W3C Checklist

There are a lot of elements at play when it comes to making your website accessible. While it's important to consider all of the above listed tips when designing, developing and writing for your site, there are a few easy ways to check if your site is accessible or not.

Keep in mind your page may check these boxes listed here, but you may still have accessibility barriers. It's best to follow the process outlined above, but this check can also help you understand how much work you'll need to put in to your site's accessibility.

Page titles

❏ Shown in the window title bar
❏ Shown in browsers' tabs when there are multiple pages open
❏ Shown in search engine results
❏ Used for browser bookmarks/favorites
❏ Can be read by screen readers

Good page titles help people understand where they are on the site and move from page to page. For users with a screen reader, the page title is the first thing it will say when it goes to a different web page with a title.

To check the titles, look at and listen to all of the titles within your site. Check that the title describes the content on the page, and that all page titles are different from other pages on the site. Put the important and identifying information in the front of the title rather than the end.

Image Text Alternatives

❏ Every applicable image has alt with appropriate alternative text

Text alternatives, or "alt text," tells the purpose of an image. They are used by people who do not see the image, for example if they are blind or have turned off images to increase download speed. The text should provide an equivalent user experience, whether that means describing the image or explaining the function of an image (such as a search magnifying glass or a submit button).

Your image must have alternate text if it conveys information useful for or essential to interacting with or understanding page content. The text needs to have the same meaning as the image so if a person cannot see the image, they can still get the important information. If the image is an infographic, it should have short alt text to briefly tell what the image is, and then have a detailed description of the graphic provided elsewhere (in text).

If it is just decorative and people don't need to know anything about the image, you can use "null alt."

Here is a link to an alt text decision tree from W3C to help you determine if you need alt text and what it should say.

Headings

❏ Most of your pages should have at least one heading.
❏ All text that looks like a heading has HTML code markup as a heading.
❏ All text marked up as a heading is actually a section heading.
❏ The heading hierarchy is meaningful (the headings and subheadings make sense throughout the copy and break it up in a meaningful way).

Many of your site pages will have headings and subheadings to tell a story through the copy. You may use different sizes, colors, or styles (bold, italics, underlined) to identify the headings. In order for headings to be accessible, they must be 'marked up,' or HTML coded.

An example of meaningful hierarchy is:

● Heading Level 1

○ Heading Level 2

■ Heading Level 3

● Heading Level 4

○ Heading Level 5

Color Contrast

❏ Site has a minimum contrast by default set at at least 4.5:1 for normal text

As previously referenced, some people have difficulty reading text if there isn't sufficient contrast between the text and background, such as light grey text on a white background, or bright colored text on a black background. This makes reading your site difficult for many people with visual impairments, including older people who lose contrast sensitivity from age. People with dyslexia also have a hard time reading bright colors.

Most web browsers allow users to change the color of text and background on a site, so your site should still work if users do change the colors.

There are three ways you can check color contrast explained in depth above, including:

- Table with contrast ratio
- Eye-dropper to select color
- Turn off color

Resize Text

❏ All text can be made larger.
❏ Text doesn't disappear or get cut off when text is made larger.
❏ Text, images and other content don't overlap when text is made larger.
❏ All buttons, form fields and other controls are visible and usable when text is made larger.
❏ Horizontal scrolling isn't required to read when text is made larger.

Resizing text can mean zooming in on the page, text-zoom, or changing the font size through Options or Preferences. Some people must enlarge the text in order to read it, and others may need to adjust the font, space between lines, etc.

If pages are unusable or unable to be seen if the text size is changed or page is zoomed, the page is not accessible. Ensure columns and sections don't overlap, the space between the lines doesn't disappear, and lines of text don't become too long. Also make sure text doesn't disappear all together. Users should not have to scroll to read a sentence.

Keyboard Access and Visual Focus

❏ You can tab to all the elements on each page of your site, including links, form fields, buttons, etc.
❏ You can tab away from all elements you can tab to. For example, if you have a media player, you're able to tab away from the navigation controls.
❏ As you tab, it follows a logical reading order. For example, left to right and top to bottom.
❏ You can visually see where the tab is, i.e. with an outline or highlight.
❏ You can do everything on your site through a keyboard, such as move through the page, click, etc.
❏ If you tab into a drop down list, you can use the arrow keys to move through the options. Ensure it doesn't automatically select the first item in the list and take you to a new page or action.
❏ When images or words are links, they have clear visual focus and can be navigated to through a keyboard.

As we've mentioned, many people cannot use a mouse to navigate a computer, and instead rely on the keyboard to interact. This can be people who are blind, have mobile impairments, or have other disabilities that mean they must rely on the keyboard or assistive technologies, such as voice input.

All links, forms, media, etc. must be able to be accessed through a keyboard. The keyboard focus should be visible and follow a logical order through the page. This could be through a border, highlight, or other format that moves through the page as you tab.

Forms, Labels and Errors

❏ All form controls are keyboard accessible, as well as drop-down lists.
❏ Every form control has a label associated with it.
❏ Labels are correctly positioned, such as to the left of text boxes and right of radio buttons and checkboxes.
❏ Any required/mandatory fields are clearly indicated. (This can't be color alone for those who cannot differentiate color.)
❏ Field indicators (such as an asterisk) is included in the marked up field label for text boxes and drop down lists.
❏ Instructions for completing the forms are located in a proper, logical place such as at the top of the form or in the section they relate to.
❏ Required formats, such as for dates and phone numbers, are included in the marked up label.
❏ Clear and specific guidance is provided in the event of an error, and helps people easily understand how to fix the error.
❏ Errors are easily findable, such as highlighted within the form or listed before the form.
❏ People do not have to re-enter all information in the form, and fields without errors are still populated with the data entered.

If you have forms on your site, such as a place to enter an email address or input contact information, the forms should have labels, keyboard access and clear instructions. People should be able to interact with the forms using only the keyboard, voice input, and screen readers. Also, the label should be clickable, increasing the size and making it easier to select buttons or check boxes.

Forms include a single text box, such as search or email address input box, text fields, radio buttons, check boxes, drop-down lists and other buttons.

Moving, Flashing, or Blinking Content

❏ If there is moving, blinking or scrolling information on your site that starts automatically and lasts more than five seconds, there is a way to pause, stop or hide the movement.
❏ If there is any automatically-updated information, there is a way to pause, stop or hide the updated information, or for the user to control the frequency of the update.
❏ Content that flashes or blinks does not do so more than three times in one second.

Moving, flashing or blinking content includes carousels, ads, videos, auto-updating information, scrolling news feeds, etc. You must give users ability to control the moving content because it can cause difficulty understanding the information, or distraction.

Also, flashing or blinking content can cause seizures in people with epilepsy, especially if it flashes more than three times in one second, covers a large area of the screen, and/or is bright.

Multimedia Alternatives

❏ Audio does not start automatically. If it does, it stops after three seconds, includes controls to pause or stop the audio, and includes controls to turn down the volume.
❏ Videos have captions, or the ability to turn captions on.
❏ Captions are in sync with spoken content.
❏ Captions are available in multiple languages
❏ People who are speaking are identified when they speak throughout the captions.
❏ Important sound other than dialogue is included in captions.
❏ It's not required, but may be helpful to include a full transcript in addition to captions.
❏ They are easy to find near the audio/video.
❏ They include all information, including dialogue and important sound.
❏ All audio and visual information is included, so if the person only reads the transcripts, they get all of the content of the video.
❏ If you have an audio description of the video, it describes all important visual information in the video (to make it accessible for people who can't see it).