



FROM AUDIOEYE

The Marketer's Checklist for Accessible Design

A free checklist to help you create accessible websites, emails, and social media posts.





Introduction

For the 1.3 billion people globally with a disability, accessibility barriers can make it difficult to access websites and other digital content. Not only can this impact sales and brand reputation, but it can also expose businesses to the risk of legal action.

This checklist can help make your content more accessible to people with disabilities — and move you closer to compliance with laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



Testing

Testing your content with both people and automation can help you find and fix more accessibility violations.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



☐ Identify current accessibility gaps.

- ◆ Use a free [web accessibility checker \(opens in a new tab\)](#) to test web pages against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) guidelines.

☐ Build a library of accessible components.

- ◆ Review common design patterns and page templates with expert human testers, including members of the disability community.



Color & Contrast

Using a free [color contrast checker \(opens in a new tab\)](#) can help you create content that people with low vision or color blindness can easily navigate and understand.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



☐ Follow minimum contrast requirements.

- ◆ Aim for a [color contrast of at least 4.5 to 1 \(opens in a new tab\)](#) between foreground and background elements, such as text on a web page.
- ◆ For large-scale text (e.g., text that is at least 18-pt font, or 14-pt bold font), aim for a color contrast of at least 3 to 1.

☐ Be careful about too much contrast.

- ◆ Don't use pure black font on a pure white background — the stark contrast may cause eye strain.

☐ Don't rely on color alone.

- ◆ If you use color to convey information ([opens in a new tab](#)), combine it with another element (such as an error message or icon) for people who cannot see color.
- ◆ Add textures and patterns to charts and graphs to help each item stand out as unique and easily identifiable.



Forms

Eliminate keyboard traps and other barriers that can prevent users from entering required information.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



Label each field programmatically.

- ◆ Provide clear labels for all form controls, including text fields, checkboxes, radio buttons, and drop-down menus.



Eliminate keyboard traps.

- ◆ Check that keyboard-only users can tab between input fields using keyboard commands alone.



Provide accessible alternatives.

- ◆ If you use color to indicate missing or required information, combine it with another element (such as an error message or icon) for people who cannot see color.
- ◆ Provide an accessible CAPTCHA alternative for people who cannot perceive images visually or distinguish between similar-looking letters.



Headings

Clear, descriptive headings enable screen reader users to understand the structure of your web pages and quickly navigate to the section(s) they're interested in.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



Support easy navigation with clear, descriptive headings.

- ◆ Write meaningful headings that provide insight into the content.
- ◆ If your website content is longer than three paragraphs, use headings to make it scannable for all users.



Use headings to provide structure.

- ◆ Ensure that [information, structure, and relationships conveyed visually \(opens in a new tab\)](#) — such as large, bold font for headings — can also be programmatically determined.



Follow the proper heading order.

- ◆ Don't skip heading ranks (e.g., jumping from an <h1> to an <h3>), which can create confusion for screen reader users.



Don't use headings for purely visual reasons.

- ◆ Avoid using headings solely for their size. Decorative headers, which place random emphasis on content, can confuse screen reader users.
- ◆ Don't use bolded text instead of a heading; screen readers will not read it as a heading.





Image Alt Text

Clear, descriptive alt text can paint a full picture of your images — even for people who can't perceive them visually.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



Write descriptive alt text.

- ◆ Like any other piece of marketing copy, lead with the most important information in your alt text description.
- ◆ If you're writing alt text for a product image, be sure to include key information about style, design, material, or features.
- ◆ If your image has text (e.g., labels that explain product features), make sure they are listed in the alt text or described nearby on the page.



Write alt text for screen reader users.

- ◆ Don't start alt text descriptions with "Image of" or "Picture of," which will already be announced to screen reader users by the preceding HTML tag.



Don't use alt text for SEO.

- ◆ Avoid stuffing SEO keywords into alt text. Not only will search engines identify — and snuff out — efforts like this, but it can negatively impact the user experience for screen reader users.



Content

Clear, descriptive content benefits everyone — but it's especially important for screen reader users and people with cognitive impairments.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



Aim for clarity and understanding.

Use short sentences with one idea per sentence.

Use active voice rather than passive voice, e.g., “Press the button” instead of “The button should be pressed.”

Avoid double negatives, e.g., “Time is not unlimited.”



Make accessible language choices.

Use people-first language (e.g., “people who have visual impairments”) rather than identity-first language (e.g., “blind people”)

Avoid using a disability as a metaphor with negative connotations, e.g., “Uncover blind spots in your reporting.”



Layout & Typography

Layout and typography can draw attention to specific areas of a page, but they're also key to comprehension for people with visual or cognitive disabilities.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



Keep fonts simple and consistent.

- ◆ Use simple, readable typefaces with a limited number of font variations. Too many typefaces or font variations can increase cognitive effort.
- ◆ Avoid complex characters or font styles, which can impact readability and comprehension.



Embrace white space.

- ◆ Use plenty of white space to improve readability and comprehension for people with cognitive or learning disabilities.
- ◆ When possible, use bulleted or numbered lists.



Check your font size.

- ◆ Although WCAG does not have a minimum font size, 12- or 14-point text is often recommended as a baseline.



Links

Clear, descriptive links make it easier for screen reader users and people with cognitive disabilities to navigate between pages on your site.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



Write descriptive alt text.

- ◆ Don't use the same wording (e.g., Learn More or Click Here) for multiple CTAs that trigger different actions or lead to different locations.
- ◆ If you have multiple CTAs pointing to the same location, use the same wording for each one.
- ◆ Avoid using “click here” in link and button copy, which implies that a user has a device to click with (e.g., a mouse).



Create links that work with assistive technology.

- ◆ Provide a link description for any clickable link or image that screen readers will read aloud.
- ◆ Avoid redundant ARIA roles, which will cause screen readers to announce the element twice, i.e., “Link Link”



Ensure links make sense on their own.

- ◆ Screen reader users often use keyboard shortcuts to jump between links on a page, so your hyperlinked text should clearly describe what users will get — or where they will be taken — if they click the link.
- ◆ Avoid using vague or generic terms like “click here” or “learn more.”



Videos

Captions, audio descriptions, and accessible controls can help all users understand and enjoy your videos.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



Provide clear, accessible captions.

- ◆ Sync your captions to appear on-screen as close as possible to sound effects or dialogue.
- ◆ Place captions so they don't interfere with important visual elements on the screen.
- ◆ Ensure that the controls to turn captions on/off are clearly labeled and easy to see.



Provide audio descriptions.

- ◆ Include audio descriptions of what's happening on screen, from speaker introductions to descriptions of key visuals or actions.



Turn off autoplay.

- ◆ It doesn't give viewers time to set up assistive technology.
- ◆ If your video has flashing elements, it can trigger seizures.
- ◆ People who are hard of hearing often turn up the volume on their devices, which can be embarrassing if your video starts playing automatically.



PDFs & Digital Documents

PDFs and digital documents are often inaccessible for screen reader users and keyboard-only users.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



Support easy navigation.

- ◆ Set the reading order of each page to ensure that screen readers and other assistive technologies read multi-column content correctly.
- ◆ Add descriptive text for each link that tells users exactly what will happen — or where they'll be redirected — if they click the link.
- ◆ Ensure links are easily distinguishable for sighted users by changing the color and adding an underline.



Avoid tables whenever possible.

- ◆ Unless carefully constructed, tables can be difficult for screen readers. If you must use a table, be sure to use headers, set the reading order, and clarify all content inside the table.



Provide image alt text.

- ◆ Add descriptive alt text for each image, graphic, and chart.
- ◆ Add textures and patterns to charts and graphs to help each item stand out as unique and easily identifiable.



Email Accessibility

Boost email click rates by making sure images and links are accessible to all recipients.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



Add alt text to every image.

- ◆ Every image in your email should include alt text, which describes the image for people who cannot perceive it visually.



Don't use images as the entire email.

- ◆ Some brands use image-only emails to achieve more complex designs; however, this can be inaccessible to screen reader users, especially when brands neglect to add descriptive alt text.



Underline inline links.

- ◆ Your inline link style should have an underline — color is not enough for people with visual impairments.



Make sure links are descriptive.

- ◆ For screen reader users, every hyperlink should have anchor text that describes the destination.



Social Media Accessibility

Make every customer touchpoint inclusive by applying the same accessibility best practices to your social media.

[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



Use #CamelCase hashtags.

- ◆ Capitalizing the first letter in each word of a hashtag helps screen readers identify separate words, enabling them to pronounce the hashtag correctly.



Add alt text to every image.

- ◆ Every image in your post — including GIFs — should include alt text. Apps like Instagram and X provide a section for alt text. If there is no dedicated section for alt text, include it in the caption.



Use special formatting in moderation.

- ◆ Try to avoid special formatting (e.g., ALL CAPS, bold, or underlined text) on captions.
 - ◆ ALL CAPS text can be difficult for people with dyslexia to read.
- ◆ Bold, italicized, and underlined text are often used to emphasize words — but they aren't always announced by screen readers, which means screen reader users can miss out on key information.



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[VIEW EXAMPLE >](#)



☐ **Make sure videos are accessible in any environment.**

- ◆ Adding captions to your videos not only makes it so that Deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers can fully enjoy and understand your content, but it also improves the viewer experience for:
 - ◆ People in a noisy environment.
 - ◆ People with a learning disability or attention deficit.
 - ◆ People who primarily speak another language.
- ◆ Provide visual and audio descriptions for videos.
- ◆ Avoid blinking GIFs and sudden flashes of light, which can trigger seizures.

☐ **Place emojis at the end of tweets and captions.**

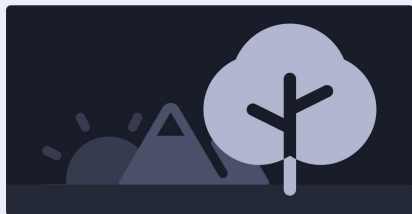
- ◆ When placed within a string of text, screen readers announce them with the emoji's alt text, disrupting the flow for screen reader users.



APPENDIX

Examples

Testing



<> **Automation:** tree.jpg

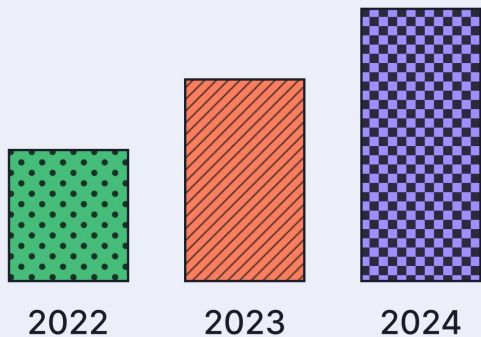
Human: Oak tree in a grassy field at sunset, with a pair of snow-capped mountains in the background.

Test with both people and automation.

Testing your content with both people and automation can help you find and fix more accessibility violations.



Color & Contrast




Don't rely on color alone.

If you [use color to convey information](#), combine it with another element (such as an error message or icon) for people who cannot see color.

Add textures and patterns to charts and graphs to help each item stand out as unique and easily identifiable.



Mobile Number



- Please enter your mobile number
- Please enter a valid mobile number
- The mobile number must not contain any letters

Combine color with another element.

If you use color to indicate missing or required information, combine it with another element (such as an error message or icon) for people who cannot see color.

Provide an accessible CAPTCHA alternative for people who cannot perceive images visually or distinguish between similar-looking letters.

Headings



Follow the proper heading order.

Don't skip heading ranks (e.g., jumping from an `<h1>` to an `<h3>`), which can create confusion for screen reader users.



Image Alt Text



```

```

Write descriptive alt text.

Like any other piece of marketing copy, lead with the most important information in your alt text description.



Disabled person



Person with a disability

Make accessible language choices.

Use people-first language (e.g., “people who have visual impairments”) rather than identity-first language (e.g., “blind people”).

Layout & Typography



Type



Type



Keep fonts simple.

Avoid complex characters or font styles, which can impact readability and comprehension.

Click here



Start free trial

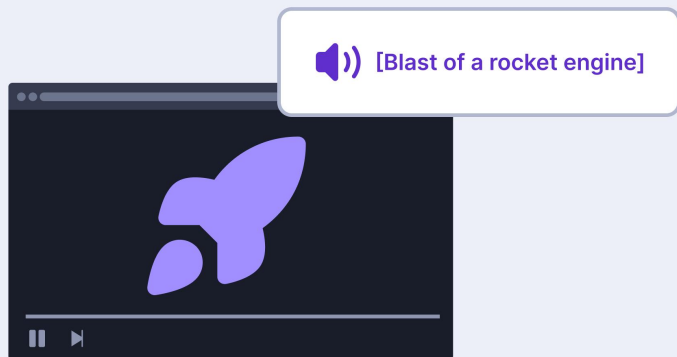


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Avoid using vague or generic terms like “click here” or “learn more.”

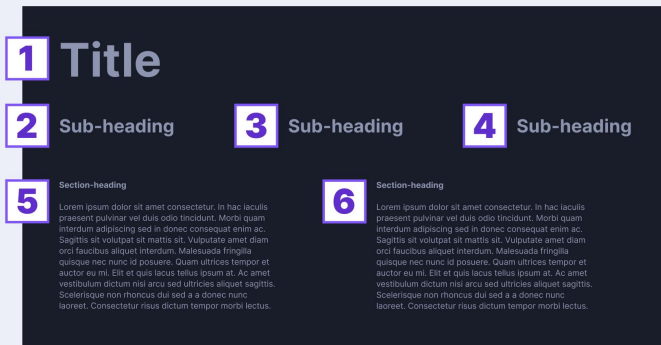
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Provide audio descriptions.

Include audio descriptions of what's happening on screen, from speaker introductions to descriptions of key visuals or actions.



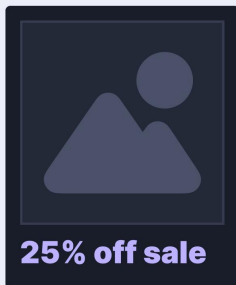
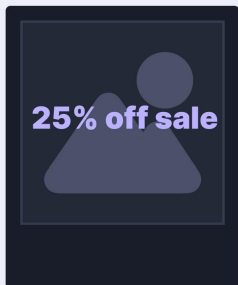


Support easy navigation.

Set the reading order of each page to ensure that screen readers and other assistive technologies read multi-column content correctly.



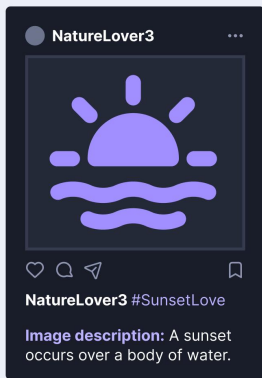
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Need personalized support?

Schedule time to learn how AudioEye's combination of powerful automation and expert human services can help you find and fix more accessibility violations.

[TALK TO AN EXPERT >](#)



About AudioEye

AudioEye exists to ensure the digital future we build is inclusive. By combining the latest AI automation technology with guidance from certified experts and direct input from the disability community, AudioEye helps ensure businesses of all sizes — including over 119,000 customers like Samsung, Calvin Klein, and Samsonite — are accessible and usable.

Holding 22 US patents, AudioEye helps companies solve every aspect of digital accessibility with flexible approaches that best meet their needs. The comprehensive solution includes 24/7 accessibility monitoring, automated accessibility fixes, expert testing, developer tools, and industry-leading legal protection.

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