

Websites and PDFs

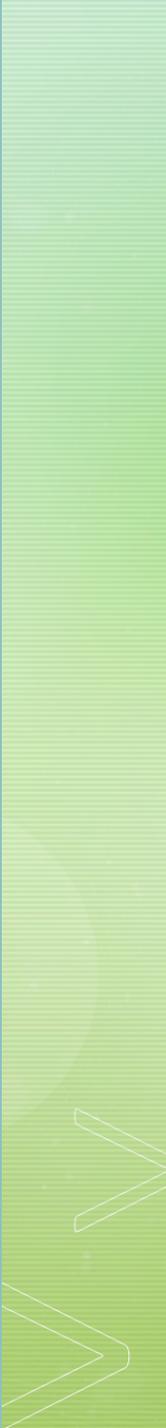
Accessible Public Communications

Part One

Law and Philosophy



What is Accessibility?

- Is it Section 508 compliance?
 - Is it WCAG 2.1, Level A & AA compliance?
 - How many people here actually know what those two statements mean?
 - And if you do, are you the only person in your organization who does?
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Section 508

- ADA is often used as a blanket term, but online and digital communications are not actually covered in the actual “Americans with Disabilities Act.”
- They are addressed in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and its updates and amendments, the last round occurring to 2017.
- <https://www.section508.gov/> will give you more information on this than you have ever desired.

WCAG 2.0 / 2.1

- WCAG stands for Web Comprehensive Accessibility Guidelines. It is a worldwide standard for website accessibility. There are 3 levels of compliance: A, AA, AAA
- In 2017, the federal government adopted WCAG 2.0 Levels A & AA as their standard for Section 508 compliance. Thus, clearing up a murky situation previously.
- <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/> will provide you with more info on WCAG and its origins.



But what is accessibility, really?

- Accessibility is about more than just rules and regulations.
 - Yes, it's the law, but more importantly, it's what we should be doing from a communications and customer service perspective.
 - It's just simply the right thing to do.
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It's in everything digital

- Websites and Social Media
 - PDFs and Word Docs
 - Video captions, Subtitles, Infographics
 - Third-party vendors
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It's a living thing

- Accessibility by its nature requires a human presence to check for compliance.
- Scanners are great and help a lot, but there are still lots of things that require a human to look at and make a judgment call on.
- And it's not just sight and hearing. It's tactile too – Keyboard usability and focus-functionality.
- There is no “silver bullet” solution! And beware of any company or product that says otherwise: ([See the recent allegations against AccessiBe](#))



It's a recurring task

- Accessibility has to be built into your daily processes, at all levels, from the beginning.
 - It's not just something you just do at the end to make something compliant. (Though that's most often how people seem to think it works.)
 - It has to be standard operating procedure at all levels of your organization.
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It applies to your vendors, too

- It also needs to be baked into your procurement process.
- Your vendor isn't going to be sued. You are.
- It is surprising how many vendors don't consider accessibility to be a priority.
- Changes and accessible digital platforms won't happen if we don't require it of all of our vendors.
- VPAT statement - Voluntary Product Accessibility Template -- ask for it in writing!!!

Part Two



So, How Do We Do This?

Step One: Finding Issues and Testing

- Scanner sites, Google Chrome extensions, Apple voiceover
- Paid solutions: SiteImprove, Monsido, etc.
- Free(ish) tools: WAVE Web Accessibility Eval Tool, WebAIM (Utah State Univ.) <https://wave.webaim.org/>
- WebAccessibility.com - <https://www.accessibilitychecker.org/>
- Web acc. eval tools list - <https://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/tools/>
- <https://www.section508.gov/test/web-software/>
- <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

Step Two: Fixing Things

- Alt Tags are low-hanging fruit (alt tag text doesn't have to be identical to text in infographics - as long as it tells the info in a structured way.)
- “Read more” and “click here” are evil. Make the text truly descriptive. “Read the 2022 budget”, “Register for swim lessons”
- Tables are also evil....try to get around them using columns or other formatting. If you can't, make sure that data tables have correct tags on them. This is a real pain, no way around it.

Step Two: Fixing Things (cont.)

- Tab order (for non-mouse, keyboard users) - tabindex="0"
- <https://www.washington.edu/accessibility/websites/keyboard/>
- <https://www.washington.edu/accessibility/websites/order/>
- <https://www.w3.org/WAI/wcag-curric/sam73-0.htm>
- Links opening in new browser windows
- <https://dev.to/cerchie/3-ways-to-make-target-blank-accessible-3lan>

Step Three: Can you fix everything?

- Maybe or maybe not, depending on your CMS or code
- These rules and requirements just show you what the code should be, but they don't take into account factors such as "can you even see your code?"
- So what can you do if you can't fix certain things?
- You do the best you can, and you continue looking for accessible solutions. Maybe that means a new software vendor. Maybe an in-house developer. Maybe that means no changes.

Bonus Points: Scanners vs. Vendors

- My site vendor says the site is accessible, but a scanner (SiteImprove, Monsido, etc.) says it's not. Now what do I do?
- Go with your scanner's results. Point the errors out to your vendor (or your webmaster) and get a response in writing.
- It may be a false positive, or it may be that the vendor didn't tell the whole truth. But at least you know if there's an issue and can reasonably explain your position. And it shows that you are trying to do the right thing.
- (Civic Plus popup module just recently had a series of false positives like this, prompting them to notify their customers that their popup overlay functionality was actually compliant.)



PDF Documents

- People need to be scanning for accessibility as they are building documents.
- Services will check if your PDFs are compliant, but they don't remediate them.
- PDF remediation with Adobe (walkthrough an example):
 - Do Accessibility Check
 - Fixing common errors:
 - Tagging
 - Document Titles
 - Table Headers
 - Non-readable PDFs – scanned PDFs. Make them “screen readable”

Conclusion

Do the Best
That You Can



It's a daily grind

- Accessibility on websites is an ever-changing standard.
 - You can be 100% compliant one day, and then something on the site changes, and you're not compliant the next day.
 - What matters most is:
 1. Understanding the need, and why it's important
 2. Doing what you can, whenever you can to create a more accessible digital experience for our residents and customers.
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Questions?

I'm here to help



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SCAN ME



Download a list
of the resources
discussed in this
presentation in
PDF format.

[kensmithdesigns.net/
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slides.pdf](https://kensmithdesigns.net/tamio/ada-resources-slides.pdf)