Accessibility SOP

COMPANY Accessibility Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Subject: ADA compliance for digital accessibility
SOP statement: This accessibility SOP provides a structured approach to ensuring ADA compliance covering the digital aspects.

Table of contents

Introduction

This digital accessibility standard operating procedure (SOP) is a comprehensive guide designed to ensure the seamless integration of ADA compliance into COMPANY's digital landscape.

Recognizing the imperative of providing inclusive experiences for all users, this SOP outlines the methodologies, responsibilities, and best practices that govern an approach to digital accessibility.

By adhering to the principles set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it shows the commitment to breaking down barriers and creating an online environment that caters to the diverse needs of our user base.

The digital accessibility SOP serves as a roadmap, empowering teams to collaboratively champion accessibility across content creation, development, design, testing, and compliance. It highlights the creation of an inclusive digital space where every user, regardless of ability, can engage, access information, and participate fully in COMPANY's online community.

1.1 Purpose of the SOP

The purpose of this digital accessibility standard operating procedure (SOP) is to establish a comprehensive framework for ensuring the accessibility of digital content and technologies within our organization. This SOP is designed to align

with the guidelines set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide an inclusive digital experience for all users.

1.2 Scope

This SOP applies to all digital assets, including but not limited to websites, software applications, and electronic documents, developed, owned, or maintained by our organization. The scope encompasses the entire digital ecosystem to guarantee equitable access and usability for individuals with disabilities.

1.3 Applicability

This SOP is applicable to all employees, contractors, vendors, and third-party entities involved in the creation, maintenance, and distribution of digital content within the organization. Adherence to these guidelines is mandatory to foster an inclusive digital environment.

1.4 Compliance with ADA

COMPANY is committed to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to information and services. This SOP serves as a tool to uphold our commitment to ADA guidelines specifically in the digital realm, creating an environment of accessibility and inclusivity.

Roles and responsibilities

In implementing ADA compliance across digital platforms, various roles play pivotal responsibilities to ensure an inclusive and accessible user experience. Each role contributes to a commitment to providing accessible and barrier-free digital experiences for all users.

2.1 Accessibility coordinator

The Accessibility Coordinator oversees the overall strategy, coordinating efforts among Content Creators, Developers, and Designers to integrate accessibility principles into the fabric of our digital presence.

- **Oversee digital accessibility initiatives:** Act as the primary point of contact for all matters related to digital accessibility.

- **Coordinate training:** Facilitate training programs to ensure all team members are aware of and adhere to digital accessibility standards.
- **Monitor compliance:** Regularly assess digital assets for compliance with ADA guidelines and initiate corrective actions as needed.
- **Serve as liaison:** Collaborate with content creators, developers, designers, and other teams to implement and maintain accessible digital practices.

2.2 Content creators

Content Creators contribute by crafting content that adheres to accessibility guidelines.

- **Create accessible content:** Develop digital content adhering to accessibility best practices, including providing alternative text for images, ensuring proper heading structures, and creating accessible documents.
- **Use accessible authoring tools:** Utilize tools that support digital accessibility and ensure that content management systems meet ADA standards.
- **Stay informed:** Keep abreast of updates and advancements in digital accessibility to continually improve content creation practices.

2.3 Developers

Developers and Designers focus on coding and designing with accessibility in mind.

- **Code accessibility:** Implement accessible coding practices, ensuring websites and applications are compatible with assistive technologies.
- **Test code for accessibility:** Regularly test code for compliance with ADA guidelines, using automated tools and manual testing as necessary.
- **Collaborate with designers:** Work closely with designers to implement accessible user interfaces and interactive elements.

2.4 Designers

Designers and Developers focus on coding and designing with accessibility in mind.

- **Create inclusive designs:** Develop designs that prioritize user experience for individuals with diverse abilities.

- **Provide accessibility guidelines:** Communicate design principles that facilitate the development of accessible interfaces to the development team.
- **Collaborate with content creators:** Ensure visual content aligns with accessibility standards, including color contrast and readable fonts.

2.5 Testing team

The Testing Team rigorously assesses our digital assets, ensuring they meet ADA standards.

- **Conduct accessibility testing:** Perform thorough testing of digital assets to identify and rectify accessibility issues.
- **Utilize assistive technologies:** Test applications and websites using various assistive technologies to simulate diverse user experiences.
- **Generate reports:** Compile comprehensive reports on digital accessibility testing results and communicate findings to the relevant teams.

2.6 Compliance officer

The Compliance Officer oversees the organization's adherence to ADA guidelines, fostering a culture of inclusivity and continuous improvement.

- **Monitor overall compliance:** Oversee the organization's adherence to ADA guidelines in the digital realm.
- **Coordinate audits:** Conduct periodic audits to evaluate the organization's digital accessibility and implement corrective actions.
- **Provide guidance:** Offer guidance and support to teams to ensure ongoing compliance with digital accessibility standards.

ADA compliance overview

This section gives an overview of ADA compliance.

- **3.1 Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

  Background:

  The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a landmark piece of legislation enacted to ensure equal opportunities and access for individuals with disabilities. Enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice, ADA prohibits discrimination against

people with disabilities and mandates that public and private entities provide accessible services and facilities.

Key components

- **Title I:** Addresses employment discrimination against individuals with disabilities.
- **Title II:** Applies to state and local government services, programs, and activities.
- **Title III:** Focuses on public accommodations and services operated by private entities, including businesses and nonprofit organizations.

3.2 Relevance to digital content and services

Digital accessibility

- **Equal access:** ADA extends its principles to the digital realm, ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to information and services provided online.
- **Web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG):** ADA compliance aligns with international standards, such as WCAG, providing a framework for creating accessible digital content.

Covered digital assets

- **Websites:** ADA requires websites to be accessible to individuals with disabilities, including those using screen readers or other assistive technologies.
- **Applications:** Mobile apps and software must be designed and developed with accessibility in mind.
- **Electronic documents:** ADA compliance extends to digital documents, requiring them to be accessible to individuals with visual or cognitive impairments.

Legal implications

- **Litigation risk:** Non-compliance with ADA digital accessibility standards may lead to legal consequences, including lawsuits and financial penalties.

- **Public perception:** Failing to provide accessible digital content may result in reputational damage and impact the organization's standing within the community.

Conclusion

Understanding and adhering to ADA guidelines for digital accessibility is not only a legal requirement but also a commitment to fostering inclusivity. By embracing these standards, we contribute to a digital environment that is accessible to everyone, regardless of their abilities.

Digital accessibility

Digital accessibility refers to the inclusive practice of removing barriers that prevent interaction with or access to websites, digital tools, and technologies by people with disabilities.

Keep in mind that ADA Compliance is a critical aspect of modern website development and optimization, ensuring that digital content is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

By integrating ADA Compliance into COMPANY's [SEO](#) practices, it contributes to creating an inclusive online environment for all users and guides SEO and non-SEO practitioners in understanding and implementing best practices, including those related to ADA Compliance.

4.1 Web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG) overview

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) provide a set of guidelines to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. These guidelines are globally recognized and form the foundation for ensuring digital inclusivity.

Key principles

- **Perceivable:** Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.
- **Operable:** User interface components and navigation must be operable.
- **Understandable**: Information and the operation of the user interface must be understandable.

- **Clear navigation labels:** Use concise and descriptive labels for navigation links to make the website's structure easily understandable for all users.
- **Clear table labels:** Use concise and descriptive headers and labels for tables. All columns should have a header!

Unclear Label:

```html
html                                              📋 Copy code

<a href="/product">Click Here</a>
```

Clear Label:

```html
html                                              📋 Copy code

<a href="/product">View Our Latest Products</a>
```

Explanation

Instead of using generic labels like "Click Here," provide descriptive and concise labels that convey the purpose of the link. In this example, changing "Click Here" to "View Our Latest Products" gives users a clear understanding of the link's destination.

- **Plain language:** Write content in plain language to enhance comprehension, especially for users with cognitive disabilities.

Complex Language:

```html
<p>Welcome to our state-of-the-art e-commerce platform, where an assort
```

Plain Language:

```html
<p>Welcome to our online store, where you can explore a variety of mode
```

Explanation

Using plain language involves simplifying complex or technical terms to enhance overall comprehension. In this example, the second version uses straightforward language to make the content more accessible, particularly for users with cognitive disabilities who may find complex language challenging to understand.

- **Robust:** Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.
    - **Semantic HTML:** Use semantic HTML tags to structure content, making it more interpretable by various user agents and assistive technologies.
    - **Compatibility testing:** Regularly test the website's compatibility with different browsers and assistive technologies to ensure a consistent experience for all users.

4.2 Incorporating WCAG principles into design and development

Text alternatives

- **Alt text:** All non-text content must have alternative text to ensure that it can be understood by screen readers.

Without Alt Text:

```html
<img src="image.jpg" alt="">
```

With Descriptive Alt Text:

```html
<img src="image.jpg" alt="A group of diverse people collaborating in a
```

Explanation

In the first example, the image has an empty alt attribute, which is not helpful for users relying on screen readers. In the second example, descriptive alt text is provided, offering a meaningful description of the image content for users with visual impairments.

- **Descriptive link text:** Use clear and descriptive link text that conveys the purpose of the link.

Unclear Link Text:

```html
<a href="/article123">Read More</a>
```

Clear Link Text:

```html
<a href="/article123">Explore Tips for Effective Remote Work</a>
```

Explanation:

Instead of using generic link text like "Read More," provide clear and descriptive link text that communicates the link's purpose. In this example, changing the link text to "Explore Tips for Effective Remote Work" gives users a better understanding of the content they can expect when clicking the link.

Colors

- **Color contrast:** Ensure sufficient contrast between text and background colors to make content readable for individuals with visual impairments.

Multimedia accessibility

- **Transcripts and captions:** Provide transcripts for audio content and captions for video content to make multimedia accessible to users with hearing impairments.

4.3 Document accessibility (PDFs, Word, etc.)

Best practices

- **Semantic structure:** Use proper heading structures and semantic tags in documents to aid screen readers.

Without Semantic Structure:

```html
<div style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">Important Information<
<p style="color: red;">Please review the document below:</p>
<div>
  <span style="font-style: italic;">Document Title</span>
  <p>This document contains essential details about our upcoming event.
</div>
```

With Semantic Structure:

```html
<h1>Important Information</h1>
<p style="color: red;">Please review the document below:</p>
<article>
  <h2>Document Title</h2>
  <p>This document contains essential details about our upcoming event.
</article>
```

Explanation

In the first example, the content lacks semantic structure, as generic <div> and <span> elements are used to style text. In the second example, semantic tags such as <h1>, <h2>, and <article> are employed to create a meaningful structure. This aids screen readers in understanding the hierarchy and relationship between different sections, enhancing the overall accessibility of the content.

- **Text recognition:** Ensure that PDFs and other documents are text-readable and not image-based.

4.4 Multimedia accessibility (audio, video)

Accessibility features

- **Audio descriptions:** Include audio descriptions for visual elements in videos for users with visual impairments.
- **Keyboard controls:** Ensure that users can control multimedia elements using a keyboard.

4.5 Social media and other digital platforms

Inclusive practices

- **Accessible images:** Use alt text for images in social media posts.
- **Platform accessibility:** Ensure that the chosen digital platforms comply with accessibility standards.

4.6 Keyboard accessibility

Navigation

- **Keyboard navigation:** All functionality must be operable through a keyboard interface.

4.7 Software and applications

Development guidelines

- **Accessible UI design:** Design user interfaces that are navigable and operable by users with various disabilities.
- **Compatibility with assistive technologies:** Ensure compatibility with common assistive technologies used by individuals with disabilities.

Training and awareness

Fostering an understanding of people with disabilities is essential for creating an inclusive digital environment.

5.1 Accessibility training for employees

Objectives

- **Understanding disabilities:** Provide comprehensive training to employees on various types of disabilities, their challenges, and how digital accessibility can address those challenges.

- **Legal compliance:** Educate employees on the legal requirements and consequences of non-compliance with ADA standards.
- **Practical implementation:** Offer hands-on training on incorporating accessibility principles into daily tasks, such as content creation, coding, and design.

Frequency

- **Initial training:** Conduct training sessions for all employees upon joining the organization.
- **Regular updates:** Provide periodic refresher courses to keep employees abreast of new developments in digital accessibility.

5.2 Periodic awareness campaigns

Campaign themes

- **Understanding accessibility:** Disseminate information about the importance of digital accessibility and its impact on users with disabilities.
- **Success stories:** Share success stories within the organization where accessible design positively influenced user experiences.
- **Legal compliance reminders:** Reinforce the legal obligations and consequences associated with ADA compliance.

Mediums

- **Email communications:** Regularly send out newsletters or emails containing accessibility tips, success stories, and reminders.
- **Intranet or internal platforms:** Utilize internal platforms to host articles, videos, and interactive content related to digital accessibility.

5.3 Integrating accessibility into onboarding processes

Onboarding modules

- **Digital accessibility overview:** Include an introduction to digital accessibility principles and the organization's commitment to ADA compliance.
- **Role-specific training:** Tailor training modules to the specific responsibilities of each role within the organization.

Mentorship programs

- **Accessibility mentors:** Pair new employees with experienced colleagues who have expertise in digital accessibility.
- **Hands-on projects:** Include accessibility considerations in onboarding projects to provide practical experience.

Evaluation

- **Assessment tools:** Implement assessment tools to evaluate employees' understanding and application of accessibility concepts.
- **Feedback mechanism:** Encourage new employees to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the accessibility training received during onboarding.

Accessibility testing

Accessibility testing enables digital products and applications to be accessible to people with disabilities like blindness, hearing problems, or cognitive impairments.

6.1 Overview of accessibility testing

Definition

Accessibility testing is a systematic process of evaluating digital content, applications, and platforms to ensure they are usable by people with disabilities. The goal is to identify and rectify barriers that may hinder accessibility.

Importance

- **User inclusivity:** Ensures that digital assets can be used by individuals with diverse abilities.
- **Legal compliance:** Verifies adherence to ADA and other accessibility standards.
- **Enhanced user experience:** Contributes to a positive and seamless user experience for all.

6.2 Automated testing tools

Selection criteria

- **Coverage:** Choose tools that cover a broad spectrum of accessibility issues, including code compliance and user interface considerations.
- **Integration:** Ensure compatibility with existing development and testing frameworks.
- **Reporting capabilities:** Opt for tools that provide detailed reports, making it easier to identify and address issues.

Examples

- **axe Accessibility Checker:** Automates the testing of web content against WCAG guidelines.
- **Google Lighthouse:** Assesses web page accessibility and provides actionable insights.

6.3 Manual testing processes

Key Areas of Manual Testing

- **User interaction:** Assess the usability of digital assets with assistive technologies.
- **Visual inspection:** Verify the visual design and layout for compatibility with screen readers and other tools.
- **Content review:** Manually inspect content for readability, proper heading structure, and alternative text.

Expert involvement

- **Accessibility experts:** Involve individuals with expertise in accessibility to perform detailed manual assessments.
- **User testing:** Conduct usability testing with individuals representing diverse disabilities.

6.4 Testing frequency and protocols

Frequency

- **Regular iterations:** Integrate accessibility testing into the development life cycle, conducting tests during each iteration.
- **Major updates:** Perform comprehensive accessibility testing when implementing significant updates or changes.

Protocols

- **Checklist-based testing:** Use a comprehensive accessibility checklist to guide both automated and manual testing processes.
- **Testing protocols:** Develop and document specific testing protocols tailored to the organization's digital assets.

Continuous improvement

- **Feedback loop:** Establish a feedback loop between testing teams, developers, and designers for continuous improvement.
- **Periodic audits:** Conduct periodic audits to ensure ongoing compliance with accessibility standards.

Reporting and remediation

The process of making digital content more accessible to people with disabilities. This may entail making changes to existing content and/or creating new content that is specifically intended for those with disabilities.

7.1 Reporting accessibility issues

Reporting channels

- **Designated point of contact:** Establish a clear point of contact for reporting accessibility issues within the organization.
- **User feedback mechanism:** Implement user-friendly mechanisms for users to report accessibility concerns directly.

Information collection

- **Detailed descriptions:** Encourage users to provide detailed descriptions of the accessibility barriers they encounter.
- **Screenshots or recordings:** Allow users to attach screenshots or recordings to better illustrate the issues.

7.2 Escalation procedures

Severity classification

- **Define severity levels:** Classify reported issues based on severity, ranging from critical to minor.
- **Escalation matrix:** Establish an escalation matrix indicating the appropriate response based on the severity of the reported issue.

Collaboration

- **Inter-team collaboration:** Facilitate collaboration between development, design, and testing teams to address reported issues.
- **Accessibility expert involvement:** Engage accessibility experts when necessary to assess and prioritize complex issues.

7.3 Timely remediation plans

Prioritization

- **Define prioritization criteria:** Establish criteria for prioritizing remediation efforts, considering factors like severity, impact, and user feedback.
- **Regular review:** Periodically review and update prioritization criteria based on evolving needs and feedback.

Remediation timelines

- **Set clear timelines:** Define specific timelines for addressing and remedying reported accessibility issues.
- **Regular updates:** Provide regular updates to users and stakeholders on the progress of issue resolution.

Continuous improvement

- **Root cause analysis:** Conduct root cause analyses for recurring issues to implement preventive measures.
- **Feedback loop:** Encourage a feedback loop between users and the development team to refine remediation processes.

Documentation and record-keeping

The ADA rules require that disability-related information be collected on separate forms, kept in a medical record that is separate from general personnel information, and stored in a location that is accessible only to authorized personnel who have a legitimate business need to access the information.

8.1 Logging accessibility tests and results

Testing logs

- **Comprehensive records:** Maintain detailed logs of all accessibility tests conducted, including both automated and manual testing results.
- **Version control:** Implement version control mechanisms to track changes in digital assets and associated accessibility testing results.

Incident reports

- **Record accessibility incidents:** Document instances of accessibility issues reported by users or identified during testing.
- **Root cause analysis:** Include findings from root cause analyses and resolutions in incident reports.

8.2 Maintaining accessibility documentation

Documentation repositories

- **Centralized storage:** Maintain a centralized repository for all accessibility-related documentation, including training materials and guidelines.
- **Access control:** Implement access controls to ensure that only authorized personnel can view or modify the documentation.

Versioning and updates

- **Version control:** Keep track of different versions of documentation to reflect updates and changes.
- **Regular review:** Periodically review and update documentation to align with evolving accessibility standards and organizational practices.

8.3 Compliance records and reporting

Compliance reports

- **Regular compliance audits:** Conduct periodic audits to assess the overall compliance of digital assets with ADA guidelines.
- **Generate compliance reports:** Create comprehensive reports detailing the organization's adherence to accessibility standards.

Reporting protocols

- **Internal reporting:** Share compliance reports with internal stakeholders to foster awareness and transparency.
- **External reporting:** If required, report compliance status to external entities or regulatory bodies.

Incident trend analysis

- **Analyze incident trends:** Utilize incident reports and compliance records to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- **Action plans:** Develop action plans based on incident trend analysis to prevent recurring issues.

Continuous improvement

PDCA cycle (plan-do-check-act):

Plan: Identify an opportunity and plan for change.

- **Identify opportunities:** Continuously identify opportunities for enhancing digital accessibility within the organization.

Do: Implement the change on a small scale.

- **Implement on a small scale**: Pilot changes on a small scale, such as specific web pages or applications.

Check: Use data to analyze the results of the change and determine whether it made a difference.

- **Use data analysis:** Analyze data, including user feedback and testing results, to evaluate the impact of the changes.

Act: If the change was successful, implement it on a wider scale and continuously assess your results.

- **Implement widely:** If changes are successful, implement them on a wider scale across all digital assets.

- **Continuous assessment:** Continuously assess results and iterate the PDCA cycle for ongoing improvement.

9.1 Feedback loops for process enhancement

Continuous feedback mechanism

- **Establish feedback loops:** Integrate mechanisms for ongoing feedback from users, employees, and relevant stakeholders regarding digital accessibility.
- **Surveys and user feedback:** Conduct regular surveys and seek input from users with disabilities to identify areas for improvement.

Incident trend analysis

- **Root cause analysis:** Analyze incident reports and accessibility testing results to identify recurring issues.
- **Continuous improvement plans:** Develop and implement improvement plans based on feedback and trend analyses.

9.2 Staying updated with accessibility standards

Monitoring industry changes

- **Designate responsibility:** Assign a team or individual to stay updated with changes in digital accessibility standards, including WCAG updates and legal requirements.
- **Regular training:** Provide ongoing training sessions to keep employees informed about the latest accessibility best practices.

Benchmarking

- **External benchmarking:** Compare the organization's digital accessibility practices with industry benchmarks and best-in-class examples.
- **Incorporate innovations:** Integrate innovative solutions and practices that emerge in the field of digital accessibility.

9.3 Periodic review of SOP

Review cycles

- **Establish review schedule:** Set up regular review cycles for the Accessibility Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).
- **Engage stakeholders:** Involve relevant stakeholders in the review process to gather diverse perspectives.

Updates and revisions

- **Document changes:** Clearly document any updates or revisions made to the SOP.
- **Communication:** Communicate changes to employees and stakeholders to ensure awareness and compliance.

Lessons learned

Post-implementation review: After implementing changes based on feedback or SOP revisions, conduct post-implementation reviews.

Document lessons learned: Document lessons learned and apply them to future iterations of accessibility initiatives.

Conclusion

Digital accessibility is not just a compliance requirement; it's a commitment to creating an inclusive digital environment. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and maintaining a strong commitment to accessibility ensures that COMPANY's digital assets are accessible to everyone, regardless of their abilities.

10.1 Commitment to accessibility

Leadership commitment

- **Executive support:** Reiterate the organization's commitment to digital accessibility, supported by leadership.
- **Resource allocation:** Allocate resources, both human and financial, to ensure ongoing accessibility initiatives.

Public declarations

- **Accessibility statements:** Publish accessibility statements on digital platforms, outlining the organization's commitment to providing accessible content and services.

- **Communication channels:** Utilize various communication channels to convey the organization's dedication to digital accessibility.

10.2 Encouraging a culture of inclusivity

Inclusive Policies

- **Incorporate in policies:** Integrate digital accessibility into organizational policies, demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity.
- **Performance metrics:** Incorporate accessibility metrics into performance evaluations and key performance indicators.

Training and awareness

- **Ongoing training programs:** Maintain ongoing training programs to reinforce the importance of inclusivity and accessibility.
- **Recognition:** Acknowledge and celebrate individuals or teams contributing significantly to accessibility initiatives.

Employee engagement

- **Feedback mechanisms:** Establish mechanisms for employees to provide feedback on accessibility-related initiatives.
- **Accessibility champions:** Identify and empower accessibility champions within different teams or departments.

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary of accessibility terms

The glossary provides a comprehensive list of terms and definitions related to digital accessibility. It serves as a quick reference for employees, stakeholders, and team members to enhance their understanding of accessibility terminology.

A

Adaptive technology: Assistive devices or software designed to adapt or modify the

user interface to suit the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Alt text (alternative text): Descriptive text associated with an image, providing information about the content or function of the image. Alt text is essential for users with visual impairments who rely on screen readers.

ARIA (accessible rich internet applications): A set of attributes added to HTML to enhance the accessibility and usability of web content for screen readers and other assistive technologies.

B

Braille: A tactile writing system used by people with visual impairments, where raised dots represent letters and numbers.

C

Captioning: The process of adding text to audio-visual content, including videos, to provide a written representation of spoken words, sound effects, and other relevant audio information.

Color contrast: The difference in luminance or color between text and its background. Sufficient color contrast ensures readability for users with visual impairments.

D

Descriptive link text: Creating links with text that conveys the link's purpose or destination, improving accessibility for users who rely on screen readers.

Digital accessibility: The practice of ensuring that digital content, including websites, applications, and documents, is accessible to all users, including those with disabilities.

Dyslexia: A neurological condition that affects reading, writing, and spelling, often requiring accessible design considerations.

F

Focus indicator: A visual or auditory indication of which element on a webpage currently has keyboard focus, crucial for keyboard navigation.

Focus management: The practice of ensuring that keyboard focus is properly

managed and indicated within a user interface, ensuring smooth navigation for users who rely on keyboards.

H

Headings: Hierarchical HTML elements used to structure content on a webpage. Proper use of headings is crucial for users who navigate content using screen readers.

I

Input modality: The method used to interact with a digital interface, such as a keyboard, mouse, touch, or voice.

Inclusive design: Designing products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

K

Keyboard accessibility: The ability for users to navigate and interact with digital content using only a keyboard. Essential for individuals with motor disabilities.

L

Low vision: A visual impairment that cannot be fully corrected by glasses, contact lenses, or surgery. Individuals with low vision may use magnifiers or other assistive technologies.

M

Motor impairment: A condition affecting motor skills, including movement and coordination, which may require specialized input devices or interfaces.

N

Navigation landmarks: Semantic HTML elements (such as <nav>, <main>, <aside>) used to identify and navigate specific sections of a webpage, aiding users with screen readers.

P

PDF (portable document format): A file format widely used for documents that maintains the same formatting regardless of the device or software used to view it. Ensuring accessibility in PDFs is crucial for users with disabilities.

Progressive enhancement: A design strategy that starts with a basic, universally accessible version of a website or application and progressively adds advanced features for users with more capable devices or browsers.

R

Readability: The ease with which text can be read and understood, often influenced by factors such as font choice, size, and spacing.

Responsive design: Designing web content and applications to provide an optimal viewing experience across a range of devices and screen sizes.

S

Screen reader: Assistive technology that reads aloud digital text, enabling users with visual impairments to access and navigate digital content.

Social media accessibility: Ensuring that content posted on social media platforms is accessible to all users, including those with disabilities.

Speech recognition: Technology that allows users to control computers and devices using voice commands.

Structured data: Information organized in a clear, hierarchical manner, making it easier for assistive technologies to interpret and present content.

Synthetic speech: Computer-generated speech used by screen readers to convert text into spoken words.

T

Text-to-speech (TTS): Technology that converts written text into spoken words, benefiting users with visual or reading impairments.

Transcription: Providing a written version of spoken content, such as audio or video, to make it accessible to individuals with hearing impairments.

U

User interface (UI): The point of interaction between a user and a digital product, including elements like buttons, menus, and forms. UI should be designed for accessibility.

User experience (UX): The overall experience a user has while interacting with a digital product, encompassing accessibility, usability, and satisfaction.

W

Web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG): A set of guidelines developed by the W3C to ensure that web content is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Appendix B: Resources and references

Appendix B contains a compilation of resources and references related to digital accessibility. These may include links to relevant websites, articles, guidelines, and other materials that offer additional information and support ongoing learning in the field.

Websites

Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)

Website: WAI - Web Accessibility Initiative

Description: Provides resources, guidelines, and updates on web accessibility standards.

Deque University

Website: Deque University

Description: Offers online courses and resources on digital accessibility and inclusive design.

A11y Project

Website: A11y Project

Description: Community-driven resource hub with accessibility best practices, tools, and tutorials.

Articles and publications

"Understanding WCAG" by W3C

Link: Understanding WCAG

Description: Quick reference guide to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

"Semantic HTML: What It Is and How to Use It Correctly by SEMrush"

Link: Semantic HTML

Description: Semantic HTML best practices and tips.

"Accessibility for Teams"

Link: Color and Contrast

Description: Color and contrast guidelines.

"Inclusive Design Principles" by Microsoft

Link: Inclusive Design Principles

Description: Microsoft's guide to inclusive design principles and practices.

Guidelines and standards

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1

Link: WCAG 2.1

Description: Official guidelines from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) for web accessibility.

Section 508:

Link: Section 508

Description: U.S. federal guidelines outlining accessibility requirements for electronic and information technology.

Tools and assistive technologies

axe Accessibility Checker

Link: axe Accessibility Checker

Description: Browser extension for automated accessibility testing.

NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access)

Link: NVDA

Description: Free, open-source screen reader for Windows.

Organizations

International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP)

Link: IAAP

Description: Professional association for individuals and organizations involved in digital accessibility.

Accessibility Guidelines Working Group (AG WG)

Link: AG WG

Description: W3C working group responsible for developing and maintaining web accessibility guidelines.

Appendix C: Sample digital accessibility checklist

Appendix C provides a sample accessibility checklist that can be used as a tool for assessing digital assets against established accessibility standards, such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). The checklist covers key aspects, including content structure, multimedia accessibility, and user interface considerations.
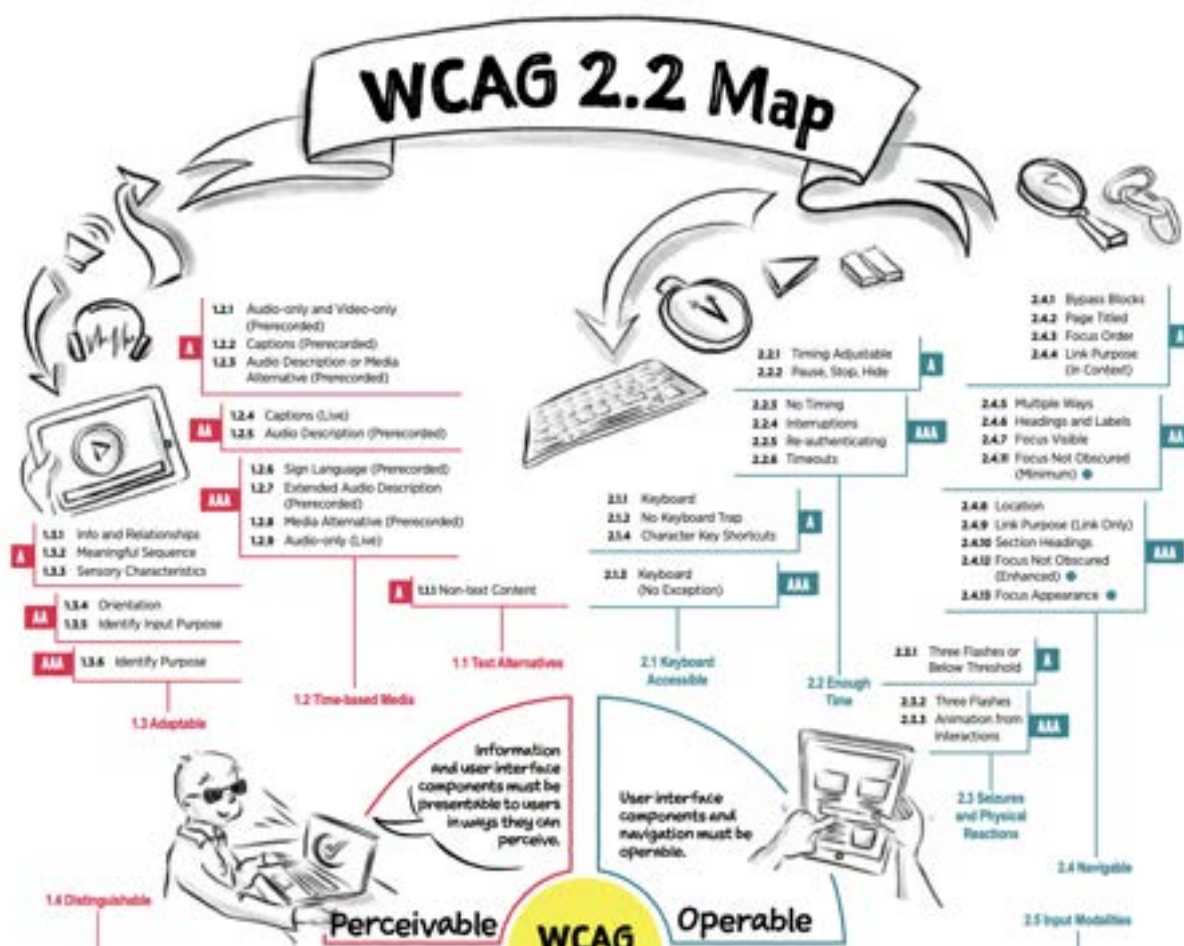
1. Content structure

- **Headings**
  - Properly use hierarchical heading tags (h1, h2, h3, etc.). ☐
  - Ensure headings accurately reflect the structure of the content. ☐
- **Semantic HTML**
  - Use semantic HTML elements appropriately (e.g., <nav>, <main>, <article>). ☐
  - Avoid using non-semantic elements for styling purposes. ☐
- **Link text**
  - Use descriptive link text that conveys the link's purpose. ☐

- Avoid using generic phrases like "click here" or "read more." ☐

2. Multimedia accessibility

- **Images**
    - Provide alt text for all images, conveying their content or function. ☐
    - Decorative images have empty or null alt text. ☐
- **Video and audio**
    - Include captions and transcripts for video and audio content. ☐
    - Provide audio descriptions for visual content in videos. ☐

3. Color and contrast

- **Text contrast**
    - Ensure sufficient color contrast between text and background. ☐
    - Use a color contrast tool to verify compliance. ☐
- **Color use**
    - Avoid conveying information solely through color. ☐
    - Provide alternative cues for users with color vision deficiencies. ☐

4. Forms and controls

- **Form labels**
    - Every form input has a descriptive label. ☐
    - Group related form elements using fieldset and legend. ☐
- **Error handling**
    - Provide clear error messages and suggestions for form validation. ☐
    - Ensure users can identify and correct form errors easily. ☐

5. Navigation and keyboard accessibility

- **Keyboard navigation**

- All functionality is operable using a keyboard. ☐
- Keyboard focus is visually identifiable. ☐
- **Skip to content link**
  - Include a "skip to content" link at the beginning of the page. ☐
  - Ensure it is visible and accessible to keyboard users. ☐

6. Document accessibility

- **PDF and documents**
  - Ensure PDFs and other documents are accessible (text-based, structured). ☐
  - Provide accessible alternatives for non-text content within documents. ☐

7. Social media and external platforms

- **Alt text for images**
  - Use alt text when posting images on social media platforms. ☐
  - Ensure accessibility features are enabled on external platforms used by the organization. ☐

8. Software and applications

- **Accessible UI**
  - Design user interfaces that are navigable and operable by users with disabilities. ☐
  - Ensure compatibility with common assistive technologies. ☐

9. General

- **Testing**
  - Regularly conduct accessibility testing using automated tools and manual testing. ☐
  - Perform usability testing with individuals representing diverse abilities. ☐
- **Training**

- Provide ongoing training for employees involved in digital content creation and development. ☐
- Maintain a culture of awareness and continuous improvement. ☐
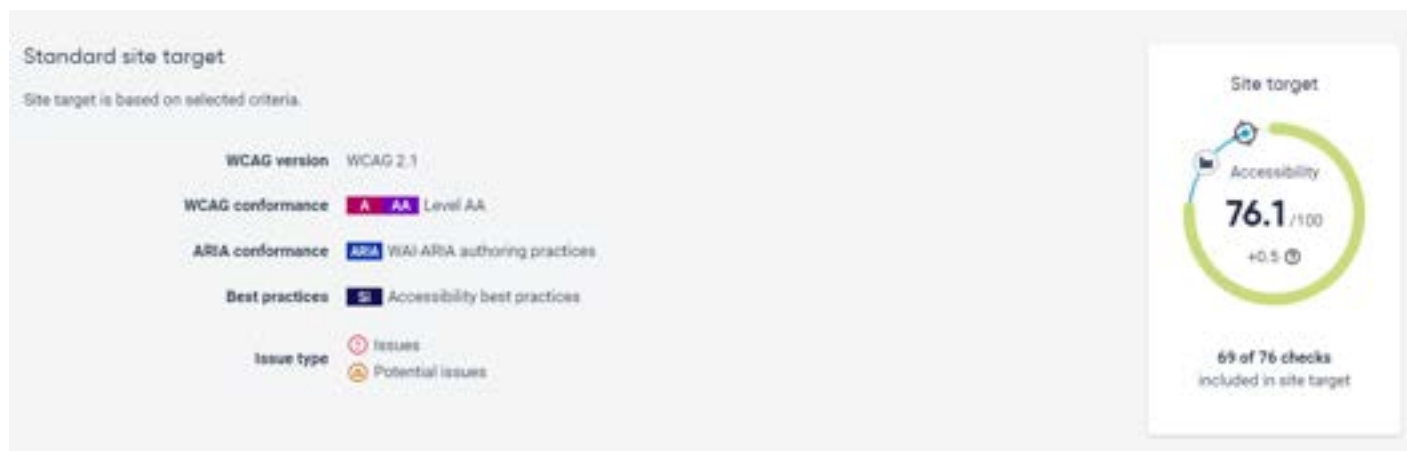
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