

# Introduction to Web Accessibility

## What is web accessibility?

Web accessibility means that websites are designed and developed so that people with disabilities can use them. Accessibility supports inclusion for people with sensory, motor, or cognitive disabilities, as well as others, such as users with “temporary disabilities” like a broken wrist or lost glasses.

Many accessibility barriers can be overcome through web technologies. Specifically, web accessibility means that your website is constructed so that visitors can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the website.

## Who decides what’s accessible?

The main set of standards that guides website accessibility is called [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG). WCAG 2.2 is the current set of website accessibility standards published by the main international standards organization for the Internet, the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

## How are the guidelines measured?

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 are organized into three levels of conformance:

### Success Criteria

- Level A – the most basic web accessibility features. Level A conformance satisfies all the Level A Success Criteria, or a [conforming alternate version](#) is provided.
- Level AA – deals with the biggest and most common barriers for disabled users. Level AA conformance satisfies all the Level A and Level AA success criteria.
- Level AAA – the highest (and most complex) level of web accessibility. Level AAA conformance is not required as a general policy for entire websites.

For most websites, Level AA is the best target. In many cases, some of the highest-level guidelines simply can’t be applied to all websites; Website owners are encouraged to comply with all the guidelines as is reasonable, whether you want Level AAA or not. Achieving Level A conformance is a great way to make progress and begin helping your users. **Level AA is the standard ePageCity is using** as a benchmark as this level targets the most common and most problematic issues for web users. It is not recommended that

Level AAA conformance be required as a general policy because it is not possible to satisfy all Level AAA success criteria for some content.

## How does this affect me and my website?

There are several practical reasons for making websites usable by as many people as possible, regardless of their disabilities or the devices they use. Accessible websites remove barriers that might make your website difficult to use, which not only increases the potential audience for your business, but also fosters a culture of inclusivity on the web.

## Accessibility: Content Best Practices

For those with visual impairments, learning difficulties, hearing loss and more, there are many unique challenges across the Internet. Creating accessibility-friendly content is easier than one might think. This document highlights various elements of your website that are editable and how to best comply with accessibility standards in those areas. It is recommended that you take all reasonable measures to address the following areas of your website to ensure your content follows accessibility standards.

### Page Titles

Choose a title that adequately and briefly describes the content of the page. Check that the title is different from other pages on the website, and adequately distinguishes the page from other web pages.

### Heading Treatments

Your Content Management System offers several heading treatments. These are text stylings of differing size and color. The headings indicate priority in descending order.

- Use headings for titles of sections or lists, not for emphasis on sentences.
- Do not use heading styles on text that normally belongs in a paragraph or quote. If you want to draw attention to some text, bold or italicize it, or consider making it a standalone paragraph.
- Use headings sparingly and in a logical order. Heading 3 should be nested under Heading 2, and Heading 4 under Heading 3.

Within the content management system, you can find your heading treatments at the top of the Basic Text Editor in the formatting options.

## Alternative (Alternate) Text

"Alt text" or "Alternative text" is textual information that is added to an image file. This text helps search engines understand what an image is about. It is also what screen readers (technology that reads text on a website out loud) use to interpret an image and provide a description of that image for the visually impaired.

- Your website will include features for you to add and edit alt text through the Content Management System.
- Alt text should be added to each image.
- Alt text should describe the image accurately and succinctly.
  - If it's a picture of a person, write out that person's name;
  - If it's a thing/object, describe it in a few words; For example, if it's a photo of Lake Michigan, use the alt text "Lake Michigan"
- Try to avoid redundant alt text. If you have several pictures on a page, the alt text should be different for each picture.

## Videos

Your Content Management System allows you to embed YouTube and Vimeo videos on pages of your website. YouTube and Vimeo include accessibility settings for video content.

- Video content should have captions for the hearing-impaired.
- You can find settings within your YouTube or Vimeo account that allow you to add subtitles/captions directly to your videos.
- Include settings that allow the user to stop or pause video content.
- Video should not include any rapidly flashing or strobing lights or colors.
- For videos from another outside source, it is recommended that you provide a transcription of the video. These transcriptions should be added to the same page of your website that the video is embedded on and labeled as the video transcription.

## iFrame Titles

An inline frame (iframe) is a HTML element that loads another HTML page within a document. Iframes are helpful tools used for incorporating external content onto your website. These are commonly used for embedding videos, maps, forms, and other types of interactive content.

Iframes must have relevant titles. Supplying a title within your iframes will provide important context to people using screen readers and other assistive technologies when browsing your website.

Adding a title to the iframe code will help explain the content's purpose. Below is an example of an iframe code:

```
<iframe src="http://www.example.com/">
```

And here is the same code with a descriptive title added in bold:

```
<iframe title="Product Demonstration video" src="http://www.example.com/">
```

This tells the user that they're about to watch a product demonstration video.

[Learn more about iframe titles](#) from the Bureau of Internet Accessibility. If you have questions or need assistance adding a title to your iframe code, please reach out to ePageCity.

## Images of Text, PDFs

Image-based file formats, such as photos with embedded text or documents saved by "print to PDF," present challenges to the visually impaired because they cannot always be read by screen readers.

- Use actual text instead of images of/containing text.
  - Use the image caption feature in the CMS to add captions on your images.
  - Use images for decoration and not for information delivery.
  - Use alt text to provide key information from the image.
- Avoid using PDFs where plain text would work. If you must use a PDF, say, for a printable form, make sure the content is readable by providing either a plain text transcription or creating the PDF with accessibility features.
- If you transcribe the PDF, the transcription should be added to the same page of your website that the PDF is on. Include a note indicating that the text is a transcription of the linked PDF.

There are several ways to add accessibility features to your PDF content. Here is a resource with information on creating accessible PDF content:

- <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html>
  - These Best Practices techniques require access to Adobe Acrobat Pro DC. Adobe Acrobat Reader DC and Adobe Acrobat Standard DC do not have the

complete set of tools needed to create and validate PDF documents for accessibility. ePageCity can provide a separate quote to add accessibility features to your PDFs.

## Link Descriptions

When adding hyperlinks throughout your website, be as descriptive as possible to reduce confusion. Describe the link and the destination it points to, rather than simply telling the reader to “click here” or “read more”. For example, write out:

- “For more information, see Accessibility Issues” instead of “Click here for more information about Accessibility Issues”.
- “Learn more about Our Services” instead of “Read More”.

## Accessibility Statement

Consider including an accessibility statement on your website. This should describe the level of web accessibility you aim to achieve, steps you have taken to promote accessibility, and acknowledgement of areas of the website where accessibility targets have not been met.

Here is a resources to help create your statement:

- <https://www.w3.org/WAI/planning/statements>

Here are a few examples of website accessibility statements:

- <https://www.nature.com/info/accessibility-statement>
- <https://msu.edu/accessibility>
- <https://www.nfl.com/legal/accessibility>