



# Responsive Enabling

## Best Practice: How to Implement Responsive Enabling

The gradual process of enabling users to interact with certain user interface elements as and when they need them is referred to as 'responsive enabling'. Initially, the user is shown all of the information and user interface elements, such as checkboxes, radio buttons, and input fields, in one panel, window, or page, but only those items necessary for the *first sub-component* of the task are enabled (i.e., active or 'interactable'). As the user makes a selection, more options are enabled, while other, redundant options are deactivated (but still visible). Implementation of this design pattern can be improved by following these steps:

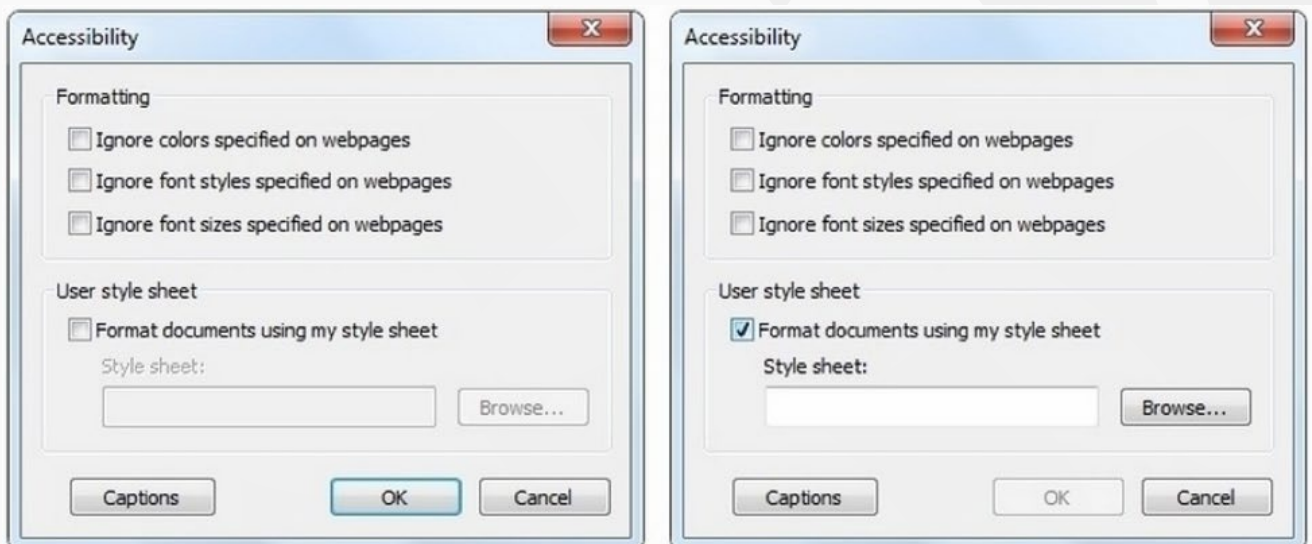
- 1** | **Arrange the different information and user interface elements** necessary to complete a task into one panel, window, or page.
- 2** | **Decide which elements are necessary for each component of a task** or each sub-task. Place the information and user interface elements relevant to a particular stage in a task close together.
- 3** | **Connect items** so that selections result in the activation of relevant user interface elements and information and the disablement of irrelevant elements and information.

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- 4 Distinguish enabled items** from disabled options using color. When the user arrives, the elements and information required to complete the first stage should be active, while all other elements should be disabled. If there are a number of possible first stages, such as choosing one of the 'Formatting' options or inputting a customized 'User Style Sheet' in the example above, allow the user to select any one of these options from the moment they arrive. Once again, when a selection has been made, disable the elements that are now redundant.
- 5 Allow the user to reactivate disabled elements** by selecting another user interface element. For example, when the user has inputted a customized 'user style sheet', in the 'Accessibility' panel below, he or she can revert back to the other 'formatting' options by clicking one of the checkboxes arranged vertically.



- 6 Ensure that there is a natural flow** to the active and inactive elements, so as to coax the user through the task(s) as quickly and efficiently as possible. User testing is a great way to achieve this.