Best Practices for Website Accessibility

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Tools and resources:

- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 (w3.org)](#) – a complete list of the current accessibility requirements.
- [Recommendations for each of the WCAG guidelines](#) – this is NOT the actual policy, just suggestions for meeting certain requirements. It's also not all-encompassing.
- [WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool (webaim.org)](#) – can be used to evaluate structural accessibility of a website.

Text and font

- All font used should be regular sans serif fonts. Avoid using serif fonts, or anything labeled as "light" or "narrow."
- Text needs to have a contract ratio of at least 4.5:1, text that is greater than 18pt needs to have contrast of 3:1
- Use actual text – try to avoid using pictures of text
- Blocks of text shouldn't be more than 80 characters wide and have adequate line and character spacing

Use of color

- Use dark text on light background for the majority of content. Light text on dark background should be used sparingly and only for text that is very large.
- Avoid having text and background from the same color family (such as navy blue text on a light blue background)
- Color should never be the only means of conveying information. If the content is printed or viewed in black and white, you should still be able to get all the intended information.
- There are some color combinations to avoid: red/green, blue/purple, grayscale
- Pay close attention to color on a any charts. There should be space or borders separating pieces (pie pieces in a pie chart, bars in a bar graph), all pieces should be labeled by variable/series and value.

Alt text

- All images or other non-text elements should have alt text. Alt text is a description of the image, which is read aloud by screen reading software. This allows the user to know what is on the page, even if they cannot see it. This includes buttons.

Uploaded documents

- All documents and files uploaded to your website need to be fully accessible. The accessibility process for Microsoft Word documents and PowerPoint files and the process for Adobe PDFs are different.
- Considerations for all file types: appropriate color contrast, alt text for all non-text elements, appropriate use and structure of tables, hyperlink formatting
  - [Microsoft Word](#): no text boxes, in-line with text alignment
  - [PowerPoint](#): reading order, unique slide titles
  - [Adobe](#): tagging and reading order
  - Each has an accessibility checker. It won't catch all errors, but it's a good double check.

Hyperlinks

- Make hyperlink text clear. It should describe the link's destination, rather than just provide the URL or using more ambiguous language like "click here."
- Hyperlinks must be underlined

Layout

- Tables
  - Only use tables for data presentation purposes – they should not be used as a formatting tool
  - All tables should have a designed header row
- Media
  - Transcript should be provided for non-live video
  - Captioning should be used on all video
  - Any media that automatically plays should include an option to stop, mute, or change volume
- Use semantic markup to designate headings, regions or landmarks, and lists
- The reading/navigation order is logical (determined by code order)
- Identify all headings and correctly indicate what level heading they are. Headings should be nested appropriately (no skipping a heading level)
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Other

- Someone should be able to Zoom in up to 200% and the text is still clear
- All page functionality should be available with keyboard
- Avoid time limits on pages, unless there is an option to turn that off
- If you have online forms, those have their own set of accessibility requirements