

Are your digital assets
optimised for success?

A WCAG checklist for designers



WCAG checklist for Designers

You've been given a design brief for an exciting new digital asset. You have a vision and you're getting geared up to create your new masterpiece.

But did you know that your design choices have an enormous impact on how easily (or not) your audiences will be able to see, understand and engage with the designed content?



As a designer, it's our job to make sure that any digital assets we design are created with every unique person in mind. It's up to us to make sure that the typeface and colour selections we choose are optimised for accessibility. And to make sure that every individual can interact and engage with our digital assets successfully. Not only for the success of your organisation's campaigns, but because it's the right thing to do.

Every person deserves to be welcomed in both the physical and virtual worlds. And that's why Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) exist, to help us think more inclusively.

In this guide, we've created three checklists to help you maintain best practice when designing digital assets.

1. **Typography**
2. **Colour**
3. **Moving visuals and video**

1. Typography



Have you chosen a font style and font size that's easy-to-read?

Avoid fonts that are difficult to read, such as serif fonts that are inaccessible to individuals with dyslexia. Instead, choose a sans-serif font, such as Verdana, Arial or Tahoma, and use a minimum font size of 12pt/16px.

It's also best practice to limit the number of fonts used across an asset.



Have you optimised line length, paragraphs and spacing?

It is recommended that line lengths are between 45 to 90 characters, that there is a space between each paragraph, and that the space between lines of text is set between 125% and 150%. Note: most software defaults to 120% (two points above font size). If the leading is below 120%, it can be difficult to read.

2. Colour



Have you chosen a colour selection that's optimised for visibility?

Avoid colour combinations that make it difficult to separate content from its background, such as similar colours. Not only is this good practice for all, but it'll help to make content more accessible for those with visual impairments or conditions like colour blindness.

Set the contrast ratio between text and its background to be at least 4.5 to 1. If your font is at least 18pt or 14pt bold (equivalent to approximately 24px and 18.5px bold), the minimum drops to 3 to 1. The same consideration should apply when using colours to convey information on diagrams, maps, and other types of images. When in doubt, use a colour contrast checker such as **WebAIM's Contrast Checker**.



Have you provided information in a channel other than colour?

Relying on colour alone to convey information can be problematic for people who cannot perceive the difference between certain colours. For example, rather than using colour alone to indicate links within text, provide another indicator such as an underline. Similarly, use labels and/or patterns with charts to distinguish different sections rather than colour alone.

3. Moving visuals and video

Where your moving visuals or video contain text, have you chosen a font style and font size that's easy-to-read?

Choose a sans-serif font, such as Verdana, Arial or Tahoma, and use a minimum font size of 12pt/16px. It's also best practice to limit the number of fonts used across an asset.

Have you left enough time between each frame, to allow viewers time to process the content?

Consider viewers with processing difficulty, and allow extra time between each frame for those who need it. This can be helped by providing your moving visuals in a format that can be paused.

Have you provided a format that can be paused or stopped?

When your organisation's marketer uploads the video or moving imagery file to a web page, it's up to them to make sure that multimedia content with audio does not automatically play when a page loads. If there is audio that automatically plays, it should be no longer than 3 seconds. Any moving, blinking or scrolling information that (1) starts automatically, (2) lasts more than five seconds, and (3) is presented in parallel with other content, there should be a mechanism for the user to pause, stop, or hide it unless the movement, blinking, or scrolling is part of an activity where it is essential. Therefore, providing a format that can be paused for any assets within those categories, that will be hosted on a webpage, will help them to maintain accessibility.

3. Moving visuals and video

Are all videos or moving visuals accompanied with alternative formats?

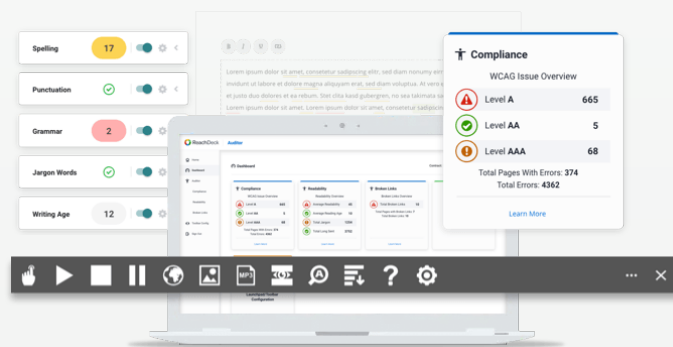
Provide an alternative format to audio information by using closed captions or subtitles throughout your videos. Offer an alternative format to visual information by providing a transcript or an audio description. If you are using YouTube as a hosting platform for your videos, be vigilant when using auto-subtitles. You may need to adjust or upload accurate captions.

Have you optimised background audio for accessibility?

Keep background audio low, to make sure individuals with hearing difficulties or sensory sensitivities can effectively hear foreground audio.

Did you know?

1 in 7* people are disabled. By 2050, this number is expected to double. Taking action to make sure digital content is inclusive has never been more important. ReachDeck can help support your efforts.



ReachDeck automatically highlights web accessibility errors, including colour contrast, missing alt tags and more. And it helps organisations to improve the readability and reach of content too!

Find out more. Or try it for free: text.help/wcag-design

*Clickaway Pound, 2019