

Summary of accessibility requirements

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For interaction designers and visual designers

- Provide descriptors (“ALT tags”, actually ALT and TITLE properties) for images, links and other page elements that need explanatory text in order to be understood
- Provide audio descriptions, transcripts, and captioning for video or transcripts for audio.
- Specify a title for the page and headers for the different sections of the page
- Make sure color is not used as the only means of conveying information (e.g. “required fields are marked in green”)
- Make sure the same images are used consistently throughout the system for controls, status indicators and other UI elements
- *Bonus points*: make sure the text and background color have enough contrast

For Web developers

- Make sure all HTML and CSS is valid and JavaScript is error-free; give every page element a unique ID (i.e., no duplicate IDs).
- Use correct HTML markup, e.g. hierarchically ordered header tags (<h1>, <h2> etc) for headers; list tags (, ,) for lists; and table markup (<table>, <tr>, <td> etc) for tabular data.
- Use HTML tables only for tabular data, not for layout.
- Define table header rows using <thead> and <th scope="col"> tags.
- In forms, use <label> tags to designate which label belongs to which form element
- Make sure that the HTML content is in a logical order (so the page still makes sense when you take the CSS away) and page elements receive keyboard focus in a logical order
- The basic HTML structure should be the same on every page, e.g. first the header, then the navigation menus, then filter options, then the content, then the footer
- Make sure the page has a title (<title> property) and the language of the page has been specified (e.g. <html lang="en">)
- Give users a way to skip the page header and navigation menus and go straight to the content, through a (hidden) “skip to content” or “skip over menus” link at the top of the page
- Preferably, display non-functional and non-meaningful images (e.g. icons and backgrounds) using CSS; do not show them directly in the HTML. Show only images like photos, charts and illustrations in the HTML, using the tag.
- Provide images in the HTML code (tags) with an alt property, even if it is an empty string (alt="")
- Make sure users can enlarge the text using their browser. In the CSS, use em or rem for font sizes rather than px. Define the font size for the body tag in %.
- Make sure the page is completely keyboard-accessible. Javascript event handlers should only be applied to elements that can receive keyboard focus (e.g. <a> and form elements, but not <div>)
- Avoid using Java applets and plug-ins such as Flash; when you do use a plug-in, make sure it is does not break accessibility (e.g., it is keyboard-accessible and has text equivalents for visual content)