

Web watch Restricted access

Building.co.uk's survey of the top 50 contractors revealed that many of the biggest names in the industry are failing to make their websites accessible to all users. **Chloë McCulloch** reports



Southern Electrical Contracting has come top in a survey of contractor's websites, exclusive to Building.co.uk. It pipped Bowmer & Kirkland to first place in a survey of 50 contractors by web testing provider SiteMorse on behalf of Martin Hornagold of the Marston Group.

SiteMorse ranked the contractors' websites according to criteria such as whether links worked, whether they were accessible to users with disabilities, the speed of downloads and the quality of the coding (sloppy coding can affect a site's appearance on particular browsers).

The site with the fastest response time was www.laingorourke.com, although the contractor only came in 35th, overall.

The survey showed that 94% of the websites passed functionality tests – those with broken links and navigation that moved users away from the site were marked down.

The results were less impressive for coding standards – only 16.8% pages passed – and for accessibility, where almost 50% of pages failed to meet the most basic of three levels. Even worse, 11 of the sites failed accessibility standards on every page.

From these statistics it is clear that many industry websites could be improved. Everyone who uses the internet is adept at assessing the quality of sites. If a site is slow or difficult to navigate, the user will leave.

In the weeks to follow, we will release more tables for architects, project managers and surveyors and Martin Hornagold will explain why some sites work and others fall short.

The companies surveyed were drawn from Building's 2007 top 50 league tables for contractors.

Top 20 contractors' websites

- 1 Southern Electrical Contracting www.s-e-c.co.uk
- 2 Bowmer & Kirkland www.bandk.co.uk
- 3 Cowlin www.cowlin.co.uk
- 4 Sir Robert McAlpine www.sirrobertmcalpine.com
- 5 Biwater www.biwater.com
- 6 The Ardmore Group www.ardmoregroup.co.uk
- 7 Taylor Wimpey www.taylorwimpey.com
- 8 HBGC www.hbgc.co.uk
- 9 Renew www.renewholdings.co.uk
- 10 Wates www.wates.co.uk
- 11 Seddon www.seddongroup.co.uk
- 12 Keller www.keller.co.uk
- 13 Byrne www.byrnegroup.co.uk
- 14 Kier www.kier.co.uk
- 15 Mace www.mace.co.uk
- 16 Emcor www.emcoruk.com
- 17 Osborne www.osborne.co.uk
- 18 Midas www.midasgroup.co.uk
- 19 Sisk www.sisk.co.uk
- 20 Balfour Beatty www.balfourbeatty.com

● For the full top 50, go to www.building.co.uk/leagueables

WHAT'S ON BUILDING'S WEBSITE ...

Liverpool 08

If you're planning on visiting Liverpool during the city's year as European Capital of Culture, make sure you check out our online special on its latest architecture and construction schemes. www.building.co.uk/liverpool08



Salary checker

Project manager

London

£57,805

Europe

£63,406

... and what you read last week

- 1 Travelodge to build hotel with shipping containers
- 2 Taylor Wimpey cuts payments to suppliers by 5%
- 3 Four injured in Clapham site collapse
- 4 BAA to axe 200 staff from projects division
- 5 Rem Koolhaas to design Maggie's Centre for Glasgow

Lost your password?

If you have lost your username and password visit www.building.co.uk/login and enter your email address to receive a new one. Keep abreast of the news from your PC or Blackberry visit www.building.co.uk/youraccount and enter your username and password before ticking the newsletter box.

My favourites ... Simon Cheshire

● www.linkedin.com

The business world's facebook! A networking site that is great for industry contacts around the world.

● www.worldarchitecturenews.com

Good for an overview of overseas news and it's great for international jobs.

● www.fool.co.uk

I use this site for its write-ups on company results and share tips. It gives some

really different perspectives.

● www.skysports.com

I can't believe this is not on most favourites lists! It does exactly what it says on the tin. Simon Cheshire is managing director of the Management Recruitment Group

