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BIMA Member News: Travel sector websites fail disabled travellers

Article Date: 25th Feb 2008

New research commissioned by Travolution magazine has found that major UK travel firms are failing to make their online services accessible to disabled people.

The research was carried out by digital design agency Fortune Cookie (www.fortunecookie.co.uk) which tested a number of UK travel websites for accessibility to the UK's 10 million disabled people.

Fortune Cookie's Accessibility Expert Rune Leth Andersen said: "There are a number of ways of testing the accessibility of a website. Run it through an automated accessibility checking tool (www.w3.org/WAI/ER/tools/complete). But beware, automated tools detect only some accessibility problems and can produce false positives. Another approach is to commission a web accessibility expert to audit the site and provide recommendations. And you can undertake user testing involving disabled people."

Fortune Cookie analysed eight popular travel websites but found that none met basic accessibility criteria and all would be difficult for a person with a disability such as blindness to use.

Examples of sites that failed accessibility tests included Malmaison (www.malmaison.com): "a number of the images have no 'alternative text' description"; Travel Supermarket (www.travelsupermarket.co.uk): "relies solely on JavaScript for navigation"; Expedia (www.expedia.co.uk): "poor colour contrast that would make the text illegible to some people"; and Trip Advisor (www.expedia.co.uk): "inconsistent and confusing navigation".

Fortune Cookie's Director of Accessibility Julie Howell, said: "The sites we tested are all popular travel sites that disabled people would reasonably expect to be able to use. Our findings highlight typical problems across the industry."

The full article is available on the Travolution website (www.travolution.co.uk/Articles/2008/02/12/1270/Accessibility+-+gaining+access+to+an+online+world.html).

About Fortune Cookie

Founded in 1997, Fortune Cookie is one of the UK's top digital design agencies. Clients include Legal & General, Kuoni, Voyages Jules Verne, Arsenal FC and Amnesty International. In 2006, Fortune Cookie client projects were short-listed for major design awards a total of 11 times, and the company became fully independent when it bought back internet incubator Brainspark's 29.4% holding in the agency in a deal that will delivered an excellent return to the investor.

Further information about Fortune Cookie is available at www.fortunecookie.co.uk or contact Julie Howell at Julie.Howell@fortunecookie.co.uk

About Travolution

Travolution is the UK's leading business magazine, website, blog and events provider for the online travel market. Covering the traditional travel market plus the new breed of online players, Travolution provides essential information and analysis for anyone in, or running an online travel business.

Further information about Travolution is available at www.travolution.co.uk



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- Fortune Cookie achieves consecutive Media Momentum top 50 ranking with phenomenal 71.4% growth (13th Mar 2008)
- Fortune Cookie continues to invest in the travel industry with digital sector sponsorship deals (10th Mar 2008)
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