

# How to support ADA website compliance: 10 top design tips

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According to the CDC, one in four adults [https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html#:~:text=61%20million%20adults%20in%20the,is%20highest%20in%20the%20South.] in the United States has some form of disability, especially among baby boomers who have [possible income](https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/2020/07/17/what-possible-income) [https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/2020/07/17/what-





has begun or even completed. Failure to consider ADA standards compliance in the planning process for a website design or redesign can result in the need for significant and costly rework.

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## 10 top tips for better user disability website experiences

In order to avoid costly or time-consuming mistakes in the design process, following are 10 top tips to keep in mind to ensure your organization is building an ADA-compliant website that will offer compelling online experiences for all your site visitors:

### 1. **Start with the right team.**

Make sure you are assembling a project team that encompasses all critical areas including Creative, UI, UX, HR and Legal.


### 2. **Consider all devices.**

It's important to take into account all devices in order to enhance the experience for users with disabilities who use keyboard and readers. Consider Voice Over, NYDA readers, JAWS, WAVE tools and more to help resolve web accessibility issues.

### 3. **Invest in user research.**

When it comes to designing websites that are ADA-compliant, dollars invested in usability research are dollars well spent. Making assumptions about design can be dangerous as it's very difficult to understand a user's need that you have never yourself experienced.

### 4. **Test and iterate.**

Too often, organizations wait to complete  checks when development is completed. Doing so can cause delays or

checks throughout every phase of the project plan—from design approvals to wireframe development to style application to final execution.

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### 5. **Design for flexibility.**

Allowing your website's users to change the spacing, size, color and fonts of your site makes it easier for a wider audience to utilize the site, regardless of disability.


### 6. **Follow design best practices.**

Adhere to industry best practices when designing the site by leveraging the **WCAG guidelines** [<https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>] (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) that are based on the core principles of designing a website that are *perceivable, operable, understandable and robust*.

### 7. **Leverage brand color palettes with contrast.**

A website is a primary channel for any organization so it's important that it is visually on-brand. However, leverage the colors in your company's brand palette with good contrast and larger buttons for those with visual impairments including within links and navigation bars.

### 8. **Analyze site logic flow.**

In order to provide a quality website experience for users with disabilities, make sure that the site's complete functionality works for them. For example, make sure that forms on your site are labeled properly and e-commerce shopping card is labeled appropriately so that an ADA device such as a der can correctly determine its function. Additionally, make sure all

those who can't use a mouse.

## 9. Consider voice recognition.

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Users with limited or no motor skills or who have neurological and cognitive concerns benefit from the inclusion of voice recognition on your website as well as text-to-speech functionality.

## 10. Use captioning in multimedia content.

If your organization isn't already doing so, make sure all videos on your site are close captioned so those with hearing disabilities can consume multimedia content. This practice also benefits SEO as it will alert a search engine to the content in your video. A **guide** [<http://www.ncdae.org/resources/cheatsheets/youtube.php>] explaining how to caption YouTube videos is available from the National Center on Disability and Access to Education.

When designing for users with disabilities, it's worthwhile to invest in usability testing at the beginning of the project to avoid unpleasant surprises later on. Too often, user pain points are discovered only after wireframes are completed, styles are applied, HTML is executed or the QA and UAT processes are concluded. User research can help identify tasks earlier in the scope of the project which will allow for the implementation phase to be conducted in parallel with development, rather than attempting to add it to the scope once the site is completed. Usability testing allows you to understand how users with disabilities will navigate the site, what tools they use and how they understand the content you deliver.

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visitors, whether or not they have a disability. Focus on designing experiences so that your website allows individuals with disabilities to experience the same content as other users but taking into account compatibility for their specific accommodations.

With proper planning, genuine effort and commitment that includes testing, user research, audits, consulting and remediation, you can ensure your organization remains ADA-compliant while delivering stellar website experiences for all your visitors.

**Tags:** ADA, disability accessibility, user disability, website design

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