



Web Accessibility for CQ5 Contributors

Web Strategy and Operations
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Web Accessibility

What is Web Accessibility?

It's making your web pages accessible to users with different types of disabilities, including:

- Visual
- Auditory
- Motor (Movement)
- Cognitive

What Needs to be Accessible?

As much as possible! That includes webpages, PDFs, Word documents, images, videos, MP3s, interactive games, etc. If it is on the internet, it should be accessible.

Who is Responsible for Making Web Content Accessible?

Everyone can contribute to making web content accessible. Developers can write code to meet web standards, and content authors can utilize accessibility techniques in their writing, design, and text formatting.

What Makes Web Content Accessible?

When needed, a user should be able to:

- **Hear web content with a screen reader.**
Blind and visually impaired users will listen to a webpage instead of viewing it. Your content must be correctly formatted so a screen reader can interpret and announce content for the listener.
- **Access content in images, audio, and video.**
Images, audio, and video should have a text equivalent whenever possible.
- **Adjust text formatting and remove graphic design.**
To make a web page more accessible, users with disabilities may turn off all the colors, fonts, graphics, and designs. They may also enlarge font sizes, change font colors, remove background images, etc., to make content easier to read.
- **Navigate web content with a keyboard, not just a mouse.**
Some users with disabilities do not use a mouse. Also, many people view web content on smartphones and tablets where a touch screen is used instead of a mouse.

Other Benefits

Web Accessibility also makes your pages easier to access on mobile devices and helps search engines find your web page.

How to Make Your Webpage Accessible

Add Alt Text to Images

Screen readers can't read the information inside an image; you need to write alt text to describe the image. In most cases, alt text is only accessible to screen readers.

Is alt text needed?

- Is the image also a link?
Yes. The image **MUST** have alt text. Treat the alt text as if it was a text link.
- Does the image have information that is not provided as text anywhere else on the page?
Yes. Alt text should be a text version of the missing information.
- Is the image a chart, graph, diagram, figure, etc.?
Yes. Briefly explain why the chart is important. Include a caption with more information, if needed.
- Does the image only contain text?
Yes. Repeat or summarize the text in the image.
- Does the image contribute important information about the subject matter?
Yes. Explain what is going on in the image and why it is important.
- Is the image decorative?
No. If the image provides no meaningful content and is only there to make the page look nice.
- Does the image have a caption?
Maybe. If the text for the image caption is the same as the alt text, do not include the alt text.

How to write alt text.

- Recommended character length:
Between 100 to 150 characters.
- Don't explain that it is an image:
Don't use: "Image of..." or "Picture of..." the screen reader will do that for you.
- Flag the image as decorative:
Add alt="" to the tag. Some web authoring tools have an option, like a checkbox, to flag an image as decorative.

Use text instead of images of text.

Don't place important information in an image; use regular text instead. It is okay to use images for promos and banners, etc., with text, but make sure that this information is not vital to the main content on the page.

Use Bold, Italics, and All-caps Sparingly

Don't format entire paragraphs with bold, italics, or all-caps. Over-emphasized text is difficult to read.

- **Bold:** Use to emphasize a word, phrase, sentence, or label.
- **Italics:** Use for "foreign" words, scientific names, book titles, magazine titles, works of art, etc.
- **All Caps:** Use to spell out acronyms; many screen readers are programmed to read common acronyms, e.g., IT is read as Information Technology.
- **Underline:** Use only for text that is formatted as a link.

Organize Content with Headings

Screen readers use headings as a navigation system. Think of headings as a Table of Contents.

- Heading 1 is like a page title.
- Heading 2 usually indicates a main content section within the page.
- Heading 3 is for subheadings related to the heading 2 sections.
- Headings 4 through 6 are rarely needed. If you think you need subheadings deeper than 4, it usually means you have too much content on the page. Consider breaking up the content into multiple pages.
- Do not format text in bold instead of formatting a heading. Most screen readers do not announce when text is bold.

Write Meaningful Link Text

Write link text that can be understood if not contained in a paragraph or sentence.

- Screen reader users can navigate from link to link instead of listening to the whole page.
- When possible, avoid using generic statements like “more,” “read more,” and “learn more.” Add an `aria-label` to the `<a>` tag to add more description to generic link text.
- Make a list of all the links on the webpage and read them. Does everything make sense?

Don't Rely on Color, Size, Shape, or Location to Convey Meaning

A screen reader can't tell where content is placed on a page, its color, or its shape. Don't use phrases like: “click the image above,” “see the image on the right,” “click the round button,” or “click the red button.”

Don't Use “Autoplay” with Audio or Video

When a video or mp3 plays automatically, it interferes with the screen reader. This makes it difficult for the listener to navigate the page and find the pause/stop button because they hear both simultaneously.

Keep Tables Simple

Tables are for tabular data and for organizing text into related categories.

- Use as few columns and rows as possible.
- Break larger tables into smaller tables.
- Don't place images in a table.
- If content is not tabular data, use the Column Component instead.
- Don't merge table cells. You can merge header cells sparingly.

Add column or row headers to tables.

Column and row headers help all users understand how content is organized in a table.

- The first row or column of a table must be Header Cells.
- Do not use header cells as a decoration for individual cells.

Add a Table Caption.

A Table caption is like a title for the table. It lets the screen reader assign a specific title to a particular table. This way, if there is more than one table on a page, they each have a unique title.

Add Transcripts or Captions

Users with hearing impairments need transcripts (text version) or captions (text placed in the video) to access audio and video content.

Pre-recorded audio and video:

- **Audio:** Provide a transcript. Use an HTML page.
- **Video:** Use captions; Vimeo and YouTube have captioning. Provide a transcript. Use an HTML page.

Creating a transcript:

- If you start with a script, use that as the basis of your transcript.
- If the recording is of a live event or a webinar, you must work with your video vendor to create transcripts from the recordings.

Don't Use Custom CSS or HTML code

The ACS Website and CQ5 components have been designed to be web accessible. Custom code can conflict with the default code and break the accessibility.

More Web Accessibility Resources

- WebAim (Web Accessibility in Mind) <http://www.webaim.org/>
- WAI (Web Accessibility Initiative) <http://www.w3.org/WAI>