



AIC Accessibility Tips for Webpages

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Website Accessibility Resources

Online resources

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

<https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/resources/tips/web-accessibility>

<https://webaim.org>

Accessibility principles: why is this important?

An introduction to some of the web accessibility requirements for websites, web applications, browsers, and other tools can be found at <https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-principles/>. It provides references to the international standards from W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) and [a useful feature] to stories of web users who benefit from accessible design.

Tips for web accessibility

The following series of tips, drawn primarily from <https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/resources/tips/web-accessibility>, provide brief information about several important points that should be considered when designing web resources to meet accessibility standards. For a more in-depth look at web accessibility issues, visit the website of WC3: Web Accessibility Initiative at <https://www.w3.org/WAI/>

Use semantic structure

Follow best practice, separating structure and appearance through the use of CSS. In particular, the use of headings makes content accessible for those using screen readers and other assistive technology.

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/page-structure/>; <https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/page-structure/example/>

<https://webaim.org/techniques/semanticstructure/>

Include proper alt text for images

Alt text should be provided for images, so that screen reader users can understand the message conveyed by the use of images on the page. This is especially important for informative images (such as infographics). When creating the alt text, the text should contain the message you wish to convey through that image, and if the image includes text, that text should also be included in the alt.

The exception to this rule is when an image is used purely for decoration; in this case, [the alt text can be left empty](#) so that the screen reader user is not distracted from the more important content on the page.

If an image is the only content of a link, the screen reader will read the file name if alt text is not provided. Always provide alt text for images that are used as links.

<https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/resources/tips/web-accessibility#accessible-alt>

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/decision-tree/>

Give your links unique and descriptive names

When including links in your content, use text that properly describes where the link will go. Using "click here" is not considered descriptive, and is ineffective for a screen reader user.

Just like sighted users scan the page for linked text, visually-impaired users can use their screen readers to scan for links. As a result, screen reader users often do not read the link within the context of the rest of the page. Using descriptive text properly explains the context of links to the screen reader user.

The most unique content of the link should be presented first, as screen reader users will often navigate the links list by searching via the first letter.

For example, if you are pointing visitors to a page called "About Us":

- Try not to say: "[Click here](#) to read about our company."
- Instead, say: "To learn more about our company, read [About Us](#)."

<https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/resources/tips/web-accessibility#accessible-links>

Use color with care

The most common form of color deficiency, red-green color deficiency, affects approximately 8% of the population. Using ONLY colors such as these (especially to indicate required fields in a form) will prevent these individuals from understanding your message.

Other groups of people with disabilities, particularly users with learning disabilities, benefit greatly from color when used to distinguish and organize your content.

To satisfy both groups, use color, but also be sure to use other visual indicators, such as an asterisk or question mark. Be sure to also distinguish blocks of content from one another using visual separation (such as whitespace or borders).

There are several [tools you can use to evaluate color contrast](https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/resources/tips/web-accessibility#accessible-color), which will assist you in making your page as visually usable as possible to individuals with low vision or varying levels of color blindness.

<https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/resources/tips/web-accessibility#accessible-color>

Ensure that all content can be accessed with the keyboard alone in a logical way

Users with mobility disabilities, including repetitive stress injuries, may not be able to use a mouse or trackpad. These people are able to access content through the use of a keyboard by pressing the "tab" or "arrow" keys, or through the use of alternative input devices such as single-switch input or mouth stick. As a result, the tab order should match the visual order, so keyboard-only users are able to logically navigate through site content.

Long pages with lots of content should be broken up with anchor links (jump lists), allowing keyboard-only users to skip to relevant portions of the page without having to negotiate through other content. "Skip to main content" should be provided at the top of each page, so keyboard-only users won't have to tab through the page navigation in order to get the main content.

For pages with local menus and multiple levels and sub-items, the menus should be configured so that all menu items can be accessed with the keyboard. Do not use elements that only activate when a user hovers over items with a mouse, as keyboard-only or screen readers users will not be able to activate them.

<https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/resources/tips/web-accessibility#accessible-content>

Design your forms for accessibility

When form fields are not labeled appropriately, the screen reader user does not have the same cues available as the sighted user. It may be impossible to tell what type of content should be entered into a form field.

For more information, go to <https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/resources/tips/web-accessibility#accessible-forms>

Use tables for tabular data, not for layout

Using tables for page layout adds additional verbosity to screen reader users. Whenever a screen reader encounters a table, the user is informed that there is a table with "x" number of columns and rows, which distracts from the content. Also, the content may be read in an order that does not match the visual order of the page. Do not create the layout of a website using a table; instead, use CSS for presentation.

For more information, go to <https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/resources/tips/web-accessibility#accessible-tables>

Make dynamic content accessible

When content updates dynamically (i.e. without a page refresh), screen readers may not be aware. This includes screen overlays, lightboxes, in-page updates, popups, and modal dialogs. Keyboard-only users may be trapped in page overlays. Magnification software users might be zoomed in on the wrong section of the page.

These functions can easily be made accessible. Options include ARIA roles and alerts, as well as front-end development frameworks that specifically support accessibility.

Ensure that video players do not auto-play (non-consensual sound), and that the players can be used with a keyboard. Additionally, all videos must have options for closed captioning and transcripts for the hearing-impaired.

If your site contains a slideshow, make sure that each photo has alt text and can be navigated via the keyboard. If you are using any unique widgets (such as a calendar picker or drag-and-drops), be sure to test for accessibility.

<https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/resources/tips/web-accessibility#accessible-dynamic>