Website Accessibility Checklist

Top 10 WCAG Issues You Can Fix Today

Web accessibility can seem like a daunting task for small teams, but it doesn't have to be so difficult. You can identify and fix many accessibility issues without consulting an accessibility specialist.

This checklist outlines ten common issues to look for when assessing the accessibility of your website or application. If you address these items, you will significantly improve usability for people of all abilities.

This checklist is for:

- Small business owners
- Web administrators
- Content creators
- Digital agencies
- UI designers
- Front-end developers

☐ 01. Images with missing or inadequate alternative text

Images must have alternative text to [communicate the meaning or purpose of the image](#) to the visually impaired user. Don't include phrases like "image of ..." or "graphic of ...", etc. This would be redundant as screen readers already announce "graphic" along with the alt text. Do your best to describe the contents of the image as you would to someone over the phone.

☐ 02. Form controls not labeled properly

Proper form labels ensure that users of assistive technology can fill out a form successfully. Each form field must be labeled with a *<label>*, *aria-label*, *aria-labelledby*, or *title*. Placeholder text does not count as a label.

☐ 03. Buttons & links with non-descriptive text

Descriptive link text is important for communicating what will happen when a link is clicked. [Avoid ambiguous link text](#), such as "click here", "learn more", etc. Buttons that only contain icons (e.g. "x" icon for closing a dialog) must have a text alternative. Adding an *aria-label* attribute is a good choice for these cases.

☐ 04. Insufficient color contrast

Small text (18px or smaller) must be a background/foreground contrast ratio of 4.5:1. Large text (larger than 18px or 14px with bold font weight) must have a contrast ratio of 3:1. WebAIM has a helpful [color contrast checker tool](#) to assist with color contrast ratios. If maintaining brand colors is important consider using [color tints or shades](#).

☐ 05. Improper heading hierarchy

Headings are one of the primary methods used by screen reader users to navigate content. Every page should have only one H1 level heading tag on a page. Heading levels should not be skipped. For example, a page should not have an H3 tag without having a preceding H2 tag.

☐ 06. Missing subtitles or captions on videos/audio media

Videos must have captions that accurately describe the content (both dialog and non-spoken content). Auto-generated captions are not a sufficient solution as they are often inaccurate. Audio clips must include a transcript that details everything that is said in the audio content.

☐ 07. Touch targets are too small

Interactive elements (e.g. link, button, etc.) must be large enough to accommodate people with decreased motor function. Touch targets must have a minimum target size of 24 by 24 pixels or be at least 24 pixels away from any other touch target.

☐ 08. Visible focus state for keyboard navigation

Sighted keyboard users must have a visual indicator of what element currently has keyboard focus. A common solution would be to include a 2px box around the focused element that has adequate color contrast with the background color.

☐ 09. Missing document language

The *<html>* tag must have either a *lang* or *XML:lang* attribute present and that attribute should not be empty. This attribute defines the default language for the page. Without it, assistive technology will not know what language to use when parsing or pronouncing elements on the page.

☐ 10. Links to non-HTML documents

Non-HTML files such as PDFs and Word docs can present issues for assistive technology if not created with accessibility in mind. These files typically require specific software to view the document. Consider including the contents of the document as HTML content on the website.