3 Media Web

The ADA Compliance Web Design Checklist

NOTICE

This is not legal advice nor guarantee of compliance. Please consult with an attorney for a full explanation of the law.

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In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ushered in the advent of wheelchair ramps and parking spaces for the disabled. As technology evolved, so too did the responsibility of website owners to make accessibility adjustments on their website.

Website owners and online businesses need to consider how each element on a web page can be adapted to fit the needs of their disabled users.

In order to be accessible these days, websites should reflect guidelines laid out by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), so that all the pages on your website can be used and understood by disabled users.

Learn more about ADA compliance and how to make your website accessible to everyone.

Visit the **3 Media Web Blog**

What is ADA Compliance for Websites

Simply put, an ADA compliant website is a site designed for everybody – no matter their ability. It should allow those with any type of disabilities to use your website in a way that works for them.

This is a win-win for everyone, as a more accessible website means more traffic – and more traffic helps your business grow!
The problem is, the U.S. government has not provided clarity on how to apply the ADA to websites. The reason is the ADA was signed into law before the world wide web was "a thing", and as we all know, the web has changed a lot since 1990!

In 2010, the Department of Justice (DoJ) announced it intended to adjust the ADA to consider how websites should work to accommodate people with disabilities. Yet, in
2016, the DoJ decided to stop recommending statues for ADA compliant websites.

In 2016, the DoJ investigated the University of California, Berkeley for their lack of accessibility in online learning content – claiming deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals could not access audio and video content. The DoJ recommended the university should adopt WCAG 2.0 standards to make their website accessible.

Essentially, since the DoJ did not officially clarify the ADA as it relates to web accessibility, WCAG 2.0 is now accepted as the standard in U.S. courts.

> " Web Accessibility protects your company from potential liability - and it's the right thing to do. "

What if my Website isn't ADA Compliant?

If you are a business owner and maintain a website, you may have questions about becoming compliant and penalties you could suffer if you fail to do so.

First, it's important to understand if the ADA applies to you. Under Title III of the ADA, any business with at least 15 full-time employees that operates over 20 weeks per year is often exempt from the ADA guidelines.

Under Title III of the ADA, any business that is a "place of accommodation", is subject to the requirements of the law. A "place of accommodation" is considered a business that is generally open to the public and has a physical "nexus" – in other words a brickand-mortar building. This would include establishments such as movie theaters, hotels, restaurants, stores, etc. All public places and privately-owned commercial facilities must comply with the ADA.

But recent court decisions in several federal districts now include businesses that exist only on the web as places of public accommodation.

Additionally, litigation for ADA website issues is only trending upward. According to the National Law Review, the number of cases filed for accessibility issues increased from 815 in 2017 to 2,285 in 2018.

While many large retailers and organizations including Domino's, Nike, Burger King, and CVS have been sued for website accessibility issues, smaller organizations are certainly not exempt from litigation. Failure to become ADA compliant can open you up to possible litigation and damage to the reputation of your brand.

ADA Website Accessibility Checklist

Web Accessibility is a complex undertaking and poses a challenge to organizations large and small. By following this checklist, you can discover potential web accessibility problems on your website, also usually referred to as an audit.

Before You Begin

Gather the Troops – Enlist the help of your web designer and web coder to assist in design and code fixes.

Get Organized - List any current efforts to make your website accessible to users with disabilities.

Toot Your Horn- List the website accessibility training certifications or accomplishments of your web team, staff, and/or contractors – including anyone eveloping or posting web content.

Open Your Door – Outline your process for receiving and implementing feedback from website users with disabilities (Pro Tip: include any suggestions already received as feed-back!).

Make a Statement – Write your company's Website Accessibility Policy.

Check the Accessibility of Your Website

How accessible is your current website?

You can rate your own site using programs like WAVE or Lighthouse, and by manually testing the site with screen reader software. To be ADA-compliant a site must meet standards within four categories:

- ☑ Perceivable
- ☑ Operable
- ☑ Understandable
- ☑ Robust

Let's audit your website to determine if it meets the ADA guidelines:

1. Is there a "skip navigation" link at the top of each page? This helps screen readers bypass the main navigation links and go immediately to the page content, thus skipping the links being read aloud each time they navigate to a new page.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Does every link provide "context" or a text description for screen readers? This should go beyond a graphic or "click here" text.

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Does each website image, map, graphic or other visual have a HTML alt or description tag? This provides a text equivalent of the displayed material.

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Is every website document available in HTML, or another textbased format? This includes documents available in other formats, such a pdf.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Source: https://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap5chklist.htm

5. Do you include HTML tags to describe the controls (text fields, check boxes, drop-down lists, and buttons) on all online forms? This helps disabled users complete and submit forms.

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Within your online forms, do your drop-down lists describe the requested information instead of displaying a response option? For example, forms should include a description that reads "your age," rather than displaying an age range of 18-21.

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Is HTML used to associate all data cells with column and row identifiers in each website data charts or table?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Does each video posted on your web pages have an audio description of the displayed information? This provides access to videos for sight-impaired website users.

☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Does each video include written captions of spoken communication, synchronized to the visuals in the video? This provides access to videos for hearing-impaired website users.

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Does every audio file also include written captions of spoken communication, synchronized to the visuals in the video? This provides access to videos for hearing-impaired website users.

☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Has every page on your website been designed for the settings of your users' web browser and operating system? This includes settings for color and font.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Feeling Overwhelmed?

No worries! Get help with ADA web compliance from the experts at 3 Media Web.

12. Do you have a written policy on website accessibility?

☐ Yes ☐ No

13. Have you posted your website accessibility policy on the homepage, or somewhere else that is easily located?

☐ Yes ☐ No

14. Is there a procedure to make content accessible before it's added to your website?

☐ Yes ☐ No

15. Is there a procedure to make the HTML of new web pages accessible before being published?

☐ Yes ☐ No

16. When pdf documents are added to your site are text-based versions (HTML, RTF, or word) added at the same time?

☐ Yes ☐ No

17. Has any in-house staff or contractor received training about your company's web accessibility guidelines?

☐ Yes ☐ No

18. Is your in-house team – or a contractor – able to make web accessibility design changes?

☐ Yes ☐ No

19. Does staff who creates or posts web content have access to the Department of Justice's technical assistance document: "Accessibility of State and Local Government Websites to People with Disabilities"?

☐ Yes ☐ No

20. Have you created a written timeframe for when changes will be made to website content that is currently inaccessible?

☐ Yes ☐ No

21. Is there a plan to improve website accessibility posted on your website and are you inviting suggestions for improvements from your website users?

☐ Yes ☐ No

22. Is your business telephone number and email address posted clearly on your website home page? This also helps users report website accessibility issues or request accessibility services and information.

☐ Yes ☐ No

23. Have you created a procedure to respond to and resolve accessibility issues to your website information, products, or services?

☐ Yes ☐ No

24. Have you asked representatives of multiple disability groups to provide feedback on the accessibility of your website? It helps to receive feedback from multiple tests, for users with different disabilities
and operating systems.

☐ Yes ☐ No

25. Have you tested your website accessibility with one of the products available online? There are many free or and low-cost website accessibility options, such as WAVE or Lighthouse, but be aware that these tools may not catch everything.

☐ Yes ☐ No

26. Have you established alternatives for people with disabilities who cannot use computers to access your website information, products, and services?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Need Help With Making Your Website ADA Compliant?

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