Top 8 Tips for Achieving ADA Compliance and Create Healthy Designed Websites

The first step to ensuring compliance is to evaluate your website using the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

The criteria are categorized according to three levels, providing successively greater degrees of accessibility:

1. Level A (minimum) - The most basic web accessibility features. Sets a minimum level of accessibility, but does not generally achieve broad accessibility for many situations.

2. Level AA (mid-range) - Deals with the biggest and most common barriers for disabled users.

3. Level AAA (highest) - The highest level of web accessibility. It is often not possible to satisfy all Level AAA success criteria for some content types.

Websites must be optimized to work in conjunction with assistive technology.

A poorly designed website can create barriers for disabled citizens, limiting, or completely inhibiting, their ability to get all available information from your website.

Besides, local businesses must understand that a website serves as the gateway to their business. Understand that accessibility concern:

- Impacts 19% of your citizens
- Increases site traffic
- Improves search engine optimization (SEO)
- Is a legal best practice

Top 8 Tips for Achieving ADA Compliance and Create Healthy Designed Websites

1. Headings and Titles

- Ensure all content uses relevant headers.
- Title all pages so that they relate to the page's content
- Use user-facing wording rather than industry jargon

2. Text and Font

- Bold and italic text
- Use bulleted lists
- Feature areas or modules in your CMS
- Have a high-contrast color scheme

Avoid dense paragraphs of text

3. Visuals

- Always include alternative (alt) text
- Pay attention to the descriptive details such as the non-image visual
- All visuals need alt text, not just photos
- Any visual element that conveys a message should have alt text

4. Color

- Use contrasting colors to differentiate text from the background for colorblind users.
- Color cannot be the only means to convey information.
- Color contrast ratio: All text must have a color contrast ratio of 4.5:1 against its background.

5. Navigation

- Websites should be navigable by both keyboard and keyboard equivalents
- Keep information in a consistent location
- If a user cannot find it he or she will assume it doesn't exist
- Screen readers move from top to bottom

6. Don't Use PDFs

- Image-based formats are challenging to the visually impaired because they cannot be read by screen readers or text enlargement programs.

7. Enhance Your Multi-Media

- Make images and video more accessible by adding audio descriptions to images, including the narration of changes in setting, gesturing, and other details. In addition, add text captions for the deaf.

8. Include "Skip Navigation"

- People using screen readers can get directly to the content

Let's break it down further into Level A and Level AA compliance to determine if your website currently meets the accessibility requirements.

Level A - ADA Compliance Checklist

- Images have alternative text that can be read by screen reader software
- Video content includes captions
- Video or audio-only content is accompanied by a text transcript or description
- Links that are provided to media players are required to view content
- Headings are presented in a logical order
- Make sure "b" and "i" tags are replaced with "strong" and "em"
- There are not empty links or heading tags
- Presentation does not rely solely on color
- Automatically-played audio does not occur and can be stopped
- The keyboard can be used to navigate the site
- A keyboard can be used to navigate the site
- Keyboard focus is never stuck on one particular page elements
- Time limits provide notifications to the user
- Automatically scrolling or blinking content can be stopped
- No strobe effects or rapidly flashing colors occur on the site
- Skip navigation functionality allows keyboard users to access content quickly
- Page titles clearly and succinctly describe the page content
- Buttons and links are clearly and logically named
- The language of each page is identified in code
- Elements receiving focus do not change the content in a substantial way
- Invalid form input is identified to the user
- Forms have labels and legends that can be read by screen reader software
- There are no major validation errors

Level AA - ADA Compliance Checklist

- Live video or audio content includes captions
- Contrast ratio between text and page backgrounds is at least 4.5-to-1
- Text on pages can be resized to 200% while still maintaining form
- Images are not used where text can achieve the same purpose
- Pages on the site can be accessed in multiple ways
- Keyboard focus is visible and clear
- The language of content is identified in code with any language changes
- Menus and buttons are used consistently regardless of the user's location in the site
- Users are given suggestions on how to solve input errors
- An error prevention technique is used whenever the user is entering sensitive data
- Underlined text that does not provide a link is removed
- Redundant links on the same page are eliminated or minimized