT LANDING PAGE - ARTICLE

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/641831>

Additional manual findings using NVDA screen reader

1. **SC 1.3.1 A** – Info and Relationships – The Title of the article appears to be a heading but is not marked up as such.

+ SOLUTION – Updated article title to use an H2 tag.

2. **SC 1.3.1 A** – Info and Relationships – The additional information content at the bottom of the page appears to be a table but is not marked up as such.

+ SOLUTION – Updated additional information section to use table markup.

3. **SC 2.1.1 A** – Keyboard – When citation is opened the close button on the menu cannot be reached with the keyboard alone.

+ SOLUTION – Citation modal close button is now able to receive keyboard focus.

4. **SC 2.4.3 A** – Focus Order – Citation is clicked a menu is expanded. The focus does not move to the menu. The entire page must be traversed with the keyboard to reach the opened menu.

+ SOLUTION – Citation modal now receives focus on the close button after it is opened, and after modal is closed, focus returns to the link that opened the citation.

5. **SC 4.1.2 A** – Name, Role, Value – All the source links (Configurations, Volume Number, Publication) are sets as lists but do not visually appear to be a list.

+ SOLUTION - Updated erroneous list items to use a div tag instead.