

# Accessibility Inspection

[Bananarepublic.com](http://www.bananarepublic.com)

<http://www.bananarepublic.com/>

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## Executive Summary

An accessibility inspection was conducted of the bananarepublic.com website, examining the pages and section that comprise the website. The inspection focused on identifying any and all accessibility issues, while also pointing out strengths of the website that should be maintained. Many accessibility solutions described in this document contribute to "universal design" by benefiting non-disabled users as well as people with disabilities.

The most significant accessibility issues identified in this evaluation include:

- **No global navigation is provided.** Currently, bananarepublic.com offers users no global navigation options. This makes it very difficult for users, especially those with any form of disability, to navigate the site effectively.
- **Existing navigation items are not consistent throughout the site.** Both the left hand navigation as well as the bottom navigation are inconsistent from section to section. Also, both degrade significantly when different technologies are disabled, such as JavaScript or images.
- **Make sure all tables are coded for accessibility.** The website contains very large tables that use no forms of accessibility coding within them. Tags such as <thead>, <tfoot>, <tbody>, <summary>, etc are very important to users who are visually or cognitively impaired and require the use of a screen reader, text only browser, Braille reader, or other form of adaptive technology. With this coding in place, tables can function and convey data properly when linearized or read aloud by a screen reader.
- **Allow the pages to be linearized.** The 'Sign In' page is currently unusable when linearized. Users requiring screen readers or text only browsers must be presented with text and page formatting that can be read and understood when linearized by adaptive technology. Pages that do not, or cannot, linearize well are difficult to impossible for these users to read.
- **Use proper "alt" tags for all images within the site.** This is very important because the "alt" text is what conveys what the image is and what it is about to users requiring a screen reader or who are using a text based browser such as Lynx. Images that contain text should reiterate that text within the "alt" tag, also, images of objects or charts require a description of what the image looks like and what it is for.

While these issues are among the most pressing accessibility concerns for the bananarepublic.com website, a number of additional accessibility issues that require attention are detailed within the analysis, accompanied by recommended solutions.

## Terminology & Conventions Used

**field name:** Field names are the labels that go with text input boxes, drop-down menus, and other form elements.

**global navigation:** Links/buttons that are available from every page, leading to many major sections of the website and/or significant pages.

**left hand navigation:** Links/buttons for moving between pages in a section of the website.

**sub-navigation:** Links/buttons for moving between pages in a section of the website.

**bottom navigation:** Links/buttons that are available from almost every page, leading to many major sections of the website and/or significant pages.

**page name:** The primary heading for the page, often shown in larger text and located between the global navigation buttons at the top of the window and the text content of the page.

## Priority Levels

The issues identified in this evaluation of the Banana Republic website are grouped into three levels of priority:

**high priority:** These issues are likely to impact a large number of users significantly. They should be resolved as quickly as resources allow.

**medium priority:** Issues at this priority level are also likely to affect a large number of users but generally are less disruptive to the user experience, relative to the high priority issues. If resources are available to address these issues, they should be addressed.

**low priority:** Low priority issues typically impact a small subset of the overall user base, although they may impact a larger group. Regardless of the number of users affected, these issues carry only a minor negative impact. Low priority issues are generally easy to resolve. There is less time pressure to fix low priority issues, compared to medium priority issues and especially high priority issues.

## Accessibility Guidelines

### Simplicity & Clarity

Simplicity and Clarification refers to layout aspects of the interface. The layout should be easy to understand and follow without extraneous or distracting elements that could hinder the user such as lack of visual focus, unnecessary design aspects, and proximity and visual perception issues.

### Suggested Changes

#### High Priority:

- **Maintain a consistent layout throughout the website.** Currently, the bananarepublic.com website does not present users with a consistent layout throughout the site. Many pages including 'Sign In', 'Banana Republic Card', and 'Store Locator' not only change in appearance, but the left hand navigation is removed making the layout confusing to understand and follow for users, especially user's requiring screen readers or having cognitive disabilities and may not understand what has happened.
- **Provide users with a breadcrumb trail.** Currently, it is very difficult for users to distinguish where they are within the website. In many instances, users are forced to use the back button repeatedly in order to return to a previous sub-page section. By implementing a bread crumb trail, users will be provided with information regarding current position within the site at all times. This would help users who are both visually and cognitively impaired.
- **Re-label all links that do not present the user with a clear indication of what the link does and what page it will lead to.** Currently there are many 'Click Here' links throughout the site as well as two 'And More...' links contained within the bottom navigation menu. This creates a very unclear situation for users who are visually or cognitively disabled. Users who are visually impaired may not be bale to tell if the link is within a specific section of text relating to a distinct page and screen readers cannot instruct the user as to where the 'Click Here' link will go. Users who have cognitive disabilities may not be able to understand why multiple links of the same name link to different pages.
- **Provide proper link labeling within code.** Labeling each link so that is self-descriptive when not supported by explanatory content is very important to users requiring screen readers. Screen readers have the ability to move from link to link in order to navigate pages more easily. If

links are not labeled efficiently, the user will not be able to navigate as well resulting in confusion and possibly leaving the website.

**Medium Priority:**

- **Remove the 'Sign up for email updates, get special benefits' text entry field and associated 'GO' button.** This current design for obtaining user email addresses is not only unclear in terms of exactly what information is required to be entered, but also creates an extra (confusing) step for users implementing a screen reader. By redesigning this function into a single link stating 'Sign up for email news and benefits', users will clearly understand what is needed and users with screen readers or mobility disabilities will have two less steps to work through.

## Visual & Non-Visual Navigation

Visual and non-visual navigation refers to users, both with and without visual disabilities, being capable of navigating throughout a website. Users will need the site to perform specific functions such as content linearization, and the ability to skip navigation menus in order to successfully navigate the site.

### Suggested Changes

#### High Priority:

- **Provide a consistent global navigation menu.** Currently, bananarepublic.com offers users no global navigation options. The website is split into three distinct navigation styles: left hand navigation, no left hand navigation, and bottom navigation. This makes it very difficult for users, especially those with any form of disability, to navigate the site effectively.
- **Provide a consistent left hand navigation menu.** The website currently offers two different left hand navigation menus. The menu presented on the home page and within the “store” section of the website offers no way for users to navigate into the ‘Customer Service’ section. Likewise, the menu within the ‘Customer Service’ section offers no method of navigating back to ‘Home’ or the “store” section. The left hand navigation should be re-designed to be consistent throughout the site while utilizing a sub-navigation menu within large sections.
- **Provide a consistent and clear bottom navigation menu.** While bottom navigation is consistent in placement, it does not offer many of the left hand navigation options in an understandable manner. Multiple links are present utilizing the same label (‘And More...’). Also, the menu options underneath the “BR Credit Card” header disappear when JavaScript is disabled. In addition, on some pages within the site (example: ‘Sign In’) the bottom navigation menu is contained within a frame that cannot be resized. This forces the user to scroll the window in order to read all the navigation links. This could present major problems for visually impaired users as well as users with cognitive disabilities that may not be able to remember the header names associated with each category once they have been scrolled off the frame.
- **Supply a ‘Home’ link on all pages.** In order to aid in efficient navigation, a ‘Home’ link should be provided within the top portion of each page as well as in the bottom navigation menu. This will provide users with visual impairments, screen readers, or cognitive disabilities to easily find and navigate back to the home page

- **All Pages within the site should offer the opportunity to bypass navigation menus.** To achieve this, a link should be included in the header of each page that links to an anchor labeled "Body Content", positioned at the beginning of the content area of each page. The position of the "Body Content" anchor is very important as it needs to be the first element in the body area of the page. On the home page, it should appear before the main title graphic while on interior pages, it should appear before the page headline, excluding pages that have breadcrumbs. On those pages, the anchor should appear before the first breadcrumb. This would allow users with mobility and visual impairments who may require the use of a screen reader the option to "skip over" navigation menus.
- **Create rollover colors for links.** When the user's cursor is placed over a text link, the link should highlight and change color. Creating a rollover state for text links within the site will provide an extra visual cue for users with mobility impairments making navigation throughout the website easier.
- **Provide users with color information next to product pictures and within product descriptions.** By including the names of the colors next to clothing items and other products, users who are color blind or otherwise visually impaired, will be able to easily identify the colors of the products ensuring the correct choice is being made.
- **Make sure all areas of the website use contrasting colors.** Color contrast is a very important issue for many different users. Users who are visually impaired (such as partial blindness), color blind, cognitively impaired, or mobility impaired may all be dependent on good color contrast. Within the left hand navigation menu, the 'Gifts' and 'Gift cards' links are presented in yellow on a light blue background making it very difficult to read. Also, the rest of the left hand navigation menu is presented as white text on the light blue background and should be altered as well. While not as obvious as a red/green combination, the white text quickly fades out on the light blue depending on the users angle of viewing the screen. Users with disabilities such as cognitive or mobility disabilities may not have or be able to move into, a direct straight on view of the monitor screen, thus limiting their ability to view and navigate the website easily.
- **Create a search function within the website.** Creating a search method would benefit not only users with visual disabilities, but also users with cognitive disabilities. A user with Down syndrome for example, may have difficulty with abstract concepts and reading. With the high number of products available on the website, the user could easily become confused.

A search function that could search by product name or by pictures would allow the user to more easily remember what is being shopped for.

- **Improve the readability of the navigation menu links.** Links within all navigation menus as well as within the page content of the 'Customer Service' section are very close together. This makes it difficult for users with mobility disabilities, specifically tremors, to effectively click the desired link leading to frustration, an inability to navigate the website, and possibly disinterest in ever returning to the site.
- **Make sure all pages within the site linearize properly.** Throughout the website (noted exception: the home page) the 'Shopping Bag' link is hidden behind the left hand navigation or graphics when the website pages are linearized. This could possibly prevent users using a screen reader from purchasing items or viewing the shopping cart. There are many other linearization issues that are mentioned within the page specific section.

#### Medium Priority:

- **Add 'previous' and 'next' buttons to product pages.** Each product has detailed information that can be accessed by clicking on that product's link. Considering the high number of products, this makes navigation hard for users with many forms of disabilities. Users with cognitive impairments might forget how to get back to the main product page, or, will not know how to move on to the next product. By adding a 'previous' and 'next' button to all 'department' pages, it will become easier for users to browse the products. These options should be coded so that users implementing screen readers or using text based browsers will also have access.
- **Remove the 'Sign up for email updates, get special benefits' text entry field and associated 'GO' button.** In terms of navigation, this function appears as if it is a search option. Users who are visually or cognitively impaired may not be able to read or understand the small explanatory text next to the entry field and may assume it is a search function. Current location does not help this problem either as many users may associate certain areas as common search option placement locations.

#### Low Priority:

- **Disable links for actively viewed pages.** Currently, the link on each page that leads to the respective open page is still active. By disabling the link and changing the color, users with visual or cognitive disabilities will

have further confirmation on current location as well as less confusion when re-navigating the desired navigation menu.

- **Re-label the alt text for the “GO” arrow button for submitting your email address.** If a user has images disabled, the arrow turns into to button labeled ‘Submit Query’. This does not relate to the function of the button and will most assuredly lead to confusion for users with screen readers or cognitive disabilities.

## Proper Text Markup & Phrasing

Proper text markup and phrasing refers to how the website content is labeled, phrased (such as reading level), and what coding markup has been applied to help improve accessibility (e.g., <abbr>, <acronym>, lang attribute).

### Suggested Changes

#### High Priority:

- **Add the title attribute to all links within the site.** This will allow users requiring the use of a screen reader to understand the nature of the link and where it will go. This is very important, especially if the link labels themselves are not clear.
- **Clearly identify the target of each link.** Again, users requiring a screen reader need to be able to understand where the links go. By identifying the target, screen readers will be able to quickly relay to the user exactly where the link goes and what it will be opening.
- **Add the title attribute to all images within the site.** This will give users requiring the use of a screen reader the ability to distinguish what the image is and how it relates to the website. With an e-commerce site such as this, it will also help to assure the user that what is presented on the screen is the item that is desired. This will help enhance the users overall experience.
- **Use proper “alt” tags for all images within the site.** This is very important because the “alt” text is what conveys what the image is and what it is about to users requiring a screen reader or who are using a text based browser such as Lynx. Images that contain text should reiterate that text within the “alt” tag, also, images of objects or charts require a description of what the image looks like and what it is for.
- **Associate labels explicitly with their controls.** For all form controls with implicitly associated labels, ensure that the label is properly positioned. According to cynthiasays.com, many form controls within bananarepublic.com lack an associated label that would help ensure a user with a screen reader could fill out forms correctly and in the right order because an appropriate label is read directly before the from element.

**Medium Priority:**

- **Include acronym tags were needed throughout the website.** While bananarepublic.com does not containing a huge number of acronyms, it is still important to use this tag within coding to help ensure every user has the best experience. Users with cognitive or visual impairments may not be able to interpret or understand the meaning of the acronym. In addition, screen readers will not be able to correctly convey the word to the user, thus, leaving them confused.

## Proper Structural Markup

Proper structural markup refers to coding the website to follow a logical document structure that will assist adaptive technology in interpreting a document and conveying that to the user

### Suggested Changes

#### High Priority:

- **Do not use deprecated tags.** The use of deprecated tags within the coding of bananarepublic.com is represented multiple times on many of the websites pages. This could represent problems for users implementing different forms of adaptive technology as rendering problems could occur with pages, tables, images, as well as many other site functions that would make it difficult for the user to use the website. Some examples of deprecated tags are represented within specific page issues.
- **Provide keyboard shortcuts to important links.** By creating keyboard shortcuts to important links, users with mobility disabilities as well as visual disabilities will be able to navigate pages faster. By using “accesskey” attributes, a specific letter within a word or link can be underlined and associated with a keyboard command. This would allow a user to bypass the tabbing process and move straight to the desired content with only a few short key strokes.

## Providing Content & Context

Providing content and context refers to users being able to experience content in a non-visual modality. It is important that the user have a proper context for interpreting the information as well as access to that content (e.g., titled frames, summaries for data tables, closed captioning or transcripts for videos).

### Suggested Changes

#### High Priority:

- **Make sure all frames are titled with thorough descriptions.** One of the most important factors to increase the accessibility of frames is to give each frame a title. The frame titles allow web developers to quickly communicate the purpose of each frame to users. This is extremely important regarding the use of screen readers. Those using screen readers cannot quickly scan the contents of multiple frame pages. All of the content is experienced in a linear fashion, one frame at a time. While the frames are not inaccessible to modern screen readers, they can be very disorienting for the user. When frame titles are not present, screen readers look for other sources of information, such as the frame's "name" attribute or file name which can prove to be very non-descriptive. It is best to keep the title of a frame brief and descriptive.

#### Medium Priority:

- **Remove frames completely from the website.** Frames that are being used to divide a browser screen into two or more windows could result in creating inaccessible pages to users requiring some types of screen readers, screen magnification applications, as well as some types of hand-held devices. Also, not all browsers support frames. Eliminating frames will help increase the overall accessibility of the website.

## Device Independence

Device independence refers to users who may not be able to view a website successfully because a given input device is required in order to use the website. Not all users will be able to use (or will possess) all input devices such as the mouse or keyboard.

### Suggested Changes

#### High Priority:

- **All Pages within the site should include tab index coding.** This would allow users with mobility and visual impairments the ability to navigate the website successfully using only the keyboard. Currently, users can tab through bananarepublic.com, however, the tabbing process carries the users through many unnecessary locations such as unlinked images and headers. By streamlining the tab index these users will be able to navigate the website faster and more efficiently.
- **Fix tab index problem presented to users of the Opera web browser.** Currently, users who visit the website while using the web browser Opera experience problems while trying to navigate by using the keyboard tab key. The tab sequence will only toggle between the email text entry field and the 'GO' arrow button at the top of each screen. Further testing is required to deduce the source of the problem.

#### Low Priority:

- **Provide more information in regards to website accessibility.** Currently, a section detailing the bananarepublic.com screen reader progress is presented to the user. Information regarding the use of page magnifiers, keyboard navigation, and other adaptive technology should be provided so that users with disabilities can easily find out how accessible the website is and how certain technologies work on the respective website.

## Graceful Degradation

Graceful degradation refers to how the user may experience the website if and when certain technologies are disabled as well as when adaptive technologies are used. Many users may need the use of a screen reader to interpret the website while others may need to view the website with JavaScript or CSS disabled.

### Suggested Changes

#### High Priority:

- **JavaScript code needs to be changed so that users with JavaScript disabled will be able to view the site in a worthwhile fashion.** Currently, users who disable JavaScript are left trying to navigate a “skeleton” version of the website. The left hand navigation menu is removed from every page within the site leaving the user no easy method of navigation. Also, the links contained within the bottom navigation menu navigation under the BR Credit Card header completely disappear from every page. This situation makes it virtually impossible for any user, disabled or not, to navigate the site successfully.

#### Medium Priority:

- **Allow users with cookies disabled access to the website.** Currently, in order to view any page on the bananarepublic.com website, a user must have cookies enabled. This practice should be discontinued in order to allow all users access to the store and information sections of the website. A warning can be placed on the home page and product pages explaining to users that products cannot be purchased and the shopping cart cannot be accessed without cookies enabled. However, users requiring some types of adaptive technology in order to use a computer may not have access to a browser with cookies or may not be able to enable cookies without assistance. These users should still be able to navigate the site in order to browse products, comparison shop prices, or find general information about Banana Republic such as store locations, hours etc.
- **Supply users with more up to date browser instructions on how to enable cookies.** Currently, only four browser types are supplied giving the user instructions for enabling cookies on the user’s machine. None are current as Internet Explorer version 6.0, Netscape 7.0 and A.O.L. 9.0 browsers are currently available. The older browser instructions provided by bananarepublic.com may hamper users with adaptive technology as those users will probably not be using older, less accessible technology.

**Low Priority:**

- **Re-label the alt text for the “GO” arrow button for submitting your email address.** With images disabled, a user cannot easily identify the meaning of the button as it changes from being an arrow graphic to a button labeled ‘Submit Query’. Problems like this help prevent a graceful degradation of the site and should be addressed.
- **Provide better spaced text in text only versions of the website.** Some text when the website is viewed as text-only is located too close to other text. This might cause confusion for users with cognitive or visual disabilities that might need to turn-off images. The proximity of the returned text may imply that different subjects or lines of text are related, leading to misconceptions by the user.

## Allowing User Control

Allowing user control refers to giving the user the ability to control aspects of the interface such as freezing animations or flickering/blinking page elements and allowing the user control over the font size. Any aspects out of the users control may derail the experience.

### Suggested Changes

#### High Priority:

- **Allow users to easily control font sizes in all browsers.** Currently on the bananarepublic.com website, pages are presented within Internet Explorer (IE) browsers as absolute font sizes that can not be changed (enlarged or reduced) easily. User control over text size is very important as users who are visually impaired need to be able to increase the font size without necessarily having to magnify the entire screen. IE browsers represent over eighty percent of all web users. This problem should be corrected immediately.
- **Change all image based text to standard text.** Represented text using images prevents the text from being able to wrap to the next line when enlarged. This could make enlarging and reading text for visually impaired users very difficult depending on the level of magnification or font size increase.
- **Make the bananarepublic.com logo “alt” text a link to the home page.** If a disabled user visiting the website had disabled images, the company logo is presented as “alt” text stating “Welcome to our company store”. The “alt” text should be replaced with the website URL so that the user can quickly identify the site.

#### Medium Priority:

- **Remove pop-up ads form the site.** Pop-up ads and other widows that spawn without user consent or action could easily confuse users implementing screen readers as well as users with cognitive disabilities that may not be able to understand what happened and why they have been moved to a new page. By reserving space within the layout of the homepage for specials and other promotions, pop-up ads could be eliminated.
- **Allow animations to be frozen.** When a page includes moving content, such as the animation, providing a mechanism within the script or applet will allow the user to freeze motion or updates. Using style sheets with scripting to create movement allows users to turn off or override the effect

more easily by disabling the style sheets. This will allow users with cognitive disabilities as well as users with Attention deficit disorder to not be easily distracted or confused by the moving animation that might prevent the user from easily navigating from the home page.

## Respecting the User

Respecting the User refers to users who may not be able to view a website successfully because a given input device is required in order to use the website. Not all users will be able to use (or will possess) all input devices such as the mouse or keyboard.

### Practices to Continue

- **Good consistency in link to page labeling throughout the site.** Most link labels within the navigation menus directly match the corresponding page. This helps users with screen readers and cognitive disabilities to more accurately confirm that navigation was successful and the desired page has been found. Exceptions to good link labeling been noted.
- **No splash pages.** This reduces the number of navigational clicks required to enter the website in addition to a faster loading time loading time. This is a good practice to continue as users with visibility and cognitive disabilities may have trouble navigating through a splash page to the actual website.

### Suggested Changes

#### High Priority:

- **Provide consistent navigation menus including the implementation of a global navigation menu.** Currently, bananarepublic.com offers users two distinct left hand navigation menus and no global navigation options. This makes it very difficult for users, especially those with any form of disability, to navigate the site effectively.
- **Maintain a consistent layout throughout the website.** Currently, the bananarepublic.com website does not present users with a consistent layout throughout the site. This makes it very difficult for all users, especially user's requiring screen readers, having cognitive disabilities, or suffering from Attention deficit disorder, to easily recognize what page or section of the website that they are currently navigating on/through.
- **Do not use links labeled 'Click Here' or 'And More'.** These provide users with screen readers or some types of cognitive impairment, no way of understanding where the link will go and what page will be provided without trial and error. This complicates navigation for these users.

- **Provide a 'Help' or 'FAQ' link within all navigation menus.** Currently there is a 'Gift FAQ' link for gift buying, but no visible 'FAQ' or 'Help' link for the rest of the website. By Providing users with a 'Help' or 'FAQ' link within all navigation menus; it assures the user that help is only a click away. Providing accessible help features is very important, especially regarding users with disabilities who may need help understanding navigation or other information. There are an gift card 'FAQ' however is only for the gift card, the website should have a 'Help' and a 'FAQ' just for the site and users to solve their problems.

#### **Medium Priority:**

- **Make the website more printer-friendly.** While most background color is removed, navigation menus remain as well as text created using images. By removing the navigation menus and allowing the "alt" text to print instead of the images, the website will become more accessible to users who may not be able to easily read from computer screens because of problems with screen flickering and refresh rates and need to print information out.

#### **Low Priority:**

- **Provide more information in regards to website accessibility.** Information regarding how different forms of adaptive technology work on bananarepublic.com should be provided so that users will have a better understanding of what is possible and what is not while navigating the website.

## Addition Accessibility Issues by Page & Section

Further accessibility issues that are specific to a page or section within the website are indicated. Some repetition may occur with issues noted in the general analysis, if the page or section in question requires significant and/or specialized assistance with that issue. Only the pages and sections with further issues are considered.

### Home Page

#### High Priority:

- **Allow the animated GIF to be frozen.** The moving GIF presented on the home page should allow the user the capability of freezing the animation. Moving animations can present problems for users who suffer from some forms of visual and cognitive disabilities in the form of distractions, confusion, over stimulation, or worse, seizures.
- **Remove animations from the home page.** The current configuration of images and animation presented on the bananarepublic.com website present dial-up users with long download times. This can affect users having cognitive disabilities or Attention deficit disorder because the user may not have the ability to wait while the page loads. These users can be easily distracted and loose focus of the task at hand. By removing the animations, both users and disabled users connecting with dial-up connections will be able to access the website content faster.

Bananarepublic.com home page download times returned by cynthiasays.com

Connection Rate	Download Time
14.4K	50.57 seconds
28.8K	25.48 seconds
33.6K	21.90 seconds
56K	13.30 seconds
ISDN 128K	4.35 seconds
T1 1.44Mbps	0.74 seconds

\*Note that these download times are based on the full connection rate for ISDN and T1 connections. Modem connections (56Kbps or less) are corrected by a packet loss factor of 0.7. All download times include delays due to round-trip latency with an average of 0.2 seconds per object. With 7 total objects for this page, that computes to a total lag time due to latency of 1.4 seconds.

- **Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element.** Users with visual or other forms of disabilities who may require the use of a screen reader or text only browser need to know exactly what each image is so that navigation can be successfully accomplished. Every image on the home page, especially the navigation link images, must have an 'alt' text description for the user.
- **Do not use deprecated tags within coding.** Because some of the navigation links are represented using an image, the <img> attribute has been applied the <img> tag. This combination has been deprecated by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and should be changed. The use of any deprecated tags may prevent some forms of adaptive technology from performing or functioning correctly, leaving the user stranded.

### Medium Priority:

- **Fix the tab indexing around the animation image.** Within certain browsers, the user cannot tab beyond the animation GIF as the tab index gets stuck in a loop while moving around the image and cause closure of the browser window on multiple occasions. This prevents users with mobility disabilities who cannot use a mouse for navigation from reaching the bottom navigation menu as well as any other navigation menu once the tab index becomes stuck. Upon multiple tests using both a PC and a lap-top computer with Internet Explorer 6.0, Microsoft XP and the Service Pack 2 update installed, this error would occur. Further testing is recommended to determine the exact cause of this malfunction and which browsers are affected.

## Email Updates

### High Priority:

- **Fix tab index problems for keyboard navigation.** Currently, the tab index order does not include the "Banana Republic card #:" entry field within any browser. IE browser tab issues also include the negation of 3 radio select boxes. These tabbing issues should be addressed immediately as this prevents mobility impaired users dependent upon keyboard navigation from being able to complete and submit the form. (See: Device Independence: page 16: Opera browser specific issues.)

## Shops (Departments)

## High Priority:

- **All images within the product department pages of the website should contain alternative text descriptions.** Text should be included to represent the functions of graphics, images used as image maps, lists containing bullets or other graphics, graphical buttons, links, and other general images. Taken into account the large number of product pictures presented to users within the department pages, it is very important to give the user a means of interpreting.

This is extremely important for users who: have turned off image-loading within web browsers, are visually impaired and require the use of a screen reader, are visually impaired and implement the user of a Braille reader, or who are cognitively impaired and may not be able to understand or comprehend images without some form of explanation. In order for screen readers and other forms of adaptive technology to convey images to the user, the images must contain the “alt” tag with a brief, but thorough description.

- **All navigation should be text based, not image based.** The navigation within department pages consists primarily of image graphics. Using requiring the user of a screen reader or text only browser effectively loose any form of comprehensible navigation. All navigation links within header image are lost as well as the home page logo link and all left hand navigation links excluding current local sub-navigation links. This presents a major issue and should be corrected immediately.
- **Make sure all colors properly and sufficiently contrast one another.** Color contrast within the department pages presents issues for users suffering from visual impairments including partial blindness and color deficiencies. Users with either type of impairment may have difficulty trying to distinguish certain color combinations. The white and yellow text that is presented on a light blue background creates an almost “blurry” effect within the left hand navigation that can make it difficult for any user to differentiate.

In addition, within the content sections of each product page, text links below each image are presented as light grey text on a white background. This again is very hard for users with visual impairment to read and distinguish from the background. These combinations of insufficient contrast between text and the background color hamper user’s abilities to successfully navigate and shop for products.

- **Make sure all product-name links are easy to read.** Currently, these links are very small. This makes it very difficult for users suffering from temporary or permanent visual impairments to read the name of the item.

Users may become frustrated when trying to shop for a product because many similar items may be clicked on before the correct product is chosen. By increasing the font size of these links, users will be able to shop and browse more easily.

### Medium Priority:

- **Make sure text only versions contain sufficient spacing between lines of text and different sections.** Currently, when this section is viewed within a text only browser, some text is presented to the user that is too close to other text. This makes it very difficult for users suffering from visual impairments or cognitive disabilities to clearly distinguish proper associations within the text. This may cause users to become confused or disoriented. By having the site output like this, users will most assuredly suffer from proximity issues, relating information together that should not be associated.

### Low Priority:

- **Provide more spaces between images within the department pages.** Currently, product images are close enough together that users suffering from mobility disabilities, in particular, tremors, may find it difficult to successfully click the correct image when browsing the web pages with a mouse. This could cause frustration and may result in the user leaving the website. These pictures are sufficient in size, but should be moved further apart to help improve the user's experience.

## Gift Cards

### High Priority:

- **Make sure the exact purpose of the page is represented when images are disabled.** Presently, the 'Gift Cards' is effectively empty and useless if a user is browsing with images turned off, disabled, or are using a screen reader or text only browser. Users suffering from visual or cognitive disabilities that require these adaptive technology methods are unable to purchase a gift card as the data entry fields are represented using an image. Text based links need to be placed on this page to ensure that these users can successfully perform the functions of the page.
- **Fix the tab order indexing.** The current tab order given for the 'Gift Cards' page does not tab through any of the navigation menus or the logo link. This makes it impossible for users with mobility disabilities that are limited

to the use of a keyboard, to navigate away from this page. These users could become permanently stuck on the 'Gift Card' page forcing the user to close out the browser and start again. This major problem should be addressed immediately.

## Sign in

### High Priority:

- **Allow the page to be linearized.** The 'Sign In' page is currently unusable when linearized. Users requiring screen readers or text only browsers must be presented with text and page formatting that can be read and understood when linearized by adaptive technology. Pages that do not, or cannot, linearize well are difficult to impossible for these users to read. Considering the importance of the 'Sign In' page, this problem should be corrected immediately.
- **Create sub-pages for important links rather than pop-up windows.** All five of these topics: 'Shipping and Handling', 'Returns and Exchanges', 'Credit Card Safeguard', 'our order form' (downloadable PDF), and 'Privacy Policy' are spawned within pop-up windows. All these pages should be turned into cross-linked pages within the site. Emphasizing the point is the fact that the 'Privacy Policy' pop-up window is a duplication of an existing page within the site. Pop-up windows can hinder a user with visual or cognitive impairments that may not be able to comprehend what has happened, or cannot see that a new window has been generated leaving the user confused as to why the content and navigation of the page has changed.

## Customer Service Main

### Practices to Continue

- **Good use of back to 'top' links.** Providing users with multiple links to return to the top of the page throughout content is an important practice. This allows users of different forms of adaptive technology to navigate more efficiently within multiple screen pages. Users that are limited to use of a keyboard no longer have to tab through all the content to reach the top of the page.

### High Priority:

- **Make sure all tables are coded for accessibility.** The 'Customer Service Main' page contains very large tables that contain no forms of accessibility coding within them. Tags such as <thead>, <tfoot>, <tbody>, <summary>, etc are very important to users who are visually or cognitively impaired and require the use of a screen reader, text only browser, Braille reader, or other form of adaptive technology. With this coding in place, tables can function and convey data properly when linearized or read aloud by a screen reader. It assures that table cells and rows are directly related to column headers. Also, that a summary is given that details the data presented by the table that cannot be seen by normal browsers, but can be read by adaptive technology.
- **Make sure all link labels are descriptive and clear.** Contained within the 'Customer Service Main' page are many links using the label 'Click Here'. These type of labels provide users implementing screen readers, text only browsers, or who suffer from some form of cognitive impairment, no way of understanding what the link is for, where it will go, and what page will be presented. Forcing these users to navigate by trial and error is not an acceptable practice and needs to be rectified immediately.

#### Low Priority:

- **Provide users with a 'Back to FAQ' (frequently asked question) link next to each back to 'top' link.** By providing a 'Back to FAQ' link next to each 'top' link, users requiring screen readers or who are cognitively impaired would benefit greatly. This would allow them to bypass steps such as, returning to the top of the page, finding the FAQ section once again, and then progressing through the many FAQ choices, allowing the user to go directly back to the FAQ section and proceed to navigate through the questions immediately.

## Privacy and Security

#### Low Priority:

- **Provide users with a 'Back to Privacy Policy' link next to each back to 'top' link.** As with the 'Customer Service Main' page, links should be provided next to each 'top' link that will allow the users of adaptive technology to skip unnecessary navigation and proceed directly back to the policy categories.

## Terms of Use

### High Priority:

- **Remove unnecessary links from the navigation menu as well as the top of the page.** Within the left hand navigation, the 'Terms of Use' header is an active link. Directly below the header is a link for 'Terms of Use'. The same two links are available at the top of the actual 'Terms of Use' page as well. Considering that all links involved take the user to same result, the two links below each header should be eliminated. By removing the unnecessary links, users requiring screen readers, or who suffer from cognitive disabilities, need not concern themselves with repetition that may cause confusion.
- **Create more 'top' links throughout the content of the page.** Considering the length of the page, 'top' links should be added with more frequency throughout the content to ensure that users of screen readers or text only browsers can navigate quickly and efficiently.

## Getting Around

### Medium Priority:

- **Eliminate the use of acronyms.** By changing the 'BR card' link to 'Banana Republic Card', users with screen readers or text only browsers will be able to understand what the link is, and not have to guess at what is meant by what could be a very strange combination of letters. This will also help users suffering from cognitive disabilities that may be able to read, but perhaps cannot recognize or translate the meaning of acronyms. Eliminating acronyms will lessen confusion for all forms of users.
- **Provide "alt" text descriptions for all images within page content.** This is very important because the "alt" text is what conveys what the image is and what it is about to users requiring a screen reader or who are using a text based browser.

## Orders and Returns

### High Priority:

- **Make sure all tables, including nested tables, are coded for accessibility.** The 'Orders and Returns' page contains very large tables with many nested tables that contain no forms of accessibility coding within them. Tags such as <thead>, <tfoot>, <tbody>, <summary>, etc are very important to users who are visually or cognitively impaired and require the use of a screen reader, text only browser, Braille reader, or

other form of adaptive technology. With this coding in place, tables can function and convey data properly when linearized or read aloud by a screen reader. It assures that table cells and rows are directly related to column headers. Also, that a summary is given that details the data presented by the table that cannot be seen by normal browsers, but can be read by adaptive technology. This is very important when use of nested tables is in place.

#### Low Priority:

- **Provide users with a 'Back to Orders and Returns' link next to each 'top' link.** As with the 'Customer Service Main' page, links should be provided next to each 'top' link that will allow the users of adaptive technology to skip unnecessary navigation and proceed directly back to the policy categories.

## Account Info

#### High Priority:

- **Make sure all link labels are descriptive and clear.** Contained within the 'Account Info' page are many links using the label 'Click Here'. These type of labels provide users implementing screen readers, text only browsers, or who suffer from some form of cognitive impairment, no way of understanding what the link is for, where it will go, and what page will be presented. Forcing these users to navigate by trial and error is not an acceptable practice and needs to be rectified immediately.
- **Fix tab index problems for keyboard navigation.** Currently, the tab index order does not include all data fields and page links. These tabbing issues should be addressed immediately as this prevents mobility impaired users dependent upon keyboard navigation from being able successfully check account information. (See: Device Independence: page 16: Opera browser specific issues.)

## Fit and Size Charts

#### High Priority:

- **Make sure all tables, including nested tables, are coded for accessibility.** The 'Fit and Size Charts' page contains very large tables with many nested tables that contain no forms of accessibility coding within them. Tags such as <thead>, <tfoot>, <tbody>, <summary>, etc are very important to users who are visually or cognitively impaired and

require the use of a screen reader, text only browser, Braille reader, or other form of adaptive technology. With this coding in place, tables can function and convey data properly when linearized or read aloud by a screen reader.

- **Create back to ‘top’ links throughout the content of the page.** The ‘Fit and Size Charts’ page currently contains no ‘top’ links within the content. These links are important because users requiring the user of a screen reader or text based browser cannot effectively navigate the page content without easy/fast access to the top of the page where main navigation menus are usually presented.

#### Low Priority:

- **Provide users with a ‘Back to Finding Your Size’ link next to each ‘top’ link.** As with the ‘Customer Service Main’ page, links should be provided next to each ‘top’ link that will allow the users of adaptive technology to skip unnecessary navigation and proceed directly back to the size charts so that recalculations can be made quickly.

## Glossary (pop-up)

#### High Priority:

- **Fix tab index problems.** Currently, the tab indexing is coded out of order. Mobility impaired users navigating the glossary by keyboard, or users who are visually impaired and require a screen reader, will easily be confused by the alphabetical order of the index. When reaching the end of the alphabet, the tab sequence is: “t – v – w – y – u – x – z”. This should be corrected immediately.
- **Allow the tab index to include each letter of the alphabet that represents the header for each glossary section.** This would allow users with mobility disabilities that can only use a keyboard to be able to quickly tab through the glossary terms by first letter. Currently, the user is taken to a ‘top’ link at the bottom of each category and cannot tab off into the actual glossary terms, leaving the user with no sense of location within the glossary.
- **Provide links that allow the user to return to the alphabetical listing.** The current back to ‘top’ links take the user to the top of the glossary. These links should take the user back to the alphabetical listing at the top of the page in order for users to select a different letter instead of having to navigate back through all the glossary terms. Users suffering from disabilities ranging from visual and mobility impairments, to users suffering

from cognitive impairments would all benefit from this improvement to navigation.

### Medium Priority:

- **Provide 'close this page' links next to each 'top' link.** This would enable users to close the pop-up window at any given letter section of the alphabet and be required to navigate to the bottom of the page. Users implementing the use of screen readers or text only browsers would benefit from faster navigation.
- **Do not use a pop-up window for this page.** Users with cognitive disabilities or requiring a screen reader or text only browser may become confused or disoriented when pop-up windows are generated without prior knowledge or consent.

## Store Locator

### Practices to Continue:

- **Good tabbing order.** Users navigating with only the use of a keyboard can successfully fill out the required data fields. An option should be given to skip navigation though for users requiring screen readers.

### Suggested Changes

#### High Priority:

- **Remove frames from the page.** Frames are used for the bottom navigation on this page and present users with a range of problems. These frames lack the proper titling and other coding aspects that would enable users of adaptive technology to successfully understand and use the bottom navigation menu.

Also, users with other visual impairment or cognitive disabilities may not understand why only half the bottom navigation is available and may not be able to see or use the scroll function. In addition, cognitively impaired users may find it difficult to remember the navigation header once it has been scrolled out of view, leaving the user confused and disoriented. Also, no description containing the purpose of the frames is provided. Considering the lack of frame titles, this is a very important attribute.

In addition, page linearize's poorly as field names are moved to the far right of the screen while the input fields are aligned left. This means that a user implementing a screen reader will first come to an input field, and

then the name of the field followed by another field and so on. This will lead to confusion.

From cynthiasay.com:

Fails: Frames, Scripts & Multimedia Cynthia says:  
Title each frame to facilitate frame identification and navigation.

- Rule: 12.1.1 - All FRAME elements are required to contain the title attribute.
  - **Failure** - FRAME Element at Line: 111, Column: 1
  - **Failure** - FRAME Element at Line: 112, Column: 1
  - **Failure** - FRAME Element at Line: 113, Column: 1

Fails: Describe the purpose of frames and how frames relate to each other if it is not obvious by frame titles alone.

- Rule: 12.2.1 - All FRAME elements are required to use the 'longdesc' attribute.
  - **Failure** - FRAME Element at Line: 111, Column: 1
  - **Failure** - FRAME Element at Line: 112, Column: 1
  - **Failure** - FRAME Element at Line: 113, Column: 1

- **Vertically align the check boxes for: 'All Stores', 'Petites', 'shoes', and 'Factory Stores'.** These form options should be vertically aligned in order to help assure visual clarity and make it easier for a screen reader to convey to the user which select box goes with which topic. Visual clarity with form elements is very important as it does not take much for a user to incorrectly associate elements.
- **Provide left hand navigation.** Considering many important navigational locations are not present within the bottom navigation menu, it is extremely important to provide users with the left hand navigation menu on all pages. The lack of a primary navigation menu leaves users of adaptive technology, as well as users suffering from cognitive disabilities, no effective way to navigate away from the page.
- **Avoid the use of deprecated tags within coding.** The use of any deprecated tags may prevent some forms of adaptive technology from performing or functioning correctly, leaving the user stranded. This page uses the deprecated tag of body with bgcolor.

## Store Locator (Return Page)

High Priority:

- **Provide alternative text for all image maps.** Maps returned to users contain no “alt” text that would allow the users of screen readers and Braille readers the ability to decipher what is being presented. As much information should be provided for these users as possible, even if it is a reiteration of text. Users need to be able to clearly identify the image and its meaning.

## Map of the Area (Multiple Map Page)

### High Priority:

- **Improve tab order.** Tab order is extremely confusing within this page. While it follows a general path, users with different forms of disabilities could easily become confused or lost while trying to navigate. Many items should be removed from the tab order indexing that are not relevant.

## Contact Us Page:

### High Priority:

- **Make sure all tables, including nested tables, are coded for accessibility.** The ‘Contact Us’ page contains very large tables, with some use of nested tables. These tables contain no forms of accessibility coding within them. Tags such as <thead>, <tfoot>, <tbody>, <summary>, etc are very important to users who are visually or cognitively impaired and require the use of a screen reader, text only browser, Braille reader, or other form of adaptive technology. With this coding in place, tables can function and convey data properly when linearized or read aloud by a screen reader.
- **Clearly label all links using descriptive text.** The click ‘Here’ link contained on this page should be changed to accurately convey where the link is taking the user. Users who are visually impaired who require the use of a screen reader, or users who are cognitively impaired or require the use of a text only browser, will not understand where ‘Here’ is taking them. This link should be relabeled to ‘Email Us’ in order to lessen any possible confusion.

## Email Questions (Seven different submit pages: ‘Banana Republic card’, International Inquires’, ‘Marketing, Advertising, and Promotions’,

## **‘Merchandise and Products’, ‘Technical Information’, ‘Tell Us How To Improve’, ‘Unsubscribe From E-mail’)**

### **High Priority:**

- **Give clear indication of required data fields.** Currently, all required data fields are indicated using bold text. Visually impaired users may not be able to distinguish the bold text from regular text. Also, screen readers and text only browsers cannot “see” or convey bold text. A screen reader will warn the user about the required fields being in bold print because of a warning header, however, it cannot show the user which fields are bold.
- **Include placeholder text within the input fields.** This would benefit users implementing screen readers or Braille readers. In the case of a print out form, a Braille reader or an embossed printout would contain the description for the input field, leaving no doubt what data is required. This is not generally required by the W3C, however, is required for WCAG Triple-A compliance, which relates to legacy screen readers which could otherwise not “see” the text box at all.

## **Site Map**

### **Practices to Continue:**

- **Good tabbing order.** Users navigating with only the use of a keyboard can successfully navigate the site map in an orderly fashion.

### **Suggested Changes**

#### **High Priority:**

- **Provide a complete site map.** Currently, many options contained within the bottom navigation menu are not present within the site map. Also, there is no ‘Home’ link present to return the user to the home page. Users with different forms of disabilities may rely on a websites site map in order to understand navigation before attempting to browse the website. If the map is not a complete representation of the site, many users may get confused or lost while browsing.

#### **Low Priority:**

- **Reduce ‘our stores’ link from two separate links into one.** Currently, under ‘our stores’, there are two separate links: ‘united states’, and ‘canada’. Both links take the user to the same search page. To help reduce any possible confusion for users suffering from cognitive

disabilities and for users requiring a screen reader or text only browser, this link should be reduced down to one link stating “United States/Canada. This simplifies the process for users required to listen to output, or tab through choices by making the point more direct.

## **Banana Republic Card (four step linear process)**

### **High Priority:**

- **Create forms that are accessible with images turned off or disabled.** Users with both cognitive and visual disabilities who do not, or can not, have access to images will be unable to complete this form. Without images, the ‘Agree and Continue’ and ‘Cancel’ buttons are not available. This makes it impossible for these users to complete an application for a Banana Republic credit card. This should be corrected immediately.
- **Maintain field descriptions when style sheets are disabled.** Users who suffer from cognitive disabilities requiring the disabling of style sheets will not be able to complete the application. All field descriptions disappear when style sheets are disabled leaving the user to guess at what each field actually represents.
- **Design the page and form so that linearization can occur.** Users with visual impairments requiring the user of a screen reader or text only browser are unable to comprehend the returned page and form in a linearized interface. Form elements and associated input fields are separated and thrown into disarray when the page is linearized. Screen reader technology relies on the linearization of web pages. This issue should be addressed immediately.

### **Low Priority:**

- **Keep all four steps on separate pages.** Currently, step two: ‘Complete the brief application’, and step three: ‘Review and accept the terms and conditions’, appear within the same page. Presented between the two steps are the ‘Agree and Continue’ and ‘Cancel’ buttons for completing step 2. When continue is clicked, the user is moved down a quarter page and is presented with the statement “Scroll down for Credit Card Agreement”.

These two steps should be on two different pages. Users who suffer from visual impairments and require the user of a screen reader, or users suffering from cognitive disabilities may become confused by this process. Also, this creates an extremely long page and users may become confused, disoriented, or loose focus completely.

## Pages Exhibiting No Further Accessibility Issues

The following is a list of pages that do not present any further accessibility issues other than those noted within the general analysis. No additional Modifications are necessary.

### **Gifts**

**Gifts: giftcards**

**Gift: FAQ**

### **Men**

**Men: Gifts by price**

**Men: Wardrobe checklist**

**Men: New arrivals**

**Men: Work**

**Men: After work**

**Men: Sport**

**Men: Suits**

**Men: Blazers**

**Men: Dress Trousers**

**Men: Casual pants**

**Men: Chinos**

**Men: Jeans**

**Men: Sweaters**

**Men: Dress shirts**

**Men: Casual shirts**

**Men: Knit shirts & tees**

**Men: Outerwear**

**Men: Big & tall**

**Men: Scarves**

**Men: Hats & gloves**

**Men: Boxers, socks & pj's**

**Men: Ties & cuff links**

**Men: Belts**

**Men: Bags**

**Men: Shoes**

**Men: Accessories**

**Men: Sale**

**Women**

**Women: Gift by price**

**Women: New arrivals**

**Women: top trends**

**Woman: Going out**

**Woman: Weekend**

**Woman: Work**

**Women: Cashmere**

**Women: Suit collections**

**Women: Blazers**

**Women: Skirts**

**Women: dresses**

**Women: Pants by fit**

**Women: Short & long lengths**

**Women: Dress pants**

**Women: Casual pants**

**Women: Jeans**

**Women: Sweaters**

**Women: Woven shirts**

**Women: Tops & Tees**

**Women: Outerwear**

**Women: Sleepwear**

**Women: intimates**

**Women: Cold weather scarves**

**Women: Hats**

**Women: Gloves**

**Women: Scarves & wraps**

**Women: Bags**

**Women: Belts**

**Women: Socks & hosiery**

**Women: Shoes**

**Women: Accessories**

**Women: Baby**

**Women: Jewelry**

**Women: Sale**

**Petites**

**Petites: Gift by price**

**Petites: New arrivals**

**Petites: top trends**

**Petites: Online exclusive**

**Petites: Going out**

**Petites: Weekend**

**Petites: Work**

**Petites Cashmere**

**Petites Suit collections**

**Petites Blazers**

**Petites Skirts**

**Petites dresses**

**Petites Pants by fit**

**Petites Dress pants**

**Petites Casual pants**

**Petites Jeans**

**Petites Sweaters**

**Petites Woven shirts**

**Petites Tops & Tees**

**Petites Outerwear**

**Petites Sleepwear**

**Petites Cold weather scarves**

**Petites Hats**

**Petites Gloves**

**Petites Scarves & wraps**

**Petites Bags**

**Petites Belts**

**Petites Socks & hosiery**

**Petites Shoes**

**Petites Accessories**

**Petites Baby**

**Petites Jewelry**

**Petites: Sale**

**Shoes**

**Shoes: For her**

**Shoes: For him**

**Accessories**

**Accessories: For her**

**Accessories: For him**

**Jewelry**

**Jewelry: Gifts by price**

**Jewelry: Diamante jewelry**

**Jewelry: Necklaces**

**Jewelry: Bracelets**

**Jewelry: Earrings**

**Jewelry: Rings**

**Jewelry: Brooches**

**Jewelry: Hair accessories**

**Jewelry: View all jewelry**

**Jewelry: Sale**

**Baby**

**Baby: Fragrances & candles**

**Baby: Giftcards**

**Baby: Gift FAQ**

**Gift Services**

**Technical Matters**

**About Banana Republic**

**Where to Work**

**Map Directions**

**BR Card Benefits & Rewards**

**Luxe Card Benefits**

**View Your Account**

**Check Your Points**

**Pay Your Bill Online**