



Website Accessibility for Small Businesses
From Legal Risk to Market Opportunity



AGENDA



- Why should you care about digital accessibility?
 - How inaccessible digital content creates barriers for customers
- How can you improve digital accessibility?
 - Tips and resources to get started
 - Plan to incorporate and maintain accessibility over time

Why Digital Access Matters

- Inaccessible websites and mobile apps may exclude or discourage individuals with disabilities from engaging with your business; inaccessibility ...
 - Reduces independence, privacy, and timeliness of interactions
 - Increases the need for assistance to find information, complete purchases, make appointments, register for events, etc.
 - Heightens frustration and dissatisfaction



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Greater Accessibility = More Customers, More Business



- About 20%, or 1 out of every 5 people in the U.S., has a disability*
- Disability crosses *every* demographic border (age, race, religion, gender, language, social background, cultural heritage, education level, economic status, etc.)
- Disabilities, including mobility, vision, hearing, cognitive, and other conditions, may make it difficult for people to do business online

*Source: U.S Census Bureau: "Americans with Disabilities: 2010" report

Digital Access

Websites, web forms, social media posts, electronic documents, email, and other digital content need design features to ensure access; for example ...



- Captions, sign language interpretation, and/or transcripts for audible information to accommodate people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Legible text to accommodate people with low vision
- Text descriptions or audio descriptions of visible information to accommodate people who are blind
- Simple, uncluttered designs and plain language make things easier for individuals with intellectual and other types of disabilities

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Access for People Who Have Low Vision

- Simple, sans serif fonts
- Character spacing not too tight or too wide
- Line spacing not less than single
- Color alone should not be used to indicate meaning
- Good contrast between characters and background
- Avoid placing text directly on top of images, watermarks, etc.



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Contrast: Examples

• Feeling blue?



❖ Feeling blue?



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Access for People Who Have Low Vision (continued)

- Text should generally be left-justified
 - Centered or right-justified text should only be used for things like titles, headings, or quotes (generally not longer than two or three lines of text)
- Don't underline text to indicate emphasis (underlining should be limited to live hyperlinks)
- Don't use all capitals to indicate emphasis
 - Use of all caps should be used for acronyms or certain simple words on signs

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Text: Same Size, Same Spacing

A little hard to look at ...

THE MID-ATLANTIC ADA CENTER,
OPERATED BY TRANSCEN, INC.,
PROVIDES INFORMATION,
GUIDANCE, AND TRAINING ON THE
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT
(ADA). THE INFORMATION AND/OR
MATERIALS PROVIDED ARE
INTENDED SOLELY AS INFORMAL
GUIDANCE AND SHOULD NOT BE
CONSTRUED AS LEGAL ADVICE.

Better ...

The **Mid-Atlantic ADA Center**,
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as legal advice.

Digital Access for People Who Are Blind

Many people who are blind use “screen readers” (assistive technology that “reads” digital text and converts it to recorded or mechanized speech or Braille output device)

- Accessible structure and navigation, with consistent, meaningful styles for content (heading 1, heading 2, etc.)
- Simple tables
- Forms: include instructions and notifications (e.g., success, errors), label controls
- Images and graphics: alternative text (simple text descriptions) in “alt text” field
- Hyperlinks: Meaningful text that is easy to read aloud, makes sense out of context

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Meaningful Link Text

Not this: The ADA Title I regulations can be found here:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2020-title29-vol4/xml/CFR-2020-title29-vol4-part1630.xml>

Not this: The Title I regulations can be found [here](#)



This! The [Title I regulations](#) can be found online

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Alternative Text

- Short, accurate
 - What is in the image and why is the image there? (And why you should always check automatically generated alt text!)



Automatically generated alt text:

A white building with columns and a circular structure with a domed roof and a body of water with pink blossoms with Jefferson Memorial in the background

Alternative alt text:

The Jefferson Memorial, a classical structure with columns and a domed roof, is reflected in a body of water and framed by pink cherry blossoms.

Alternative alt text:

Jefferson Memorial framed by cherry blossoms



Text Embedded in Images

Include text in alt text of image or repeat information outside image

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Plan for Maintaining Access

- Establish policies and practices to ensure that new digital content is “born accessible”
- Ensure contractors address accessibility
- Get training or consultation if needed
- Look to your sources
 - Many systems, platforms, apps, etc. offer free information, instructions, and tips on how to make content accessible, many include settings to trigger accessibility “reminders” (e.g., “add alt text?” when you upload an image to your library or add one to your content)

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Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) (w3.org/WAI/)

Great Resource!

The screenshot shows the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the W3C logo and the text "Web Accessibility Initiative WAI". Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for "Accessibility Fundamentals", "Planning & Policies", "Design & Develop", "Test & Evaluate", "Teach & Advocate", and "Standards/Guidelines". The main content area features a large heading "Making the Web Accessible" with a sub-heading "Strategies, standards, and supporting resources to help you make the Web more accessible to people with disabilities." Below this are three columns: "W3C" (The World Wide Web Consortium), "WAI" (The W3C Web Accessibility Initiative), and "You" (You can use W3C WAI resources to make your websites, applications, and other digital creations more accessible and usable to everyone.). A "News" section is visible on the left, with a sub-heading "Current Work" and a link to "See What We're Working On - Accessibility Activities and Publications". On the right, there is a "Get Resources for..." section with a list of links for various roles: Getting Started, Content Writers, Designers, Developers, Evaluators, Testers, Managers, Policy Makers, Trainers, Educators, Web Users, People with Disabilities, Advocates, Everyone (All WAI Resources), and Other Languages.

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Questions



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