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Section 508 Checks for Websites and Applications

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These are some basic checks that developers can do while developing an application or software. Keep in mind these tips do not address every way to make websites and web-based applications Section 508 conformant. Start early and understand how choices affect Section 508.

Keyboard access

- All elements can be accessed with a keyboard. A user can tab through everything including on-hover pop-ups.
- No elements trap keyboard access. A user can tab to and away from all elements.
- If keystroke timing is critical to the action, there is an alternate method to complete the task not requiring timing.
- Non-standard keystrokes are documented, readily available, and do not interfere with assistive technology or the native program keystrokes.

Reading order

- Tab order is in logical reading order.

Focus

- Visual focus is always provided on the correct element.
- When a component receives focus, there is no unexpected change of context, e.g., opening in a new window, automatically submitting a form.
- Navigation through the page is in logical order.
- When hidden content is revealed, the focus is moved to that content immediately or in one keystroke e.g., accordions, upload dialogs, drop down boxes.
- The focus order returns to that element or the next logical element after exiting hidden content.

Repetitive Content

- Provide a link to skip repetitive navigation/links to go directly to the content.
- Present navigational mechanisms consistently.
- Components that perform the same function across a website are consistently labeled.

Non-text content

- Images have equivalent alt text. Use “Mark as decorative,” null alt text (“”), or otherwise set the image not to read if alt text is not applicable.
- Alt text does not repeat surrounding content.



Text

- Text is rendered as text unless essential to a graphic, e.g., logo or flow chart.

Tables

- All tables are formatted correctly, no images of tables.
- All column and row headers are identified using scope or headers/id.
- Tables are not used for layout.
- See [Word](#) and [PDF](#) documentation for more discussion on tables.

Structure

- Provide document structure/landmarks. Use semantically correct markup/styles.
- Visual headings are tagged as headings. They are used in hierarchal order to give structure to the document, e.g., matches a table of contents.
- All content is semantically correct, e.g., lists are proper lists, one paragraph is tagged/styled in a single paragraph.
- Default language is set to the correct language.
- Language of parts is set as needed on specific elements.
- Provide descriptive, unique page titles.
- Avoid frames.

Color contrast

- Text on a background meets minimum color contrast, including images of significant text, e.g., an infographic.

Use of Color

- Confirm color alone does not convey information.
- **Text:** If changing the font color or the background for a reason, e.g., a color-coded table, the green text are updates, see the highlighted information, there needs to be another way to uniquely, visually convey this information. This includes links.
- **Graphs/Charts:** If document has charts or graphs, ensure that each line or segment has a non-color visual indicator. For line graphs, this can be a unique marker, line style, or the category label pointing to the line. For charts, this can be a unique pattern on each segment or the category label of each segment near the segment. Note: putting the values of a point on a line or a segment does not satisfy this criterion.
- **Links:** Links and only links should be underlined. If not, ensure the links pass minimum contrast and have another visual indicator.

Adjustable Time

- Confirm any content with time limits can be turned off, adjusted, or extended.
- Does not include real-time events, e.g., auction; when timing is essential, e.g., timed exam; or where time limited is greater than 20 hours.



Multiple ways

- At least two methods are available to locate content. This criterion does not apply to content such as a confirmation page, search results, content that is a step in the process, or a page that is not part of a larger website.

CSS

- Confirm any meaningful content inserted using the CSS, e.g., pseudo `::before` and `::after`, is available in another way.
- Content retains logical order when CSS positioning is not used.

Resizing

- Text is resizable to 200% and readable.

Flashing

- No content flashes, blinks, strobes, etc.

Links

- Links do not open in new tabs or windows.
- Linked words are unique and descriptive of the link destination. Avoid using generic links such as 'click here'.

Dynamic Content

- Discussion on dynamic content is beyond the scope of this documentation.

Forms

- See "[Creating Section 508 Conformant Forms.](#)"

Multimedia

- See [Multimedia documentation.](#)