

Dragons & Distractions site review

Overview of the site

- **Purpose and structure** – The website presents a “dragons and distractions” tool-kit that helps users recognize different productivity patterns (called *monsters*) and provides rituals and printable tools to counter them. The top navigation exposes key sections: **Choose your monster**, **Fast printable/tool cabinet**, **Monsters**, **Rituals**, and **Codex**. Each section has a distinct layout; the site is built with Jekyll and uses YAML front matter to describe monsters and rituals. A low-stimulus mode toggle changes the colour palette to a softer beige.
- **Monster selection flow** – The *Choose Your Monster* page lists common feelings (e.g., “Deadlines do not feel real” or “Shiny distractions keep outbidding the work I chose”). Clicking a list item scrolls the page to the matching monster section; the corresponding description, ritual and tool appear in a long vertical list. While functional, the length of the page means users may not realise that their selection has moved them to a different section until they scroll down.
- **Printables & ritual pages** – The *Fast tools/printables* section offers printable cards (e.g., the **Single-Task Oath**) with “View card” and “Download ink PDF” options. The PDF link opens a printable PDF in a separate tab. Ritual pages (e.g., Single-Task Oath) provide step-by-step instructions and reference the corresponding monster.
- **Monsters and lore** – The *Monsters* section lists all monsters with a brief tagline and links to full pages. Each monster page includes alt text for banner images (e.g., the **Sensory Storm** front-matter provides a clear description of the banner image ¹) and identifies triggers, weaknesses, rituals and tools.

Positive observations

Aspect	Comment
Concept and tone	The site uses creative metaphors (dragons, hydras, goblins) to describe common productivity challenges. The playful tone eases users into difficult topics while still offering concrete rituals.
Visual design	Dark and beige themes with illustrated sigils create a distinctive atmosphere. The low-stimulus toggle allows users sensitive to high contrast to switch to a softer palette.
Content depth	Each monster page provides a summary, ecology, weaknesses, rituals and tools; ritual pages outline actionable steps, making the advice concrete.
Lazy loading and modern formats	Many images use <code>loading="lazy"</code> and modern formats (e.g., WebP), which helps improve performance.
Printables	Printable cards and ink-friendly PDFs make the tools accessible offline.

Usability and navigation findings

- **Long scroll on the chooser page** – Clicking a symptom in the *Choose Your Monster* list highlights it but does not reposition the viewport; users must scroll down to find the newly displayed section. On first use, this may be confusing because the right-hand “Best match” box stays near the top until the user scrolls. A possible remedy is to automatically scroll the page (via JavaScript) to the selected section or collapse other sections into accordion panels.
- **Navigation/anchoring** – The bottom navigation repeats the top navigation links, which is helpful. However, there is no quick way to return to the top of long pages. A “back to top” button or shorter pages could improve the experience.
- **Search/filtering** – As the number of monsters grows, a search box or filter (e.g., by feeling or tag) could help users find relevant monsters quickly. Currently the index page lists all monsters without a filter.

Accessibility

- **Alternative text** – Monster pages usually provide `banner_image_alt` and descriptive alt text (e.g., the Sensory Storm page describes the banner image as “Sheltered refuge beneath swirling storm patterns, lantern light, and a calm centre” ¹). This aids screen-reader users. In contrast, the monster index uses empty alt attributes for sigil images (line 62) ². According to the W3C’s decorative images tutorial, empty `alt` attributes are acceptable for images that do not add information and are described by nearby text ³. If the sigil conveys unique meaning (e.g., an emblem that identifies the monster), the alt text could describe it; if it is purely decorative, leaving `alt=""` is correct.
- **Colour contrast** – WCAG 2.1’s contrast guidelines require a minimum 4.5:1 contrast ratio between text and its background ⁴. The dark theme mostly meets this requirement, but the low-stimulus theme uses beige backgrounds with light brown text; some small text (e.g., meta badges) may not meet the 4.5:1 ratio. Consider testing colours with a contrast checker and adjusting colours to meet WCAG AA.
- **Keyboard and focus** – The review did not test keyboard navigation. Ensure that all interactive elements (nav links, toggles, accordion controls) are reachable via keyboard and have visible focus styles.
- **ARIA roles** – The low-stimulus toggle and monster chooser rely on custom components; using `role="switch"` and proper `aria-checked` attributes would make these controls understandable to screen-reader users.

Performance and technical considerations

- **Optimising images** – Modern image formats like **WebP** and **AVIF** offer better compression than PNG or JPEG and shorten load times ⁵. The site already uses WebP for some assets; consider adding AVIF versions via a `<picture>` element to provide the smallest format supported by the browser (with JPEG or PNG as a fallback) ⁶. Ensure that each image includes explicit `width` and `height` attributes to avoid layout shifts.
- **Compression and minification** – Minify HTML, CSS and JavaScript and enable gzip/ Brotli compression on the server to reduce transfer size. Using a build pipeline (e.g., Jekyll plugins) can automate this.

- **Caching** – Add appropriate cache-control headers for assets (images, CSS, PDFs) to leverage browser caching.
- **SEO/meta tags** – Each page should include a descriptive `<meta name="description">` tag summarising the page contents. Search engines use this when indexing static sites.
- **Broken links/checks** – Automated tests (e.g., the included `check_printable_links.py`) help catch missing files. Continue running these checks during deployment.

Actionable recommendations

Priority	Recommendation	Rationale
High	Improve navigation on “Choose Your Monster” page – Implement auto-scrolling to the selected section or use an accordion to display only the selected monster.	Currently users must manually scroll to find the result; auto-scrolling or collapsing sections improves clarity.
High	Test and adjust colour contrast , especially in low-stimulus mode; ensure a 4.5:1 ratio for text vs. background ⁴ .	Sufficient contrast aids readability for users with low vision and is required for WCAG AA compliance.
Medium	Add search or filtering for the monster index.	As more monsters are added, users may need to find them quickly without browsing the full list.
Medium	Add ARIA attributes to custom controls and verify keyboard navigation.	Proper roles (<code>role="switch"</code> , <code>aria-checked</code> , <code>aria-expanded</code>) and focus indicators improve screen-reader and keyboard accessibility.
Medium	Verify alt text semantics – keep empty alt on purely decorative sigil images ³ , but provide descriptive alt text if the sigil itself conveys meaning.	Screen-reader users rely on alt text to identify images; decorative images should be skipped, while informative ones need descriptions.
Medium	Extend image optimisation – Offer AVIF versions and ensure explicit <code>width</code> / <code>height</code> attributes; continue using lazy loading and WebP ⁵ .	Reduces page weight and improves the Largest Contentful Paint, enhancing user experience.
Low	Provide a “Back to top” button on long pages.	Allows users to navigate quickly after scrolling through lengthy monster sections.
Low	Add meta description tags for SEO.	Improves search engine snippets and helps users discover the site.
Low	Consider analytics (with user consent) to understand which monsters/tools are most used.	Helps prioritise content updates and track user engagement.

Conclusion

The Dragons & Distractions site is a thoughtful, creative resource that blends storytelling with practical tools. Its dark and low-stimulus themes, printable cards and structured rituals make it engaging and accessible. Addressing the navigation confusion on the chooser page, verifying colour contrast and enhancing accessibility and performance will further strengthen the user experience and help the project scale gracefully.

1 [raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/WhatsYourWhy/dragons-and-distractions-site/main/_monsters/sensory-storm.md)

https://raw.githubusercontent.com/WhatsYourWhy/dragons-and-distractions-site/main/_monsters/sensory-storm.md

2 [raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/WhatsYourWhy/dragons-and-distractions-site/main/monsters/index.md)

<https://raw.githubusercontent.com/WhatsYourWhy/dragons-and-distractions-site/main/monsters/index.md>

3 [Decorative Images | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/decorative/)

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/decorative/>

4 [G18: Ensuring that a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 exists between text \(and images of text\) and background behind the text | Techniques for WCAG 2.0](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20-TECHS/G18.html)

<https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20-TECHS/G18.html>

5 6 [Image performance | web.dev](https://web.dev/learn/performance/image-performance)

<https://web.dev/learn/performance/image-performance>