

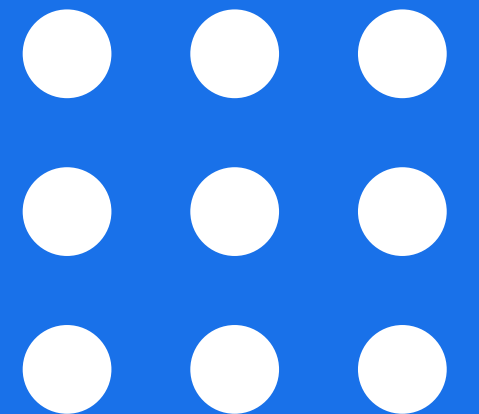
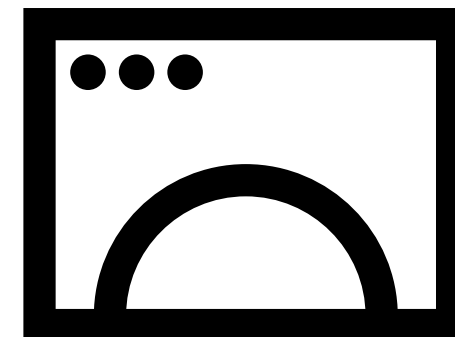
JULY 2021

Accessibility for project management teams

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What is digital accessibility?



What is digital accessibility?

Digital accessibility means making the web and digital products easier to use for everyone, regardless of their abilities. When digital products are built with accessibility in mind, brands can expand their user base, improve search engine optimization (SEO), and site performance, and contribute to making the web a more equitable space. What is the impact? Here are a few statistics that can help demonstrate value and importance:

1/4

of individuals around the world have some form of disability

In the U.S. alone, based on 2018 statistics, that translates to 61 million individuals.

Source: [CDC: 1 in 4 U.S. adults live with a disability](#)

30%

of working professionals have some form of disability

When you think about this in terms of our peers, our clients, and their clients, it's almost certain that someone you're interacting with has some kind of disability.

Source: [Department of Labor](#)

3/4

of disabilities aren't identifiable by looking at a person

Invisible disabilities, like color blindness, hearing, or cognitive disabilities are not visible on the outside.

Source: [Invisible Disabilities® Association](#)

71%

of individuals with disabilities will abandon a website that's difficult to use

This could impact a business's bottom line as potential customers go to competitors without accessibility barriers.

Source: [How Website Accessibility Affects Online Businesses](#)



**Accessibility
for project
management teams**

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WHAT IS DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY?

Some common types of disabilities include:



Vision

People who are blind,
have low-vision
or are colorblind



Speech

People who are not able
to speak or have difficulty
forming words.



Hearing

People who are deaf
or hard of hearing.



Cognitive

People who have attention
deficit disorder (ADD),
dyslexia or epilepsy.



Motor Control

People who have limited
or no use of their hands.



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WHAT IS DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY?

What does it mean to make a digital product accessible?

While not laid out specifically by law, there is a set of guidelines which we can use to ensure our products are accessible. These are the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (commonly referred to as WCAG). The aim of these guidelines is to establish a single, shared standard for making web content more accessible. The WCAG is broken down into four broad principles that lay the necessary foundations for anyone to engage with web-based content.

The 4 principles of web accessibility



Perceivable

Users must be able to perceive information and user interface (UI) in some way, using one or more of their senses.



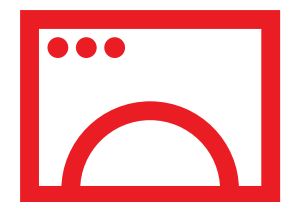
Operable

Users must be able to control UI elements using some type of input device – mouse, keyboard, voice command, etc.



Understandable

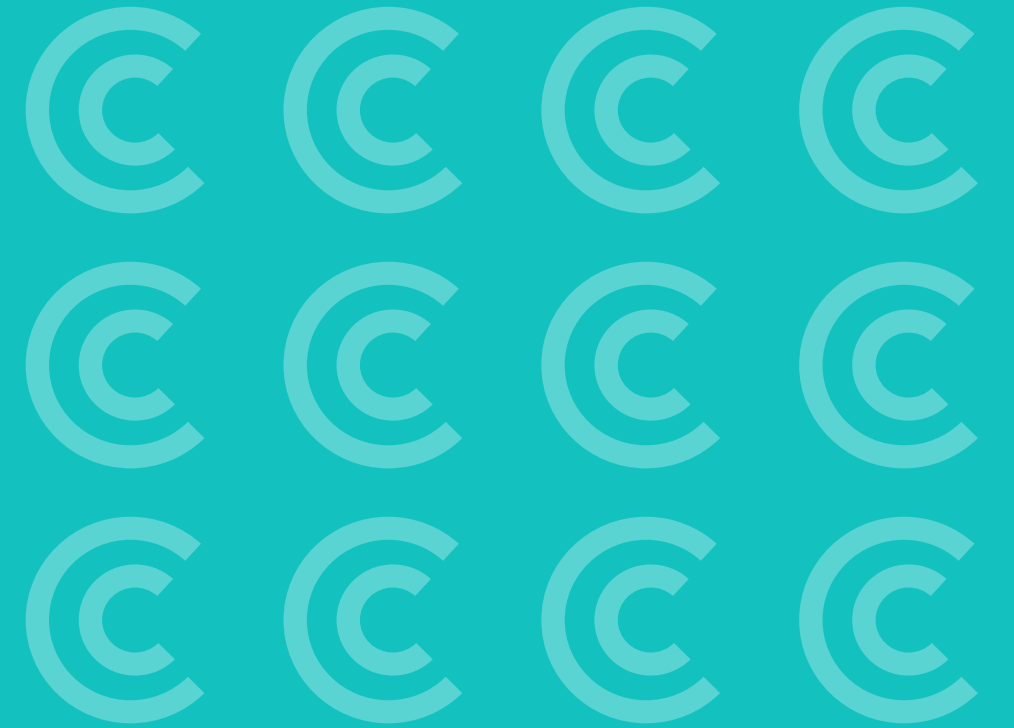
The content must be readable and appear in consistent, predictable patterns to its users.



Robust

The content must be developed using web standards that work with current and future browsers and devices.

Accessibility considerations for project management teams



Accessibility considerations

As a project management professional, you're the first point of contact once a contract agreement is in place. Part of your job is setting an expectation for how the process of working with your team will go. As with other responsibilities, you also have an obligation to help others understand what it means to build an accessible experience, why they should care, and what to expect along the way.

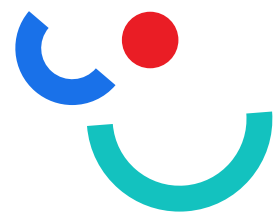


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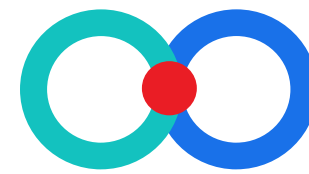
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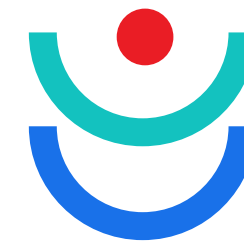
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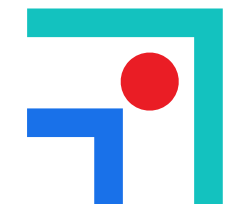
Educate others



Advocate for the process



Set an example



Communicate the value



Accessibility for project management teams

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ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Investment in accessible digital products yields significant value that's often overlooked:



Improved overall customer experience (CX)

Taking accessibility into account from the start of a project results in an experience that not only provides equal accommodation for individuals with disabilities, but also produces a better experience for everyone.



Overlap in web best practices

Accessibility overlaps with a multitude of best practices such as mobile optimized design, performance, usability, and SEO. Generally, websites that take accessibility into account also have reduced maintenance costs.



Enhanced brand reputation

Adopting a comprehensive accessibility practice can serve to enhance brand image and reputation, as well as increase sales and customer loyalty. In addition, hiring and employee retention can be improved through internal diversity and inclusion efforts.



Extended market reach and increased return on investment (ROI)

Equal digital access is no longer a novelty but a critical tool of modern life. From a business perspective, the spending power of individuals with disabilities in the U.S. alone is more than \$300 billion dollars.



Reduced legal risk

There are unnecessary legal risks involved when you don't support accessibility. The cost and risk of inaction can be huge as well as damaging to your brand reputation.

8 accessibility tips for teams





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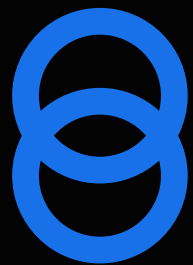
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8 ACCESSIBILITY TIPS

Use appropriate language

People-First Language speaks to what abilities or conditions a person has, not what a person is. If a person's disability must be mentioned in conversation or in writing, reference the person first, then their disability. Avoid a statement like “the disabled” or “the handicapped,” and instead use “people with disabilities.”





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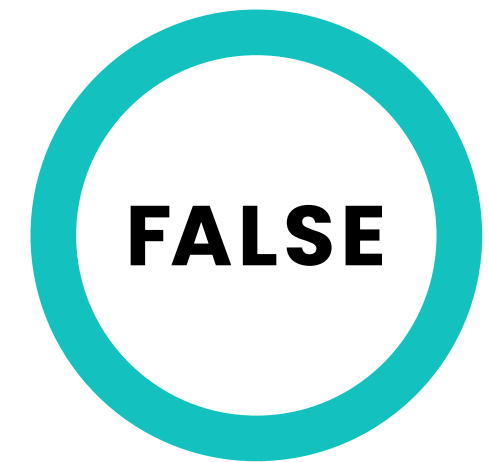
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8 ACCESSIBILITY TIPS

Dispel common myths

Talking about digital accessibility can make people nervous or uncomfortable, and they may have a list of objections for why they can't approach accessibility within their product or service. The ability to educate people about common accessibility myths and misconceptions is essential to improving accessibility support in your product — even if only incrementally.





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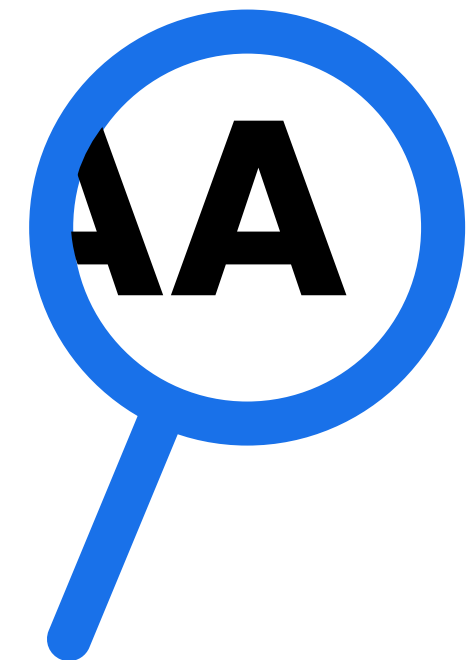
8 ACCESSIBILITY TIPS

Improve readability of your content

It's important that all of your users are able to understand the content of your website. Writing at as low a reading level as is appropriate for your content will benefit users with cognitive disabilities, users who do not speak English as a first language, and users who are distracted while reading. When content requires more advanced reading ability, provide supplemental formats such as images, audio, or video, and present the content as simply as possible. Authoring tools, such as the Hemingway Editor, can provide real-time readability feedback while you're creating content.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

WCAG 3.1.5 Reading Level – Level AAA





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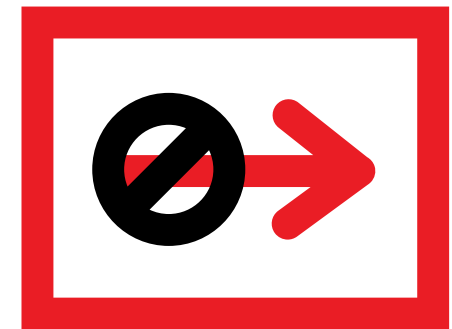
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8 ACCESSIBILITY TIPS

Avoid directional language

Directional instructions assume a user is able to see the layout of the page in front of them. These words can be confusing to users who are blind or have low vision, and in some cases, users who are viewing a streamlined version of a website on a mobile device. For example, instead of saying “Select from the options in the right sidebar,” say “Select from these options,” and list the steps after the title.





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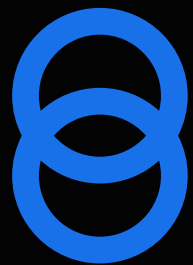
Provide contextual links

All links should have text that uniquely identifies the link destination. Screen readers allow users to navigate through content in different ways, including jumping from one link to the next which removes the surrounding context. The best way to deal with link text is to make sure it flows within your paragraph, but also makes sense out of context. For example, a link that says “Learn More About Accessibility” provides helpful context as opposed to “Learn More.”

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WCAG 2.4.4 Link Purpose (In Context) – Level A





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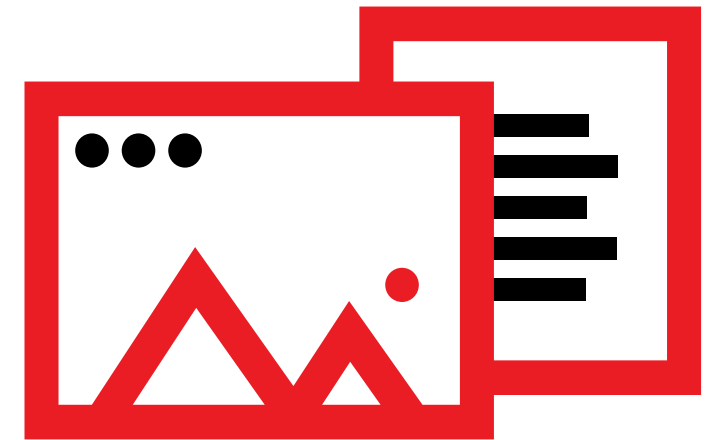
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8 ACCESSIBILITY TIPS

Make rich media accessible

To be fully accessible, all information on your website or application needs to be available and understandable by all users, regardless of ability. To accomplish this, you can provide alternatives to all visual and auditory content so that it is adaptable and distinguishable.





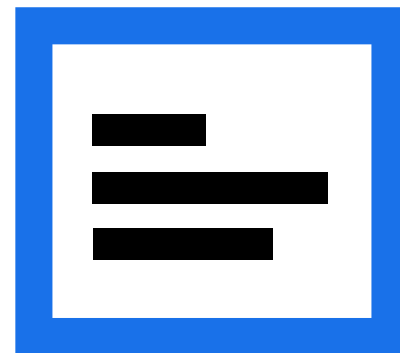
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8 ACCESSIBILITY TIPS

Make rich media accessible (continued)



Accessible PDFs

All PDF files should be “tagged” and edited for reading order, tab order, and other semantic and structural markup to be accessible to screen readers. You can use authoring tools like Microsoft Word or Adobe InDesign, along with Acrobat Pro to convert documents to tagged PDFs. There are also third-party services, such as [Equidox](#), that have specialized tools and services to create accessible PDFs.

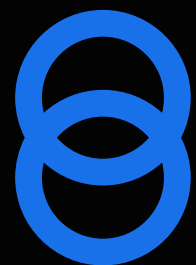


Images of text

Avoid using images of text when you can use plain text instead. Images of text cause problems for users who need to resize text, are using a text-only browser, or might have images turned off. Avoiding images of text will allow users with low vision, visual tracking problems, or cognitive disabilities to perceive the information in alternative ways.

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[WCAG 1.4.5 Images of Text – Level AA](#)



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Make rich media accessible (continued)

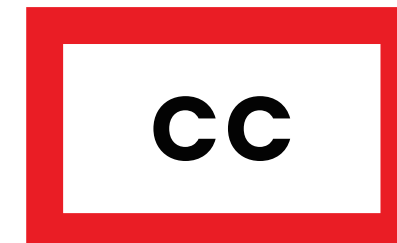


Audio descriptions

Video content should provide audio descriptions to narrate movements that aren't explained in the video and to explain visual information. This will allow users who are blind or have low vision, or users with cognitive limitations, to perceive the information in alternative ways. You can use third-party services, such as [3Play Media](#), to create accessible video content for your site.

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[WCAG 1.2.5 Audio Description \(Prerecorded\) – Level AA](#)

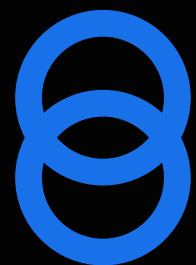


Captions

Prerecorded audio content should be paired with captions that include all spoken words, identify speakers, and caption non-speech information such as sounds. This will allow users who are deaf or hard of hearing to perceive the information in alternative ways.

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[WCAG 1.2.2 Captions \(Prerecorded\) – Level A](#)



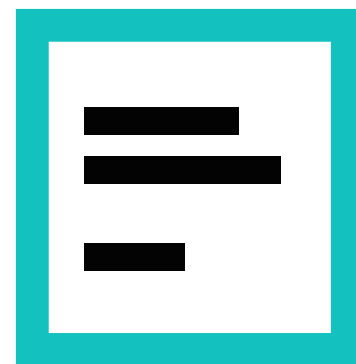
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8 ACCESSIBILITY TIPS

Make rich media accessible (continued)



Transcripts

Along with audio descriptions, text transcripts should be provided as a second alternative for video content. They should include all information in the video, similar to a script, including visual cues, dialogue, and non-speech sounds. This will allow users who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who may have difficulty watching moving images, to perceive the content in alternative ways. Other benefits of transcripts include improved SEO and the ability to more easily translate content into other languages.

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WCAG 1.2.3 Audio Description or Media Alternative
(Prerecorded) – Level A



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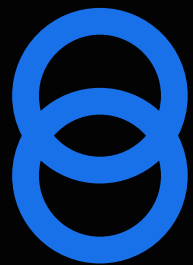
Write meaningful alternative text

Alternative text provides a substitute for image-based content, and can also be changed into other formats. Users who are blind or have low vision navigate digital content with screen readers, which then output an audio version of the alternative text, so you want to describe the image so they can visualize it's content. When writing your alternative text, you can omit words like, "photo of" or "image of" since screen readers will automatically add that. Image-based content that is used purely for decorative purposes does not need alternative text.

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WCAG 1.1.1 Non-text Content – Level A

`<alt=" |." >`



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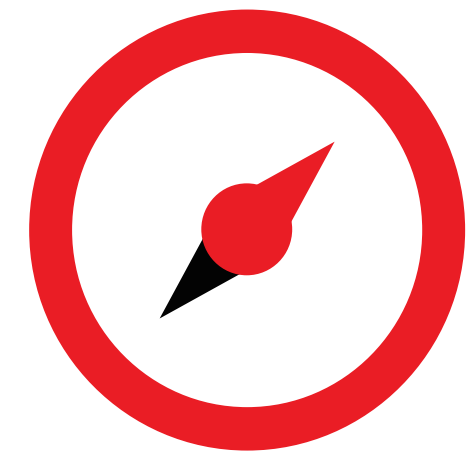
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8 ACCESSIBILITY TIPS

Plan for the future

Set the expectation with your clients that accessibility is never finished. It's an ongoing and iterative process that everyone has a responsibility in maintaining. In addition, plan to periodically audit the website or application to identify and correct any issues that have snuck in due to content additions or updates to the WCAG criteria that may affect the level of accessibility support.




Connect with us

Whether you're starting a project from scratch or looking to improve upon an existing online experience, O3 can help. Stay tuned as we release future e-books focused on helping strategy, design, and development teams better understand accessibility. Learn more about our work at www.o3world.com.

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