

WCAG 2.1 AA Requirements Cheat Sheet

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to:

- Explain the four Key Principles of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1,
- Provide easy-to-follow guidelines on making WCET, SAN, and Every Learner content accessible, and
- Suggest tools for checking the accessibility of various types of digital platforms.

Recommended External Resources

- [The Illinois Department of Innovation's accessibility page](#)
- [WebAIM's WCAG 2 Checklist](#)
- [World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#)

WCAG 2.1 AA Requirements Overview

What are the WCAG 2.1 AA Requirements?

- In short, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are a set of standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to ensure that digital content can be accessed by anyone regardless of ability status. WCAG version 2.1 AA is currently the most recent baseline set by the Americans with Disabilities Act for determining digital accessibility.
- The WCAG 2.1 guidelines surround [four key principles](#).
 - **Perceivable:** Information and user interface components must be displayed in a way that allows users to view and recognize the content.
 - Text alternatives for non-text content.
 - Captions and transcripts for audio/video.
 - Adaptability in content layout without losing information (i.e., simpler layouts).
 - Make it easier for users to see and hear content (color contrast, resizing text).

- **Operable:** User interface components must be usable and functional
 - All functionalities are available from a keyboard.
 - Allow users to have enough time to read and use content (options to pause or extend time limits).
 - Avoid content that could cause seizures or other physical reactions, such as flashing lights.
 - Provide clear headings and navigation tools to help users find content.
 - Provide options for users to operate functionality beyond the keyboard, such as touch or voice.
- **Understandable:** Information and operation of user interface should be comprehensive to users
 - Make text content readable and understandable by using clear language and expandable abbreviations.
 - Make sure web pages are consistent and appear/operate in predictable ways (consistent designs and navigation bar)
 - Help users avoid and correct mistakes.
- **Robust:** Content must be able to be interpreted by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.
 - Make sure that content is compatible with current and future user agents (use well-formed HTML, make sure all elements have start and end tags).
 - Use technologies that support accessibility and are compatible with assistive technologies.

Why is it important to make sure digital content is accessible according to these standards?

- Aside from potential legal consequences, there are many reasons why having accessible digital content is crucial. For one, having accessible digital content ensures it reaches a broader audience and provides a better experience for all users. Accessible content is essential for people with disabilities to interact with it, but it can also benefit those without disabilities. For more information on the importance of web accessibility, check out [this resource](#) published by

the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction has a good overview of the [Key Principles of WCAG 2.1](#).

WEBSITES

- Provide captions for live videos.
- Provide website visitors with audio descriptions for video content.
- Ensure that website visitors can use either screen orientation.
- Ensure a high contrast between text sections and their backgrounds
 - Ensure good contrast between text (or images of text) and its background, with a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1.
 - When using bold or large text (18pt or larger), a 3:1 ratio is sufficient. Contrast restrictions do not apply to logos and brand names.
- Ensure that text can be resized to 200% without loss of content or function
- Ensure your website is responsive
 - It's important that a website displays and functions as expected on any device, including mobile devices and tablets, so that website visitors can navigate content in a way that's easiest for them.
 - Make sure all content is available at any screen size.
- Use clear headings and labels to make it easier for people with disabilities to find content and navigate a web page.
- Make sure to indicate in code when the language on a web page changes
- Ensure menus, icons, and buttons appear consistently.
- Ensure that when website visitors adjust text spacing, there is no loss in functionality.
- Create a place on the website where visitors can report accessibility issues that require remediation.

These resources are good to use as a baseline when designing a website:

<https://webaim.org/resources/>

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/resources/>

These resources are good to use to check existing website accessibility:

<https://wave.webaim.org/>

<https://www.accessibilitychecker.org/>

DOCUMENTS

- Text can be highlighted, copied, and pasted.
- Headings are used and used properly (heading levels are not skipped).
- There is sufficient color contrast between text and background.
- Non-decorative images include descriptive alt-text.
- Hyperlink text is meaningful (avoids using “click here” or “read more”).
- True bulleted and numbered lists are used (asterisks and tab are avoided).
- The Microsoft Office Accessibility checker was used to identify and resolve issues.
- PDFs are not scanned but saved from an original Word or PowerPoint file that was accessible in its native format.
- Any scanned PDFs have been converted to optical text using the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) tool in Acrobat.

This is a good tool to use as a baseline when creating new documents:

<https://www.section508.gov/create/documents/>

These tools can be useful to determine document accessibility, but they should always be reviewed:

<https://pac.pdf-accessibility.org/en>

<https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html>

SLIDE PRESENTATIONS

- The PowerPoint presentation was created with a built-in template.
- The order of the on-slide elements have been verified by going to Home -> Arrange -> Selection Pane (elements are layered on top of each other with the first object on the bottom).
- There is sufficient color contrast between text and background.
- Non-decorative images include descriptive alt-text.
- Hyperlink text is meaningful (avoids using “click here” or “read more”).
- True bulleted and numbered lists are used (asterisks and tab are avoided).
- The Microsoft Office Accessibility checker was used to identify and resolve issues.

PowerPoint - This is built in and you can check

Google Slides - You need to download an extension

Prezi - Don't use

Canva - This is built in and you can check when your presentation is done

This is a good tool to use as a baseline when creating new presentations:

<https://www.section508.gov/create/presentations/>

These tools are built into the software to check for accessibility, but should be reviewed:

PowerPoint: Microsoft Accessibility Checker

Canva: Canva Accessibility Checker

This tool is an add-on that can check for accessibility:

Google Slides: Grackle Slides

SPREADSHEETS & FORMS

- Non-decorative images include alt-text image descriptions.
- Header rows and column headings are specified.
- Hyperlink text is meaningful (avoids using “click here” or “read more”).
- Hyperlink text is meaningful (avoids using “click here” or “read more”).
- The use of merged cells was avoided.
- The Microsoft Office Accessibility checker was used to identify and resolve issues.

Excel - Built-in accessibility checker

Google Sheets - Built-in accessibility checker

Google Forms - This is accessible to screen readers, but you need to be mindful when adding images.

Smartsheet - Is accessible in its design

Smartsheet Forms – is accessible in its design

This is a good tool to use as a baseline when creating new spreadsheets:

<https://www.section508.gov/create/spreadsheets/>

Both Microsoft Excel and Google Sheets have built-in accessibility checkers

<https://support.google.com/accessibility/answer/1631886?hl=en>

AUDIO AND VIDEO

- All video content used in class or as a class resource (online, DVD, VHS) is accurately captioned (avoid unedited auto captions in YouTube and similar platforms).
- Transcripts are available for audio-based materials.
- Audio descriptions of essential content that is visual only, such as tables, graphs, etc. See this overview of audio descriptions: [Audio Description Narration](#)

This is a good tool to use as a baseline for audio and video accessibility:
<https://www.section508.gov/create/audio-video/>

LIVE VIRTUAL PRESENTATIONS

- Use an accessible slide deck.
- Make video content accessible with live captioning as well as audio descriptions of key visual content that can be seen but not heard.
 - Audio descriptions can be added after the event in a special soundtrack.
- Include a transcript of both the live and recorded event.
- Offer an alternative format
 - Provide during each webinar session an invitation for participants with special needs to request information in an alternative format, such as a PDF or PowerPoint slide deck. Example language: “We make every effort to make our webinars accessible to all participants, including those with disabilities. We provide an accessible PDF of the slide content, an accessible PowerPoint and a transcript of the presentation. Please let us know if you have any other special considerations with accessing the webinar.”
- [Audio Description Narration](#): Read out loud any slide content that is not incorporated into the verbal presentation or discussion.
 - It is not necessary to read verbatim slide content that is included in the presentation, such as a list of talking points. Examples of content that

should be read verbatim include website URLs, phone numbers, and other contact information, quotes, and statistics. Example: Instead of saying, “You can see the URL on the slide,” the presenter might say, “The Military OneSource URL is www.militaryonesource.mil.”

- Verbally describe information in charts, tables, screenshots and other complex visual content. It is not necessary to read all the information from a table or chart if describing a subset of the information is sufficient to make a point. Example: Instead of saying, “You can see the poll results here,” the presenter might say, “This chart shows that 75% of poll takers responded ‘Yes,’ while 25% responded ‘No.’”
- Choose wording carefully when discussing screenshots of websites or other applications.
 - If the screenshot will not be discussed for the group in detail, the presenter may simply reference the name of the website, webpage or other application featured in the screenshot. However, if the presenter highlights some of the application’s features or provides how-to instructions, the presenter should be aware that participants with visual impairments may not be able to see color, location, or other visual elements of the application. For those who use a screen reader to access websites and other applications, the screen reader will read text, buttons, links, form fields, and images. Screen readers will not provide a feature’s color or location. Example: Instead of saying, “Use the blue button on the left to provide feedback,” say, “Use the blue Feedback button on the left to provide feedback.” Say, “Use the search field in the upper right,” rather than “Go to the upper right of the screen to search.” Reminder: Shaking camera, GIFs, and annotations can be a distraction or problematic to some. The webinar host’s opening comments will explain that the presenter will make a conscious effort to verbalize much of the slide content to enhance the accessibility of both the live and archived events for people with disabilities.
 - Use simple, but precise language to help those who are not native speakers. Instead of using idioms, use plain language. Rather than, “She was so slow, she couldn’t find her way out of a paper bag.” Say,

“Her low intelligence results in even simple tasks being challenging for her.”

- Avoid speaking too fast. Speaking more slowly than usual will also help captioners be more accurate and non-native speakers better understand you.
- Identify the takeaway of charts, tables, and other complicated content rather than assuming that each participant is able to identify the point for themselves.

EXTERNAL LINKS

- When including external links, such as links to other websites or videos, within digital content, make sure that the link itself is accessible. This is especially important if the links are crucial to the comprehension of the digital content.
- Having a disclaimer and remediation request could help visitors to your website or readers of your resources find accessibility solutions.
- Example of an accessibility disclaimer statement: Every Learner Everywhere is committed to ensuring that its resources and content are accessible to all users and has developed materials using current WCAG accessibility standards. However, some content on this website may be sourced from third parties and is not owned or maintained by Every Learner. As a result, we cannot guarantee that all third-party content meets established accessibility standards. If you encounter any accessibility barriers or require access to specific content in an alternative format, please contact us at **elesupport@wiche.edu**. In your message, include the website URL and a description of the issue. We will do our best to accommodate your request and respond as soon as possible.