##### **Best Practices for Website Accessibility**

**Submitted By:**



Making Accessibility Work for You

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# Web Accessibility Tips

1. **Use Alternative Text Tags**
Alternative text, also known as alt text or Alt Text, appears when you move your pointer over a picture or object, and is ready by assistive technology. Alt text helps people who use screen readers to understand the content of images. For many readers, this is the only information they have about the images and objects on your webpage.

Don’t provide alternative text for decorative or background images. This can clutter a page, and consume time for content that does not description. Add a null text tag.

1. **Do’s and Don’ts for Web Images**
	1. **Do** use images where needed
	2. **Do** keep image meaning consistent
	3. **Don’t** use images where other markup can do the job: display text using text
	4. **Do** use the IMG tag to place meaningful images in the page
	5. **Don’t** use CSS to place images that need Alt text: you cannot assign Alt text to background images
2. **Consider Good Color Usage**

Your web content provide alternative for color-coded information, rather than just relying on color to be the sole identifier. This is not announced by assistive technology, and your emphasis might not be made. Avoid using bright text colors on bright backgrounds, as well as dark text colors on dark backgrounds. Check to make sure your website provides accessible color contrast.

1. **Avoid Timeouts without Warnings**

Your webpage shouldn’tautomatically log the user out without providing notification. If there is a timeout on the page, offer the user the option to extend the time limit.

1. **Provide Descriptive and Distinct Links**

If you are including a link on one of your pages, it's more useful (and conformant to Section 508 2.0 and WCAG) to describe the link, rather than just telling the reader to "click here." Taken out of context, there is no way to determine where that link is going. For example, it's better to write out, "To discover more about our services, check out Our Service Offerings instead of, "To learn more about our services, click here”.

Moreover, if possible, use a style beyond color choice to distinguish your link text. Many organizations underline their links or make sure that there is a significant color contrast between hyperlinked text and regular text. Using this methodology ensures that colorblind users will able to find a link immediately without having to hover over it with their cursors or look for subtle color differences.

1. **Use Abbreviations Wisely**Like many organizations, abbreviations can consume us. If you're abbreviating something in HTML in your web content, put periods in between each letter to improve readability. For example, if you're referencing the United States of America, write it out as U.S.A., rather than USA. A screen reader won't recognize the abbreviation without periods, and will instead read it out phonetically as a word. It could be confusing for a user of a screen reader, and slow down the access of the website.
2. **Allow users to access the user interface**

Regardless if they use a mouse, a keyboard, a screen reader, screen magnifier or speech recognition. Do not have areas that might be difficult to reach. Consider testing with assistive technology, as well as users with disabilities.

1. **Structural Markup and Coding**

Do use heading tags for headings, list elements for lists, etc. Use the elements, and not just styles to organize. Don’t use markup, such as headings and blockquotes just for formatting if a structure is not intended. Use them for their intended purpose. However, don’t format visually. Don’t just bold text and assume it will be read as a heading, since assistive technology does not announce styles.

1. **Include Subtitles or Transcripts for Media**

If your web content regularly includes videos or audio, try to provide subtitles — especially if you’re producing the bulk of your own video content. It’s easier to do it in-house, with someone who understands your content. You might see that video hosting sites such as YouTube have tools that allow users to add subtitles to their clips, but this is not as reliable. Making a transcription of the video available online is also an incredibly helpful resource for users who have auditory disabilities, like Deafness or are Hard of Hearing.

1. **Explicit Labeling for Form Fields**

Use HTML provided elements where possible, instead of other formatting. Use HTML presets for textbox, radio button, checkbox, button, listbox, combo box, text area elements. In order to provide proper identification by assistive technology, add explicit label form controls using Label tag. Don’t rely on placing labeling text in a textbox that is cleared when an entry is made.

Ensure keyboard accessibility. For instance, JavaScript validation and event handling should not interfere with keyboard usage. When creating a custom element, e.g., slider, use an accessible widget where possible such as Yahoo UI. Also, ensure custom elements take into account accessibility. You can use ARIA to provide semantic information.

1. **Utilize Skip Navigation**

For repetitive navigation links, provide a way to bypass them via keyboard and move to main content. Don’t assume this is only for screen readers: keyboard-only users also need to move to main areas for links and form controls quickly. Consider using WAI-ARIA landmarks to mark sections of the page: navigation, main content, search area

1. **Tables and Frames**

Do use table markup for data tables, but not for layout tables. For those data tables, use header tags to identify header cells for rows and columns. This helps with readability and navigation by assistive technology. Don’t use header tags in tables that are for layout purposes only.

For pages with multiple frames, add descriptive titles. For your webpage, title a frame for its purpose e.g., “menu”.