Web Accessibility FAQ

What is Web Accessibility?

Web accessibility refers to ensuring that people with disabilities or impairments can perceive, understand, navigate, interact with and contribute to websites.

Am I required to make my website accessible?

In the United States, Title III of the [Americans with Disabilities Act(ADA)](#) requires general accessibility to those with disabilities; though not expressly stated, it has been generally held by the courts that websites are included under the requirements of Title III. Therefore, we strongly recommend all sites to be accessible to those with disabilities or impairment such as the blind/visually impaired or deaf/hard of hearing.

Specific requirements pertaining to US ADA compliance will be issued in 2018. Until then, [WCAG 2.0](#) or 2.1 guidelines, whichever is newer, should be used. Even though the ADA requirements are not yet published, websites are still required to provide a basic level of accessibility.

Websites that do not make any attempt at making content accessible risk visitors [filing ADA violation complaints](#) with the US Office of Civil Rights (OCR) or other litigation.

Is my website "accessible"?

Growth Zone is continually addressing the changes surrounding [WCAG 2.0](#)/2.1 and ADA compliance in order to ensure that our SmartCMS and GrowthZone CMS websites follow best practices for web accessibility. This ongoing initiative aims to ensure the systems not only incorporate these accessibility requirements but our customers are informed and trained regarding best practices.

LiveEdit Aurora customers should refer to LiveEdit's documentation regarding accessibility and ADA compliance.

Are there Web Accessibility Guidelines?

Yes. [The Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)](#) develops guidelines and techniques to use for websites that are considered to be the international standard with [WCAG 2.0](#) being the most current published standard for web content accessibility.

[WCAG 2.1](#) is currently in development and is scheduled to be published in 2018 coinciding with ADA requirements for Web accessibility. You do not have to use WCAG guidelines but they can serve as best practices guide until specific ADA requirements are released.

Do I need to do anything while maintaining my website for it to be accessible?

Yes. It is important to note that even though a website may be accessible and ADA compliant at launch, it can quickly fall into non-compliant status if accessibility guidelines and best practices are not followed. Since content is added and maintained by you, our customers, we want to share some common pitfalls where sites that were once accessible fall out of compliance.

Accessibility Approach and Alternative Formats

While not expressly stated in the requirements, it is generally considered to be a good idea to add a page regarding accessibility and alternative formats for content; this page can go a long way in avoiding a complaint or litigation in case non-accessible content is discovered. A link to this page should appear somewhere on your landing/home page (often in the footer) so that it can be easily found by someone using a screen reader.
This page covers:

- Your commitment to making your content accessible to the visually impaired/ADA compliant including contact info for who should be contacted if a visually impaired visitor has trouble accessing content on the site
- How a visitor can access content in other formats (location on the site or contact us)

Text Alternatives

Provide text alternatives for any non-text content. For images, the text will be read aloud describing the content for the visually impaired. In the case of video, closed captions should be available for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Alternative Document Formats

Pdfs are great but are not readable by many screen readers. Make sure you are able to provide the document in another format such as Microsoft Word or html.

Colors and Contrast

Avoid using colors in text and background that are similar. The visually impaired and those with certain types of color blindness will have difficulty distinguishing the text from the background. Always attempt to use text colors that stand out from the background. Never use flashing/strobing text or images or other items whose quick movement makes them difficult to read or understand.

Navigation

Accessibility requirements regarding site navigation and menus will be handled when your site is created, yet you may wish to add or remove navigation and menu options later on. Try to keep any menus simple without many layers of bumpouts and dropdowns. Also, avoid having several menus on a single page or mixed in wither other content in the body such as text and images.

Do I have to make the MIC/Hub accessible?

No. The accessibility requirements for the MIC/Hub and backoffice are handled by GrowthZone as part of the software.

Checking your Site

There are several online tools that you can use to check your site. A word of caution, however, as most perform their checks at the highest levels of "accessibility", resulting in flags on areas of your site that do, in fact, meet accessibility requirements. Therefore, they should be used as informative tools only.

Web Accessibility Check

Want to learn more? Click the links below

Understanding WCAG 2

Web Accessibility Tutorials