

ADA & Section 508 Compliance

Why Is This Important?

What is website accessibility?

What is Section 508?

Why is it important?

Why should I care about it?

Have you ever asked yourself these questions? I know that I have, many times actually. There is so much information available now about website accessibility, but the *BIG* question is "Why is it important?"

Let us begin with some basics, shall we?

Website accessibility (def.) – Developing and maintaining websites that meet the needs of all users. This may include, but not limited to, people with special abilities; those with limited sight or hearing who may need to use adaptive web devices; or assisting the aging population.

Section 508 (def.) – It is required by law! Section 508 is an amendment to the US Rehabilitation Act requiring federal agencies to make their information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Information technology includes websites, documents, webinars, just to name a few. For the complete list, please refer to the Essential Accessibility Website.

Best Practices

Headlines

- **Headline 1 (H1)** - Must be the first text item on the page
- **One only, please** - There should only be *one* H1 on each page
- **Hierarchy** - Follow the outline concept to list the headlines on each page. For example, H1, then H2, H3, then H2, H3, etc.
- **Skipping Headlines** - Do not skip! Do not go from an H1 to H3 or H2 to H4

Images

- **Alt Text** - Use alt text to describe the image(s)
- **Text in Image** - Do not use! Images with text are still considered to be images and are *not* readable or accessible to adaptive web devices

Fonts & Styling

- **Strong** - Use the code for strong. Not bold or "b"
- **Emphasis** - Use code for emphasis. Not italics or "i"
- **Underline** - *Do not use!* Underline is used for hyperlinks

Please contact Laura Ramirez at lramirez@nmsu.edu or (575) 646-5938 for any additional questions.

- **Font Size & Color** - Do not change the font size or color. A color font is typically used to depict hyperlinks as the crimson color is used for NMSU links. The change in font may confuse the reader or make it harder to see
- **Capitals** - Refrain from using all capital letters to stress importance. Use strong or emphasis styling instead.

Hyperlinks

- **Unique** - Make links unique and descriptive, but not too long
- **Generic** - Do not use words like click here, learn more, or download to indicate a hyperlink
- **Entire URL** - Do not use the entire URL for a link. A screen reader device will read the entire link to a person with a sight impairment
- **Type** - Include the type of link used, if not a link to a webpage. For example, a readable file may have (PDF) at the end of the link or (video) to distinguish what type of link it is

Resources

There are many resources available to learn more about ADA Compliance. Below please find only a small listing to get you started.

- **Section 508: What It Covers and How To Comply – Level Access Website**
 - <https://www.levelaccess.com/blog/508-compliance>
- **Website Accessibility Under Title II of the ADA - ADA Government Website**
 - <https://archive.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap5toolkit.htm>
- **Introduction to Web Accessibility - Henry, Shawn L - WC3 Website**
 - <https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-intro/>
- **Website Accessibility Top 10 - Site Improve Website**
 - <https://siteimprove.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/80000448004--en-webinar-website-accessibility-top-10>
- **Accessibility Roadmap - Site Improve Website**
 - <https://siteimprove.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/80000447976--en-webinar-accessibility-roadmap>
- **Accessibility Handbook - Monsido Website**
 - https://assets.monsido.com/images/pdf/2021/The_Monsido_Web_Accessibility_Handbook.pdf
- **Legal Landscape of Web Accessibility - Monsido Website**
 - <https://monsido.com/blog/web-accessibility-compliance>
- **Accessibility Training Videos - Section508.gov Website**
 - <https://www.section508.gov/training-home/#Trainingvideos>
- **Web Accessibility Tutorials - W3.org Website**
 - <https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/>

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