



Making your website accessible

This summary provides an overarching view for managers who are involved in influencing the design of websites and intranet sites. It is not a rigorous guide for developers. The official standards (WCAG) themselves are very comprehensive and can be found on [WCAG's website](#).

Our summary here is an effort to make them accessible to the non-technician.

What is the benchmark for accessibility?

When considering the accessibility of your external website, software applications or even your internal intranet site, there is plenty of guidance available but it can seem quite technical and difficult to assess whether you are 'doing it right' or not. This section seeks to de-mystify the acronyms and language and explain how you can determine if your sites are accessible.

What are the principles and guidelines?

The worldwide consortium W3C has developed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, which define how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. It is the international standard which web developers should be using to ensure that your website is accessible to people with a wide variety of disabilities. Meeting the standards means your website will be accessible to the widest possible audience, but will not meet the needs of all combinations and degrees of disability.

There are four foundation principles which are essential for the development of web content. Whilst most of the W3C material is reasonably non-technical, we have simplified the language a little here. For each principle, there are one or more guidelines that assist web developers and those commissioning work on the web to better understand what is required to deliver on each principle.

The four principles for good website design, and their guidelines, are:

1. **Perceivable** - users must be able to perceive the information being presented (it can't be invisible to all of their senses)
 - Provide text alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed into other forms people need, such as large print, braille, speech, symbols or simpler language
 - Provide alternatives for time-based media
 - Create content that can be presented in different ways (for example simpler layout) without losing information or structure
 - Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background.
2. **Operable** - users must be able to interact with your website (it cannot require interaction that a user cannot perform)
 - Make all functionality available from a keyboard





- Provide users enough time to read and use content
 - Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures
 - Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are
3. **Understandable** - the content or operation of your website cannot be beyond the understanding of the user
- Make text content readable and understandable
 - Make Web pages appear and operate in predictable ways
 - Help users avoid and correct mistakes
4. **Robust** - users with a wide variety of assistive technologies must be able to use your site now, and in the future as technologies evolve.
- Maximize compatibility with current and future user agents, including assistive technologies

How do I know if my website meets the requirements?

Success criteria are "testable" propositions or criteria that determine whether a guideline has been achieved. The Success criteria are graded as A, AA and AAA with AAA representing the most accessible designs.

A particular web page or web site may have some features which are A, some which are AA and others which are AAA.

- Level A: For Level A conformance (the minimum level of conformance), the Web page satisfies all the Level A Success Criteria, or a conforming alternate version is provided.
- Level AA: For Level AA conformance, the Web page satisfies all the Level A and Level AA Success Criteria, or a Level AA conforming alternate version is provided.
- Level AAA: For Level AAA conformance, the Web page satisfies all the Level A, Level AA and Level AAA Success Criteria, or a Level AAA conforming alternate version is provided.

There is extensive information about each Success Criterion on the W3C website. The table below shows some success criteria that relates to making audio and video accessible on the Internet:

WCAG 2.0 Single Level A	WCAG 2.0 Double Level A	WCAG 2.0 Triple Level A
Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captions (pre-recorded audio/video)• Transcript (audio-only content)• Media Alternative transcript	Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captions (pre-recorded audio/video and live audio-video)• Transcript (audio-only content)	Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captions (pre-recorded audio/video, live audio/video and live audio-only)





WCAG 2.0 Single Level A	WCAG 2.0 Double Level A	WCAG 2.0 Triple Level A
OR <ul style="list-style-type: none">Audio Description (Pre-recorded audio/video)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Audio Description (Pre-recorded audio/video)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Transcript (pre-recorded audio-only content)Media Alternative transcript (Pre-recorded audio/video)Audio Description (Pre-recorded audio/video)Sign Language interpretation (Pre-recorded audio/video)Extended Audio Description (Pre-recorded audio/video)

The Australian government has stipulated that all government websites must be Level AA (Double A) by 31 December 2014.

Working with your Information Technology team

It is likely that your IT team is already informed and has a good understanding of what is required and has plans for your website. This section is aimed at helping you have a more informed discussion and systematic approach.

Determine what is important to you and your audience:

- Which are your most commonly used internal and external pages? Your IT department should be able to provide that quite easily
- Be clear about whether you are talking and thinking about your external website or the internal website of your organisation
- If cost is an issue - focus your attention on those sections where your organisation and people with disability will get the greatest benefit. This may be your most commonly used pages but also be pages that tell potential applicants that your organisation is accessible:
 - Company profile pages
 - Recruitment and Selection section and links
 - Website accessibility guidance pages

Questions for the IT team:





- Has there been an accessibility review of the organisation's Internet and Intranet sites?
- Is that the whole site or just some pages?
- What WCAG 2.0 compliance level (A, AA, AAA) is the organisation working towards and over what time frame?
- Which A, AA and AAA criteria do we meet for our most commonly used pages?
- What would be the quick wins to improve accessibility for our most commonly used pages?
- What are the fixes that users cannot get past as opposed to those which are an inconvenience?
- Are links to other applications, systems or landing pages (for example, a job seeker application forms) accessible?
- Do you have further plans in the pipeline?
- What accessibility factors are taken into account when designing and/or upgrading information technology systems?
- Is there induction training for IT developers on accessibility standards?
- Do you have online authoring standards?
- How does the organisation assess alternative technologies and their compatibility with the internal systems environment? (screen reading software etc.) for new employees?

How do I determine if my site is A, AA or AAA?

There are many providers that can give you an assessment of the accessibility of your website:

- [Digital Access at Vision Australia.](#)
- [Access iQ](#)
- [Australian Network on Disability](#)

