Simple Steps for Improving Accessibility

Reference Guide

UC GAAD 2021

This guide is provided as a supplement to the *Simple Steps for Improving Accessibility* portion of UC's *Accessibility Is for Everyone: Global Accessibility Awareness Day 2021* webinar.

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Accessibility should be foundational!

DO NOT

Ignore accessibility considerations or leave them for the end of a project.

DO

Think about accessibility, and try to incorporate it, from the start.

Doing so will help you avoid headaches down the road, like:

- Inability to post content to UC websites because it's inaccessible
- Inaccessible content being removed from UC websites and platforms
- Needing to make significant changes to content after its been "finalized," in order to achieve better accessibility

And, it often leads to products that are better designed overall, in ways that benefit everyone.

Use sufficient contrast between foreground text/graphics and background color

DO NOT
Have low-contrast text that is difficult to read.

DO
Have higher-contrast text/graphics that stands out and is easy to read.

"Large text" is defined as text that is at least 14 points in size and bold, or text that is not bold and at least 18 points in size. Large text requires a contrast ratio of 3 to 1.

"Normal text" is defined as any text that is not large text and requires a contrast ratio of 4.5 to 1.

Graphics and interface elements, like icons, buttons, etc., require a contrast ratio of 3 to 1.

Numerous tools are available to help you with this. They will evaluate colors, tell you the contrast ratio between them and identify if they pass specific contrast standards.

WebAIM, a notable web accessibility website, offers two such tools:

1. Contrast Checker: which can determine the contrast ratio between two colors and indicate whether the colors pass various WCAG contrast standards.
   o If accessed through Chrome, the tool even includes an eyedropper feature you can use to sample colors currently displayed on your computer; just select a color swatch to open the color panel, then select the eyedropper tool and click on any color displayed on your computer
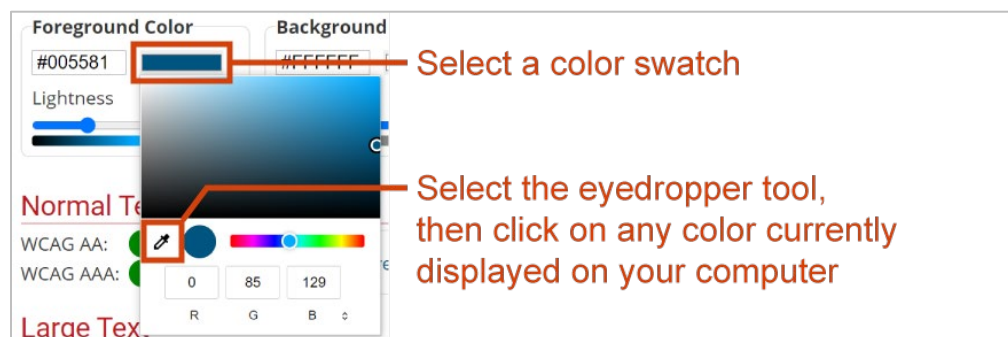
2. WAVE: offers a suite of accessibility evaluation tools, including a contrast checker, and can be installed as a Firefox or Chrome plug-in.

There are also contrast-checking desktop applications you can install, such as the Colour Contrast Analyser, which can also sample and compare colors and indicate WCAG pass/fails.

Do not use color as the only means of indicating information

Here's an example of using colors as the only means of indicating information:

<div style="background-color:green; color:white">

Have higher-contrast text that stands out and is easy to read.

</div>

<div style="background-color:red; color:white">

Have low-contrast text that is difficult to read.

</div>

The first rectangle's green color is all that indicates it contains "Do" guidance; the second rectangle's red color is all that indicates it contains "Do not" guidance, and if you have difficulty discerning between red and green, which is one of the most common forms of color blindness, you might be unable to tell which of those rectangles contains the "Do" guidance and which contains the "Do not" guidance.

This is not to say you can't use color as a means of indicating information, but rather, that it should not be the only way you indicate that information.
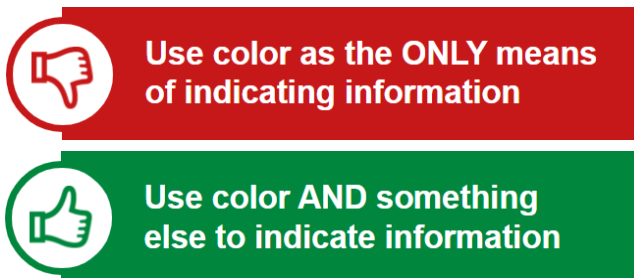
DO NOT
Use color as the only means of indicating information.

DO
Use color AND something else to indicate information.

For example, you could use:

- Color and icons

Use color as the ONLY means of indicating information

Use color AND something else to indicate information

- Color and shapes

- Color and text

Take care in using images

Keep in mind that visually impaired individuals may not be able to see the images you use and also that assistive technologies cannot read images by default.

DO
Assign alt text to your images.

Alt text is text you assign to images that will be read by assistive technologies when they encounter that image. [Alternative text guidance](#).

DO (as a presenter)
Describe what's in the images that you show and how those details relate to why you're showing the image.

DO NOT (as a presenter)
Rely on your audience's ability to see the images you show in order for them to fully understand the points you're trying to make.

DO NOT
Use images of text, when text could reasonably be used instead.

Use descriptive link text

"Link text" is text that hosts a hyperlink. Here is an example: [UCnet](). "UCnet" is the link text.

DO NOT
Use link text that requires context clues — that is, that requires the reading of surrounding text — in order to get a sense of where the link directs, because assistive technology users have numerous methods of encountering links that only provide them with the link text and do not provide them with the opportunity of being able to read context clues.

DO NOT
Use any of the following as link text:

- Click here
- Learn more
- Explore
- PDF
- Video
- Or any other link text that is non-descriptive and requires a user to have additional context clues to gain a sense of the link's destination

DO
Use link text that, on its own, provides a clear sense of the link's destination; for example, use a destination's webpage or document title as the link text.

Test for keyboard accessibility

DO
If you're designing or procuring something interactive, test for keyboard accessibility.

The purpose of keyboard accessibility testing is to ensure that all necessary tasks can easily be completed and all necessary content easily accessed, using only keyboard commands.

Keyboard commands that can be used to navigate or test using only your keyboard:

- Press the Tab key to move focus forward
- Press the Shift + Tab keys together to move focus backward
- Press the Enter key to interact with an element that currently has focus
- Use the arrow keys to navigate certain menus and button sets

What is "focus?"

- It's the keyboard equivalent of a mouse cursor; it indicates what you'd be clicking on
- It only lands on interactive elements
  - For example: links, buttons, form fields, etc.
- It's indicated by a highlight rectangle, the color of which varies by website/platform
  - For example:
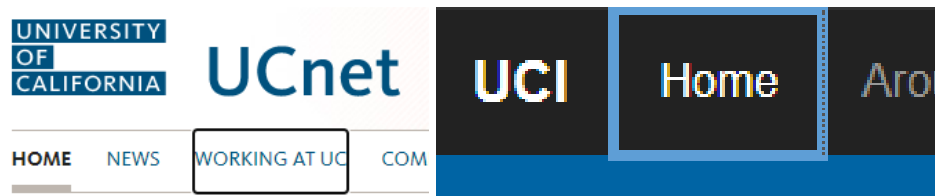
If focus ever gets stuck in a particular area or on a particular element, that is a significant problem known as a "focus trap" or "keyboard trap."

Keyboard testing can serve as an accessibility barometer: where there are keyboard accessibility issues, there are often other assistive technology/accessibility issues.

And experiment with keyboard navigation outside of accessibility testing. You may find it to be a more efficient way of doing things, like navigating between form fields when filling out a survey or entering information. This is just one example of how learning about accessibility can introduce you to new tools and features that can help increase your overall productivity.

United Kingdom Home Office accessibility posters

If you liked this DO, DO NOT framing, you'll really appreciate these accessibility posters provided by the UK Home Office.

They contain a wealth of easy-to-understand accessibility guidance, all delivered through this Do, Do Not framework.

Each poster contains design guidance relevant to particular users, such as designing for users with low vision and designing for users with physical or motor disabilities.

There are even posters speaking to users you might not as readily consider when thinking about accessibility, such as designing for users with dyslexia, designing for users with ADHD and designing for users with anxiety.