

Web Accessibility Essentials

POUR Principles (Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, Robust)

Perceivable

- The user can identify content and interface elements by **means of the senses**. For many users, this means perceiving a system primarily visually, while for others, perceivability may be a matter of sound or touch.
 - **Text Alternatives:** Provide text alternatives for any non-text content. Consider other forms to meet user needs, such as large print, braille, speech, symbols, or simpler language.
 - **Time-based Media:** Provide alternatives for time-based media (e.g., videos and podcasts).
 - **Adaptable:** Create content that can be presented in different ways (for example, using a simpler layout) without losing information or structure.
 - **Distinguishable:** Make it easy for users to see and hear content. Be sure to separate foreground from background.

Operable

- A user can successfully **use controls, buttons, navigation, and other interactive elements**. For many users, this means using assistive technology like voice recognition, keyboards, screen readers, etc.
 - **Keyboard Accessible:** Make all functionality available from a keyboard.
 - Keyboard accessibility is one of the most important aspects of web accessibility. It is relevant across disability types and technologies.
 - **Enough Time:** Provide users enough time to read and use content.
 - **Seizures:** Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures (e.g., flashing lights or contrasting visual patterns, such as stripes, grids, and checkerboards).
 - **Navigable:** Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are in a resource.

Understandable

- Users should be able to **comprehend the content**. Web content needs to be **consistent** in its presentation and format, **predictable** in its design and usage patterns, and **appropriate** to the audience in its voice and tone.
 - **Readable:** Make sure text content is legible and understandable.
 - **Predictable:** Make sure web pages appear and operate in predictable ways.
 - **Input Assistance:** Help users avoid and correct mistakes.

Robust

- Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of users, allowing them to choose the technology they use to interact with websites, online documents, multimedia, and other information formats. **Users should be allowed to choose their own technologies to access content.**
 - **Maximize Compatibility:** Make sure content is compatible with current and future user tools, including assistive technologies.
 - **Test With Different Browsers and Devices:** Regularly test your website on different browsers (like Chrome, Firefox, Safari) and devices (desktops, tablets, smartphones) to ensure consistent performance.
 - **Test With Assistive Technologies:** Use screen readers, magnification software, and voice recognition tools to test your website. This helps you understand how your content is accessed by these technologies and where improvements can be made.

Quick Tips

1. **Use Alt Text for Images:** Provide alternative text (alt text) for images. This helps screen reader users understand what the image is about when they can't see it.
2. **Ensure Text Contrast:** Ensure high contrast between text and background to make content readable for users with visual impairments.
3. **Provide Alternatives for Media:** For audio and video content, provide captions or transcripts so that users with hearing impairments can understand the content.
4. **Label Forms Properly:** Ensure all form fields have proper labels. Screen readers rely on these labels to help users understand what to put in each field.
5. **Use Proper Hierarchy to Structure Your Content:** Use headers (H1, H2, H3, etc.) to structure your content logically. This helps users, especially those using screen readers, navigate your content more effectively.
6. **Always Use Unique Titles:** Unique titles provide clear and distinct context for each page or section. This is especially important for users who rely on screen readers to understand the structure and content of a website or document. If titles are repetitive or vague, it becomes challenging for users to understand the content or the purpose of each section.

Have all your public-facing content checked and verified by an accessibility specialist!

Accessibility Tools

1. **[Wave](#):** WAVE can quickly identify potential contrast errors, text size issues, and confusing structural elements.
2. **[accessScan](#):** Automatically scans the submitted landing page. Once completed, accessScan will tell you if your site is WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) compliant.
3. **[A11y Color Contrast Accessibility Validator](#):** Automatically scans the submitted landing page. Once completed, accessScan will tell you if your site is WCAG compliant.
4. **[Microsoft Accessibility Checkers](#):** Before you send an Outlook email message or share a Word document, Excel spreadsheet, PowerPoint presentation, or OneNote notebook, run the Microsoft accessibility checker to make your content easier for people with disabilities to read and edit.