ADA Web Content Accessibility Checklist

Making your website accessible to everyone has never been more critical to your business than it is today. This high-level checklist will help you evaluate if your site needs further remediation.

Does this checklist guarantee your site is accessible? No, there is no such thing as "perfect accessibility" or a website being "100% accessible." The goal is to make it as accessible as you can.

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Accessibility Principles: POUR

No two people experience disability in precisely the same way. While no two accessibility barriers are quite the same either, people frequently group these barriers into functional accessibility groups. They are collectively known as POUR.

POUR is an acronym for four high-level principles that describe functional accessibility. Accessible technology is Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust (POUR).

Perceivable

Information and user interface components must be presented in ways people can perceive. People will consume content in different ways. For example, a sighted person will see the content, a blind person may listen to it as synthetic speech, and a deaf-blind person will feel it with their fingertips as electronic Braille.

- ❏ Provide text alternatives for non-text content.
- ❏ Provide captions and other alternatives for multimedia.
- ❏ Create content that can be presented in different ways, including by assistive technologies, without losing meaning.
- ❏ Make it easier for users to see and hear content.

Operable

User interface components and navigation must be operable. The interface cannot require interaction that a user cannot perform.

- ❏ Make all functionality available from a keyboard.
- ❏ Give users enough time to read and use the content.
- ❏ Do not use content that causes seizures or physical reactions.
- ❏ Help users navigate and find content.
- ❏ Make it easier to use inputs other than the keyboard (e.g., screen reader).

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Understandable

The user interface and information contained within must be understandable. Everyone has different comprehension levels.

- ❏ Make text readable and understandable.
- ❏ Make content appear and operate in predictable ways.
- ❏ Help users avoid and correct mistakes.

Robust

Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by everyone. Users should be able to choose the technology they use to interact with websites, online documents, multimedia, and other information formats. (As technologies and user agents evolve, the content should remain accessible.)

- ❏ Validate your HTML. Maximize compatibility with current and future user tools by writing clean code.
- ❏ Ensure all elements have appropriate labels.
- ❏ Send status messages to the user without interrupting their workflow by giving focus to an element. e.g., "added to cart" while shopping online should act as a message and not redirect the user's activity or focus.

Accessibility Checklist

While there are no hard and fast rules for accessibility requirements, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are generally used as a benchmark for compliance. Use this checklist below to find out if your website meets the standards for ADA accessibility.

User Control Standards

- ❏ The site does not use automatic pop-ups, including discounts, newsletter sign-ups, etc.
- ❏ Content that automatically refreshes can be paused (rotating ads are an exception to this rule.)
- ❏ When submitting important information, like financial data, SSN, reservation dates, etc., the user is given an opportunity to review and correct the information before the final submission of the data.
- ❏ Audio and video do not auto-play; these types of media only play on initiation from the user.
- ❏ The site doesn't change unexpectedly or without warning.
- ❏ Timed elements such as pop-ups requiring input or scrolling text (excluding necessary limits like auctions):
  - ❏ Must be user-adjustable and extendable
  - ❏ It can be extended by up to 8 times the default limit before the timer begins.
  - ❏ Provide a warning before the expiration
- ❏ If there is a cognitive test to prove you are human (e.g., Captcha), there needs to be an alternative way to authenticate that does not require a cognitive test (e.g., 2-factor authentication).

Site Appearance Standards

- ❏ Site layout and navigation are consistent. Logical variance is acceptable - sub-pages may differ from top-level pages but should be consistent across page type (e.g., sales pages can vary from landing pages, but all sales pages should have similar layouts)
- ❏ Text can be zoomed in up to 200% of the original size without negatively impacting readability.
- ❏ Text links within the body of the text are distinctive from the surrounding text, using at least two of the following: color, underline, bold, italics.
- ❏ All text on the site has a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 against the background.

Usability Standards

- ❏ All links and fields have a way to indicate when a user's keyboard, mouse, or other input devices, are focused on them.
- ❏ All website content and functions are accessible with only a keyboard. Visitors use the tab and arrow keys to navigate.
- ❏ The site has a sitemap that is accessible from the homepage (at minimum).
- ❏ The site has search functionality that is accessible from the homepage (at minimum).
- ❏ A link that allows a user to skip the main navigation of the page is available in the top left of every page.
- ❏ A default language has been set for the website.

Site Development and Functionality

- ❏ The site is free from HTML errors, broken links, and error pages.
- ❏ All form fields have clear labels that exist outside of the form element.
- ❏ All form fields have clear instructions on input formats and what is expected.
- ❏ All form fields have instructions on how to fix errors.
- ❏ Identical images and elements throughout the site also have identical labels and alt tags.
- ❏ Each page uses a hierarchy of headings, starting with the <h1> tag and proceeding to the <h2>, <h3>, and so on to <h6> if needed
- ❏ Page titles use clear, descriptive text.
- ❏ Headings use clear, descriptive text.
- ❏ Links use clear, descriptive text that indicates the content that follows.
- ❏ The meaning of website text is not conveyed only with color; additional cues are used if color is the primary conveyance.

Content Alternatives

- ❏ There are no images of text on the site; all text is coded as text (this does not include logos, graph labels, etc.)
- ❏ All meaningful images have alt text. Decorative images do not need alt text.
- ❏ Table data should be easy to understand if read aloud.
- ❏ Any tables that are too complex to be read aloud must have a manageable alternative and/or text caption that accurately describes the data.
- ❏ All video with meaningful audio contains closed captioning that is synced to the video.
- ❏ All audio files and videos are accompanied by an accurate text transcript that conveys the meaning of the audio or video and is available directly below the file.

Web Documents

- ❏ All linked documents not in HTML format, such as PDFs, presentations, spreadsheets, and Word documents, meet their type's basic accessibility requirements.
- ❏ Ensure PDFs are machine-readable. Scanned or password-protected documents are usually not machine-readable.
- ❏ PDFs need to be tagged in the valid reading order for accessibility.
- ❏ Make sure electronic publications have page numbers, and those numbers match the printed version.

Accessibility Statement

An accessibility statement is a public information page that relays internal organizational policies, accessibility goals, and past successes in serving and working with people who have disabilities.

Accessibility statements should contain at least the following:

- ❏ A commitment to accessibility for people with disabilities
- ❏ The accessibility standard applied, such as WCAG 2.1
- ❏ Contact information in case users encounters problems.

It is also advisable to include the following information:

- ❏ Any known limitations to avoid frustrating users
- ❏ What measures were taken by the organization to ensure accessibility
- ❏ Technical prerequisites, such as supported web browsers
- ❏ Environments in which the content has been tested to work
- ❏ References to applicable national or local laws and policies