ACCESSIBILITY NOW

Are you worried about web accessibility compliance? You should be.

Not only is your brand missing out on the economic advantages of catering to the market of users with disabilities, but a non-compliant site also subjects your company to the peril of private lawsuits for violating the American Disabilities Act.

Web accessibility can be complicated, especially for small businesses that may not have the internal resources to initiate and maintain web accessibility.

Here are four tips to enable immediate accessibility:

1. COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

Publicly display your commitment to achieving web accessibility compliance. Create a public accessibility statement that communicates to your customers that accessibility is a top priority, and add the statement to the footer of your site. Additionally, provide contact phone numbers and email addresses in your footer so that any user having problems accessing your site can speak with a customer representative.

2. COMMUNICATE INTERNALLY TO YOUR IT AND WEB TEAMS

Make sure that your main IT and web teams understand that accessibility is important to your organization and help them understand the necessity and requirements of web accessibility. Recommend that they read the **Introduction to Web Accessibility** provided by the W3C.

3. FORM A WEB ACCESSIBILITY TEAM

Web accessibility requires constant maintenance. While a third party's auditing and organizational efforts may help in the short-term, long-term success will only come by making web accessibility a part of everyday monitoring, designing, and building sites and apps.

The best way to prioritize and improve upon web accessibility is to integrate your third party accessibility partner into your process of testing/auditing your sites and apps during every release. Select a partner company that will understand your development process and bring your long-term accessibility goals to fruition.

4. CHECK YOUR TOP PAGES FOR ACCESSIBILITY

There are many steps that your developers can take to immediately enhance the web accessibility for users with disability as well as reduce your chance of being subject to accessibility-related legal action. See the next page for a few Easy Check areas compiled by the W3C that offer the easiest way to update your website.

Page Title

Check that page titles adequately describe the content of your page. Page titles should be unique and distinguishable for each page of your website.

Image Text Alternatives

Images should be labelled with text for users with low-vision. Check that each image on your site has alt with appropriate alternative text that is functional and describes the image simply.

Re-Size Text

Some users need to enlarge web text, or change font or space between lines to read content. When a user re-sizes text, all text should get larger on the corresponding site. Check that text does not disappear or get cut off. Additionally, ensure that text, images, and other content do not overlap on a re-sized screen.

A common mistake is creating text as an image, preventing the re-sizing of text.
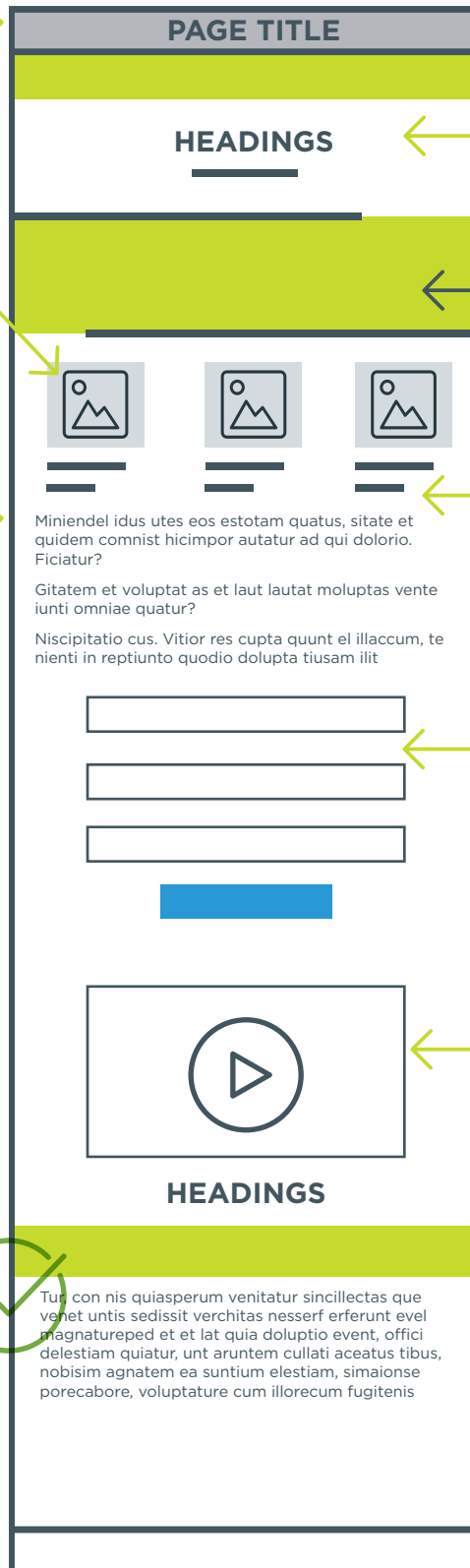
Keyboard Access and Visual Focus

Check that a user can tab to all elements, including links, form fields, buttons, and media player controls, and check that users can relatedly tab away from all elements.

Additionally, ensure that the tab order follows a logical sequence (left-to-right for appropriate languages, top-to bottom, etc).

Basic Structure Checks

Check that the information makes sense when read in the correct order. Additionally, check that blocks of information have clear headings so that users can navigate the information more easily.

PAGE TITLE

HEADINGS

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HEADINGS

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Headings

Every page should have at least one heading. Check that all text that is a heading is marked as a heading as well as a conceptual section heading.

Contrast Ratio

Web pages should have a minimum contrast of at least 4.5:1 for normal-size text.

Developers should be cognizant of the importance of color contrast. While some users need high color contrast (e.g. dark colors on a light background), others need low luminance to see. Therefore, web pages must continue to work when people change site colors.

Forms, Labels and Errors

Check that all form controls are keyboard accessible as well as labeled correctly.

If a user makes an error in a form, error pages should be easy to understand, and fields without errors should still be populated.

Multi-Media (video/audio) Alternatives

Ensure media player controls are labeled correctly.

Audio should not start automatically when a web page opens.

Video should contain captions which must be in sync with spoken content, should identify speakers, and include sounds other than dialogue.

Video transcripts should be easy to find near the audio/video and include all audio information.

Audio description should be made accessible for users with low-vision.

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Usablenet is a global technology services company with over 16 years' experience in web accessibility and usability. Usablenet supports a wide range of companies seeking to ensure their web and mobile experiences are accessible and meet WCAG 2.0 AA standards.