Understanding Accessibility in Web Design

This guide offers webmasters a concise overview of essential accessibility practices to help make websites usable for everyone.

Choose a topic and start learning!

01

What is Accessibility?

An introduction to accessibility in website, types of impairments & disabilities, and assistive technologies.

02

The Basics of Auditing a Site

Learn about the generalities of the WCAG Level A guidelines and walkthrough applied examples in WordPress.

03

Going for the Extra Mile

Improve your WCAG Level to AA & AAA and make your website more accessible and inclusive.

04

Useful Tools & Resources

Recommended tools for checking accessibility issues, simulating user profiles, and enriching web designs.

05

Do’s & Don’ts in Web Design

Examples of what to avoid and how to handle it.

06

Glossary

A handy list of web slang and key accessibility terms. Perfect for speaking the same language as developers and designers.

01

What is Accessibility?

An introduction of what accessibility in website is, the type of impairments and disabilities and assistive technologies.

Start reading

Introduction

Accessibility is the practice of designing digital content, products, and services that can be used by everyone, including people with disabilities. It involves removing barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing digital content. Accessibility is also considered an approach that values the full range of human diversity. Making things accessible ensures that individuals, regardless of their abilities, can use digital technology.

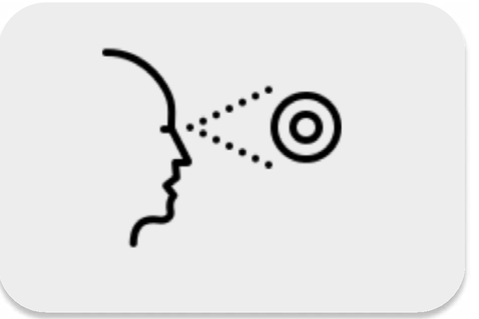
The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are a set of technical standards and guidelines that explain how to make web content more accessible. WCAG aims to provide a single, common, global standard for web accessibility. They are developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Following WCAG helps web content comply with legal mandates like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). WCAG is organized by four main principles: perception, operability, understandability, robustness.

WCAG four main principles

Perceivable: Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.

Operable: User interface components and navigation must be functional for users in ways they can operate.

Understandable: Information and user interface operation must be understandable.



Robust: Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of users and assistive technologies.

Types of Disabilities

There are three primary categories of disabilities: permanent, temporary, and situational.

Permanent disabilities encompass long-term conditions like blindness, deafness, or motor impairments that consistently affect an individual's abilities.

Temporary disabilities are those experienced for a limited duration, such as an eye injury, a broken wrist, or the cognitive effects of recovering from surgery.

Situational disabilities arise from specific environmental contexts, like the glare of sunlight making a screen unreadable, the noise of a crowded place hindering hearing, or having wet hands restricting device interaction.

Although the aforementioned difficulties differ from each other in many ways, they all pose a limitation for people using websites and can make their lives more difficult.

Types of Conditions

Vision impairment which refers to people who are blind or who have partial vision. Our sense of sight allows us to experience the world around us, including its diverse colors, forms, and arrangements. Across the WHO European Region, an estimated 90 million people live with vision impairment or blindness.

Hearing impairment referring to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Our ability to hear allows us to experience the sounds of our environment, notably the voices of those we communicate with. Several factors contribute to these conditions, such as infections during pregnancy, difficult births, middle ear infections, noise exposure, medications harmful to hearing, and the natural effects of aging.

Types of conditions

Cognitive conditions that include:

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) which can affect the way information is understood and categorised in the brain.
- Mental health conditions - a term for a group of illnesses related to the mind or brain that can affect your level of concentration.
- ADHD - is a neurodevelopmental condition marked by persistent patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity.
- Dyslexia - an unexpected and ongoing difficulty with acquiring and using written language. It represents a difference in how language is processed cognitively. Individuals with dyslexia may find reading and spelling challenging, even if they have the capacity to learn.
- Intellectual disability resulting in cognitive limitations that can impact people's’ lives on many levels.

Types of Conditions

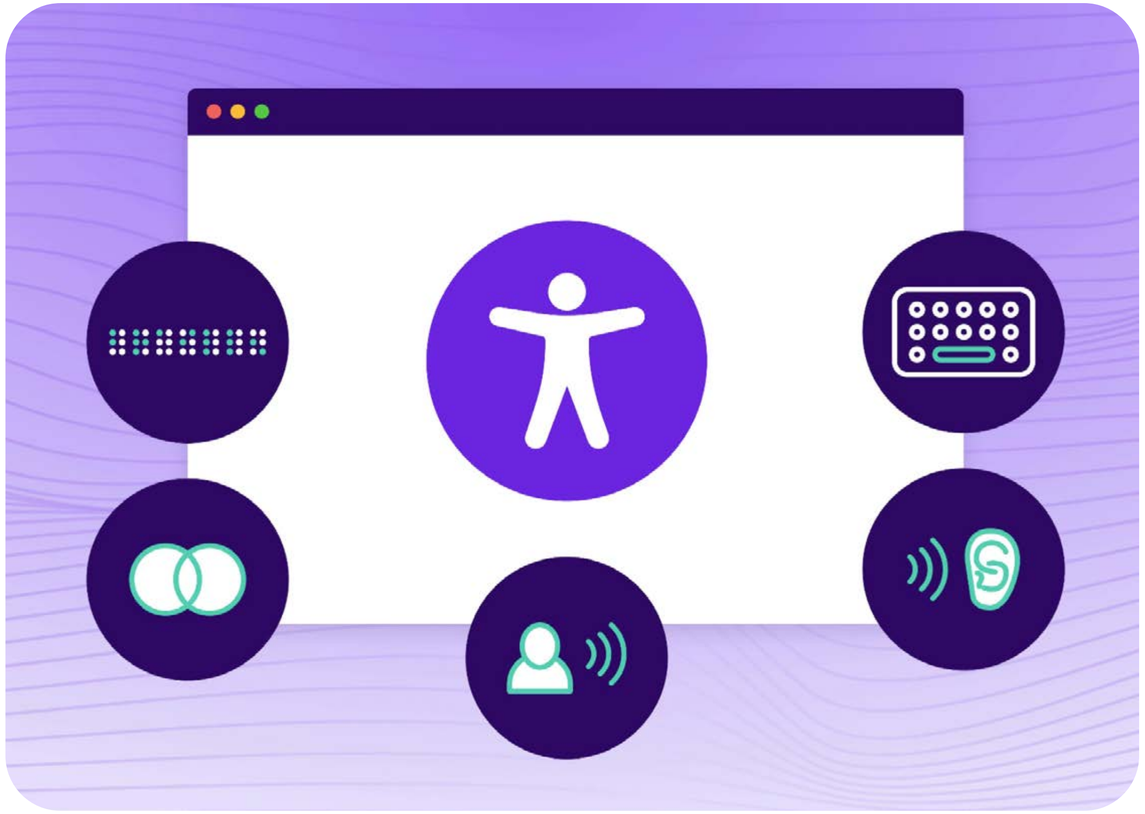
Physical conditions including limitations to physical functions such as mobility, dexterity, or stamina They are diverse, with varied individual experiences, and can be permanent or temporary, present from birth or acquired later.

What is assistive technology?

Assistive technology refers to any item, piece of equipment, or system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. It includes a wide range of tools and solutions that help people overcome barriers related to mobility, communication, vision, hearing, and cognition.

Examples include screen readers like VoiceOver for blind or visually impaired users, Braille keyboards that enable tactile reading and writing, and mouse pad alternatives for individuals with limited motor function.

These technologies are essential for enabling access to education, employment, and full participation in society, especially in digital environments where inclusive design is crucial .



VoiceOver is Apple’s screen reader that speaks screen content aloud. It lets blind users operate devices like the iPhone or iPad using gestures or a keyboard. It’s intuitive and supports user independence.

Braille keyboards allow blind users to type using six or eight keys that represent Braille dots. Modern designs using Raspberry Pi or Arduino are affordable, user-friendly, and often include voice feedback. These devices aim to improve access to education and communication for visually impaired individuals.

Why is this important in web design?

Web accessibility ensures that people with disabilities can perceive, navigate, and interact with online content independently. Accessibility is fundamental to digital equality — it removes barriers for users who are blind, deaf, or have motor or cognitive impairments.

Accessible design includes practices like providing text alternatives for images, ensuring keyboard navigation, using clear language, and supporting screen readers. Without such measures, many users are excluded from essential services, education, and participation in society.

Accessibility is not optional — it is a core principle of inclusive design that respects human diversity and rights.

Next Topic

The Basics of Auditing a Site

02

The Basics of Auditing a Site

Learn about the generalities of the WCAG Level A guidelines and walkthrough applied examples in WordPress.

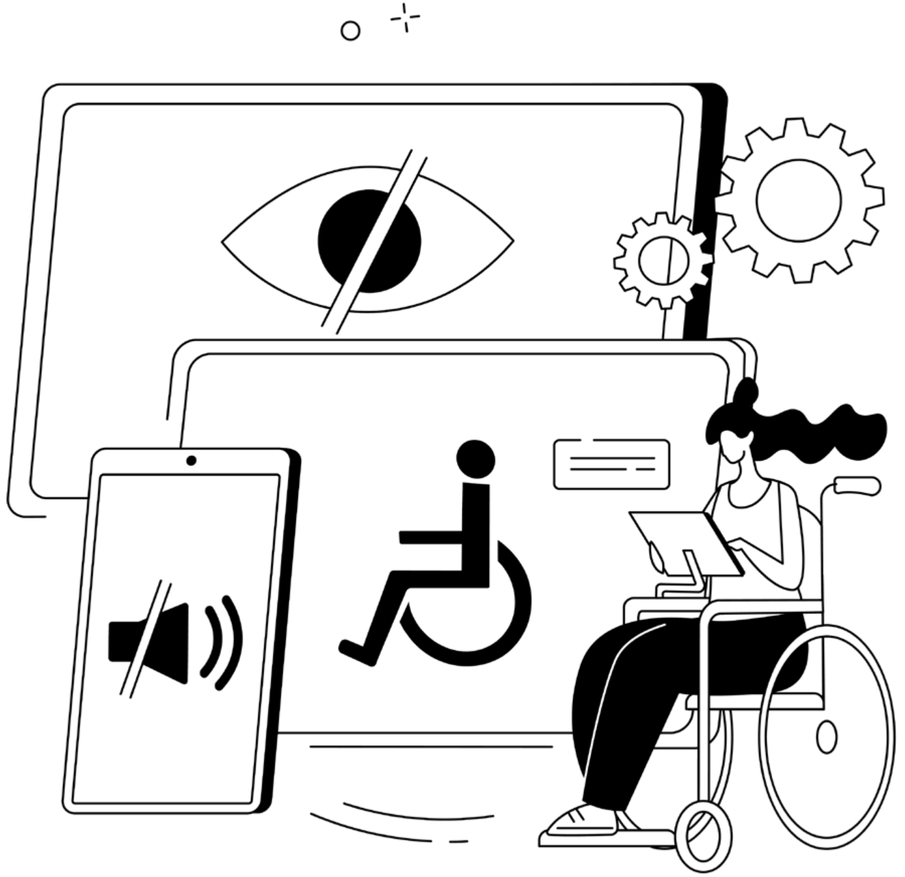
Start reading

The Basics of Auditing a site

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 provide recommendations to improve web accessibility for people with various disabilities, including visual, auditory, motor, speech, and cognitive impairments, though they may not meet all individual needs.

All WCAG 2 success criteria are written as testable criteria for objectively determining if content satisfies them. Testing the success criteria would involve a combination of automated testing and human evaluation. The content should be tested by those who understand how people with different types of disabilities use the web.

There are five requirements that must be met in order for content to be classified as 'conforming' to WCAG 2. This section provides brief notes on those requirements. This section will be expanded over time to address questions that may arise or to provide new examples of ways to meet the different conformance requirements.



Understanding Requirement 1

- For **Level A** conformance (the minimum level of conformance), the web page satisfies all the Level A success criteria, or a conforming alternate version is provided.
- For **Level AA** conformance, the web page satisfies all the Level A and Level AA success criteria, or a Level AA conforming alternate version is provided.
- For **Level AAA** conformance, the web page satisfies all the Level A, Level AA and Level AAA success criteria, or a Level AAA conforming alternate version is provided.

Level A

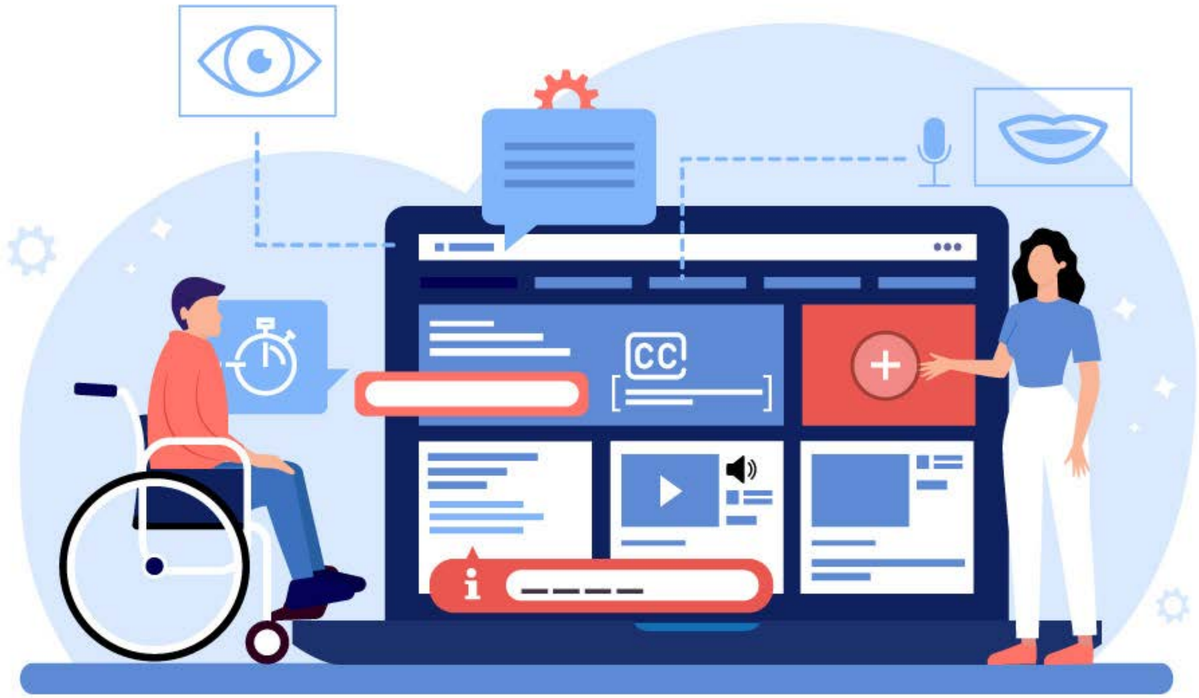
Is a must have

Level AA

Is a should have

Level AAA

Is good to have

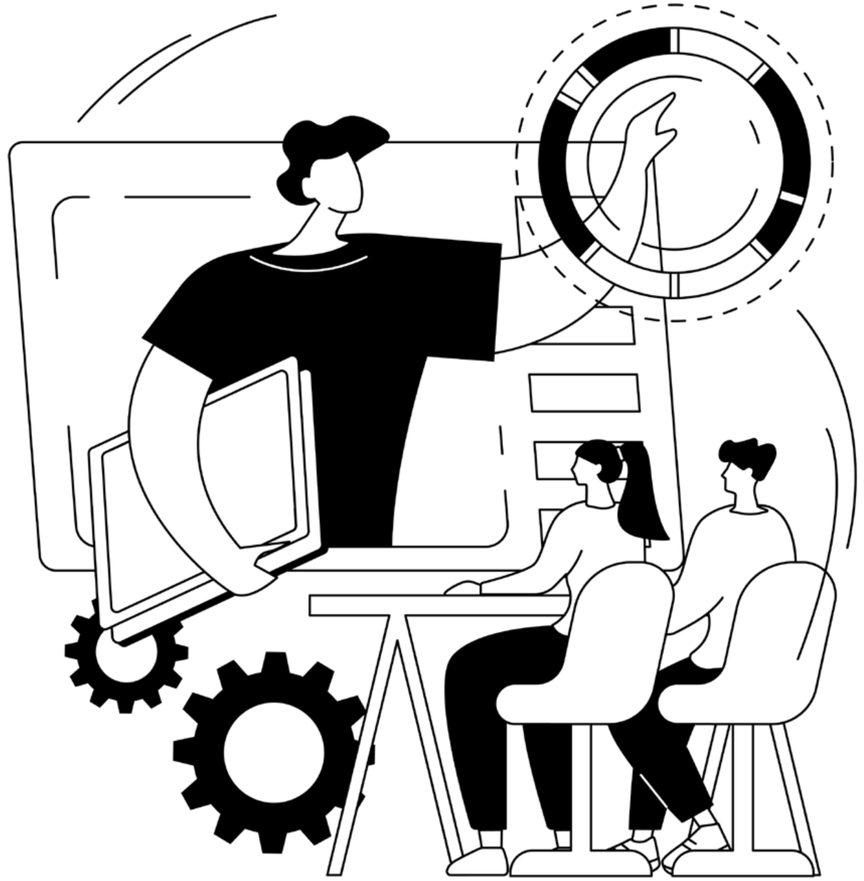


Understanding Requirement 2

Full pages: Conformance (and conformance level) is for full web page(s) only, and cannot be achieved if part of a web page is excluded.

Understanding Requirement 3

Complete processes: When a web page is one of a series of web pages presenting a process (i.e., a sequence of steps that need to be completed in order to accomplish an activity), all web pages in the process conform at the specified level or better. (Conformance is not possible at a particular level if any page in the process does not conform at that level or better).



Understanding Requirement 4

Only Accessibility-Supported Ways of Using Technologies:
Only accessibility-supported ways of using technologies are relied upon to satisfy the success criteria. Any information or functionality that is provided in a way that is not accessibility supported is also available in a way that is accessibility supported.

Understanding Requirement 5

Non-Interference: If technologies are used in a way that is not accessibility supported, or if they are used in a non-conforming way, then they do not block the ability of users to access the rest of the page. In addition, the web page as a whole continues to meet the conformance requirements under each of the following conditions:

1. **When any technology that is not relied upon is turned on in a user agent.**
2. **When any technology that is not relied upon is turned off in a user agent.**
3. **When any technology that is not relied upon is not supported by a user agent.**

In addition, the following success criteria apply to all content on the page, including content that is not otherwise relied upon to meet conformance, because failure to meet them could interfere with any use of the page:

1.4.2 - Audio Control.

2.1.2 - No Keyboard Trap.

2.3.1 - Three Flashes or Below Threshold.

2.2.2 - Pause, Stop, Hide.

Font Use

Best practices include using sans-serif fonts like Arial or Verdana for body text and ensuring a minimum font size of 12 points (16 pixels). Additionally, users should be able to resize text up to 200% without losing content or functionality.

Sans-Serif Preference:

Sans-serif fonts are generally considered easier to read, especially for individuals with visual impairments or dyslexia.

Minimum Font Size:

While not a strict rule, a minimum font size of 12 points (16 pixels) is a common guideline for body text.

Text Resizing:

Websites should allow users to resize text up to 200% without losing content or functionality.

Text Spacing:

Proper line height (leading), paragraph spacing, letter spacing, and word spacing contribute to readability.

Widely Available Fonts:

Using common, web-safe fonts like Arial, Verdana, or Tahoma increases the likelihood that users' devices will display the text correctly.

Contrast:

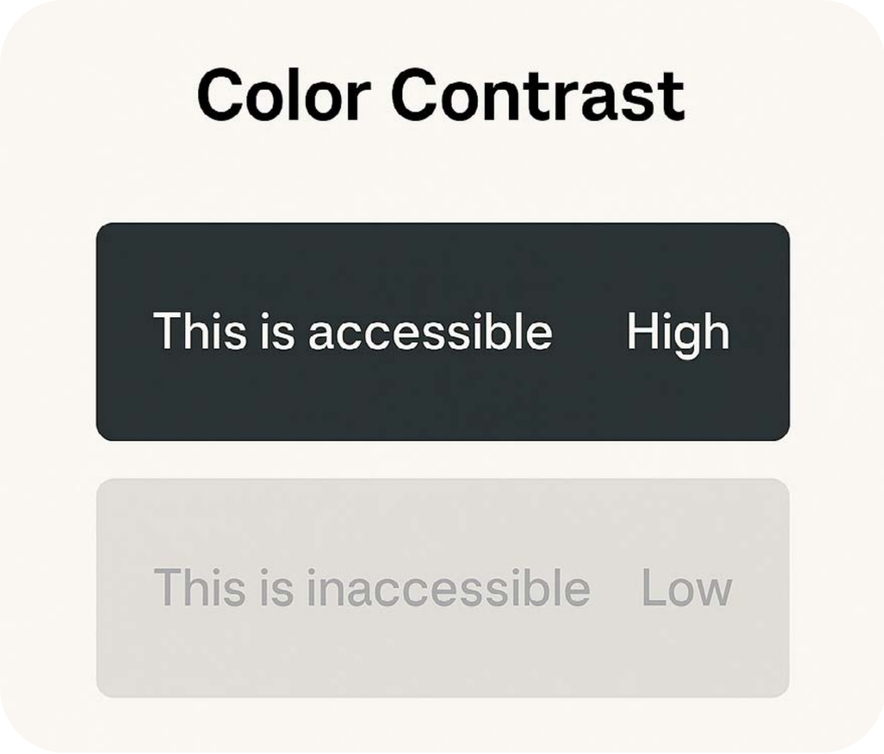
Ensure sufficient contrast between text and background for easy readability, as specified in WCAG 1.4.3.

User Control:

Allow users to control font size and color to customize their experience.

Color & Contrast

Best practices include WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) mandates minimum color contrast ratios for text and other interface elements to ensure readability for users with visual impairments. For normal text, a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 is required for Level AA compliance, while 7:1 is recommended for Level AAA compliance. For large text, the contrast ratio can be relaxed to 3:1 for Level AA, and 4.5:1 for Level AAA.



Level AA:

→ Normal text: 4.5:1 contrast ratio.

→ Large text (18-point or 14-point bold): 3:1 contrast ratio.

Level AAA:

→ Normal text: 7:1 contrast ratio.

→ Large text: 4.5:1 contrast ratio.

Non-text elements:

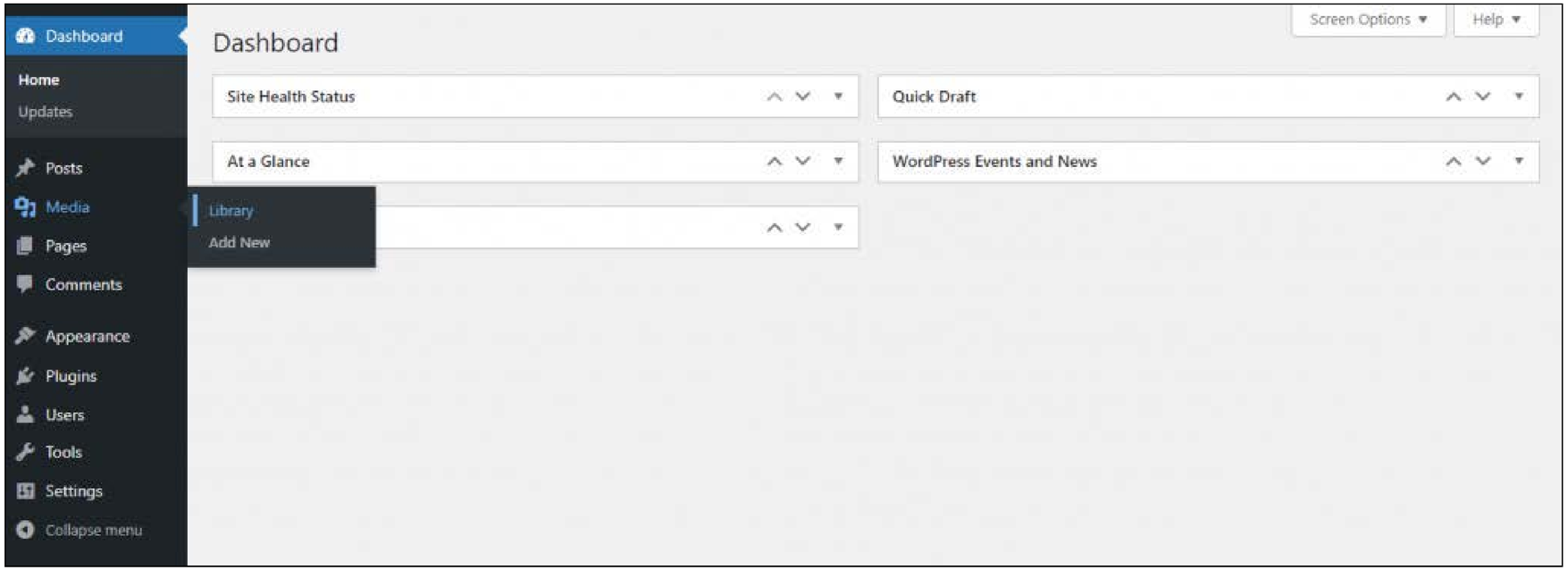
→ Icons and other graphics may require a 3:1 contrast ratio if they are crucial to understanding the content.

Several online tools and extensions can help verify color contrast and ensure compliance with WCAG guidelines, such as the Color Contrast Accessibility Validator, **checks WCAG 2 Accessible Colour Contrast Checker**, and **Accessible Web's Color Contrast Checker**.

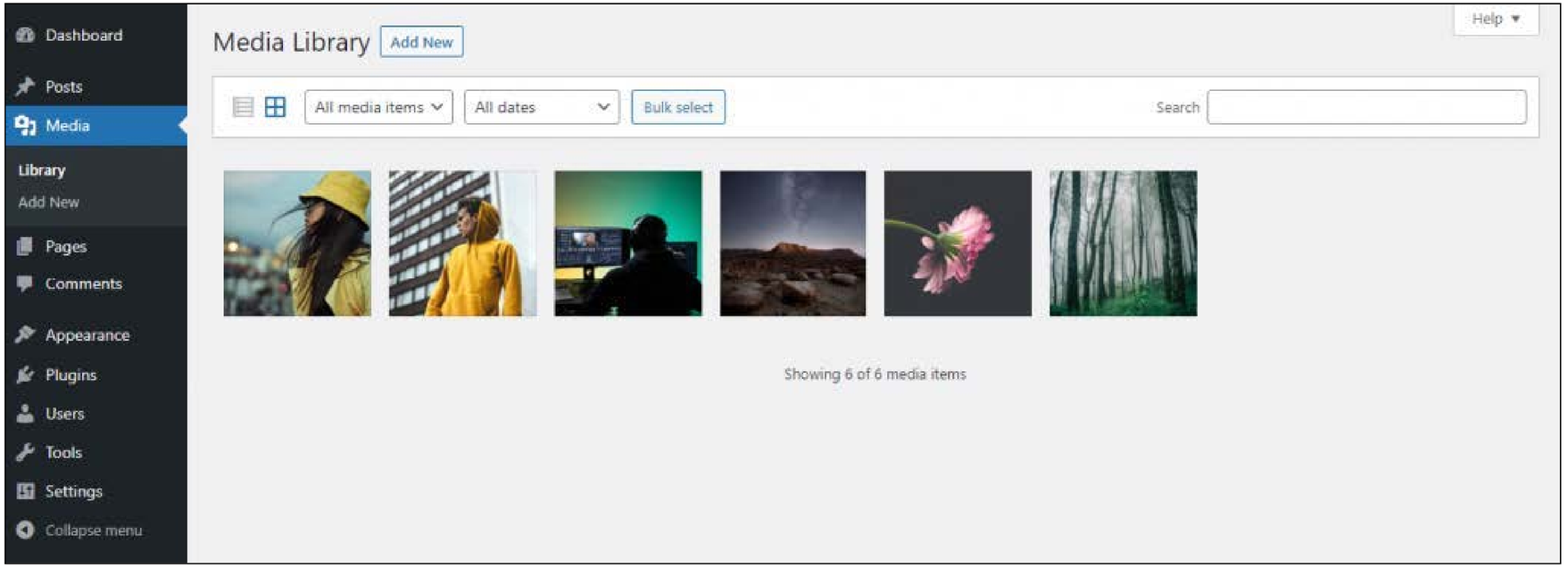
How to Add Alt Tags to Images Using WordPress Media Library

1. Log in to your WordPress dashboard.

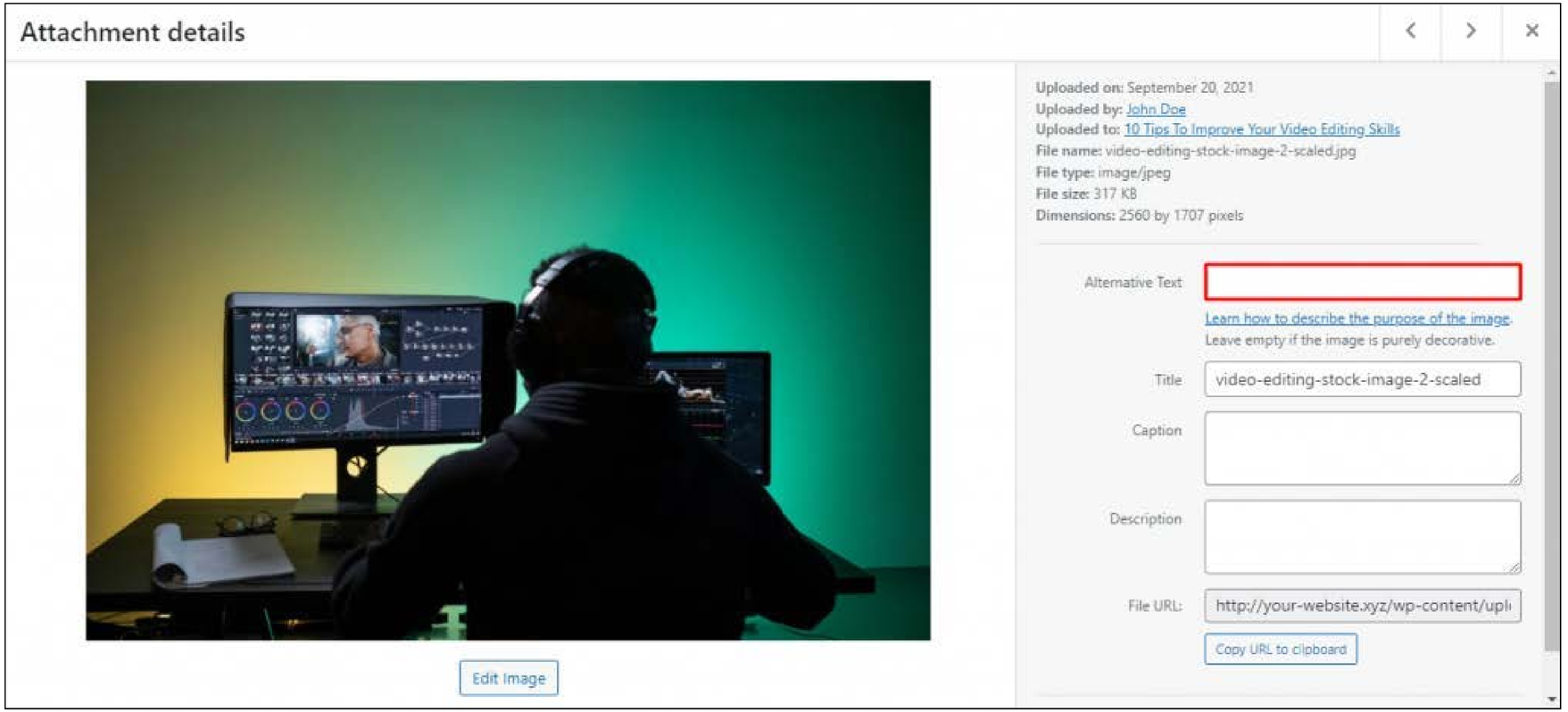
2. Go to Media → Library on the left navigation menu.



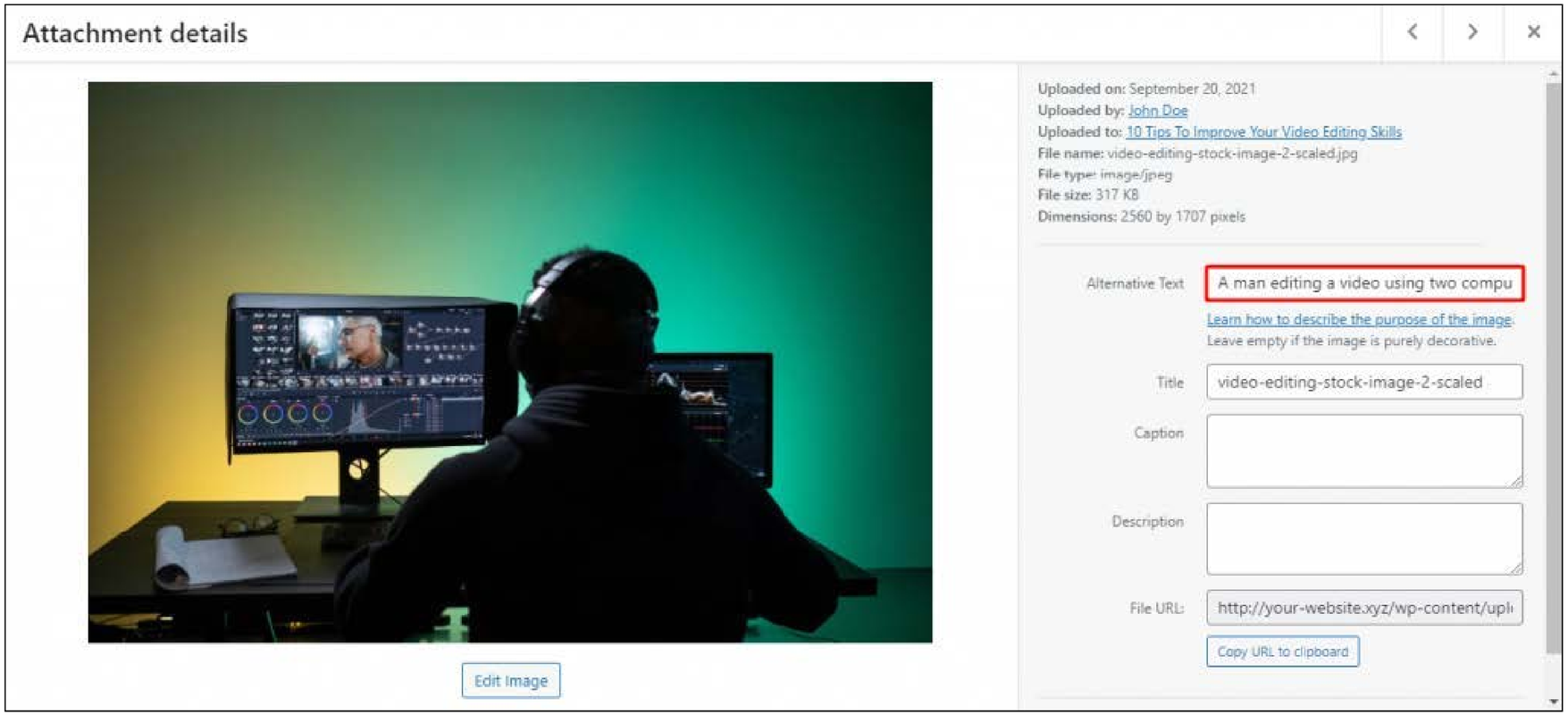
3. Once you’re in the Media Library, click on the image you want to add the alt tag to. Alternatively, upload a new image.



4. Find the Alternative text field on the right-hand side of the Attachment details window. In this window, you can also edit other image attributes, such as the image title tag, caption, and description.



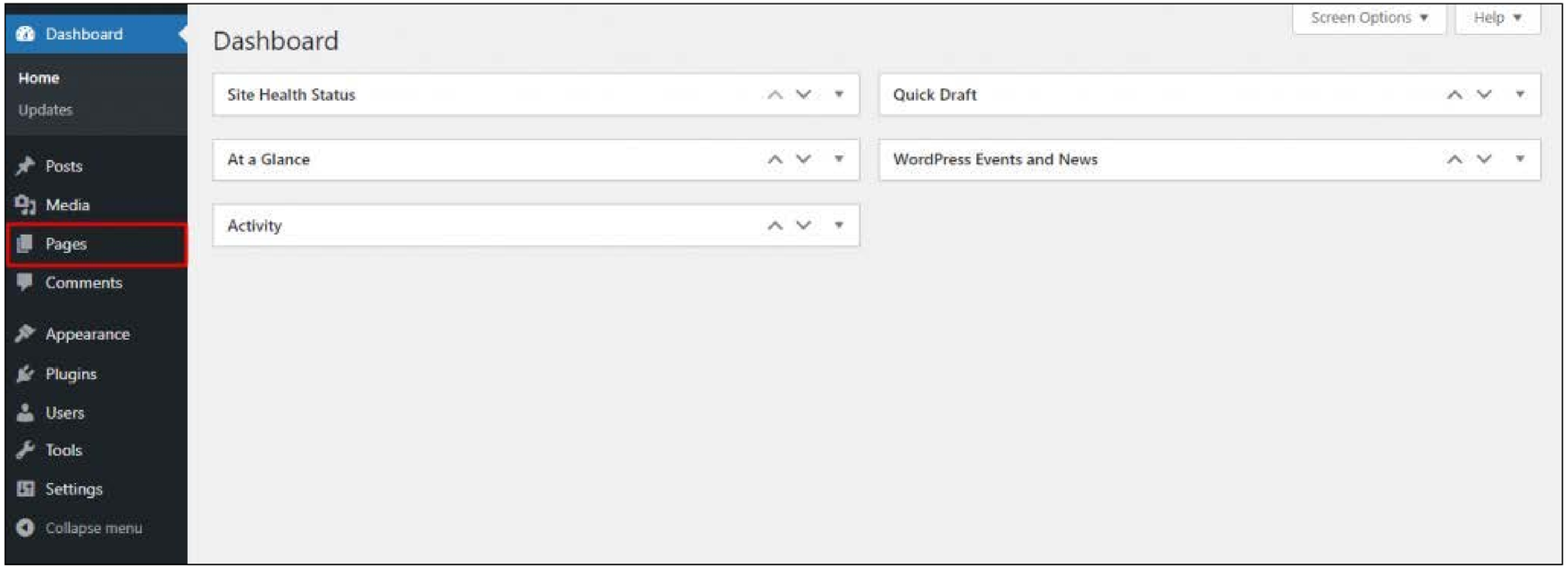
5. Type your desired alt text into the field.



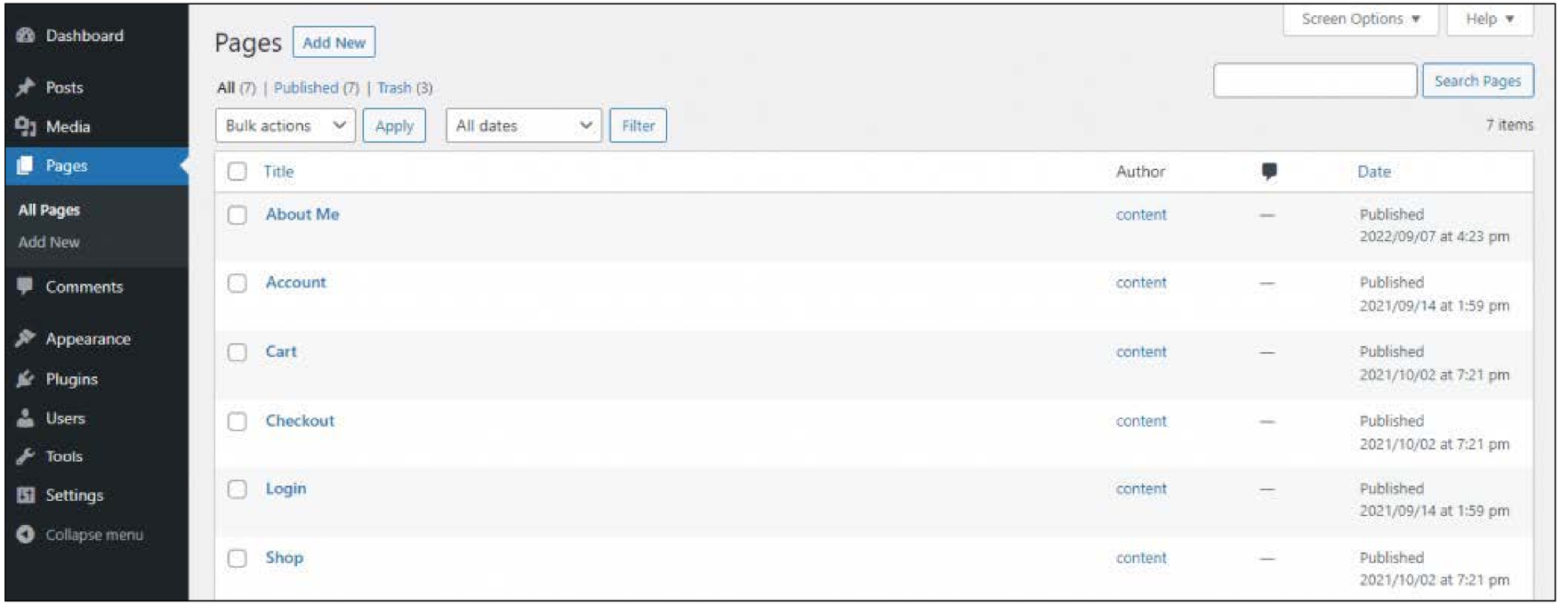
6. Click off the field once finished to let WordPress save the changes.

Using WordPress Gutenberg Editor

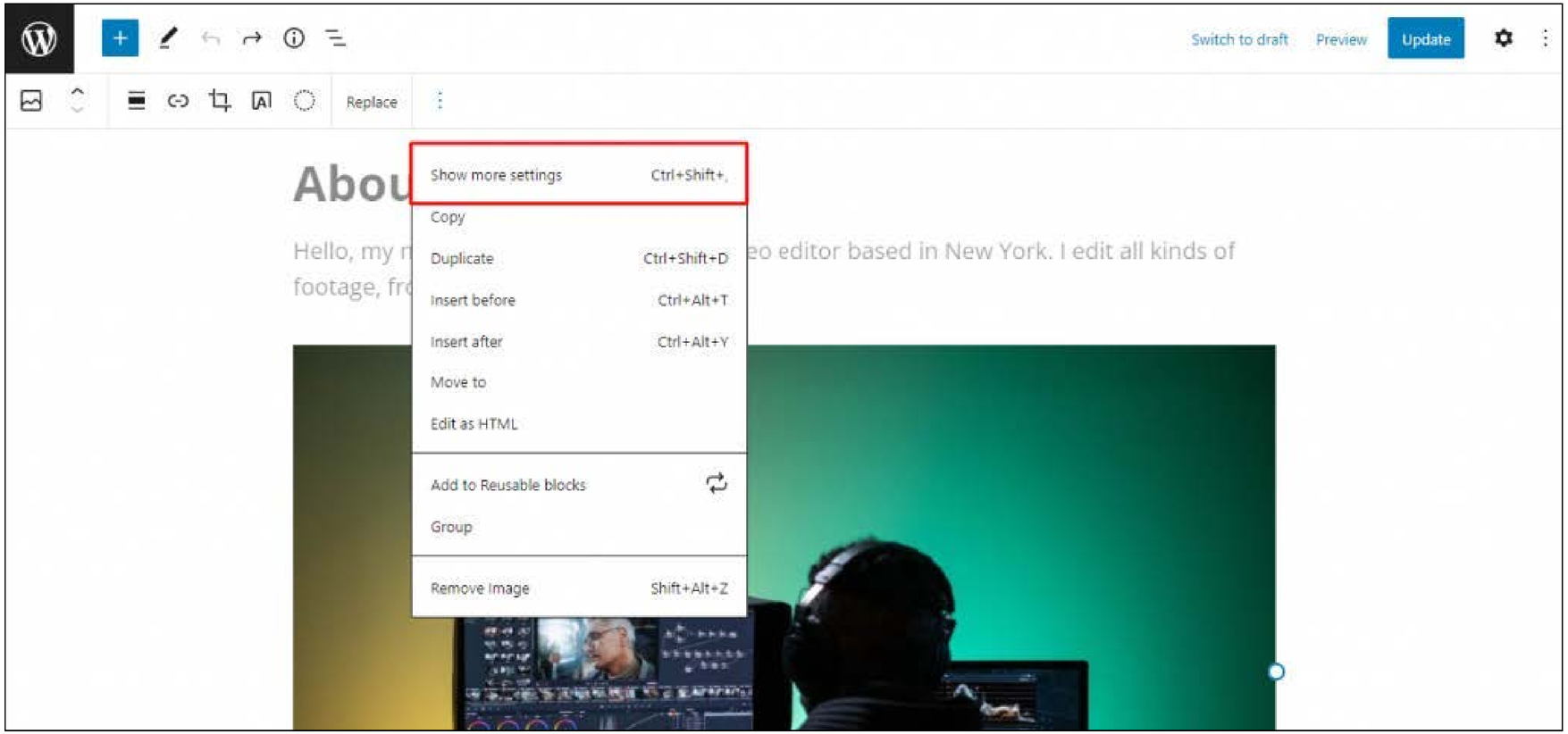
1. Log in to your WordPress admin area and click on Pages on the navigation sidebar.



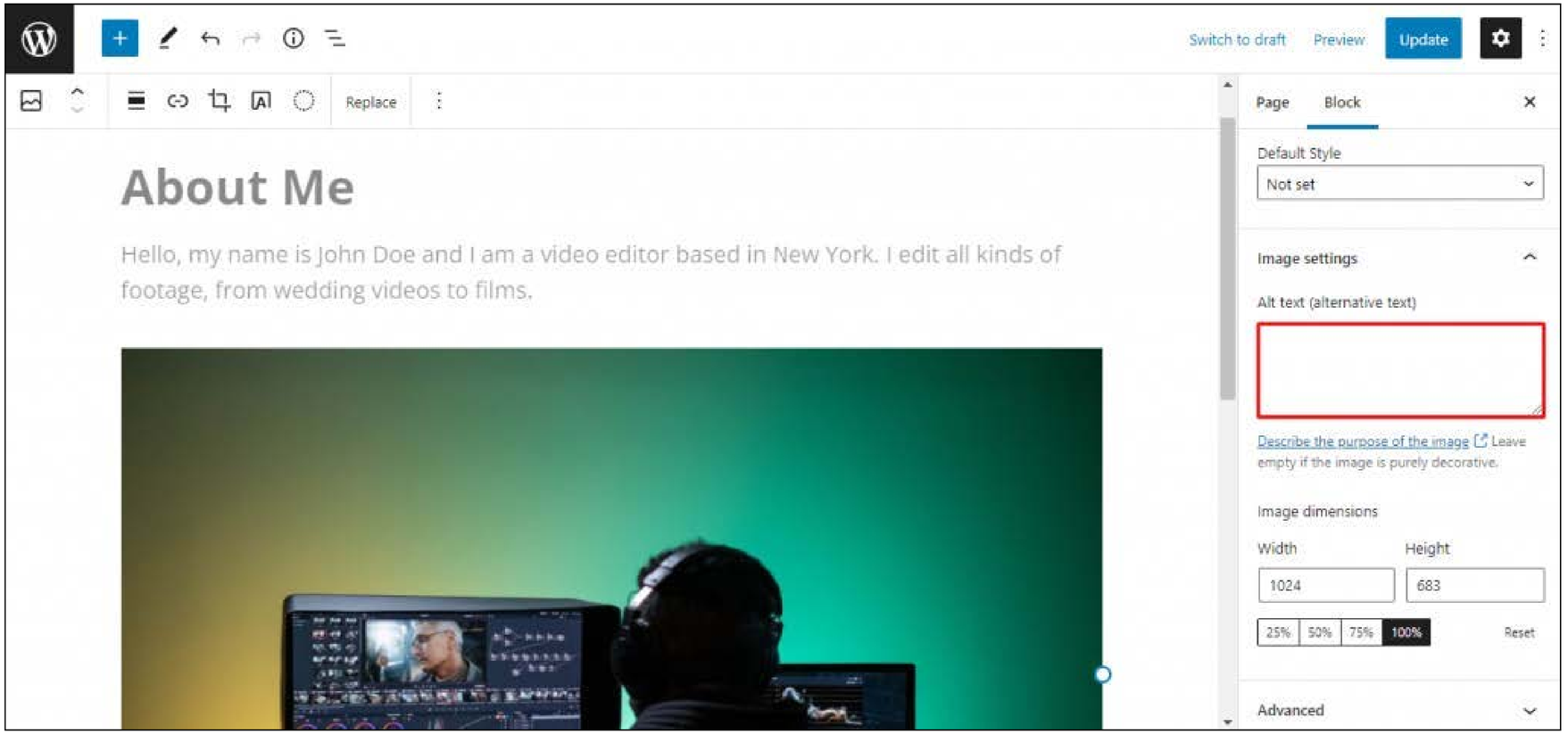
2. On the Pages page, click the post or page containing the image to which you want to add the alt tag. This will open up the Gutenberg block editor.



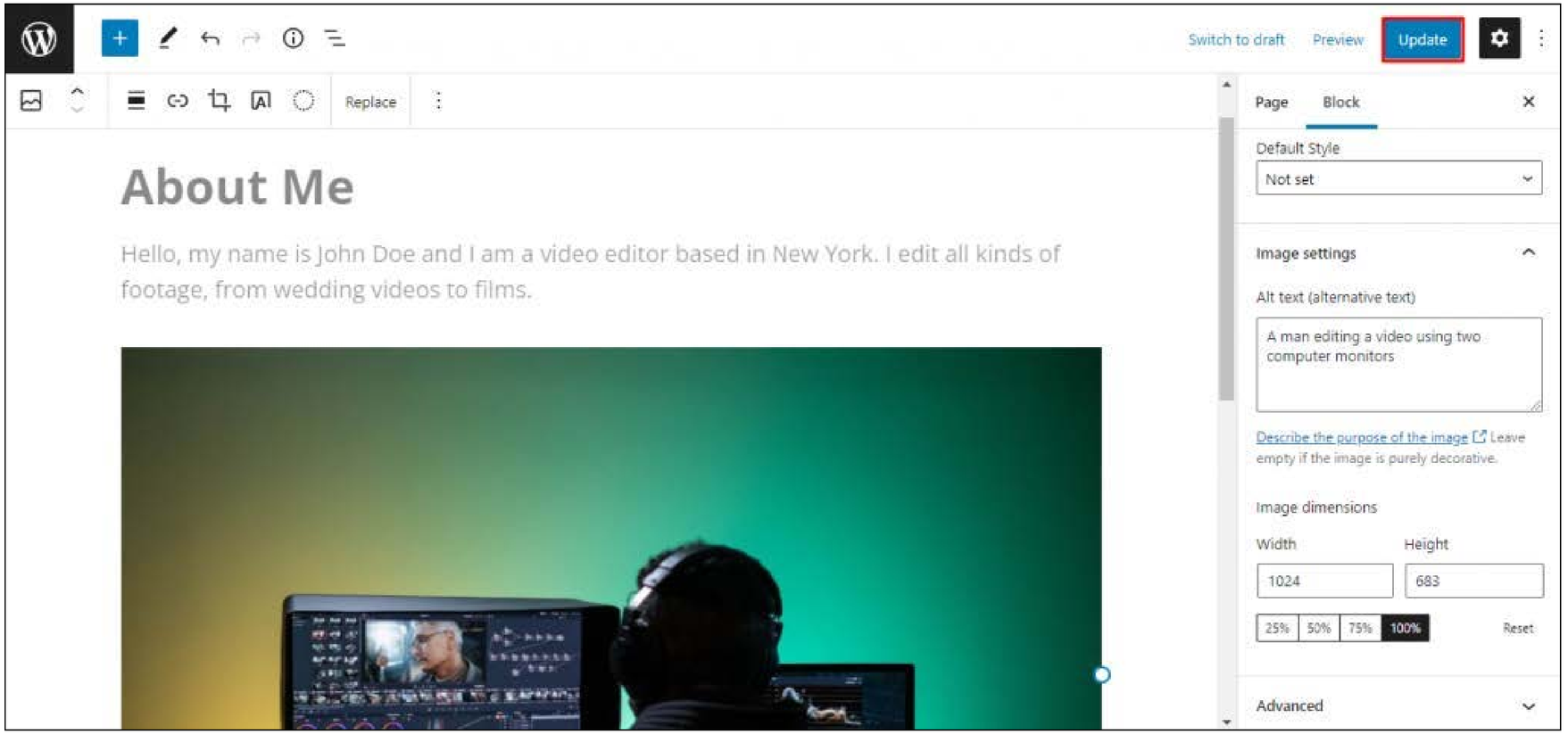
3. On the page editor, click on your desired post image. Then, click on the three dots from the menu bar above and select Show more settings.



4. Click on the Image settings on the right sidebar menu and find the Alt text (alternative text) field.



5. Type the image alt text into the field and click the Update button to save the changes.

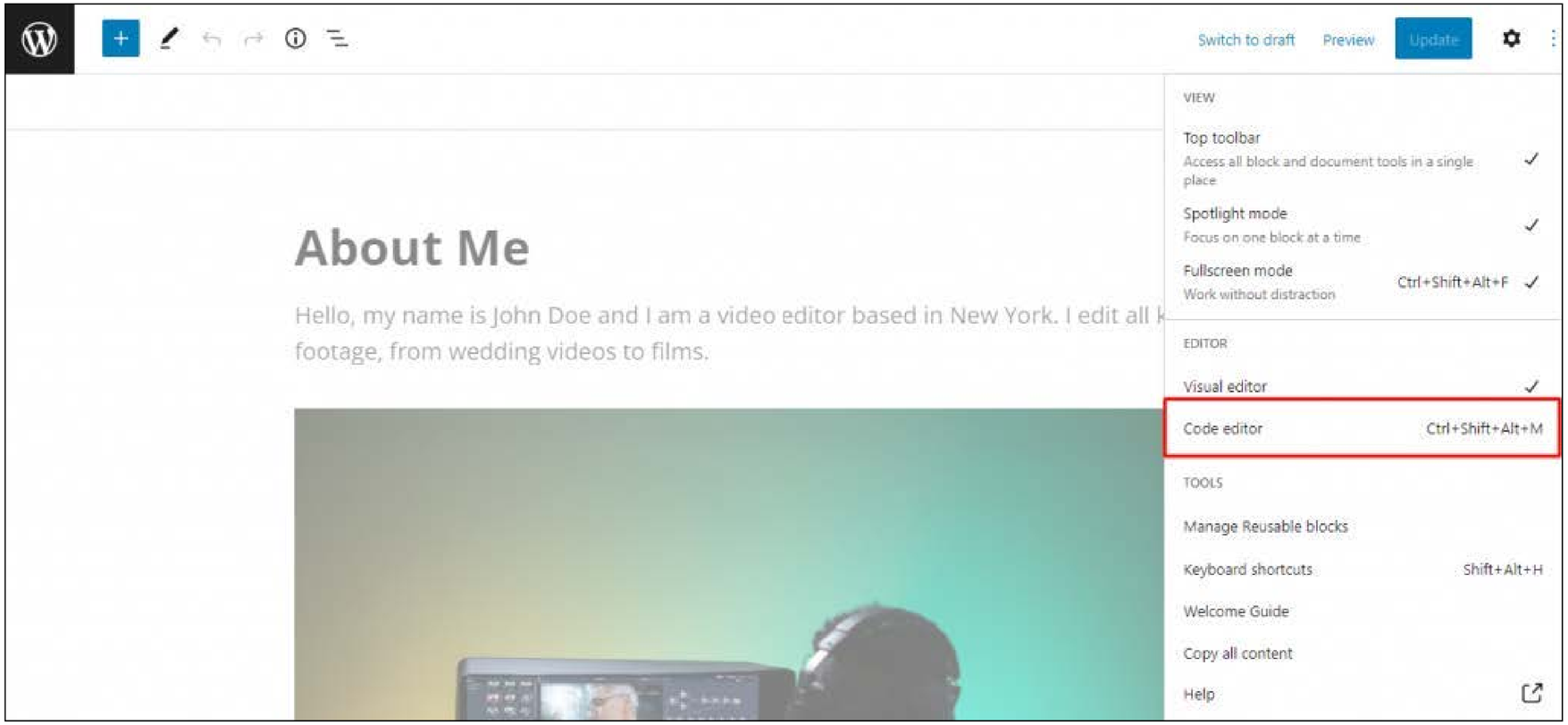


6. Click Publish to make the changes go live.

Editing Code

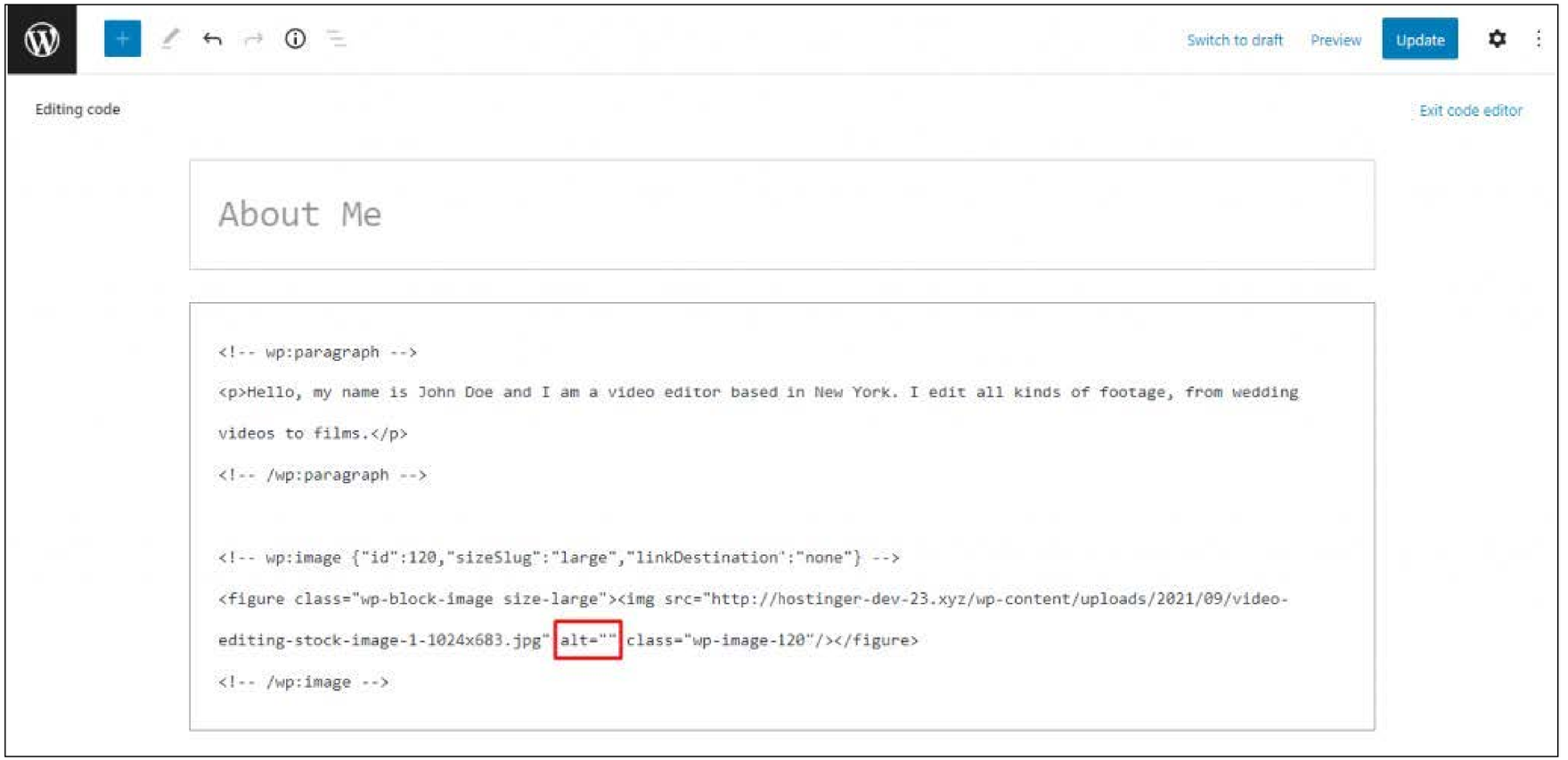
1. Open the page containing the image to which you want to add the alt tag using the first two steps from the previous section.

2. Once you're on the Gutenberg editor, click on the three dots at the top right corner of the page and click Code editor.



3. Find the lines of HTML code representing your chosen image. The first line typically starts with <!– wp:image. If there are multiple images contained within one page, make sure these pieces of code don't represent any other image.

4. Among those lines of code, find alt="".



5. Type in the missing alt text between the quotation marks.

6. Click on the Update button to save the changes.

7. Click Publish to make the changes go live.

How to Write Good Image Alt Tags

A great image alt tag shouldn't overexplain or underexplain images. To accomplish this, follow these image alt text practices:

1. **Only add alt text when necessary.** Not all featured images need alt text. For example, you don't need to add alternate text to decorative images or the ones already described in a nearby paragraph. Typically, alt text for a background image is also not necessary.

2. **Be specific, direct, and concise.** Provide an accurate image description but don't go into too much detail. Get straight to the point.

3. **Use content context.** This is especially useful for describing stock images without recognizable image details, like well-known places or subjects. For example, if an image of a man looking at a computer screen was posted as part of a blog post on WordPress SEO tips, the alt text could be a "man researching WordPress SEO techniques."

4. **Keep the alt text under 125 characters.** Many screen readers will only read alt text consisting of 125 characters, stopping abruptly once it exceeds the character limit. This may make it difficult for visually impaired people to understand the image.

5. **Avoid using phrases like "a screenshot of" or "an image of."** This practice is redundant, as browsers and search engine bots can already identify it as an image file through the code.

6. **Incorporate keywords wisely.** Include the content's target keywords in the alt text as naturally as possible to avoid keyword stuffing. One of the best strategies to slip keywords into your alt text is by using semantic keywords.

How to Check Whether Alt Text Was Successfully Added

If you're unsure whether you have successfully added alt text to your WordPress images, simply follow the steps below to check:

1. Go to the live page of your WordPress website that features the images you want to check.
2. Right-click on the page and click **View page source**.
3. Press **Ctrl + F** on your keyboard to search the page source code. Mac users should press **Command + F** instead.
4. Type **alt="** into the search field that pops up. This will highlight the alt text of all images on the page.
4. **Keep the alt text under 125 characters.** Many screen readers will only read alt text consisting of 125 characters, stopping abruptly once it exceeds the character limit. This may make it difficult for visually impaired people to understand the image.
5. **Avoid using phrases like "a screenshot of" or "an image of."** This practice is redundant, as browsers and search engine bots can already identify it as an image file through the code.
6. **Incorporate keywords wisely.** Include the content's target keywords in the alt text as naturally as possible to avoid keyword stuffing. One of the best strategies to slip keywords into your alt text is by using semantic keywords.

Text Tags

Using proper HTML tags and attributes improves web accessibility, helping users with disabilities navigate and understand content with assistive technologies.

Key Text-Related HTML Tags and Practices for Accessibility:

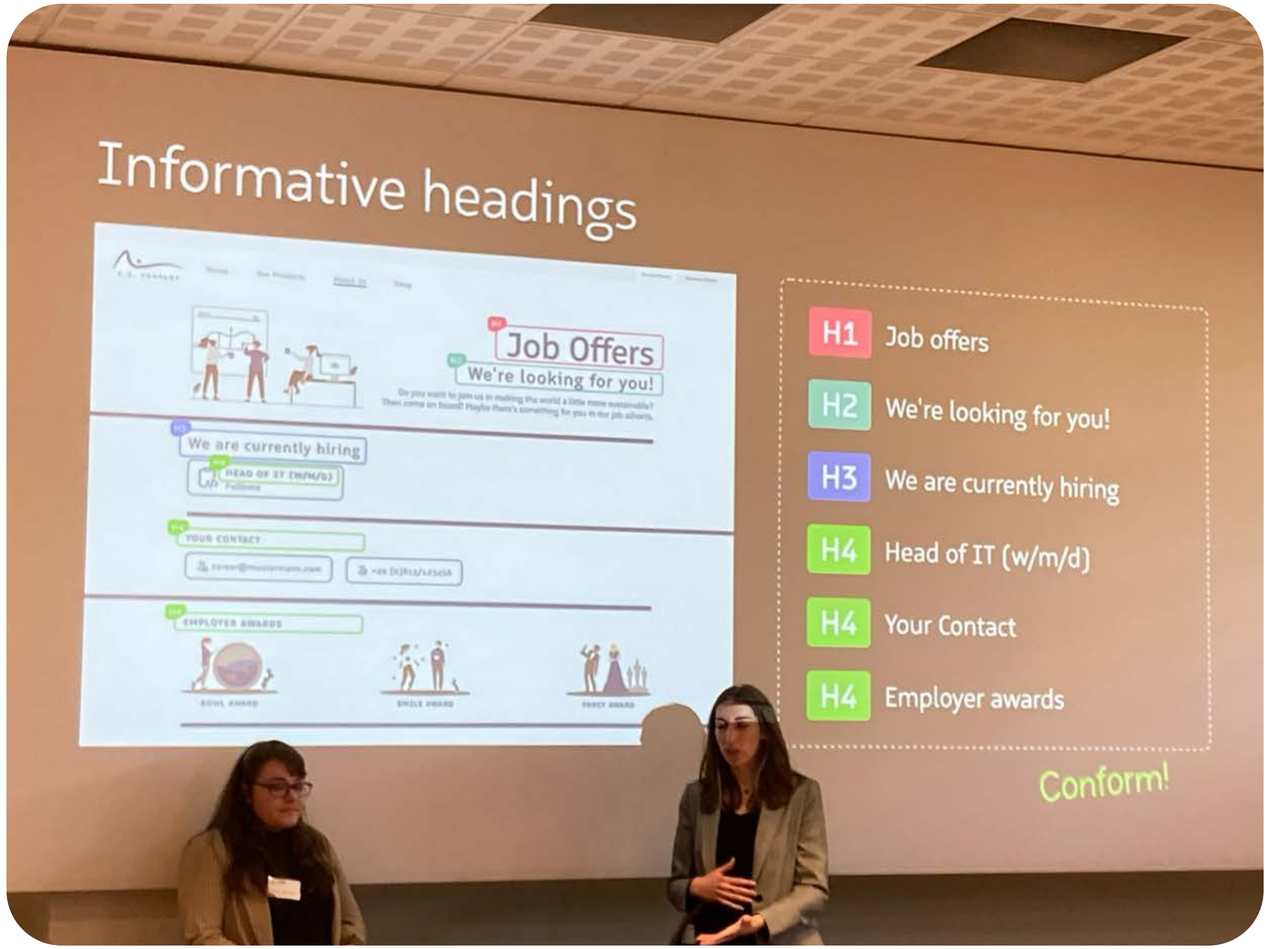
lang attribute:
Specifies the language of the page, which is crucial for screen readers to pronounce text correctly.

h1 - h6 (headings):
Provide semantic structure to your content, allowing screen readers to navigate and understand the hierarchy of information.

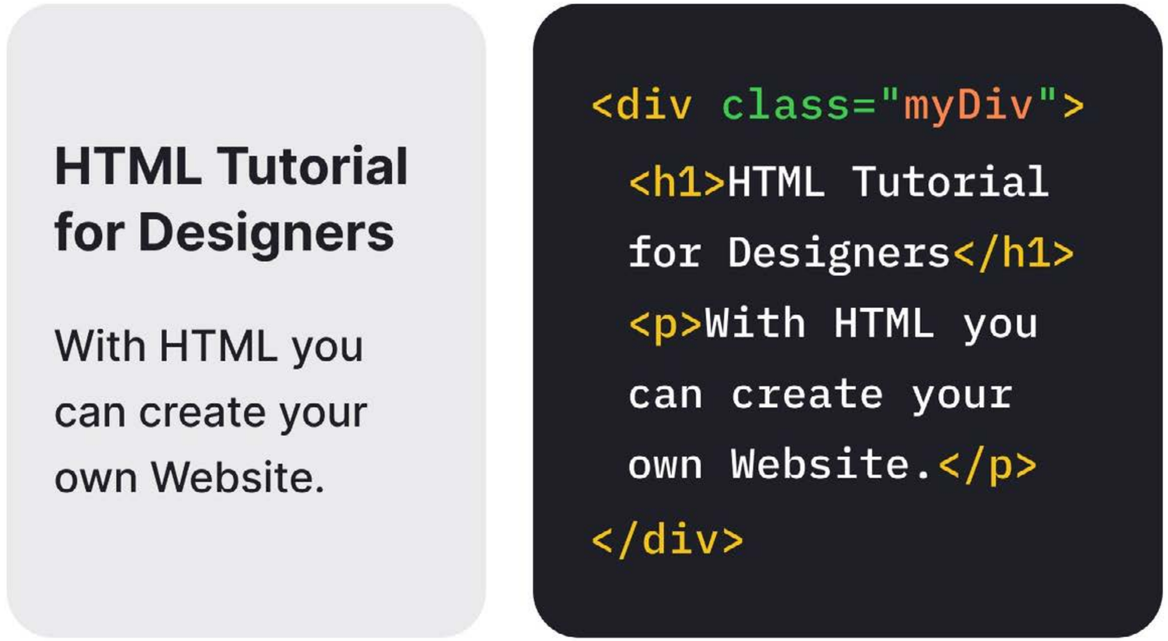
p (paragraph):
Marks blocks of text, improving readability and navigation.

abbr:
Used for abbreviations, allowing screen readers to pronounce them correctly or provide a full explanation.

a (links):
Use clear, descriptive link text instead of "Click here" or similar generic phrases. The text should clearly indicate the destination or function of the link.



Text Tags



Label:
Associates labels with form controls (input fields, buttons, etc.), making them accessible to screen readers and other assistive technologies.

Title attribute:
Provides additional information about an element when the user hovers over it, which can be useful for screen readers or for users who need more context.

Clear Language:
Use simple, easy-to-understand language. Avoid jargon, slang, and abbreviations unless they are clearly defined.

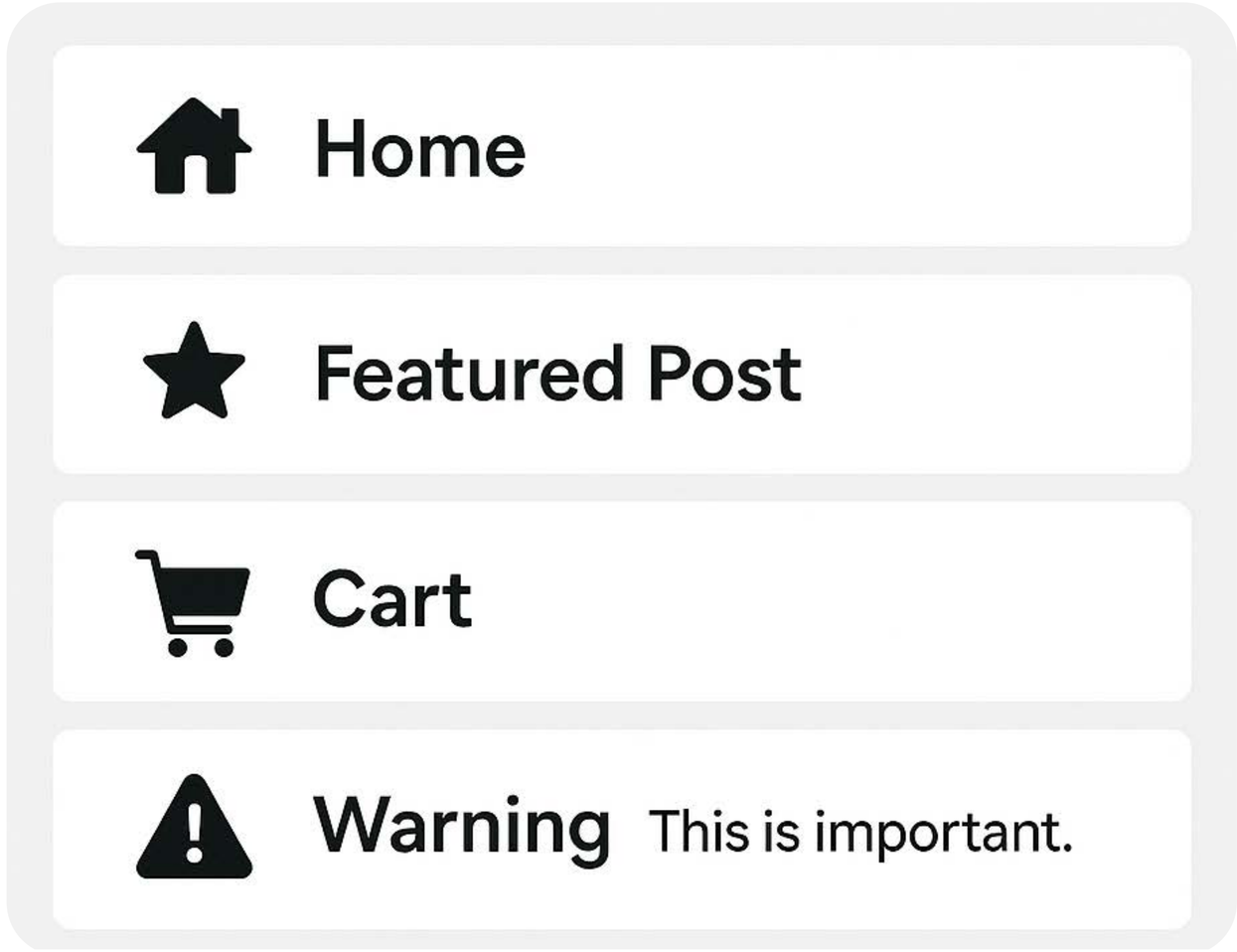
Semantic HTML:
Use the correct HTML elements for their intended purpose (e.g., <nav> for navigation, <article> for articles) to provide context for screen readers and other assistive technologies.

Create Good Link Text:
A link text should explain clearly what information the reader will get by clicking on that link.

Icons

Add familiar icons, images, and symbols to important content such as controls and section headings. Each icon or symbol should convey a single meaning and be next to the content it relates to.

1. **Use clear and unambiguous icons or symbols that are easy to see and enlarge.**
2. **Be aware of cultural differences.**
3. **In left-to-right languages, when adding a few icons or symbols to a page place the image to the left of the text.**
4. **When adding multiple symbols to a paragraph or section of text, place the symbols above the text.**
5. **Use personalization semantics to help the user load familiar symbols.**
6. **Alt text has to be clear and non redundant.**



Keyboard navigation

Basic keyboard navigation, crucial for web accessibility according to WCAG, means users can interact with a website using only the keyboard. This involves navigating through interactive elements (like buttons and links) using the Tab key, and Shift+Tab for reverse navigation. WCAG guidelines ensure all functionalities are accessible via keyboard, even for users who can't use a mouse or other pointing devices.

Key aspects of keyboard navigation under WCAG:

Operability:
All interactive elements must be accessible and operable using the keyboard.

Tab Order:
The order in which elements receive keyboard focus (the "tab order") should be logical and intuitive, generally following the visual flow of the page (left to right, top to bottom).

Focus Indicators:
Clear and visible focus indicators (e.g., highlighting or outlining the focused element) should be used to help users understand where they are in the tab sequence.

No Keyboard Traps:
Users should be able to move the keyboard focus away from any element without getting stuck.

Testing:
Website developers should test their content using keyboard navigation to ensure it meets WCAG requirements.

Level A and AA LIST

In this link you will find everything you need to know to pass the A level accessibility in your website.

https://accessible.org/wcag/

Next Topic

Going for the Extra Mile

03

Going for the Extra Mile

Improve your WCAG Level to AA & AAA, make your site more accessible and inclusive.

Start reading

General Introduction

AA and AAA are the next levels after A which determine the strict minimum rules a website has to follow to be partly accessible. The AA is the most target conformance level as it’s a more accessible and better version of a website. It can allow more groups of disabled users to go through the website easily thanks to taking in count the assistive technologies. Then we have the highest level which is AAA that gives access to all categories of disabled users but it may not be applicable to every website, as this level depends on the digital experience given by the website. That is the reason why level AA is the most common targeted level.

Errors messages and how to solve problems (AA)

When writing input forms as a user, sometimes we make a mistake or we forget a mandatory input, but some websites don't give feedback to tell us where the mistake is. Well, we can somehow manage this as a non disabled user, but imagine being a cognitive disabled person, blind or impaired vision person or motion impairment person, in this case we may not understand where the error is and/or how to correct it, if a website is not accessible. That is why we need to focus on error managing messages when coding a website.

This criteria is a AA level, so it is important to not demotivate any disabled user to complete a form, which is a big part of any website and essential for databases to give the user a personal experience.

How-to and techniques:

- Using aria-alertdialog to Identify Errors
- Providing a text description when user input falls outside the required format or values
- Providing suggested correction text
- Indicating when user input falls outside the required format or values in PDF forms

Example situation:

- Provide additional help for correcting an input, telling the user what’s wrong with the actual input and how to modify it.
- Suggestions from a limited set of values, telling the user which format to use for a date or any specific value.

Error prevention when entering financial or legal data. (AA)

Sometimes we have to put very important information that will have a big financial and/or legal impact on the user. For example, you have to write input form the amount you earn each year for the impositions which is an important step and if wrong can have very bad consequences on the user’s life. That is why enabling the verification, correction and making everything reversible is important. This point is also a level AA, it is really important to implement this in your website if you have to deal with any transaction or legal information.

How to & techniques:

- Providing a stated time within which an online request (or transaction) may be amended or canceled by the user after making the request
- Providing the ability for the user to review and correct answers before submitting
- Providing the ability to recover deleted information
- Requesting confirmation to continue with selected action
- Providing a checkbox in addition to a submit button

Example Situation:

- Stock sale
- Order confirmation

Keyboard focus on elements (AA)

The focus on an element is essential to know where exactly we are typing in the form. Without it, the user is lost and might write information in the wrong input. This creates unneeded correction afterwards to change the information in the right input but for any disabled person, this might demotivate them and make them quit the form without sending it.

This point is a level AA, so it is necessary to think of it as a very important element to implement in your website.

How-to & techniques:

- Using user interface components that are highlighted by the user agent when they receive focus
- Using CSS to change the presentation of a user interface component when it receives focus
- Using the default focus indicator for the platform so that high visibility default focus indicators will carry over
- Using an author-supplied, visible focus indicator
- Creating a two-color focus indicator to ensure sufficient contrast with all components
- Using CSS :focus-visible to provide keyboard focus indication
- Using script to change the background color or border of the element with focus

Example:

- Displaying a visible border around an input when it receives focus.
- Displaying a vertical bar or highlighting the text in a field when it is focused on.

Audio description prerecorded (AA)

Audio descriptions are added to prerecorded videos to help people who are blind or have low vision. They describe important visual details that aren’t explained in the regular audio, usually during natural pauses in speech.

How-To and Techniques:

- Offer a second audio option that includes descriptions of visual content
- Make the whole video available with audio descriptions
- Provide media with extended audio descriptions

Example Situations:

- Audio described tours in museums and art exhibitions
- Entertainment media
- Educational content

f) Sign language, prerecorded (AAA)

Sign language in videos helps make prerecorded audio content accessible to deaf and hard of hearing people who use sign language. It means adding a sign language interpreter to videos so users can understand the audio content.

Sign language also shows tone, emotion, and other details that captions can't, making the experience more complete..

Important: People who use sign language every day, watching an interpreter is often faster and easier than reading captions.

How-To and Techniques:

- Show a sign language interpreter in the corner of the video
- Play the interpreter video at the same time as the main video, either on top of it or in a separate window
- Add the interpreter video into the main video or offer it as a separate version

Important: Do not forget to consider regional varieties and make sure the interpreter is well positioned and does not hide important visual content!

Sign language, prerecorded - examples

Offering sign language interpretation improves accessibility by making content more inclusive and easier to understand for deaf or hard of hearing users.

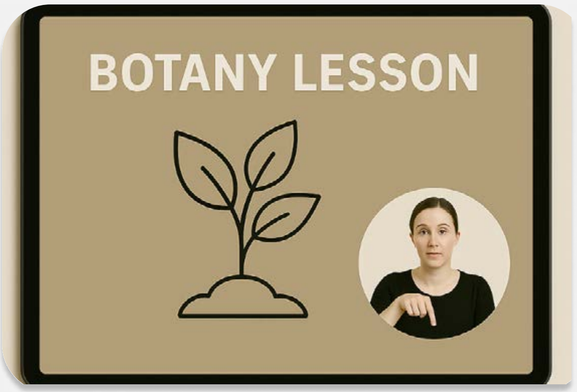
Example Situations:

- Educational videos: Show a sign language interpreter in the corner to help students understand the content
- Museum guides: Include sign language in video guides for better access
- University lectures: Add sign language to recorded lessons
- Government videos: Use sign language to share important public information

Museum guide with sign language interpreter

Educational video with sign language

Government announcement with sign language



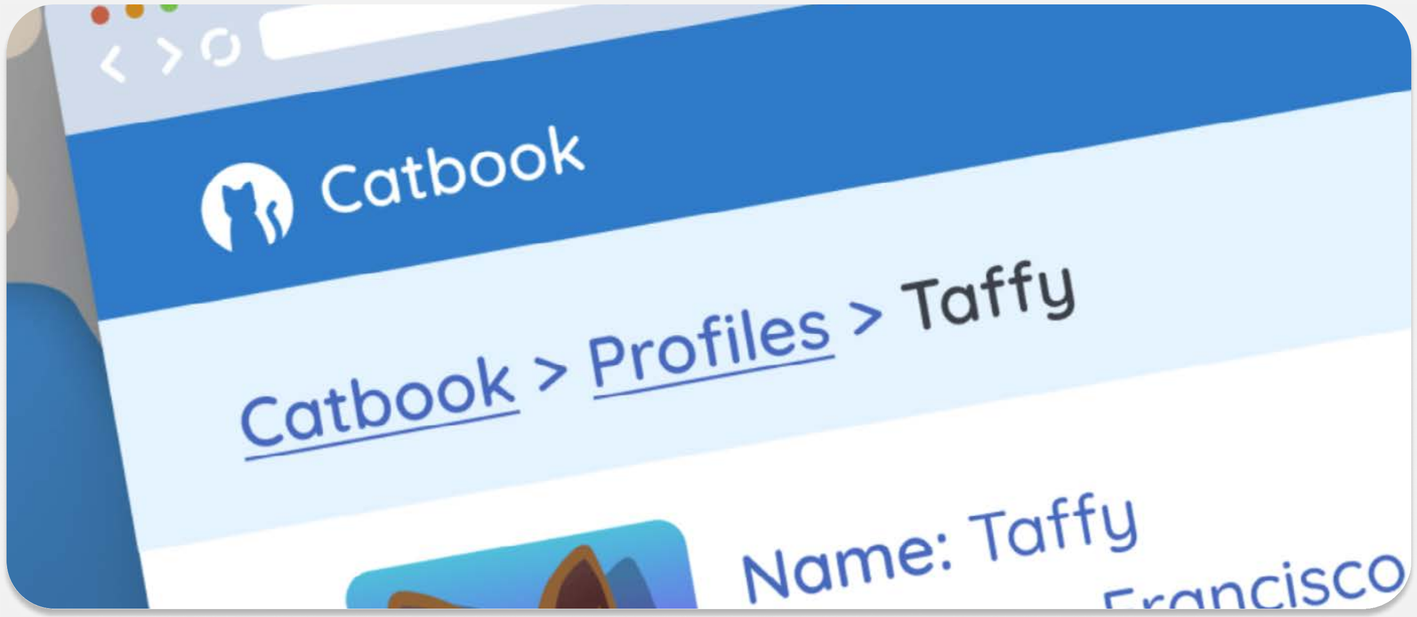
University lectures with sign language

Location (AAA)

Provide clear navigation cues to help users understand where they are within a website or application, avoid confusion, and easily find related information. This is especially important for screen reader users, people with cognitive impairments, and all website users in general.

How-To and Techniques:

- **Use breadcrumbs:** A portal website organizes topics by category, with breadcrumb trails showing the user's location and a link to the home page on every screen.
- **Highlight the current page:** Clearly indicate the current page in navigation menus to help users understand their location.
- **Provide a site map:** Outline and link to all major sections of a site, helping users understand its structure and navigate it more easily
- Use running headers and footers in PDF documents
- Number pages consistently in PDF documents
- Provide a link to the home page
- Provide an easy-to-read overview of how the website is organized.
- Offer a sign language version explaining the site's structure.
- Include a simple summary at the start of each content section.



Link Purpose (Link Only) AAA

People who use a keyboard or screen reader to move around a website rely on clear links. If a link just says something like “Click here,” it doesn’t tell them where it goes or what it does. That can be confusing.

To help everyone use your site more easily, make sure each link clearly says what it will do or where it will take the user. If several links go to the same place, use the same wording for each one. If they go to different places, use different wording to show that.

Example situations:

- Include icons and text in the same link: An icon showing a matcha latte and the text “Matcha Shop” are combined to make a single link. See the example code below:

```
<a href="/products/matcha">
 <img src="matcha-icon.png" alt="" style="vertical-align:
middle;">  Shop Matcha </a>
```

- Lists of book titles: Alice in Wonderland is available in three formats: HTML, PDF, and MP3. Each format link shows just the type (e.g., “PDF”), but the link text includes both the title and format, like “Alice in Wonderland, MP3,” to support screen reader users.
-

How-To and Techniques:

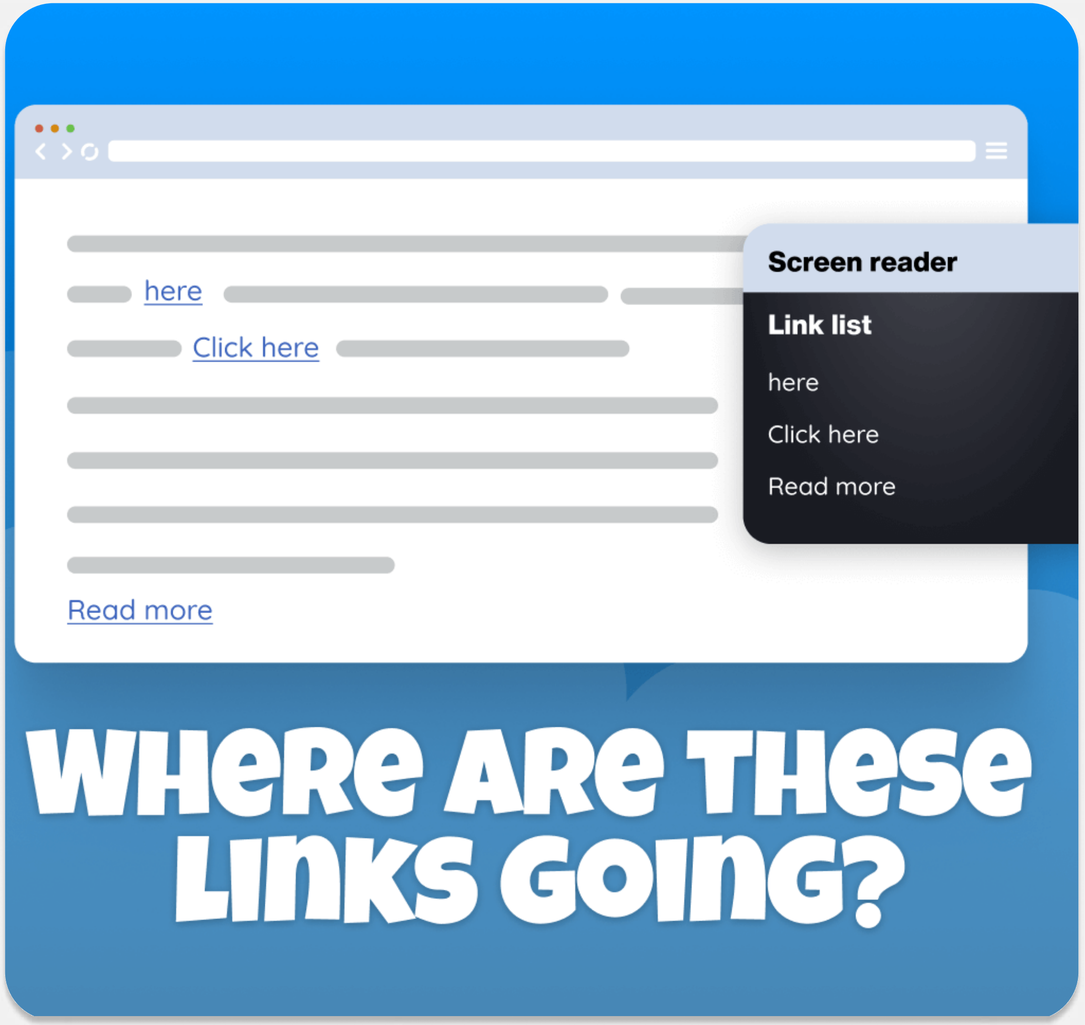
- Use aria-label for link purpose
- Write clear, descriptive link text that describes the purpose of the link
- Add text alternatives for image map areas
- Use hidden text to add context to links (known as C7 Technique)
- Mark links properly in PDF documents
- Let users choose short or long link text
- Combining icon and text into a single accessible link

Tip: Use meaningful, concise and non-generic link text, and check the clarity with assistive technology.

Link purpose mistake

1) Avoid links such as "Click here" and "More" as anchor elements

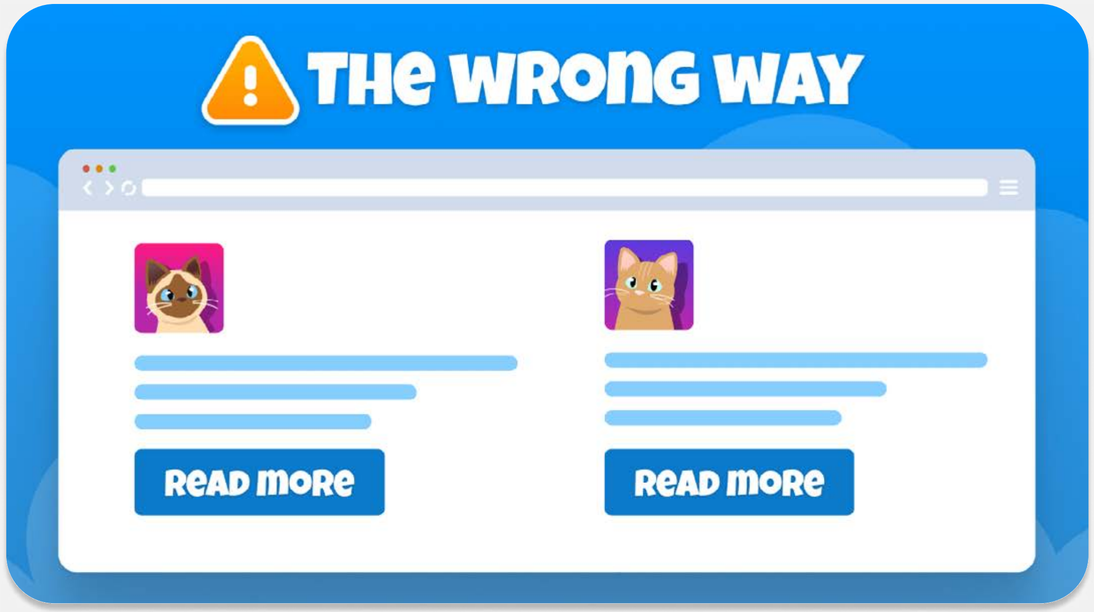
Don't use vague links like "click here" or "more" Links should clearly say what they do. If a link just says "click here" or "more," it doesn't give users enough information – especially people using screen readers or keyboards to move through a page. They might hear a list of links with no context, which is confusing. This also breaks accessibility rules (WCAG 2.4.9).

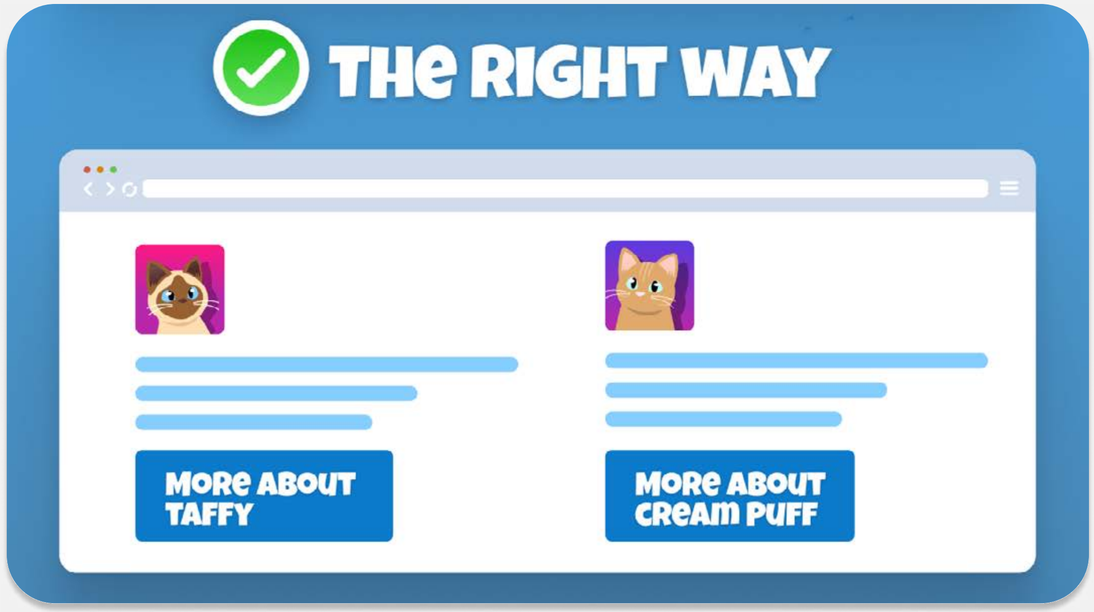


Link purpose mistake

2) Using generic wording

The example below shows the right and wrong way to add link text. The text on CTA buttons should clearly indicate to (screen) readers and users navigating with keyboards where the link will lead. Avoid generic phrases and use clear, concise link text so users can easily understand where the link leads without needing to guess.





Next Topic

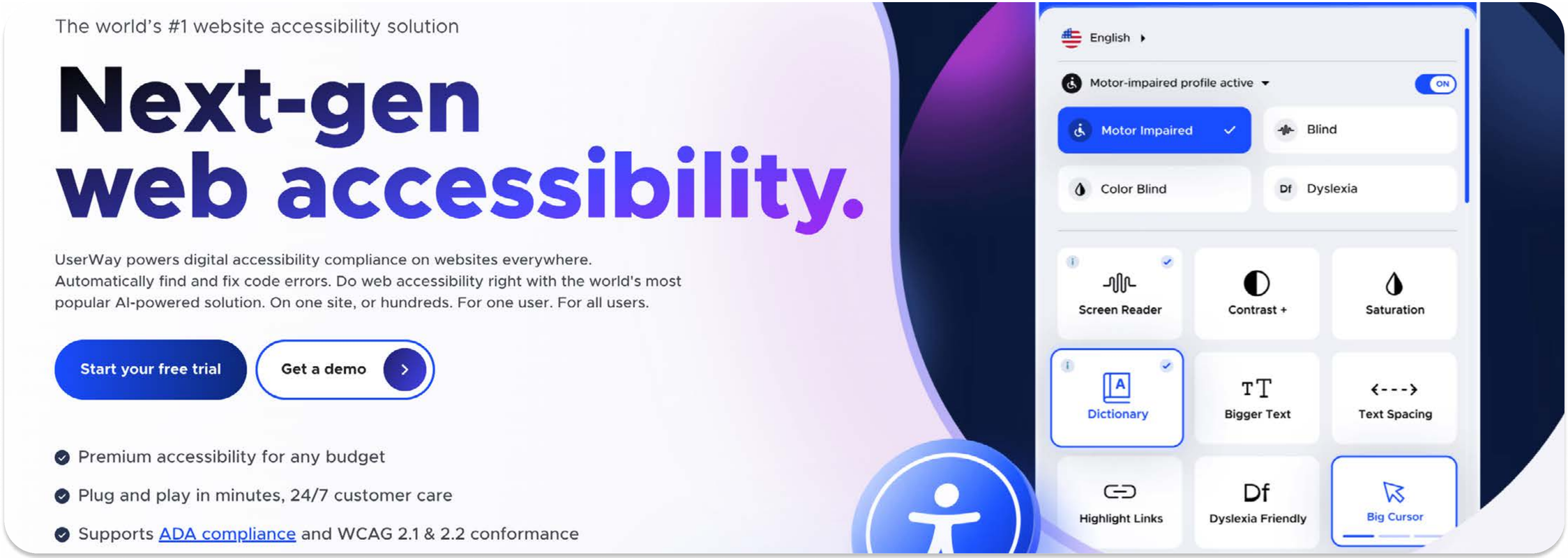
Useful Tools & Resources

04

Useful Tools & Resources

Recommended tools for checking accessibility issues, simulating user profiles, and enriching web designs.

Start reading

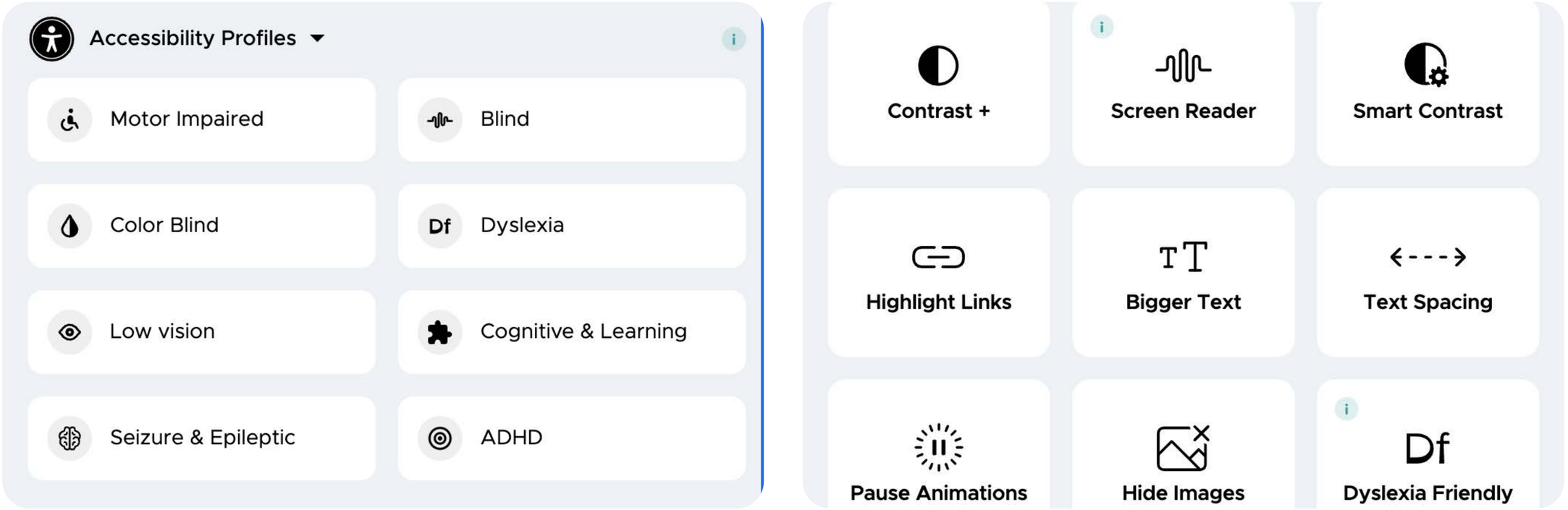


UserWay

userway.org

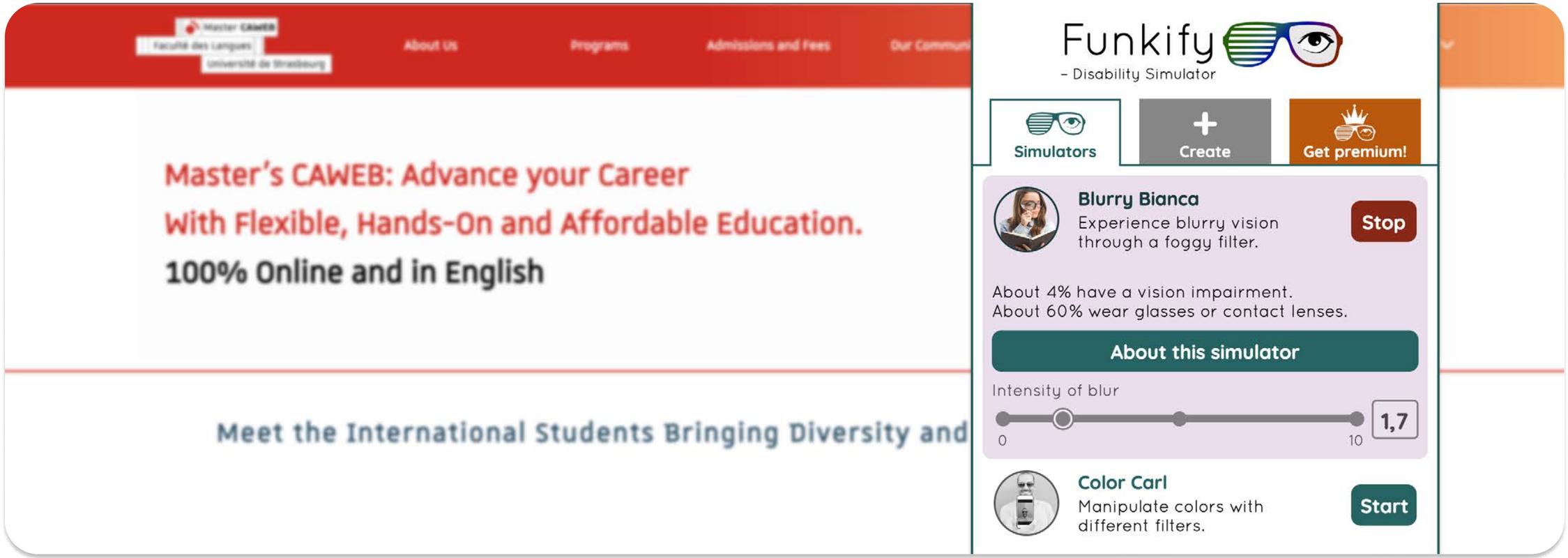
UserWay is widget that you can place in your website to enable multiple accessibility features, allowing your site be more inclusive, accessible and usable.

And it has a WordPress integration!



The free version is a solid option and likely sufficient for meeting A and AA accessibility standards. However, if we want to go the extra mile, the premium version may be worth considering. It includes advanced features beyond language and color contrast adjustments, as tailored solutions for specific user needs—such as motor impairments, cognitive and learning differences, dyslexia, low vision, blindness, and epilepsy.

Download UserWay

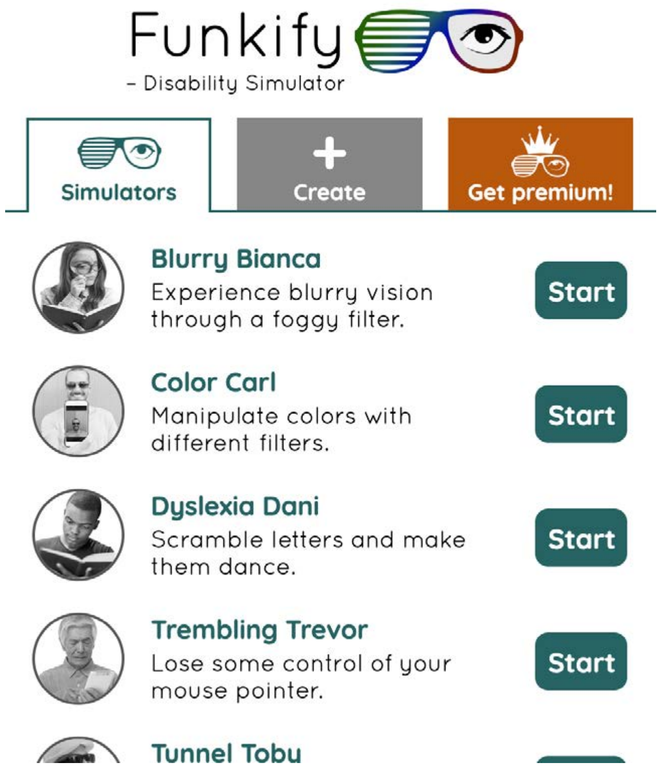


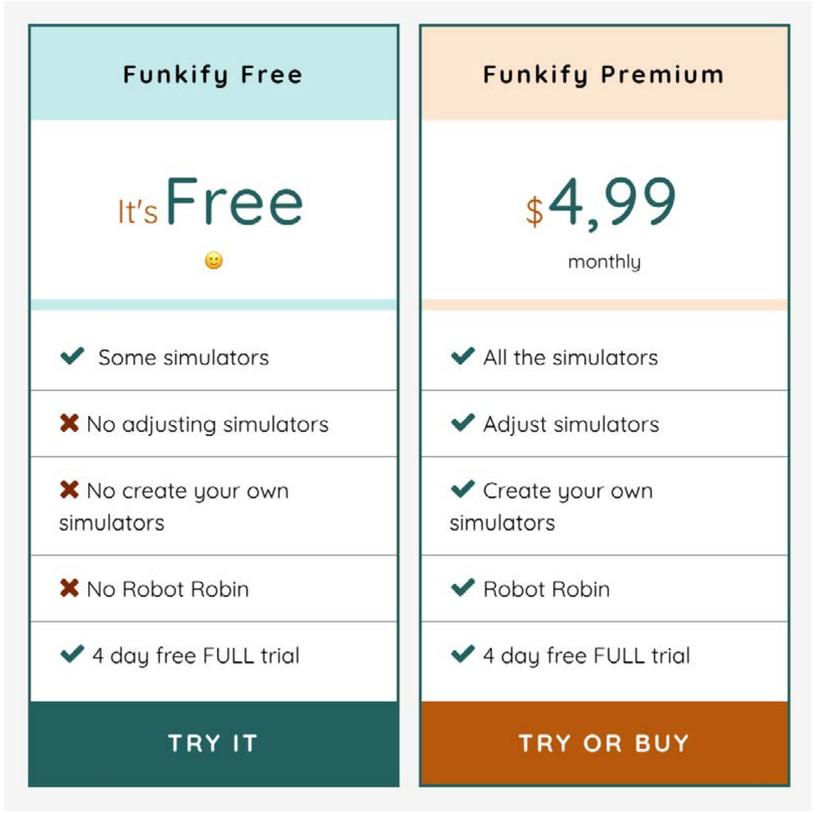
Funkify

funkify.org/

Funkify is a **Google Chrome extension** that helps you experience the web through the eyes of different users, by simulating different abilities and disabilities such as color blindness, dyslexia, trembling, partial vision and more.

And it has a free and premium version!





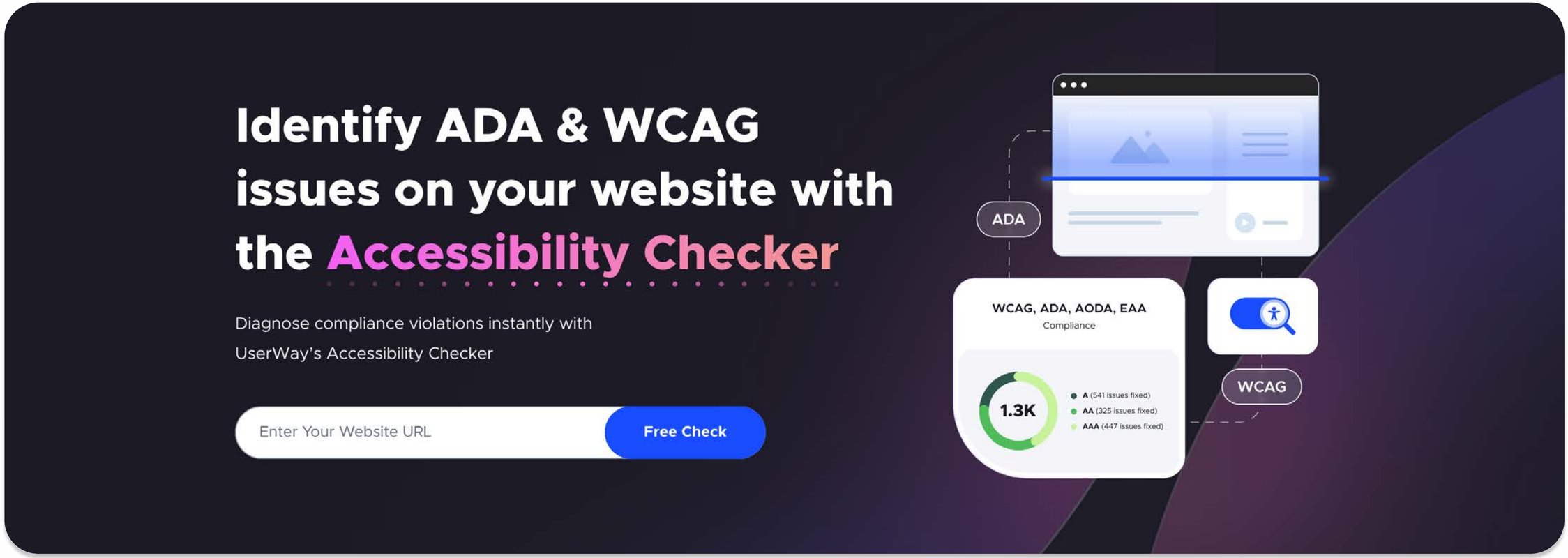
Install Funkify

WAVE

wave.webaim.org/

This website allows for a quick audit of any site, helping designers and developers identify potential visual and code-level issues.

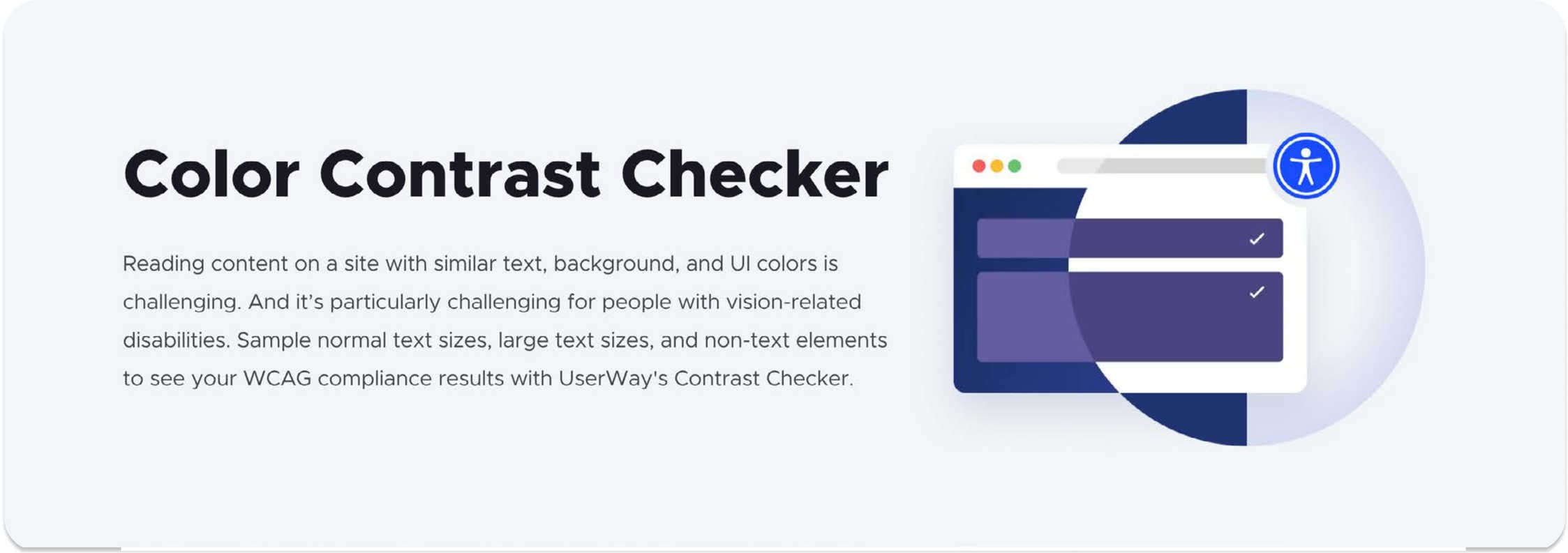
Use WAVE now



UserWay's Accessibility Checker

https://userway.org/scanner/

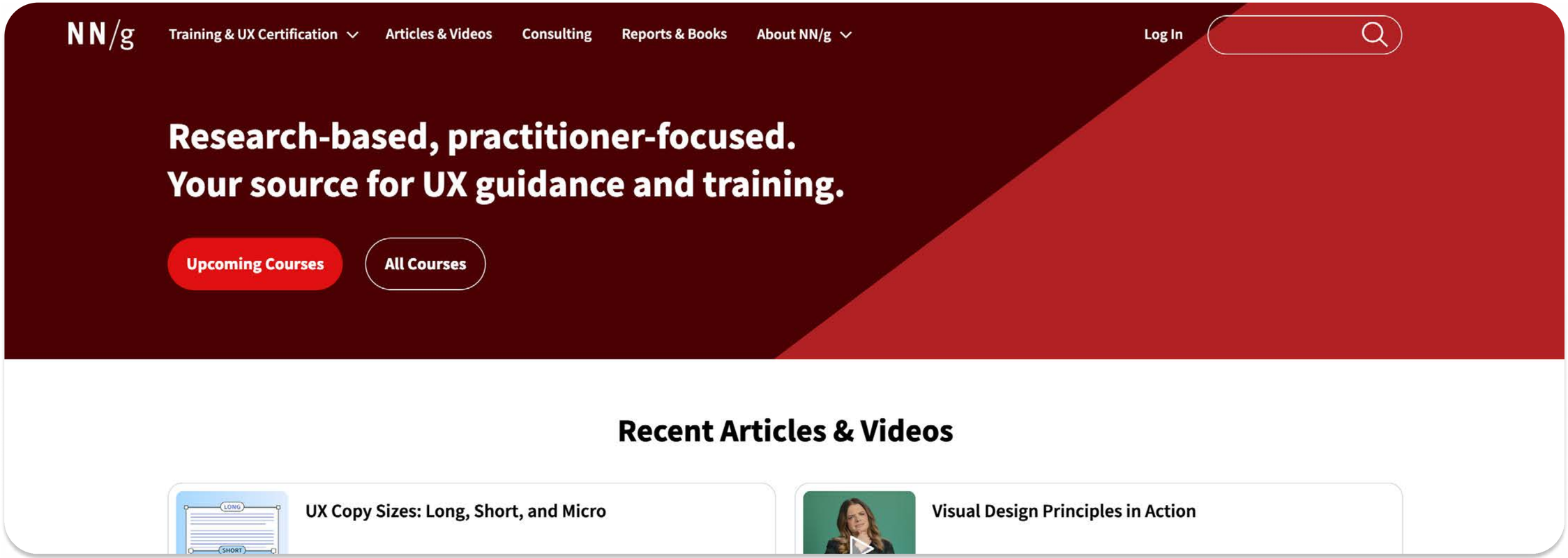
Use Accessibility Checker



UserWay's Color Contrast Checker

https://userway.org/contrast/

Use Color Contrast Checker



Nielsen Norman Group

https://www.nngroup.com/

If you're passionate about UX and want to dive deeper into usability, accessibility, and design guidelines, explore their courses and valuable blog resources.

Visit NN/g site

Next Topic

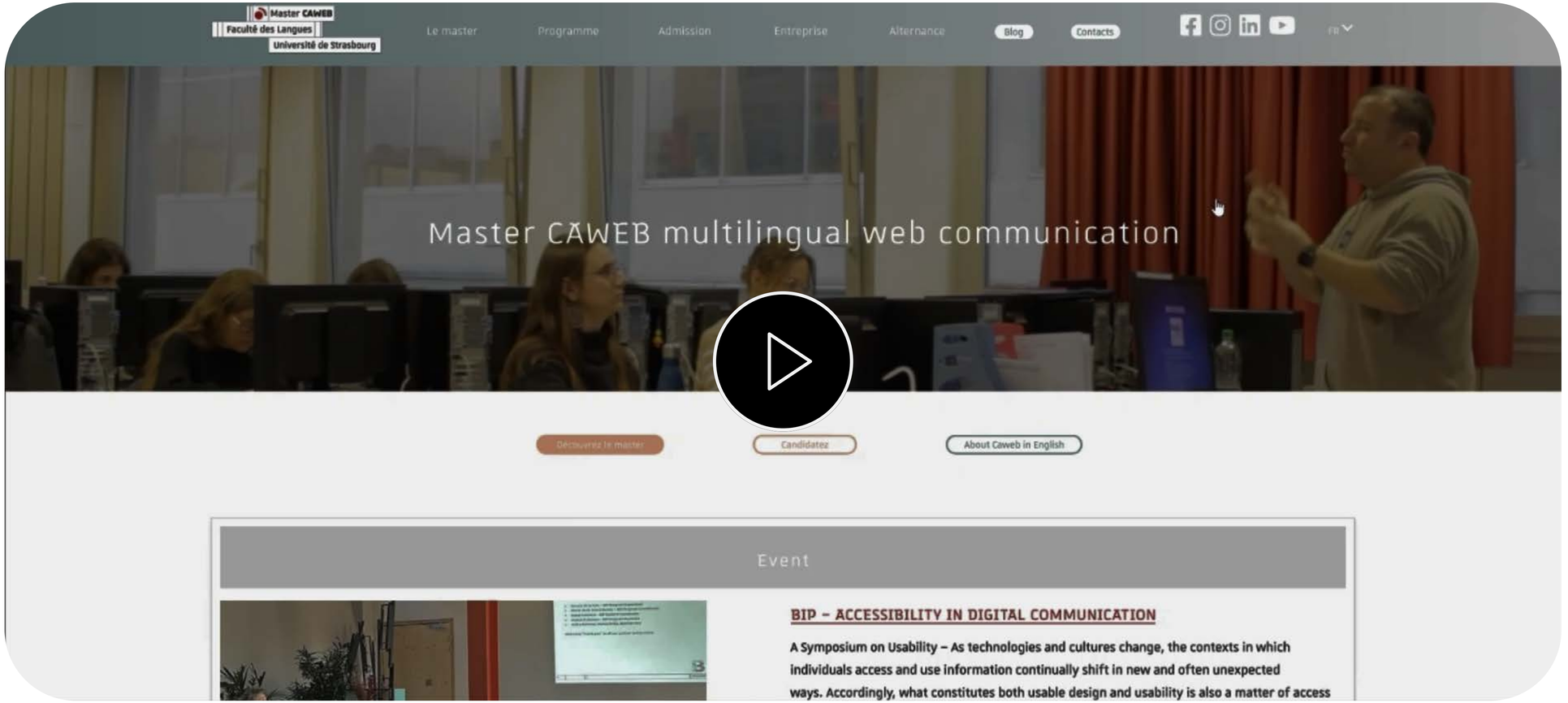
Do’s & Don’ts in Web Design

05

Do’s & Don’ts in Web Design

Examples of what to avoid and how to handle it.

Start reading


Master CAWEB
Faculté des Langues
Université de Strasbourg
Le master
Programme
Admission
Entreprise
Alternance
Blog
Contacts
FR
Master CAWEB multilingual web communication
Découvrez le master
Candidatez
About Caweb in English
Event
BIP – ACCESSIBILITY IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION
A Symposium on Usability – As technologies and cultures change, the contexts in which individuals access and use information continually shift in new and often unexpected ways. Accordingly, what constitutes both usable design and usability is also a matter of access

Watch Video

Previous Video Transcript

[Scene: Overwhelming, cluttered, non-accessible website screen]
Voice (calm):

"When you look at this page, what do you see?"

"You might notice this image over there, or this content block here..."

[Scene: hover some elements]

Voice:
"Maybe you’re able to see this site exactly how it appears."
"But not everyone sees it the same way you do."

[Scene: The same webpage appears, but nearly empty]

Voice:
"This is how this site would look like if you only leave the accessible parts."
"Not much left, huh?"

Voice:
"Let’s list what’s wrong together."
[Scene: The overwhelming, cluttered, non-accessible website screen is back on screen]

Voice (each point delivered with a pause, as items are highlighted or shown disappearing):

"Low-contrast colors make text unreadable for many."
"Ensure color contrast meets accessibility standards."

[Scene: The low contrast colors change for more suitable ones]
"Clickable areas are too small or fiddly—hard for users with motor impairments."

"Make actions easy to click for people with motor impairments."
[Scene: Button size increases, spacing added]

"Font sizes so small, they're barely legible."

[Scene: The font size increases]

"No alt text on images and links—screen readers can’t describe them."
"To make more people visualize this image, describe it with an alt text."

[Scene: A code window appears; <img src="image.jpg" alt="Team working around a laptop">]

[Scene: The whole site now looks cleaner, accessible, and clear]

Voice:
“Now by just simply take this in mind, you should have a more accessible webpage.
"When you create a website, see it like others would."

[Scene: A cover page appear with “Accessibility Audit Handbook Group 2” written on it]

Next Topic

Do’s & Don’ts in Web Design

06

Glossary

A handy list of web slang and key accessibility terms. Perfect for speaking the same language as developers and designers.

Start reading

Foundational Concepts

These terms help understand what accessibility is and why it matters.

Accessibility (a11y)
The practice of designing websites, tools, and content so that everyone — including people with disabilities — can use them.

Disability
Any condition of the body or mind that limits a person's ability to perform certain activities or interact with the world around them.

Neurodiversity
A term that describes the natural differences in how people think and process information. It includes autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other cognitive variations — viewed as part of human diversity, not disorders.

Autistic
Sometimes called "autism spectrum disorder", "ASD", "autism", "asperger syndrome", and "pervasive developmental disorder".
Autistic people have some degree of impaired social behavior, communication and language abilities. This may also impact the person's ability to regulate behavior and attention. Individuals can have a narrow range of interests and activities and they may rely on alternative communication methods. Some individuals may also experience episodes of sensory overload. See neurodiversity for an alternative approach to autism and learning and cognitive disabilities.

Cognitive Load
The amount of mental effort needed to process information. Reducing it improves accessibility for users with cognitive or learning disabilities.

Color Contrast
The brightness difference between text and background. High contrast makes reading easier, especially for users with vision impairments.

Accessibility Guidelines & Standards

These help define how to make websites accessible in a measurable and structured way.

WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)
A global standard that explains how to make web content more accessible. It has three levels: A (basic), AA (standard), and AAA (enhanced).

POUR Principles:
This acronym is formed by the words Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, Robust. The foundation of WCAG:

Perceivable:
Users must be able to perceive content with their senses (e.g., see or hear it).

Operable:
Navigation and controls must be usable in different ways (e.g., keyboard).

Understandable:
Content and UI must be easy to comprehend.

Robust:
Content should work across a wide range of devices and assistive technologies.

Tools & Technologies That Support Accessibility

These help users with disabilities access and interact with digital content.

Assistive Technology
Tools like screen readers, voice input, or adaptive keyboards that help people interact with websites.

Screen Reader
Software that reads text and describes on-screen elements to users who are blind or visually impaired.

Keyboard Navigation
The ability to move through a website using only a keyboard — crucial for users who can’t use a mouse.

Alt Text (Alternative Text)
Descriptions added to images so screen readers can explain them to users who can’t see them.

ARIA (Accessible Rich Internet Applications)
Special code that helps screen readers understand dynamic or complex content like menus or tabs.

Captions & Transcripts
Text versions of audio or video content for users who are deaf or hard of hearing.

UX, UI & Website Structure Terms

These relate to how content is organized and presented in an accessible way.

User Experience (UX)
The overall experience someone has when interacting with a product or website — including how easy, intuitive, or pleasant it feels.

User Interface (UI)
The visual and interactive elements (like buttons or menus) that allow users to engage with a website.

Information Architecture
The way content is organized and labeled on a website to help users understand and navigate it easily.

Taxonomy
The classification system used to structure website content into logical categories and subcategories.

Content Cluster
A group of related content pieces that help users explore similar or featured topics.

Performance & Platform Support

Supporting accessibility also means ensuring your site is fast and easy to manage.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
Techniques to help search engines find and rank your content. Accessibility improvements often boost SEO too.

Web Performance Optimization (WPO)
Improving load speed and responsiveness — good for both users and accessibility.

Plugin
A small software add-on that extends the features or functionality of a website, often without needing to code. Common in platforms like WordPress, plugins can add tools for SEO, forms, security, accessibility, and more.

WordPress Content Management System (CMS)
A popular platform for building and managing websites. It can be optimized for accessibility using themes, plugins, and proper content practices.

Understanding Accessibility in Web Design

Blended Intensive Programme
Accessibility in Digital Communication 2025

Tutor:
Marie-Aude Sourd

Content & Design:
Juan Calleja Casado
Kelly Chaussard
Carlos De Luis Fita
Chloe Fallon Gaudichon
Caroline Grasser
Alicja Han
Zofia Margraf
Alessandro Muzio
Cylia Nafa
Oscar Daniel Gómez Palacio