Accessibility Quick Checks

This resource is designed to help you run a ‘first pass’ at website accessibility based on the requirements of WCAG2.1 Level AA and ETSI EN 301 549 accessibility standards. It does not cover all the accessibility success criteria for these standards, but it enables you to undertake some checks with minimal accessibility auditing tools and experience.

We recommend that you record your results on a risk scale, where

**Low risk** = this would indicate a likely pass as you are confident that your checks you have performed show no issues and that this would be case across the whole site

**Medium risk** = this would indicate that further investigations are required to establish as:

* you are not sure that the results you have found are representative of the while site
* you are not sure of the accuracy of your checks
* the issues you’ve found would cause barriers for some users, but they would not stop them using the site

**High risk** = this would indicate that you believe the site would fail this accessibility check

Each test includes a link to the W3C WAI guidance for undertaking a similar accessibility check. The tests are presented here in the order they would be found in the WCAG 2.1 Level AA guidelines. The checklist at the end of the document provides a summary of the checks in an order that is useful to use when checking a few pages of a website.

## Purpose of this document

This document is an attempt to summarise a range of guidance from WCAG, Government Digital Services, Web2Access so that organisations can begin to understand what barriers disabled users may experience when using their digital estate. The authors have used their experience of common issues and barriers in UK education to help organisations translate and apply technical standards across typical digital systems in education.

While these checks can provide helpful information about the accessibility of a website, it is not intended to replace an accessibility audit and these tests on their own are not sufficient to evaluate whether a website complies with web accessibility standards.

## Perceivable

### Image alternatives

Text alternatives are available for images

* Does each decorative image have a null alt text or aria-hidden?
* Is the alt text on other images meaningful?

[Testing for image text](https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/#images)

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

### Alternative media

Audio or video should have text alternatives. This may include captions or transcript or text description of the key points and can be operated without a mouse.

[Multimedia testing](https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/#media)

Do videos have:

* Transcript
* Captions
* Audio descriptions

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

### Page Structure

The heading structure creates logical and effective navigation. Some disabled people rely on a clear and consistent heading structure to help navigate long pages using assistive technologies. [Testing for headings.](https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/#headings)

Use [Headings Map for Chrome](https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/headingsmap/flbjommegcjonpdmenkdiocclhjacmbi) or [Headings Map for Firefox](https://addons.mozilla.org/en-GB/firefox/addon/headingsmap/?src=search) or Outline in [WAVE](https://abilitynet900-my.sharepoint.com/personal/abi_james_abilitynet_org_uk/Documents/Client-Training/Online%20Training/wave.webaim.org) to check

* Is the heading structure logical and meaningful?

It is also useful to check that page retains a consistent structure and is understandable when Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) is turned off. If content disappears or is in the wrong order when CSS is turned off this will indicate potential issues.

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
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| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

### Forms field labels

Form fields should be associated with their labelled. A quick check on simple form fields is to click on a form field name in a desktop browser. The input field will receive focus if the label is associated it. For more complicated form fields and hidden labels use the [WAVE](https://abilitynet900-my.sharepoint.com/personal/abi_james_abilitynet_org_uk/Documents/Client-Training/Online%20Training/wave.webaim.org) checker.
[Testing for forms.](https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/#forms)

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

### Colour contrast and meaning

Check that colour contrasts are adequate and colour not used for meaning. A colour contrast ratio of 4.5:1 is required for text content, 3:1 for large text or non-text graphical controls. This should be checking using:

* Code inspector in browsers
* [WAVE](https://abilitynet900-my.sharepoint.com/personal/abi_james_abilitynet_org_uk/Documents/Client-Training/Online%20Training/wave.webaim.org) accessibility checker
* [Paciello Group Colour Contrast Analyser](https://developer.paciellogroup.com/resources/contrastanalyser/)

Pages should also be checked to see if colour has been used as the only means of conveying information (e.g. for highlighting errors).

[Testing for colour contrast.](https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/#contrast)

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

### Reflow and magnification

Check that page works correctly when zoomed in. This includes:

* Content of the page can be zoomed to 300% using the browser zoom controls (Ctrl +) and retain all content and functionality
* Text can be resized up to 200%.
* Text reflows when magnified up to 400% (except tables).

[Testing for resize and reflow.](https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/#resize)

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

## Operable

### Keyboard operable

All interactive content should be operable without a mouse. You should be able to reach everything (including drop-down menu options etc) using the Tab key and up/down arrows instead of a mouse. Spacebar and/or Enter keys should be able to activate any buttons, links or controls. It should be possible to enter and exit all components via the keyboard (no keyboard trap) and the order should be logical.

Are there ways that keyboard access can be more efficient / effective? Are users forced to tab through components such as social media feeds or news feeds?

[Testing for keyboard.](https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/#interaction)

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

### Focus is visible

When you use the tab key to move through a page you can see where you are on the page. The focus indicator should either have sufficient contrast that it is clearly visible or it should be the browser default focus indicator.

[Testing for keyboard.](https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/#interaction)

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

### Pause or stop

Any content on a page that moves or auto-plays for more than 5 seconds can be paused, stopped or hidden. This control must be keyboard accessible.

If there are audio play automatically on a webpage for more than 3 seconds, then it should be possible to pause/stop it or to alter the audio volume independently of the device’s audio control (e.g. a mute button).

No content flashes more than 3 times per second.

[Testing moving content.](https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/#moving)

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
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| Confidence in check: |

### Page titles

Pages have titles that describe their purpose and are unique. Titles are usually displayed in the browser tab. Check that there is a title that adequately and briefly describes the content of the page. Check that the title is different from other pages on the website, and adequately distinguishes the page from other web pages.

[Testing for page titles.](https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/#title)

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
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| Confidence in check: |

### Skip links

Skip links are available to bypass repeated content if it appears on each page (e.g. navigation menus. Test them by refreshing the page and using the Tab button to navigate. Does a pop-up Skip link message appear before you get to any menus? Does the link move you to the beginning of the main content on the page?

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

### Link text

Link text should be meaningful. Look for hyperlinks on a page. Are they unique and meaningful within content (e.g. *contact us*) or repetitive and unenlightening (e.g. *Here* or *Click here*)?

[Advice on accessible hyperlinks](https://webaim.org/techniques/hypertext/)

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
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| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

### Alternate navigation

There is more than one way of getting to any web page. This could be a site map, menus, search box etc.

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
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| Confidence in check: |

## Predictable

### Consistent navigation

Does each part of your web site have the same kind of menu structure?

Or does the user experience different navigation conventions on different parts of the website?

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
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| Confidence in check: |

### Consistent icons and labelling

Are icons and visual cues for navigation used consistently in a page and across the sites? Ideally icons should have text labels that are displayed on screen. Any icons without text labels need to have a programmatic label that can be accessed by screen readers. This may be shown in the [WAVE](http://wave.webaim.org) checker.

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
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| Confidence in check: |

### Error messages

When you do something wrong (like put your name in an email field of a form) do you get a helpful error message that helps you correct the mistake?

Check if the error message is associated with the form field so that screen-reader users can know that there is an error on a field. This can be checked by using the WAVE accessibility checker on a form with an error. The message should be associated with the field using an aria-describedby tag.

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

### Accessibility Help

Is information about the accessibility of the site (e.g. the accessibility statement) easily accessed on every page? Does the accessibility help provide information on:

* Known accessibility issues
* Who to contact if accessibility issues are encountered?

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

### Accessible documentation

Are any help and support pages accessible and do they provide information on accessibility features and compatibility with assistive technologies?

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| **Risk estimate:** Low / Medium / High |
| Comments: |
| Who might be affected: |
| Who can fix it: |
| Confidence in check: |

## What next?

If your results show many medium or any high risk issues, consider:

* Undertaking an accessibility review using assistive technologies and accessibility code inspection tools to get further information on the issues.
* Getting an objective external accessibility audit in order to establish known accessibility issues and how to address them.
* Getting help with writing an accessibility statement and roadmap.

## Checklist

The following table lists the tests in an order we recommend for efficient workflow.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Test | Accessibility standard | Type of page | Result |
| Skip links | WCAG2.1 – 2.4.1 | Landing page | Low / Medium / High |
| Alternative navigation | WCAG2.1 – 2.4.5 | Landing page | Low / Medium / High |
| Accessibility Help | EN 301 549 12.1 & accessibility statement | Landing page | Low / Medium / High |
| Focus is visible | WCAG2.1 – 2.4.7 | Content page | Low / Medium / High |
| Keyboard operable | WCAG2.1 – 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.4.3 | Content page | Low / Medium / High |
| Page structure | WCAG2.1 – 1.3.1, 2.4.6  | Content page | Low / Medium / High |
| Reflow and magnification | WCAG2.1 – 1.4.4, 1.4.5, 1.4.10 | Content page | Low / Medium / High |
| Page titles | WCAG2.1 – 2.4.2 | Content page | Low / Medium / High |
| Consistent navigation | WCAG2.1 – 3.2.3 | Content page | Low / Medium / High |
| Consistent icons and labelling | WCAG2.1 – 1.3.1, 3.2.4, 4.1.2 | Content page | Low / Medium / High |
| Image alternatives | WCAG2.1 – 1.1.1 | Content page | Low / Medium / High |
| Link text | WCAG2.1 – 2.4.4 | Content page | Low / Medium / High |
| Colour contrast and meaning | WCAG2.1 – 1.4.1, 1.4.3, 1.4.11 | Content page | Low / Medium / High |
| Form field labels | WCAG2.1 – 1.3.1, 3.3.2 | Page containing a validated form | Low / Medium / High |
| Error messages | WCAG2.1 – 3.3.1, 3.3.2 | Page containing a validated form | Low / Medium / High |
| Alternative media | WCAG2.1 – 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.5 | Page containing videos and/or audio | Low / Medium / High |
| Pause or stop  | WCAG2.1 – 1.4.2, 2.2.2 | Page containing videos or moving content | Low / Medium / High |
| Accessible documentation | EN 301 549 12.1 | Help pages | Low / Medium / High |

## About this document

This document was written by Alistair McNaught and Abi James to help organisations undertake simple accessibility evaluations as a resource for the Further Higher Education Digital Accessibility Working Group (FHEDAWG). It was initially published on <https://www.lexdis.org.uk/digital-accessibility/> in September 2019.

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