

Digital Accessibility Checklist

This comprehensive checklist explains the necessary steps to take when creating a digital accessibility initiative.

Reference this checklist throughout the initiative-creating process for all of your digital channels.



PHASE 1

Plan and Communicate

The success and effectiveness of any accessibility program will depend on your ability to develop and follow a strategic plan. It's essential to communicate this plan to all employees and vendors responsible for the software development lifecycle.

This is a collaborative process, so the responsibility doesn't fall on a single team or individual. To ensure participation and efficiency, you must share expectations and goals across your organization.

- ✔ Set clearly-defined key performance indicators (KPIs) for digital accessibility.
- ✔ Standardize the use of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA across your channels and online digital properties.
- ✔ Create an internal-facing accessibility policy and a public-facing accessibility statement for your digital properties. These documents will communicate the steps you're taking on your accessibility journey.
- ✔ Communicate your digital inclusion strategy and efforts to all internal and external stakeholders using your accessibility policy. Make sure third-party developers understand your digital accessibility protocols.

- ✔ Set a timeline for tasks that must be completed, including ongoing process reviews, remediations, conformance checkpoints, and so on.
- ✔ Encourage open communication and collaboration among your departments.
- ✔ Train all of your staff on their roles in accessibility.

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PHASE 2

Test and Audit

Testing and auditing your company's digital properties goes well beyond your website and app. All visual elements must also adhere to WCAG 2.1 AA standards. This includes multimedia properties (i.e., audio and video), which must meet specific guidelines. Transcripts, captions, audio descriptions, and PDFs must also be considered.

Starting with programmatic or automated testing can help you get a general understanding of where your websites fall in terms of accessibility. However, many aspects can only be tested using manual methods (e.g., code reviews or assistive technologies).

- ✔ Perform initial tests on digital properties using an automated accessibility checker to understand where they fall on the spectrum of accessibility. Do they meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards?

- ✔ Conduct manual auditing and testing to ensure you find all WCAG 2.1 AA issues. If your staff cannot carry out the manual assessment, have it conducted by an accessibility expert from a company like UsableNet.
- ✔ Create a detailed list of issues that fail the automated and manual assessments. Organize the list according to how your site is developed (components, user journeys, sections, etc) and by team/person who will fix each issues. Not all issues can be solved solely by a developer.
- ✔ Work with a accessibility partner like UsableNet to help your organization identify and resolve issues.



PHASE 3

Fix and Verify

After conducting both automated and manual testing on all digital properties, it's time to fix any accessibility issues.

Remember that accessibility is a journey, not a destination. Automated and manual tests must be conducted on any content added to your website and app. Additionally, any future updates made to the site—including updates made while going through initial remediation of accessibility issues—must also meet accessibility standards.

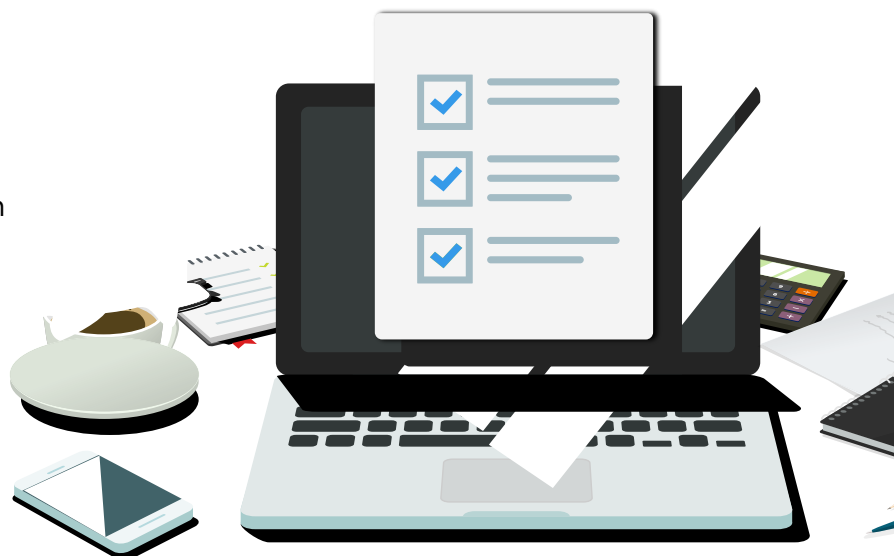
- ✓ Remediate high severity issues on your most visited pages first. Then, prioritize the remediation efforts across all pages for all severity levels.
- ✓ Ensure that you provide training to all your resources to help them understand WCAG. This will allow them to identify, repair, and verify current and future issues.
- ✓ Train freelance employees or contractors on accessibility standards.
- ✓ Make sure that your quality assurance (QA) team uses assistive technologies to verify accessibility and identify future problems. If the internal QA team cannot perform this work, use an accessibility partner like UsableNet.
- ✓ Incorporate user testing with members of the disability community to confirm accessibility.

PHASE 4

Document, Train, and Maintain

In this phase, make sure to track and document your progress and current conformance level. It's helpful to create a summary for stakeholders involved in this process.

- ✓ Update your accessibility policy and statement to showcase your new level of digital conformance.
- ✓ Train all remaining roles involved in creating and maintaining your digital experience and ensure any new hires are trained.
- ✓ Have a plan to communicate your accessibility policy to new vendors and employees.
- ✓ Provide ongoing training for existing employees and new hires.
- ✓ Make sure you continually evaluate the accessibility of all digital channels through automated, manual testing, including testing with users who have disabilities.



Ensure that accessibility is integrated as part of the software development lifecycle.

- ✔ Set up reporting mechanisms that track accessibility conformance over time.
- ✔ Document all positive user outcomes and issues found to ensure you have an escalation path to solve problems following release.
- ✔ Have a process to help your company stay current on any changes to accessibility guidelines and laws and adjust your accessibility policy when necessary.
- ✔ Train customer service representatives.
- ✔ Partner with a company like UsableNet to receive continuous monitoring and website certification.

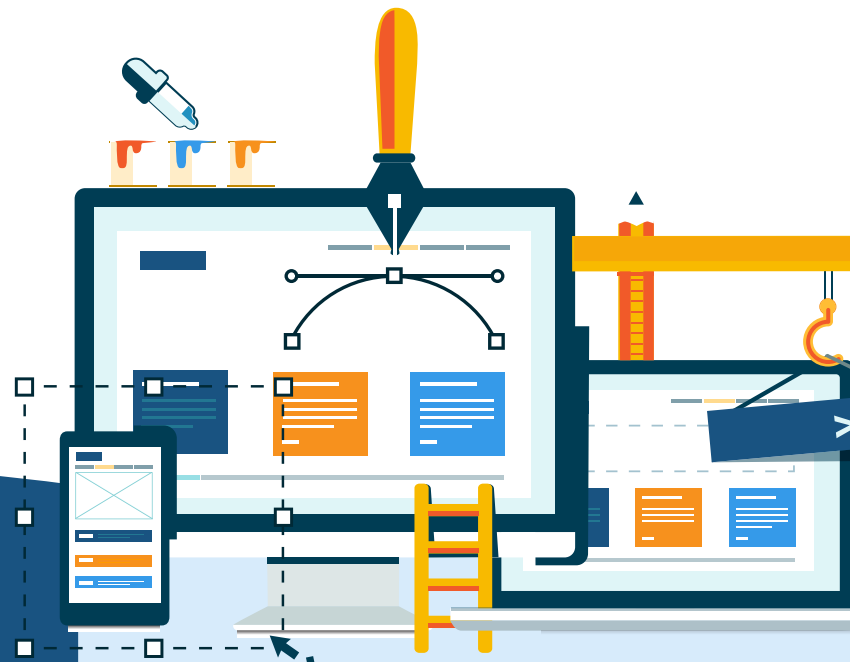
Start Your Journey to Accessibility

Now that you understand the steps to accessibility, it's time to start planning your company's strategy. This benefits your employees, customers, and stakeholders and creates a more inclusive digital world for people of all abilities.

UsableNet

[Contact Us](#)

Partner with a company like UsableNet to receive continuous monitoring and website certification.



Let UsableNet make your site accessible

Our Assistive platform offers an end-to-end solution that dynamically remediates and maintains the accessibility of your site so it conforms to WCAG 2.1 AA. It is ideal for websites that are not accessible, especially those that have transactional functionality on them, such as ecommerce.