Web Accessibility Audit

Web accessibility means websites, tools, and technologies are designed, built, and optimized in a way that **people with ALL abilities can use them**.

Some estimates place disabled Americans around **26%** (nearly 61 million people, with an annual disposable income of $1.2 trillion).

People with a disability
People with no disability

Stat and image courtesy of the www.cdc.gov
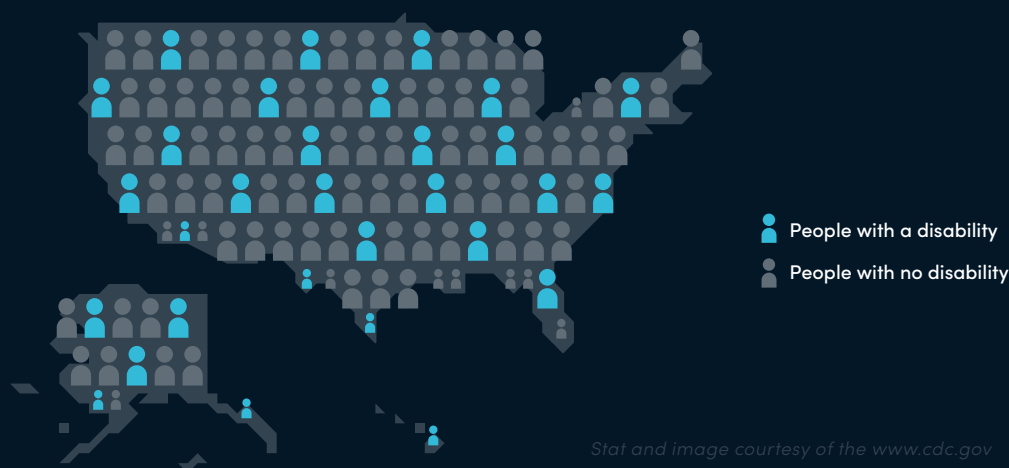
Websites and platforms that don't meet the latest in website accessibility standards exclude huge communities of users, and frankly, are more likely to give a poor user experience (UX) to everyone.

In our two-part resource, you'll find:

1 **Self-Guided Website Accessibility Audit** outlines steps to quickly improve your website accessibility, inclusivity, and UX for all users.

2 **Accessibility Culture Checklist** offers strategic recommendations to plan, manage, and prioritize accessibility projects and build continuous accessibility optimization into your corporate culture.

Self-Guided Website Accessibility Audit

Visual Design + Content

- Is website branding consistent to reduce confusion?

- Is copy legible (adequate font size and color contrast against backgrounds)?

- Are you using WAI-ARIA for dynamic elements (any changes to content that occurs without the page reloading should be clearly communicated to users of assistive technology)?

- Do error and other critical messages use a combination of visual cues (color, iconography, and text) to guide users to successfully input data (not relying solely on color)?

- Is copy clear, concise, and jargon-free to reduce cognitive load?

- Did you write Descriptive Link Text – a descriptive name and anchor text that clearly identifies the link destination?

- Does copy use "person-first" language for disabilities (ex: "a person who is") and avoid gendered colloquialisms (ex: "you guys")?

Layout + Webforms

- Is there an intuitive and simple layout with proper content hierarchy (positioning key elements) and plentiful whitespace to help content stand out?

- Did you use clear headers to structure content and help visitors understand how the different information on the page is related (particularly impacts users of assistive technology, who may override or disable CSS)?

Does the content placement mimic a 'Z' or 'F' shaped pattern to mimic natural eye movement and help users scan?

Can users resize text, increasing and decreasing text size without affecting the function or content of the page?

When requesting user data in webforms, are options flexible and diverse (ex: gender identification options, citizenship status, race/ethnicity)?

Do webform input fields have clear labels to specify required information and clear messaging to call out form entry errors, such as required fields being empty?

Media

Is there descriptive alt-text on images and non-text content, ensuring non-decorative images, media, applets, and other non-text content can be understood by users with assistive technologies? (Use an extension like Alt Text Tester to check for alt-text on images.)

Is live text used whenever possible, versus text in imagery? (Avoid text within imagery.)

Is anything flashing or moving? (Aim for fewer than 3 flashes/second.)

Do video and audio content automatically play? (Versus allowing a user to control content playback.)

Do audio and video files have a transcript or captioning?

Are images high enough resolution to maintain quality when viewed at 200% of their original size?

Do images reflect diverse populations and circumstances?

Is it easy to differentiate between website content and ads?

Mobile

- Is everything easy to read, access, and interact with on a mobile device?

- Is there plentiful space between components?

- Are buttons and click areas large enough to easily select?

- Is the layout orientation agnostic (accessible from both Portrait and Landscape modes)?

- Do website elements stack correctly when zoom is enabled on mobile devices (larger font/graphics)?

Keyboard Navigation

- Can the site be successfully navigated using keyboard keys (tab, arrow, and return keys; space bar)?

- Are content elements presented in a logical order or skipping around?

- Is every part of the webpage accessible by keyboard (including media, like PDFs)?

- Did you include a "Skip To Main Content" link to allow non-mouse users to access your content quickly and easily?

- Can users close popups and modals with the keyboard?

- Can components like accordions and tabs be used with the keyboard?

- Does the content have clear focus states? (Can you clearly see what element is currently selected?)

Tools to Check Your Website Accessibility

- **Accessible Content Guide**

- **Monsido's Color Contrast Checker**

- **Alt Text Checker**

- **NoCoffee Vision Simulator Firefox Extension**

- **Color Contrast Checker**

- **Google Lighthouse Automated Testing**
  axe Automated Testing Browser Extension

Built in screen reader tools on your device:
Mac VoiceOver; **Microsoft Narrator**

Build a More Accessible Culture Checklist

Everyone – from executives, managers, designers, developers, marketers, and more – has a role to play in building a more accessible and inclusive digital experience. Improving website accessibility is not a one-and-done activity; it's a continuous corporate imperative.

Based on W3C (The World Wide Web Consortium) recommendations, the following checklist provides a list of things to cement web accessibility efforts into your corporate culture.

Plan

1. **Benchmark the Current Environment**
    Benchmark your organization's current level of accessibility and identify any fundamental issues that need to be addressed – our Self-Guided Website Accessibility Audit is a great place to start.

2. **Develop Business Case**
    Develop a business case that clearly outlines accessibility's importance and business benefits to persuade stakeholders to provide financial support and resources and ensure that accessibility is prioritized as a corporate imperative.

3. **Gather Support + Raise Awareness**
    Raise internal awareness and make sure your teams understand how they too can positively impact accessibility. Increase commitment to accessibility and maintain long term support by regularly communicating your efforts, struggles, and victories to stakeholders.

4. **Create an Accessibility Policy**
    Define goals and targets by creating an accessibility policy that establishes the web accessibility standards to conform to within a given timeframe.

5. **Determine Budget and Resources**
    Determine your budget by identifying the level of resources to successfully achieve accessibility goals. Specify the return on investment from accessibility optimizations.

Implement

1. **Build Skill & Expertise**

    Provide training for key staff members to develop accessibility skills and identify skills that should be added to your staff recruitment criteria.

2. **Assign Tasks & Support Delivery**

    Based on your goals and team member responsibilities, assign clear tasks with clear time schedules and make necessary resources available.

3. **Evaluate Early & Regularly**

    To reduce risk and cost, regularly evaluate accessibility throughout the design and development process, so issues can be discovered and fixed as early as possible.

4. **Prioritize Issues**

    Prioritize high impact, easy-to-resolve issues first to demonstrate success and help build team motivation.

5. **Establish Monitoring & Communication Framework**

    Establish a standardized way to monitor and report findings to track your progress. Communicate milestones, recognize employee achievements, and create clear escalation paths for any issues discovered.
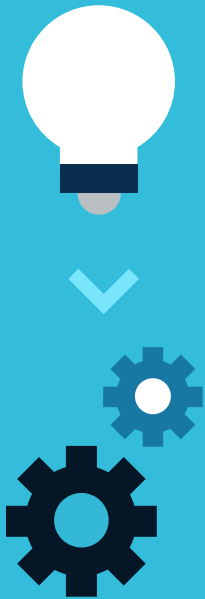
Maintain

1. **Monitor Websites**
   As your website evolves and grows, make sure that regular accessibility reviews are carried out to reduce the risk of issues occurring and to understand what is causing issues to arise.

2. **Engage With Stakeholders**
   Maintain ongoing engagement with stakeholders to ensure that they remain aware of accessibility issues and the benefits that your efforts have brought the organization to date.

3. **Track Standards & Legislation**
   Ensure you are meeting the latest requirements by keeping up-to-date with the current standards and regulations in your industry.

4. **Adapt to new Technologies**
   Track functionality changes for every new version of your tech stack, looking for additional accessibility support in new versions.

5. **Incorporate User Feedback**
   Solicit feedback to guide and prioritize ongoing improvement efforts. Ask users who use assistive technology to test and share their experiences or test the experience yourself using assistive technology.
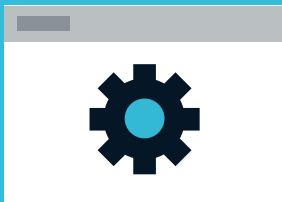
Accessibility is for Everyone

We believe easy and enjoyable digital experiences are a fundamental right – and accessibility is for everyone.

As partners, Whereoware and Acquia work together to help clients build accessibility and inclusivity norms throughout their corporate culture. From accessibility audits, to architecture, design, development, training, and technology, our accessibility and user-experience (UX) experts will optimize your digital experience.

WHEREOWARE

Leading digital agency for 20+ years, Whereoware drives smart growth through digital strategy and activation. We specialize in successfully guiding brands through the ever-changing digital landscape, through customer acquisition, retention, and maximization strategies; custom website and Salesforce development; design and user experience optimization; integrated data services; accessibility, usability, and compliance services; marketing and CRM optimization; and e-commerce solutions.
To learn more, please visit **wheroware.com**

Acquia

Acquia empowers ambitious digital innovators to craft the most productive, frictionless digital experiences that make a difference to their customers, employees, and communities. We provide the world's leading open digital experience platform (DXP), built on open source Drupal, as part of our commitment to shaping a digital future that is safe, accessible, and available to all. With Acquia Open DXP, you can unlock the potential of your customer data and content, accelerating time to market and increasing engagement, conversion, and revenue. Learn more at **acquia.com**