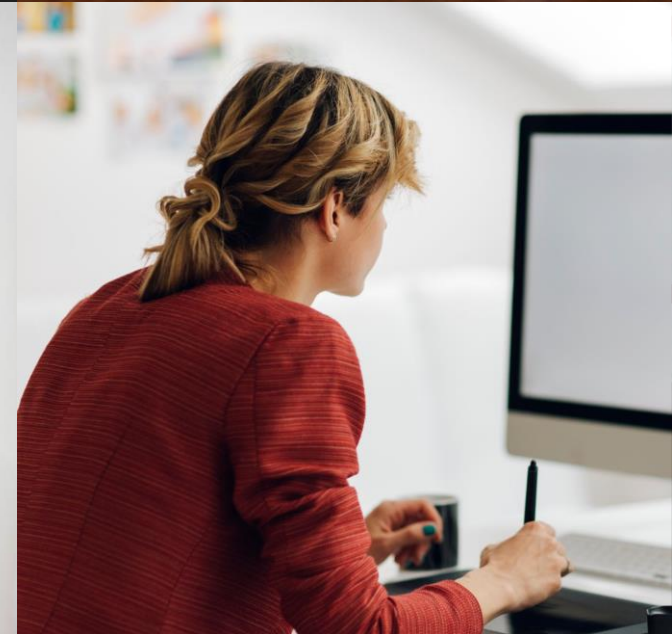# Website Accessibility

Why it's important and how to achieve it

**Presented by Richard Hubble
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What we'll cover

- What is web accessibility?
- Why your website must be accessible
- The benefits of making your website accessible
- What is WCAG?
- The three levels of WCAG explained
- The four design principles to follow
- Common accessibility issues and how to fix them
- How to achieve full compliance

What is web **accessibility**?

Web accessibility is all about making digital services – such as websites – accessible for everyone, including users with impairments to their:

- vision – such as severely sight impaired (blind), sight impaired (partially sighted), or colour blind people
- hearing – e.g. people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- mobility - like those who find it difficult to use a mouse or keyboard
- thinking and understanding – such as people with dyslexia, autism, or learning difficulties

Why your website must be **accessible**

Best practice for all website visitors to deliver a great user experience

- **Best practice for all website visitors to deliver a great user experience**

- **Risk of alienating 20% of potential clients**
  - 1 in 5 people in UK* and 1 in 7 in Ireland** have a disability or long-term illness

- **Legal obligation**
  - All public sector websites must comply with WCAG 2.1 AA standards
  - All private sector websites must comply with Equality Act 2010

*https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692771/family-resources-survey-2016-17.pdf

** http://nda.ie/Resources/Factsheets/NDA-Factsheet-1-Disability-Statistics-briefing-information.pdf

The benefits of making your website accessible

- **Reach a wider audience** – 69% of disabled online shoppers will click away from websites they find difficult to use (4.9 million shoppers in the UK with purchasing power of £17 billion)*

- **Improve SEO** – Google favours websites that deliver a great user experience - many accessibility requirements also make your website easier for search engines to understand – both help with achieving higher rankings

- **Strengthen brand image** – ethical brands becoming more important to consumers – creating an inclusive website that's accessible for all users shows you care about your customers

- **Increase usability** – an accessible website provides a better user experience for all visitors, not just those with disabilities – people more likely to buy from a website they can use easily

*http://www.clickawaypound.com/downloads/cap19final0502.pdf

What is **WCAG**?

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines - internationally recognised set of recommendations for improving web accessibility.
- The latest version, WCAG 2.1, has been adopted into UK law.
- There are three levels – A, AA, and AAA.
  - The level you need to attain depends on the sector that you work in.

The three levels of **WCAG explained**

- **Level A** – covers critical accessibility issues you must fix to make your website accessible to some users.
- **Level AA** – covers important accessibility issues you should fix, to make your website accessible to almost all users.
- **Level AAA** – Covers further accessibility issues that are beneficial to fix. This will make your website accessible for all users.
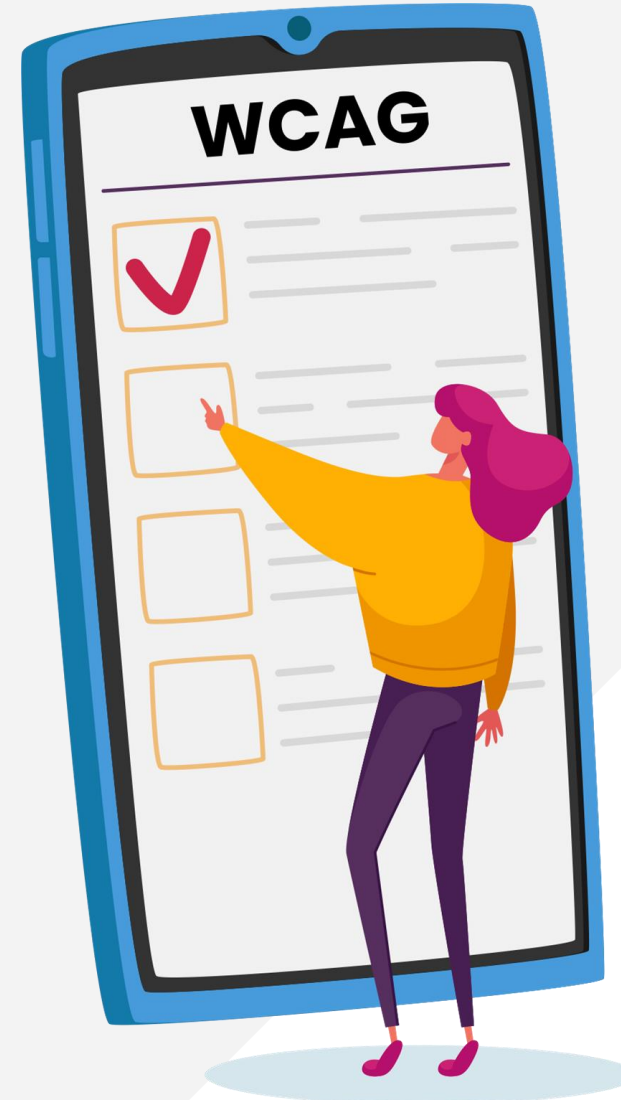
WCAG

The four design principles to follow

WCAG 2.1 is based on four guiding principles/categories

Web content should be:

- Perceivable
- Operable
- Understandable
- Robust

Perceivable

Users can recognise and use your website with the senses that are available to them

Can be achieved by:

- Providing text alternatives (alt text) for non-text content such as images
- Not using images of text
- Providing transcripts or captions for audio and video content
- Structuring content logically so it can be navigated and read by a screen reader
- Not using colour as the only way to explain or distinguish something – e.g. 'click the green button'
- Using text colours that show up clearly against the background colour
- Making sure every feature is responsive to the user's device – e.g. the page orientation and font size they like to use

Operable

Users can find and use your content regardless of how they choose to access it – e.g. using a keyboard or voice commands

Can be achieved by:

- Making sure everything works for keyboard-only users
- Letting people play, pause, and stop any moving content
- Not using blinking or flashing content - or letting users disable animations
- Providing a 'skip to content' option
- Using descriptive titles for pages
- Making sure users can move through content in a way that makes sense
- Using clear, descriptive links
- Using meaningful headings and labels

Understandable

Users can understand your content and how your website works

Can be achieved by:

- Using plain English
- Keeping sentences short
- Not using words and phrases that people won't recognise - or providing an explanation if you can't avoid it
- Explaining all abbreviations and acronyms unless they are well-known and in common use – e.g. UK, EU, VAT
- Making sure website features look consistent and behave in predictable ways
- Making sure all form fields have visible and meaningful labels
- Making it easy for people to identify and correct errors in forms

Robust

Users can reliably access your website across a wide variety of platforms, browsers, assistive technologies, and devices

Can be achieved by:

- Following best practice for web development – up-to-date, clean website code and valid HTML

Common accessibility issues

& how to fix them

Missing alt text on images

- Not all users can see the images on your website
- Without providing alt text – text description of the image – visitors could miss out on information presented by the image
- Describe each image in as much detail as you can – imagine you are reading the page over the phone to someone who needs to understand all the content
- Avoid using file names
- Can help SEO but avoid keyword stuffing – description should be useful for users
- Decorative images do not require alt text

Text on images

- Text placed on top of an image can be very difficult to read
- Any text over an image requires a light or dark overlay to create sufficient colour contrast between the text and the image
- Don't upload images with text saved over the top as part of the image file – screen readers cannot read the text
- Text needs to be added separately so that it can be understood by assistive technology
- Logos are the exception – don't need to worry if this contains text

Missing text for audio/visual content

- Video files may not be visible to every website visitor
- Likewise, audio/video content may present problems for users with hearing impairments
- Always include captions within videos where possible – popular with all users and will encourage more people to engage
- A text transcript should also be provided on any pages that include a video or audio file – not all assistive technology can access multimedia files
- If unable to provide a transcript, a summary of the content including any key info it contains will help all users understand

Unclear link text

- Links are key for navigating a website – without a clear link description, can be difficult for users to move around
- Link text may be missing – e.g. link is just an image or a button – assistive technology cannot interpret this as a link without descriptive text or image alt text
- Link text may be ambiguous – e.g. 'click here' or 'more information' – does not tell user what the link is for or where it goes
- Always use brief but informative text for links e.g. 'download our WCAG 2.1 checklist'

How to achieve full compliance

- Check with your web designer
- They should have built several of these requirements into your site
- If you have an it'seeze website you're already complying with many requirements
- BUT – website content is a big part of compliance. If you edit your website any new content must meet requirements
- Use our checklist: **https://itseeze.com/blog/wcag-compliance-everything-you-need-to-know/**
- Periodically check through your site to make sure it's still accessible – particularly if you are regularly adding new content

UserWay

- Easy to use tool
- Can be enabled on any it'seeze website
- Offers a better browsing experience to any visitors who are visually impaired or blind, mobility impaired, or temporarily disabled.
- Does not affect the browsing experience of visitors who don't require any assistance.
- Visitors see the UserWay icon or button saying 'accessibility' on the right of the web page

How to add to your it'seeze website:
https://support.itseeze.com/support/solutions/articles/1700010
8279-adding-the-userway-widget

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