

WCAG 2.0 & Beyond

Modernizing Web Accessibility

 3PLAYMEDIA

© 2023 All Rights Reserved

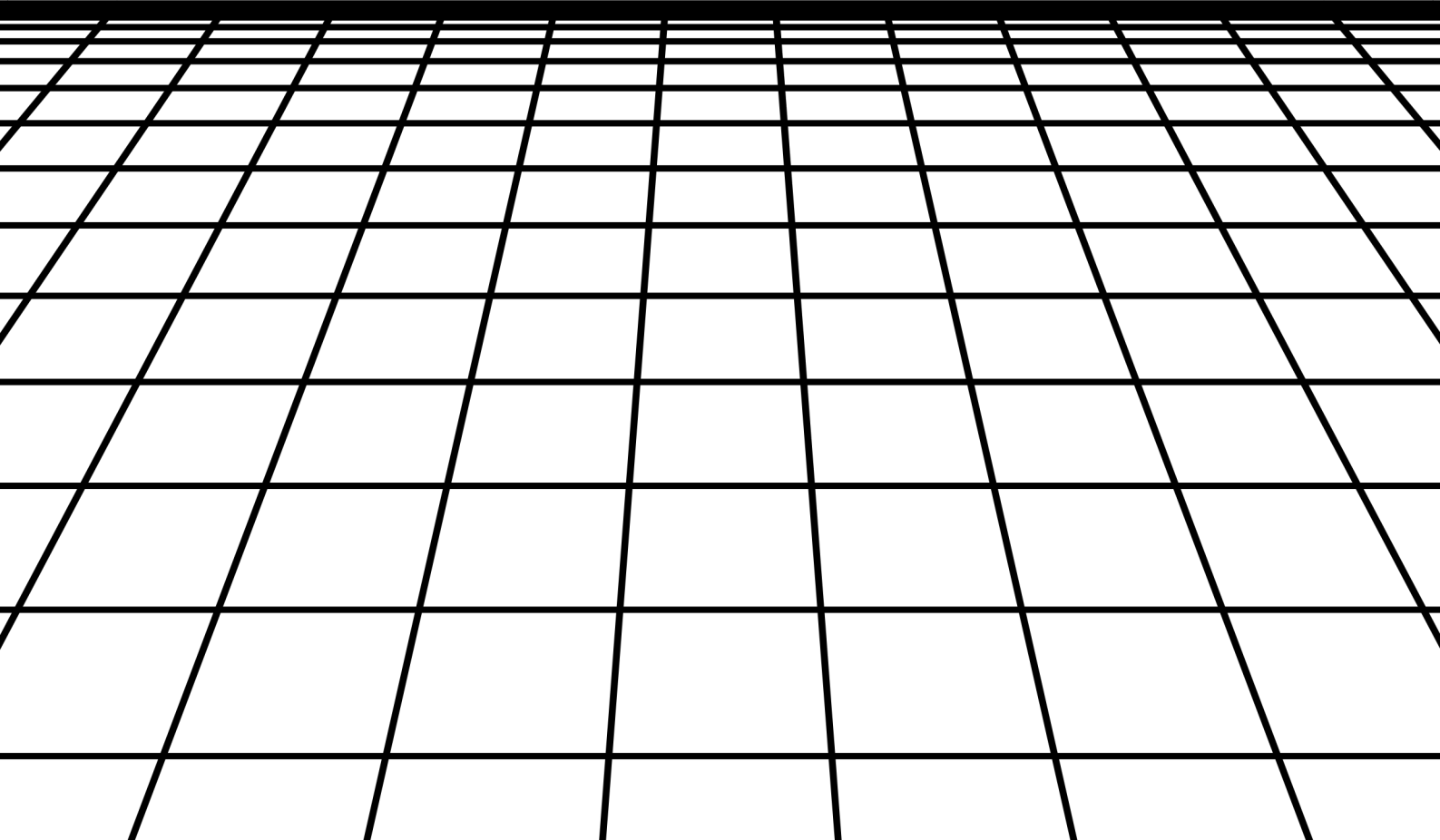
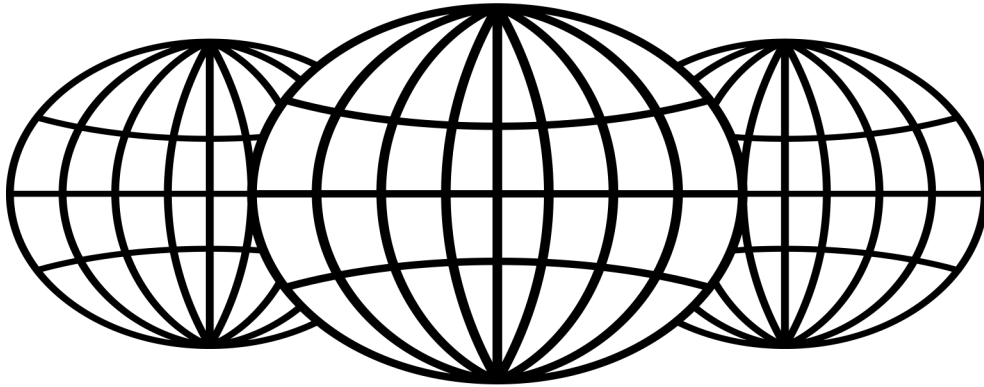


Table of Contents



Introduction	<u>3</u>
What is WCAG?	<u>5</u>
What is WCAG 2.0?	<u>7</u>
What is WCAG 2.1?	<u>15</u>
WCAG & the Law	<u>19</u>
Global Web Accessibility Standards	<u>25</u>
Conclusion	<u>37</u>
Resources	<u>38</u>
About 3Play Media	<u>39</u>

Introduction

With digital accessibility lawsuits on the rise, compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is crucial for any organization with a web presence.

However, WCAG requirements can be intimidating to wade through for novices and experts alike. With a number of compliance levels, principles, guidelines, and success criteria, developers and other stakeholders sometimes struggle with keeping all of the WCAG requirements straight and determining what is truly necessary for compliance.

In this eBook, we aim to help clarify WCAG's compliance needs and measurements for success. We'll cover what WCAG is, how levels 2.0 and 2.1 work, touch on some key differences, explore laws that reference the guidelines, and showcase its impact on countries across the globe.

Get ready to discover how WCAG versions 2.0 and beyond are modernizing web accessibility worldwide!



This eBook is written for educational and general information purposes only, and does not constitute specific legal advice. This eBook should not be used as a substitute for competent legal advice from a licensed professional attorney in your state.



71%

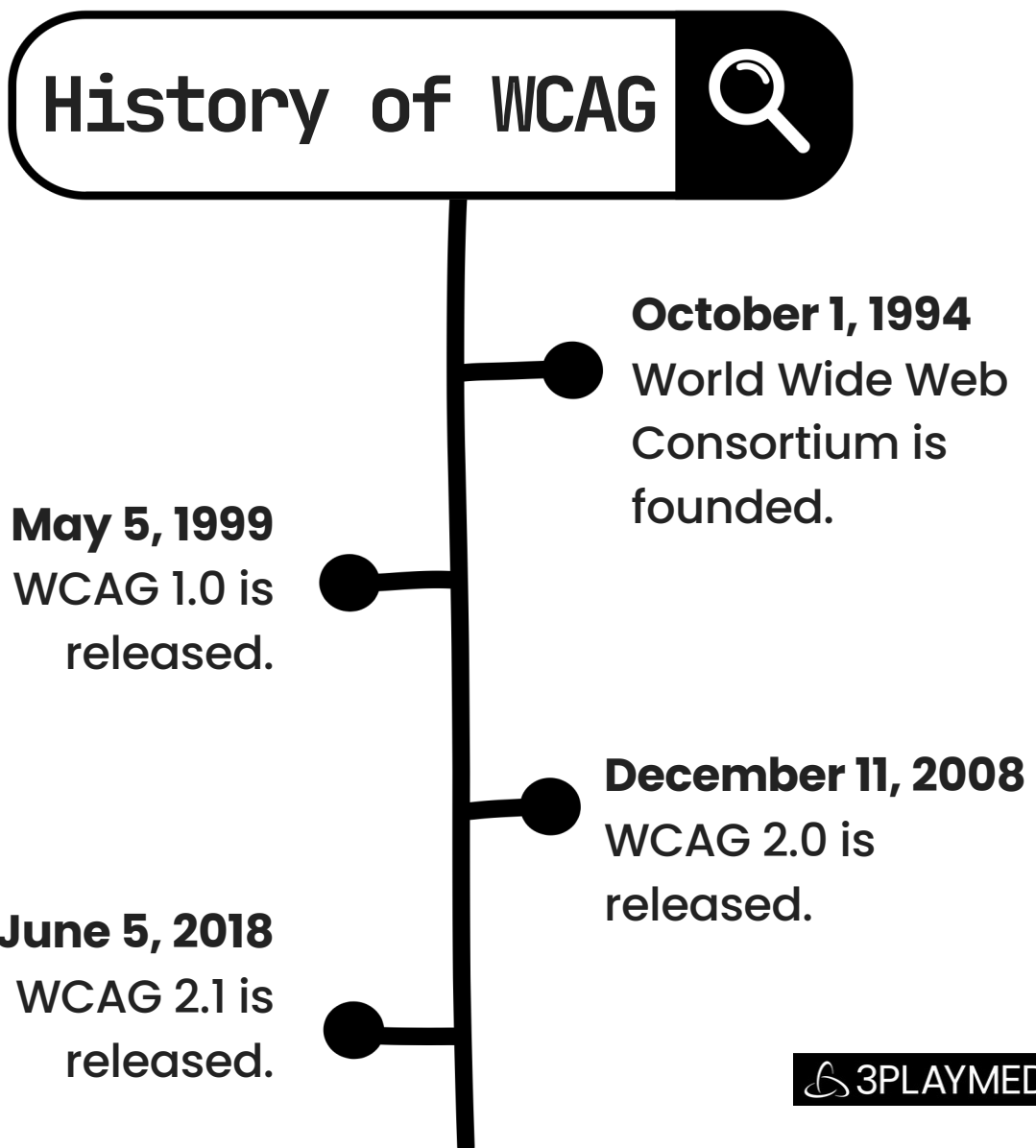
of people with disabilities
leave a website immediately
if it is not accessible.

Source: MediaAccess

What is WCAG?

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, or WCAG, is a set of guidelines for making digital content accessible for all users, including those with disabilities. WCAG was developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) nearly 30 years ago.

WCAG has been continuously developed and updated, and has a few different versions. In this eBook, we will primarily focus on the two most relevant standards: **WCAG 2.0** and **WCAG 2.1**. These standards are most frequently referenced in laws and legal settlements across the world as the baseline for web accessibility.





WCAG Versions, Explained

WCAG 1.0

Uses guidelines. Each guideline has a checkpoint, which are priority 1, 2, or 3.

WCAG 2.0

Uses four design principles. Each principle has a guideline. Each guideline has a success criteria level A, AA, or AAA.

WCAG 2.1

WCAG 2.1 is backwards compatible with WCAG 2.0. The 2.0 success criteria are the same as in 2.1, but 2.1 has additional guidelines. W3C recommends organizations strive to meet WCAG 2.1 if possible.

WCAG 2.2

WCAG 2.2 is considered a draft as of September 2023. The current draft is backwards compatible with versions 2.0 and 2.1, with additional guidelines as well as the removal of 4.1.1 Parsing. W3C expects to publish 2.2 as a recommendation once its standards are finalized.

What is WCAG 2.0?

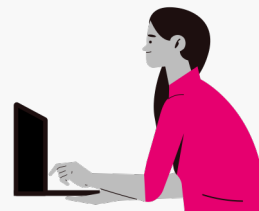
WCAG 2.0 follows four essential principles of accessibility: perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust. These are also referred to as the POUR Principles.

Perceivable



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

Operable



User interface components and navigation must be operable.

Understandable



Information and the operation of a user interface must be understandable.

Robust



Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

Levels of Compliance

Each guideline under WCAG 2.0 has a level of compliance assigned to each success criteria associated with it – Level A, AA, or AAA.

Level A

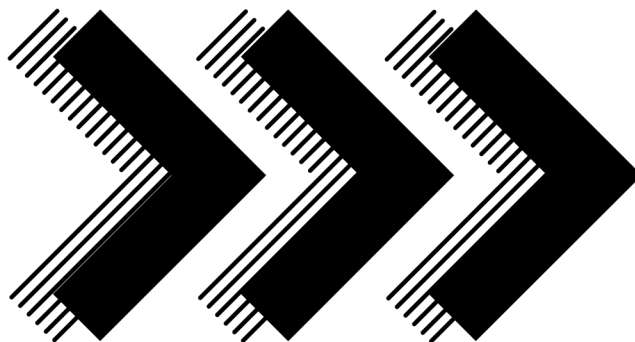
The highest priority and usually easiest to achieve.

Level AA

More comprehensive and often cited as the standard to meet.

Level AAA

The strictest, most comprehensive accessible design standard, and therefore, the least common level to meet.





An average of

50.0

web accessibility errors were present on each of the top 1 million home pages across the internet in 2023.

Source: WebAIM

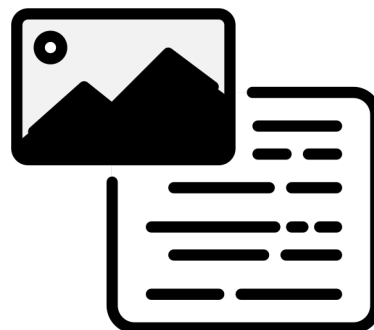


WCAG 2.0 Standards

WCAG 2.0 follows the POUR principles and includes 12 guidelines scattered across each principle. Each guideline includes success criteria for compliance.

Text Alternatives

Non-text content must have text alternatives, such as alt text, transcripts, and CAPTCHA alternatives.

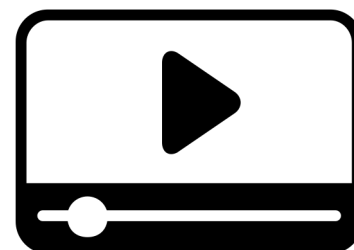


Why?

Non-text content can be converted into other forms people need such as braille, large print, speech, symbols, or simpler language.

Time-Based Media (Video Alternatives)

Provide alternatives to video and audio, such as captions, transcripts, and audio description.



Why?

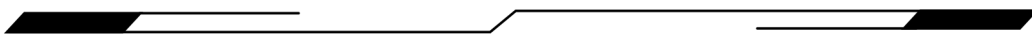
Assures content can be accessed by D/deaf, hard of hearing, blind, and low vision users.

Adaptable

Create content that can be presented in different ways without losing structure or information.

Why?

To ensure content can be converted into other forms people need through software.

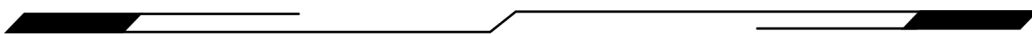
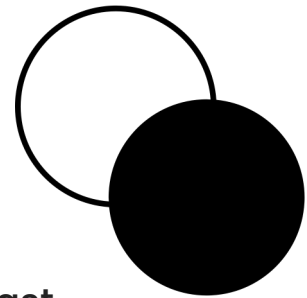


Distinguishable

Make it easier for users to see and read content.

Why?

To ensure content is presented with sufficient contrast between background and foreground.

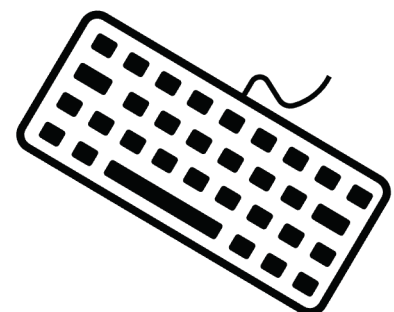


Keyboard Accessible

Make all functionality available from a keyboard.

Why?

Keyboard accessibility is the most flexible and universally supported method for navigation. It also ensures content can also be accessed through speech input, mouse, and assistive technologies.



Enough Time

Provide users with enough time to read and use content.

Why?

This guideline ensures individuals can complete tasks with their own individual response times.



Seizures & Physical Reactions

Do not design content that might trigger a seizure.

Why?

This guideline protects people who have photosensitive epilepsy and more.

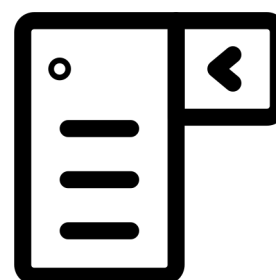


Navigable

Provide multiple, intuitive ways for users to navigate content.

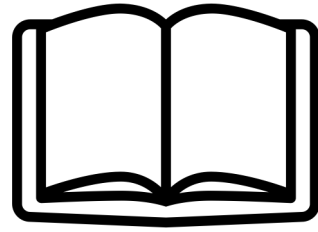
Why?

To help users find the content they need and track their location.



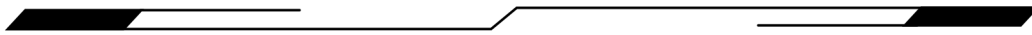
Readable

Make content easily readable and understandable, both visually and cognitively.



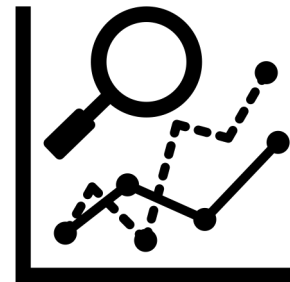
Why?

This guideline ensures text content can be read by users and assistive technologies.



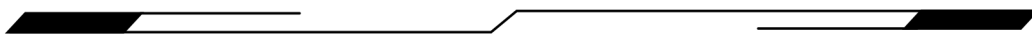
Predictable

Make pages appear and operate in predictable ways.



Why?

This guideline ensures uniformity for how web pages behave and function throughout the web.



Input Assistance

Help users to avoid making mistakes; make corrections easy.

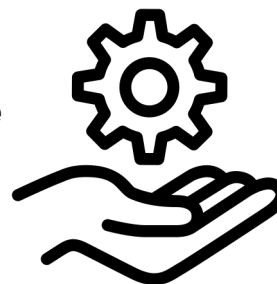


Why?

It can be hard for people with disabilities to correct or detect errors.

Compatible

Maximize compatibility across devices and make sure content is compatible with assistive technologies.



Why?

To support compatibility with current and future user agents like assistive devices, desktops, tablets, mobile, etc.

Success Criteria & Sufficient and Advisory Techniques

Under each guideline, success criteria are provided to allow WCAG 2.0 to be used where requirements and conformance testing are needed. Success criteria have associated levels of conformance (A, AA, or AAA) to help you understand the most critical web accessibility needs.

[Learn more about Success Criteria conformance for WCAG.](#)

For each guideline and success criteria, WCAG additionally contains techniques for meeting them. Sufficient techniques are considered to be reliable ways to meet success criteria. Advisory techniques are suggested ways to meet success criteria. Advisory techniques may not be sufficient to meet the full requirements of a given success criteria, but can often be helpful to some users who would not be able to access web content otherwise.

[Learn more about Techniques for WCAG Success Criteria.](#)

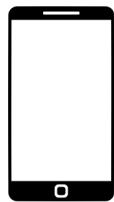
What is WCAG 2.1?

WCAG 2.1 was released June 5, 2018, and is the W3C's current recommendation for organizations to follow.

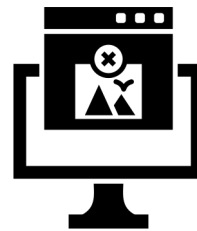
WCAG 2.1 is backwards compatible to WCAG 2.0. It follows the same structure, principles, and compliance levels as WCAG 2.0.

WCAG 2.1 includes 17 additional standards that benefit individuals with cognitive or learning disabilities, users with low vision, and all mobile users.

2.1 Highlights



Includes mobile accessibility guidelines



Places limits on interruptions, like pop-ups



Improves navigation technology to reduce clicking on incorrect links or buttons



New standards to benefit low vision users like 400% zoom, 3:1 contrast level, and better labeling

WCAG 2.1 Updates

Perceivable

Adaptable

- 1.3.4 Orientation (AA)
- 1.3.5 Identify Input Purpose (AA)
- 1.3.6 Identify Purpose (AAA)

Distinguishable

- 1.4.10 Reflow (AA)
- 1.4.11 Non-Text Contrast (AA)
- 1.4.12 Text Spacing (AA)
- 1.4.13 Content on Hover or Focus (AA)

Operable

Keyboard Accessible

- 2.1.4 Character Key Shortcuts (A)

Enough Time

- 2.2.6 Timeouts (AAA)

Seizures & Physical Reactions

- 2.3.3 Animation from Interactions (AAA)

Input Modalities



NEW GUIDELINE IN 2.1!

- 2.5.1 Pointer Gestures (A)
- 2.5.2 Pointer Cancellation (A)
- 2.5.3 Label in Name (A)
- 2.5.4 Motion Actuation (A)
- 2.5.5 Target Size (AAA)
- 2.5.6 Concurrent Input Mechanisms (AAA)

Robust

Compatible

- 4.1.3 Status Messages (AA)

Which Level of Compliance Should I Strive For?

If you hear the term “WCAG compliant,” there’s a good chance it’s referring to WCAG 2.0 or 2.1 Level AA. For years, WCAG 2.0 Level AA has been considered the standard for web accessibility.

WCAG 2.0 Level AA is the most commonly referenced standard in accessibility laws and policies around the globe. 2.0 Level AA compliance is written into Section 508, and is also a best practice for government websites in the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

To achieve WCAG 2.0 Level AA conformance, Level A standards must also be met. Web designers are recommended to meet at least WCAG Level A and Level AA compliance.

As for AAA compliance, W3C recognizes that most organizations simply won't be able to achieve Level AAA success in some cases, stating:

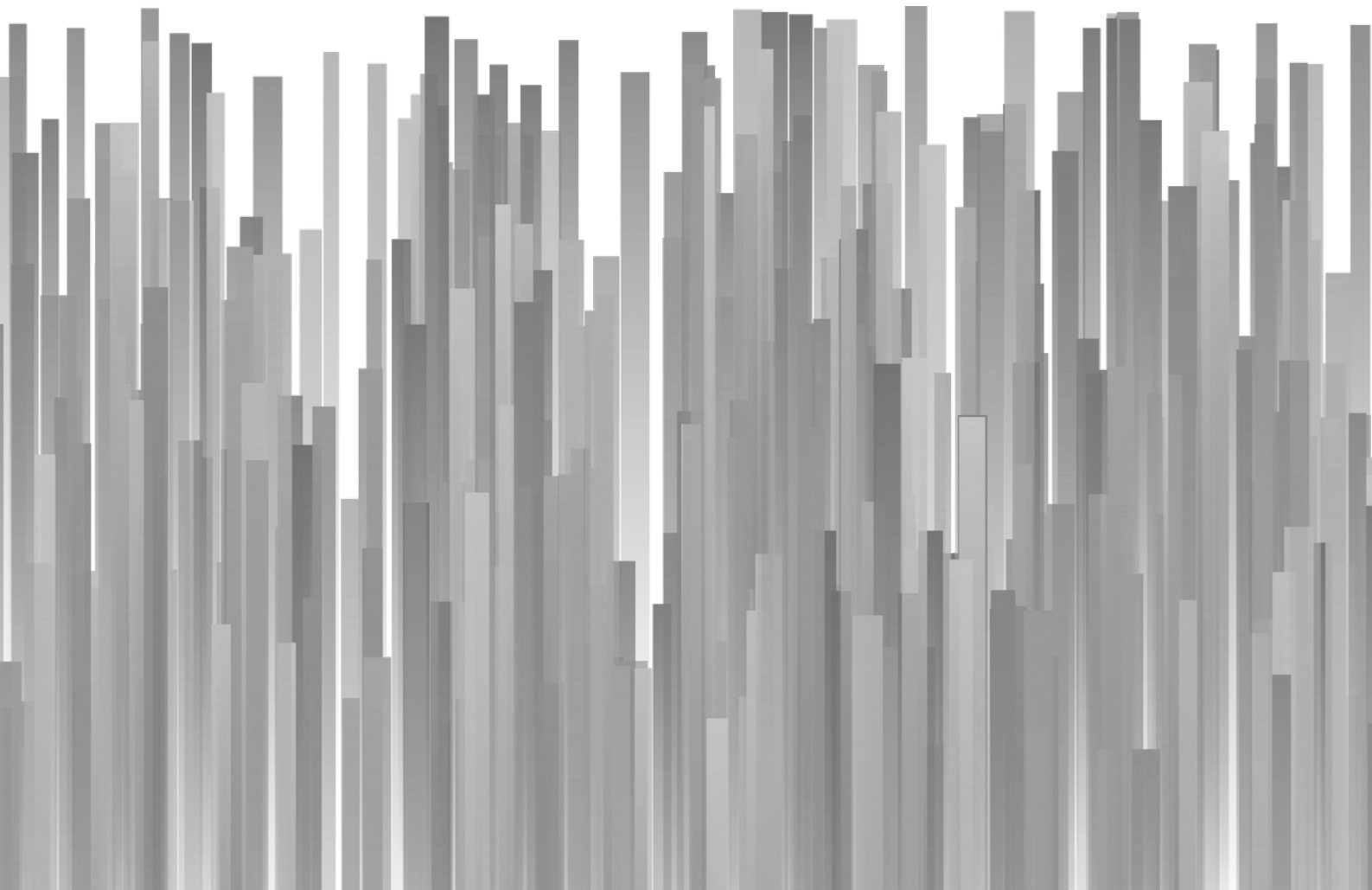
“It is not recommended that Level AAA conformance be required as a general policy for entire sites because it is not possible to satisfy all Level AAA Success Criteria for some content.”



**Web accessibility
lawsuits jumped**

74%

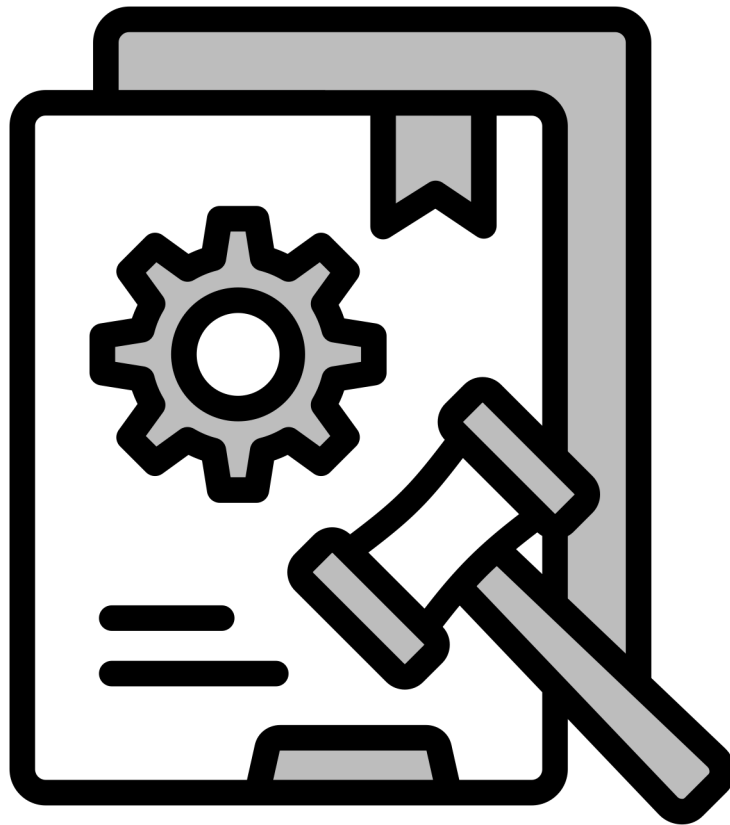
between 2018 and 2022.



WCAG & the Law

While there has been progress in advancing digital access for all, many disability-focused laws still lag behind in terms of directly addressing web accessibility.

In the U.S., lawmakers recognize this and often reference WCAG 2.0 AA or WCAG 2.1 AA in legislative updates and documents like "Dear Colleague" letters.



These legal callouts have set a precedent in numerous ADA-based cases, establishing WCAG as the standard for organizations to follow, as it provides the most comprehensive web accessibility guidelines available today.

Section 508

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that all information technology must be accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and the public.

Section 508 requires compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level A and Level AA.

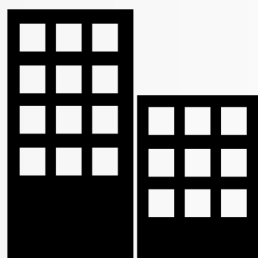
Does Section 508 apply to you?



Federal departments
& agencies



State governments
through "little 508s"



Organizations with
institutional 508
requirements

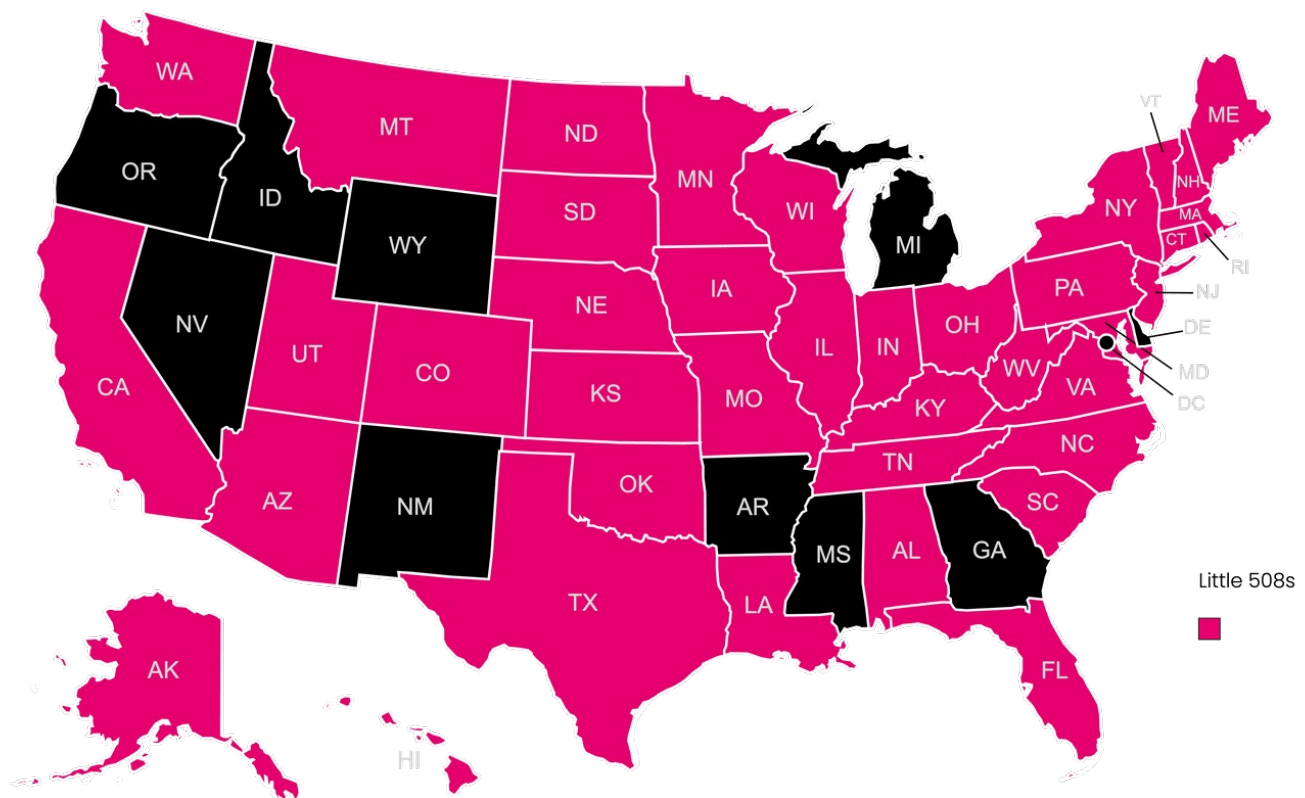


Grants that require
508 compliance

"Little 508s"

States whose accessibility laws reference Section 508 and/or WCAG compliance include:

Alabama	Iowa	Nebraska	South Carolina
Alaska	Kansas	New Hampshire	South Dakota
Arizona	Kentucky	New Jersey	Tennessee
California	Louisiana	New York	Texas
Colorado	Maine	North Carolina	Utah
Connecticut	Maryland	North Dakota	Vermont
Florida	Massachusetts	Ohio	Virginia
Hawaii	Minnesota	Oklahoma	Washington
Illinois	Missouri	Pennsylvania	West Virginia
Indiana	Montana	Rhode Island	Wisconsin



AODA

In Canada, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was instated in 2005 with the intention of creating a barrier-free Ontario by 2025. The AODA applies to government, public, and private sectors, including:

- Customer service
- Employment
- Information and communications
- Transportation
- Design of public spaces

Under AODA's Information and Communications Standards, organizations must make their websites and web-based apps accessible. Organizations must do so by making their websites (including video) compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

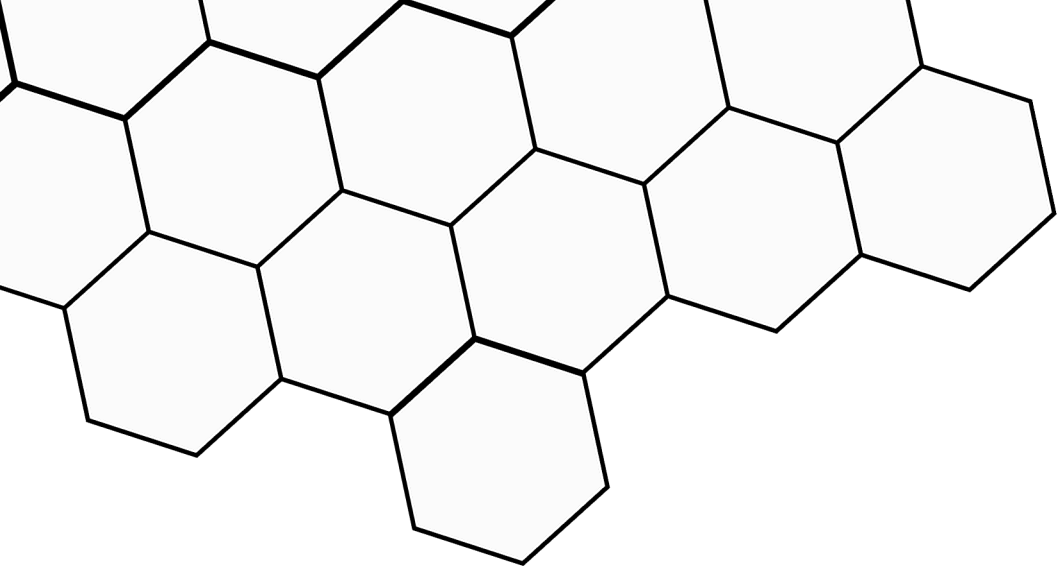
Looking Ahead

Further web and streaming-focused accessibility guidelines are on the horizon in the U.S., with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) recently announcing its intent to strengthen web and mobile accessibility under Title II of the ADA.

[Details of the proposed rule](#) were made available on August 3, 2023. Read the full [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking \(NPRM\)](#) or review the [ADA's Fact Sheet on the NPRM](#).

Based on past lawsuits and aforementioned settlements, most experts anticipated that U.S. guidelines would draw from WCAG 2.0 or 2.1 Level AA standards, and the NPRM does in fact reference **WCAG 2.1 Level AA** as the technical standard state and local governments would need to follow.

It is important to remember that this proposed rule is just that... for now. The DOJ is soliciting feedback about the proposal through October 3, 2023, and encourages folks to submit their thoughts via [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) or directly mailing comments to the DOJ.

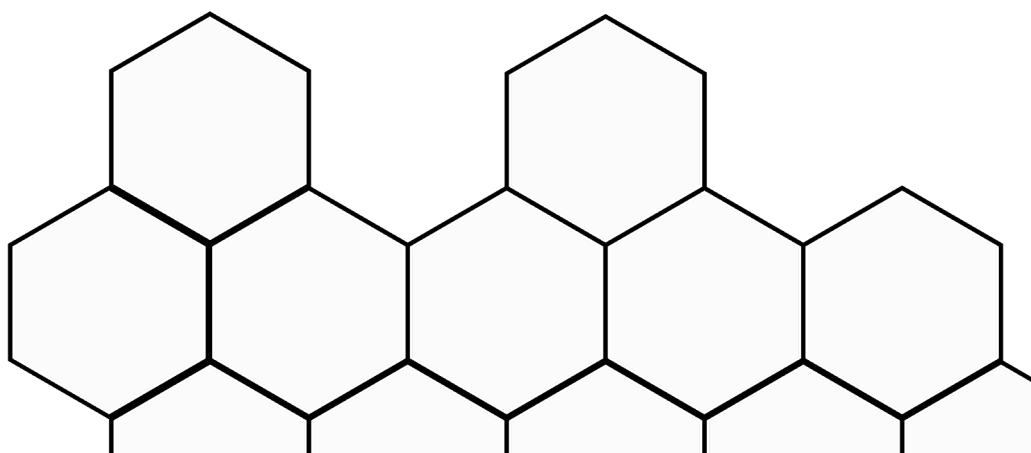



Should I comply with WCAG version 2.0 or 2.1?

Most North American laws, such as Section 508 and AODA, currently mention WCAG 2.0 compliance. But in recent years, WCAG 2.1 has started making its way into proposed legislative updates and other guidelines.

WCAG 2.0 AA remains the primary standard that most organizations should meet. At this time, only if a law explicitly states that web developers have to adapt to the newest WCAG version, are you required to make your content WCAG 2.1 compliant.

The W3C does suggest that any new websites should be created following WCAG 2.1 guidelines since they are more inclusive and mobile friendly. Many organizations are beginning to move towards meeting WCAG 2.1 to align with the W3C's suggestions and emerging legal updates.





**In the first half of
2023, ADA lawsuits
against companies
using accessibility
widgets or overlays
increased by**

24%

compared to 2022.

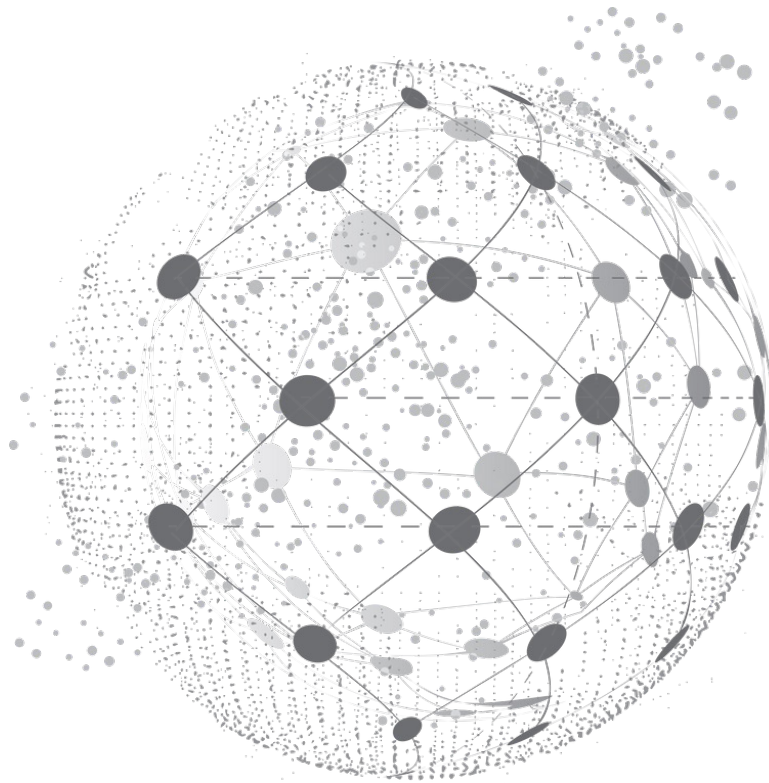
Source: UsableNet

Global Web Accessibility Standards

Around the world, a number of countries have adopted some form of WCAG in their respective accessibility laws.

Some, such as Canada and Israel, require conformance with WCAG 2.0. Others, like the United States and Japan, do not require WCAG, but reference it in legislation or have implemented similar/equivalent guidelines.

Below, we'll take a look at how WCAG is being implemented in certain countries by region.



Kenya



Standard: WCAG 2.1 Level AA, Level AAA encouraged when possible

Legislation: Kenya Standard DKS2952-1:2021 (Public Draft)

Requirements: Government Information and Communication Technology should follow WCAG 2.1 Level AA and Level AAA when possible.

South Africa



Standard: WCAG derivative

Legislation: Website accessibility – Government Communication and Information System

Requirements: Government websites are encouraged to follow a set of guidelines derivative of WCAG. W3C is referenced directly, but no specific version is stated.

China

Standard: WCAG 2.0 derivative

Legislation: Voluntary Web Accessibility Standards

Requirements: Agencies, ministries and other governmental entities must comply with WCAG 2.0 derivative.

Hong Kong

Standard: WCAG 2.0 Level AA

Legislation: Guidelines on Dissemination of Information through Government Websites

Requirements: Government departments and bureaus must comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA guidelines.

India

Standard: WCAG 2.0 Level A

Legislation: Guidelines for Indian Government Websites

Amendment to Rule 15(1) to add Indian Standards 17802 Parts 1 and 2 issued by Bureau of Indian Standards (under active consideration as of April 2023)

Requirements: Government agencies must comply with WCAG 2.0. Proposed amendment to align with EU and WCAG 2.1 guidelines is under active consideration.

Japan



Standard: WCAG 2.0 Level AA equivalent

Legislation: Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS) 8341-3

Requirements: Public sector websites must conform to JIS 8341-3 standards, which are equivalent to WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

Republic of Korea



Standard: WCAG 2.0 Level A derivative

Legislation: Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities

Korean Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1

Requirements: Guidelines for public and private sector use a WCAG 2.0 derivative.

Taiwan



Standard: WCAG 2.0

Legislation: Web Accessibility Guidelines 2.0

Requirements: Public sector must adhere to WCAG 2.0 equivalent guidelines.



Aotearoa New Zealand

Standard: WCAG 2.1 Level AA

Legislation: Web Accessibility Standard 1.1

Web Usability Standard 1.3

Requirements: Government websites must comply with WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards.

Australia

Standard: WCAG 2.0 Level AA

Legislation: Disability Discrimination Act

Procurement Standard Guidance

Digital Service Standard

Requirements: All government websites should comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

European Union

Standard: WCAG 2.0 Level AA derivative

Legislation: European Accessibility Act

Web Accessibility Directive

Requirements: All new EUROPA websites must be compliant with WCAG 2.0. Many individual countries part of the European Union have separate ally laws referencing WCAG principles and compliance levels, including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

United Kingdom

Standard: WCAG 2.1 Level AA

Legislation: The Equality Act (2010)

UK Government guidance on digital accessibility

Requirements: Required for all UK government websites.

Other UK websites need to comply with Equality Act. No specific standard is mentioned in the law, but the UK Government references and suggests meeting 2.1 Level AA.

Israel



Standard: WCAG 2.0 Level AA

Legislation: Internet Accessibility Standard (Israel Standard 5668 Part 1)

Requirements: Both private and public entities providing services online are required to adhere to WCAG 2.0 Level AA guidelines.

Oman



Standard: WCAG 2.0

Legislation: ITA e-Accessibility Policy 5.1

Requirements: Government websites and e-services shall comply with W3C WCAG 2.0 guidelines. Policy may not be applicable to government functions that are related to national defence or national security.

Qatar



Standard: WCAG 2.0 Level AA

Legislation: Qatar's eAccessibility Policy (2011)

Requirements: All public-service Government websites must comply with WCAG 2.0, conformance level AA.

United Arab Emirates

Standard: WCAG 2.0 and 2.1 Level AA, 1.0 for some

Legislation: National Policy to Empower People of Determination, Pillar 4.2

Requirements: Government public service websites are committed to support of persons with disabilities and to comply with WCAG 2.0 and WCAG 2.1 Level AA.

Some Government public-service websites comply with W3C Best Practices and Guidelines version 1.0.

North America



Canada

Standard: WCAG 2.0 Level AA

Legislation: Policy on Communications and Federal Identity
Canadian Human Rights Act
Ontario:
Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
Quebec:
Standards sur l'accessibilit  du Web

Requirements: All government agencies must adhere to WCAG 2.0

Ontario: New public websites and web content must meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

Quebec: Custom made standard based on WCAG 2.0 with specifics covering websites, downloadable documents and multimedia.

United States

Standard: WCAG 2.0 Level AA

Legislation: Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
State Laws
Americans with Disabilities Act (digital accessibility update proposed)

Requirements: US federal agencies and department websites must comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

Certain states reference Section 508 or WCAG compliance.



Argentina

Standard: WCAG 2.0

Legislation: Ley de Accesibilidad de la Informacion en las Paginas Web

Requirements: Public sector websites must meet WCAG 2.0 standards.

Brazil

Standard: WCAG 2.1

Legislation: Article 63 of the Statute of Persons with Disabilities

Requirements: WCAG 2.1 standards for websites maintained by government bodies and companies with headquarters or commercial representation in Brazil.

Chile

Standard: WCAG 2.1

Legislation: Guía Técnica Para la Implementación de Sitios Web Accesibles per Servicio Nacional de la Discapacidad (SENADIS)

Requirements: Guidance for government websites points to latest version of WCAG (currently 2.1).

Colombia

Standard: WCAG 2.0

Legislation: Colombian Technical Standard (NTC) 5854

Requirements: Government websites must follow WCAG 2.0 and use A, AA, AAA levels to measure degree of conformance.

Ecuador

Standard: WCAG 2.0

Legislation: Ecuadorian Technical Standard NTE INEN ISO/IEC 40500:2012

Requirements: Any private or public organization that offers public services must meet WCAG 2.0 standards.

Peru

Standard: WCAG 1.0

Legislation: Ley General de la Persona con Discapacidad y su Reglamento

Requirements: Web pages under the public institution of Peru's National Information System must meet WCAG 1.0.

Uruguay

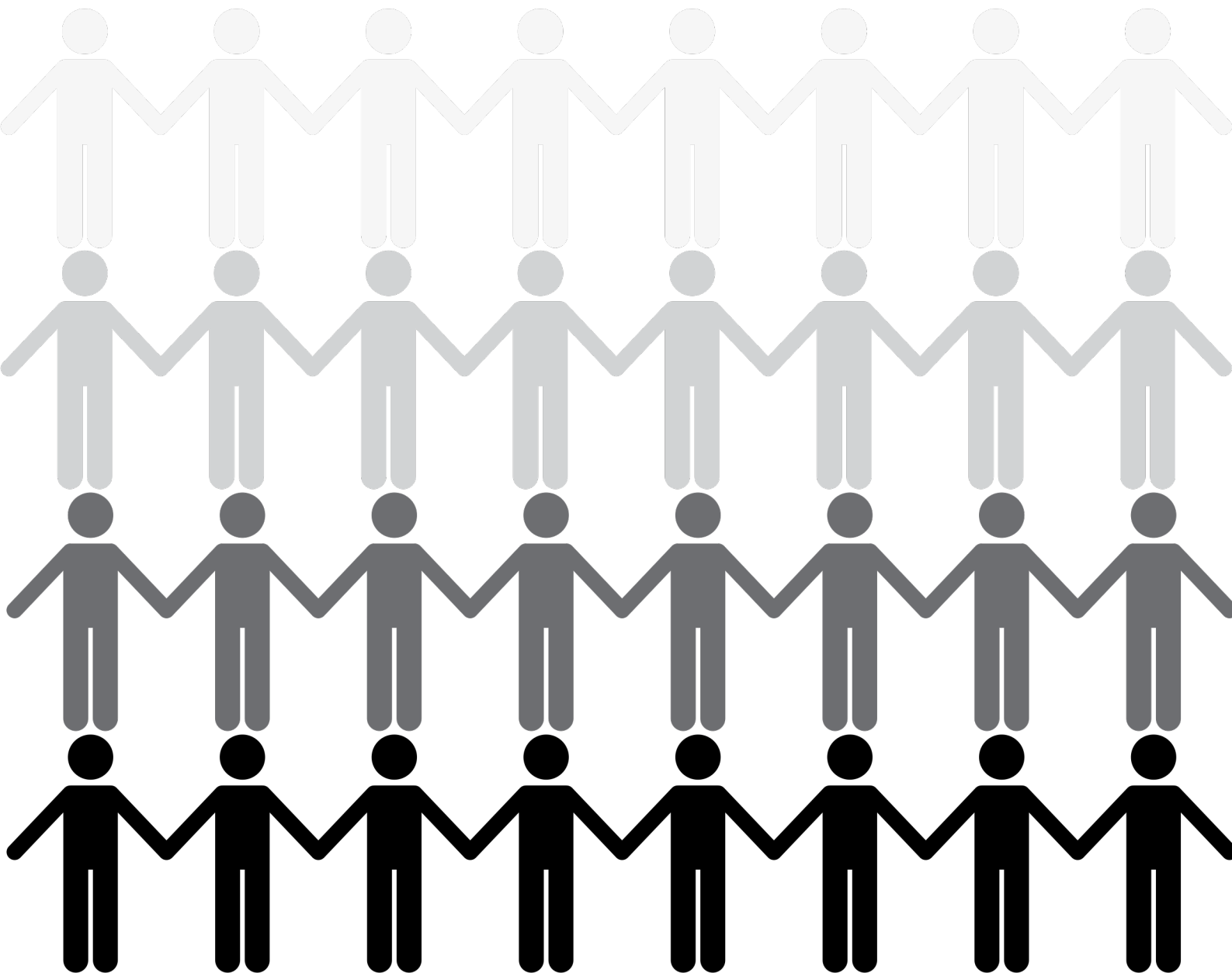
Standard: WCAG 2.1 Levels A and AA

Legislation: Decreto N° 406/022, Artículo 5

Requirements: Government websites must conform to WCAG 2.1 Level A or AA to meet accessibility compliance.

2.5 billion

people use assistive products
and technology worldwide



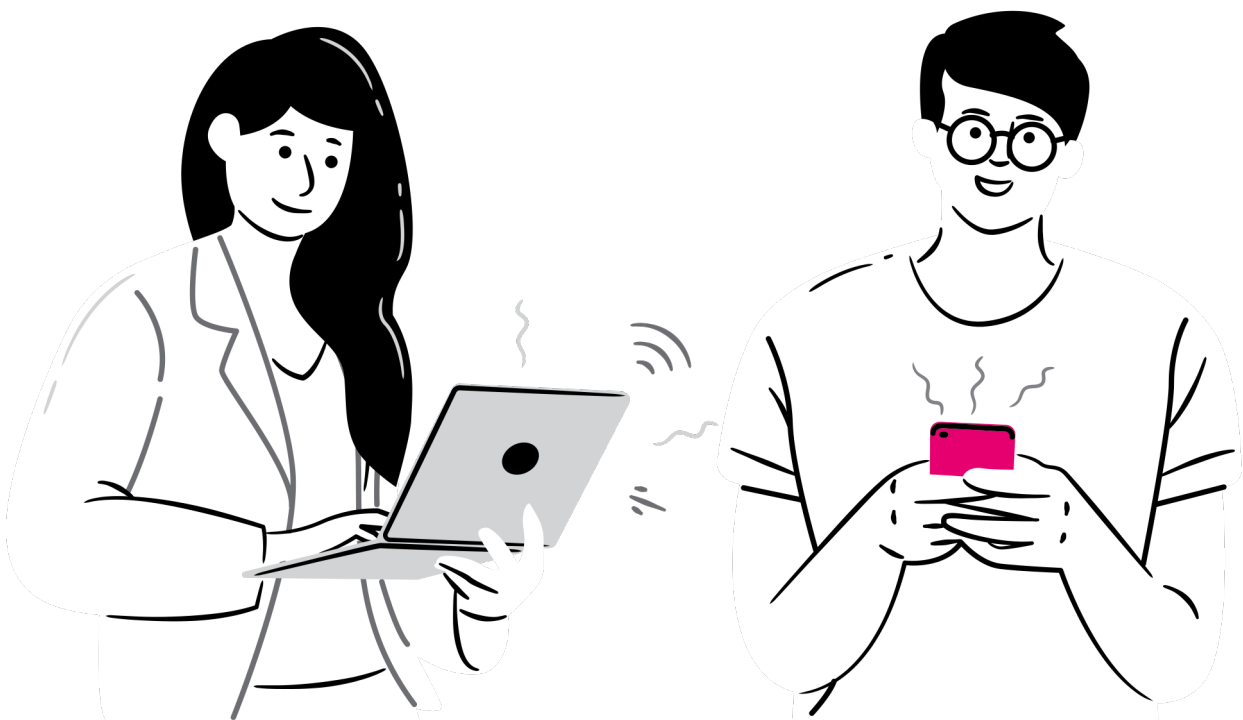
Conclusion

WCAG was created to make the digital world more accessible to all. With over 1 billion people in the world with some form of a recognized disability, it's imperative for organizations to prioritize accessible digital experiences.

By implementing WCAG 2.0 or 2.1 Level AA-compliant website features, businesses, public entities, and individuals alike can ensure:

- Accessibility is never an afterthought
- Equal access is provided to all
- Legal risks are minimized
- Market reach expands to billions of users

Committing to web accessibility can help your digital presence thrive. It is not only a social responsibility, but a strategic decision that allows everyone to succeed in the digital age.



Resources

WCAG

[A Practical Guide to WCAG Video Accessibility Requirements](#)

[How to Make Your Captions and Audio Descriptions WCAG-Compliant](#)

[Key Takeaways from UsableNet's Digital Accessibility Lawsuit Report](#)

[What You Should Know About WCAG 2.1](#)

[What You Need to Know About the AODA](#)

[Canada's Past, Present, and Future Leadership in Digital Accessibility](#)

[Roadmap to Web Accessibility in Higher Education](#)

[WCAG Around the Globe](#)

[WCAG 2.0 & 2.1 Compliance Checklist](#)

Video Accessibility

[U.S. Laws for Video Accessibility](#)

[Legal Compliance with 3Play Media](#)

[How the ADA Impacts Online Video Accessibility](#)

[Sections 508 and 504: Captioning and Web Accessibility Requirements](#)

[Section 508 Checklist](#)

[Video Accessibility 101](#)

About 3Play Media

3Play Media provides premium services that make media accessibility easy. We are headquartered in Boston, MA, and have been operating since 2007.

Follow Us

For more information and resources on web and video accessibility, find us @3PlayMedia on all socials.

Drop Us A Line

Website: www.3playmedia.com

Email: info@3playmedia.com

Phone: (617) 764 5189

Born In Boston

77 N Washington Street, Floor 2
Boston, MA 02114

Also Based In

275 Market Street, Suite 445
Minneapolis, MN 55405

1909 10 Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T3C 0K3
Canada

