EDUPRIZE

Eye on the Prize: EDUPrize Meets Web Accessibility Goals with HiSoftware Compliance Sheriff®

EDUPRIZE

SCHOOLS

Quick Facts

Organization

- EDUPRIZE is an Arizona based charter school serving over 3,700 students from Pre-K to High School.

Industry

- Education

Challenges

- Ensure the public website is fully accessible to the visually impaired
- Identify and remediate all accessibility issues
- Provide reporting capabilities to demonstrate how accessibility issues addressed

Benefits

- An easy to use solution for auditing the site accessibility in its entirety
- Accessibility issues identified and listed in one central place to help prioritize remediation
- Offers repair guidance for Web teams unfamiliar with WCAG and Section 508 guidelines

Background

The EDUPRIZE mission is to provide educational excellence to its community of learners with multiple modality instruction and a strong differentiated curriculum. Serving over 3,700 students in three Arizona-based campus locations, EDUPRIZE is the only A+ charter school in Arizona. It received Phoenix Magazine's "Best Schools" recognition and is fully accredited by the Advanced ED (NCA/CASI).

The Challange

EDUPRIZE launched its new website in 2014 to provide information on the charter school and as a resource for staff, parents and students. Following the launch of the new site, EDUPRIZE was made aware that the site was not fully accessible to the visually impaired.

Aaron Cremona, Director of Operations at EDUPRIZE said, "We run a lean technology and IT department at EDUPRIZE. To develop our new website, we contracted the project out. However, without an internal accessibility expert, we were unaware that the site was inaccessible. Once alerted of the issues, we took immediate action, but needed help." The IT team initially lacked the knowledge to identify and rectify the inaccessibility issues with the site. As a result, EDUPRIZE sought a solution to help.

Requirements

Cremona continued, "I immediately started searching for solutions looking at both free online Web accessibility tools and also for examples of what other education institutions used. We required a solution that would not only help us identify the problems, but help us repair the issues. We also needed to provide our small team with education on the regulations for Web accessibility so we could improve and conduct effective training."

EDUPRIZE required an automated solution to identify and remediate all the accessibility issues across its public facing website, as well as reporting capabilities to allow them to demonstrate how it was addressing the problem.

Finding The Right Solution

"A core value of EDUPRIZE Schools since the doors opened 20 years ago is to meet the needs of every child. The school has received numerous recognitions for its ability to serve special educational needs. Given how important Web accessibility was to solve, we needed a resolution immediately. On day one of our search, we came across Cryptzone on another educational institution's site and got in touch with them immediately. In just 48 hours, we had an agreement in place to use HiSoftware Compliance Sheriff. We were up and running with a hosted solution following a tutorial with Cryptzone's customer solutions team," continued Cremona.

HiSoftware Compliance Sheriff is an automated software solution that aids organizations in meeting their Web accessibility requirements through automated scanning, monitoring and reporting. Compliance Sheriff enables users to check the compliance of public-facing website and intranet content, as well as unpublished content, against Section 508, WCAG 2.0 and custom standards.

Compliance Sheriff is used to scan the complete EDUPRIZE online content universe against hundreds of out-of-the-box accessibility checks such as images, forms, Alt text quality checks, and dynamic content interactions that map to Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 requirements. If corrections need to be made, Compliance Sheriff provides an easy-to-read yet comprehensive report, detailing the violations as well as providing drill down reporting to show the exact location of compliance violations in the code so EDUPRIZE developers can take corrective action. It also provides ongoing monitoring that can be scheduled at regular intervals to ensure content remains compliant as changes are made or pages are added to the site.

Benefits of a Hosted Automated AccessibilityTesting Solution

Cryptzone offered EDUPRIZE not only the identification of issues all in one place, but just as important, guided the organization through remediation. Cremona said, "We reacted and responded quickly when we found out there were issues with the site. Compliance Sheriff helped us identify common and glaring issues as well as problems we didn't even know were problems. The customer service team was tremendously helpful in getting us up to speed and providing us with a roadmap for accessibility."

Cremona continued, "One of our favorite aspects is the ability to export the reports to Excel. We are able to use it as an action item list to help us prioritize the issues and rectify them more easily. Because our website is based on WordPress, this also allows us to prioritize problems that can be fixed across the site in one place."

Once issues are identified by Compliance Sheriff, EDUPRIZE can drill into the report for a more detailed explanation on the problem, exact location of the error in the code and links to information on how to fix it. "We found this capability especially helpful as our team initially did not have in-depth knowledge of accessibility standards. It is nice to have all the details easily identified and laid out in one place to guide the team through repairs."

HiSoftware Compliance Sheriff is able to scan the website in its entirety offering a huge benefit over free accessibility tools. "We had looked at using free tools, but unfortunately it would only show one page of results at a time. With over 75 web pages and growing, this would have been a nightmare," continued Cremona.

Using the Cryptzone solution, EDUPRIZE now has a repeatable and auditable process to discover accessibility issues and resolve them. Compliance Sheriff also archives all the scan history so EDUPRIZE can monitor the accessibility improvements made over time and demonstrate progress to improve internal accountability.

On-going Accessability is The Future

EDUPRIZE will continue to use Compliance Sheriff on its website to check for accessibility regularly, scan new pages as they are added, and continue to satisfy Section 508 and WCAG. "We now have a solution to be proactive moving forward as we scan weekly so that when new content is added, we can ensure it is accessible."

"Web accessibility is definitely an area where people will be caught off guard. Without the background to handle it quickly, organizations need a solution like Compliance Sheriff to automatically scan the site, show what is wrong and offer a solution to move towards an accessible website," concluded Cremona.

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