



# The Digital Accessibility Handbook

Your step-by-step guide  
to creating a better  
**web UX for all**



CONTENTSQUARE



**Have you  
ever tried  
to eat  
soup with  
chopsticks?**

Imagine there's a local shop in your neighborhood that sells soup. They sell the best soup in the country and your friends won't stop raving about it. They've all tried the soup – and they loved it.

So you decide to take a visit. You love soup, you have cash to spend, and after all; the hype must be worth it, right?

You reach the shop, sit down, and the waiter brings you a bowl of piping hot soup. It smells like heaven, looks delicious; you can practically taste the flavors jumping out at you. But in place of a spoon, you're given chopsticks.

## You can't eat soup with chopsticks.

**It's frustrating.**

**It's messy.**

**It's futile.**

**You need a damn spoon.**



Now, what if I told you this soup shop only offered **70%** of its customers a spoon? The other **30%** had to use chopsticks.

You'd think that was pretty unfair, right?

Here are some things that might happen next; you wouldn't return to this shop in a hurry – in fact, you might feel so let down by their lack of spoons for everyone that you decide to never eat soup there again. You might tell other people not to bother either.

## **But what if next door there was another soup shop, one with spoons for everybody?**



You'd eat there again and again.

You'd become a loyal customer, one that felt included, catered for, respected. You'd spend your money in that soup shop – even if it might cost you a little more – and you'd encourage your friends to do the same.

When you look at it like that, refusing to offer everyone a spoon doesn't just seem unfair, it seems kind of ridiculous.

## **Well, did you know that 70% of digital content is inaccessible to people with cognitive, visual, or physical impairments?**

So welcome to digital accessibility in 2021.  
Let's get right into it, shall we?

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# The state of digital accessibility in 2021

We can do more online today than ever before. From ordering food and making reservations, to catching up with friends and attending university; the internet has changed how we shop, communicate, learn, and make decisions – it's changed how we develop and interact as human beings.

But for all its incredible magic, it comes with one big problem; digital accessibility.

**Digital accessibility means ensuring that the web is accessible by everyone, regardless of disability.**

So why is this so important?

And why now?

**Let's  
break  
it  
down.**

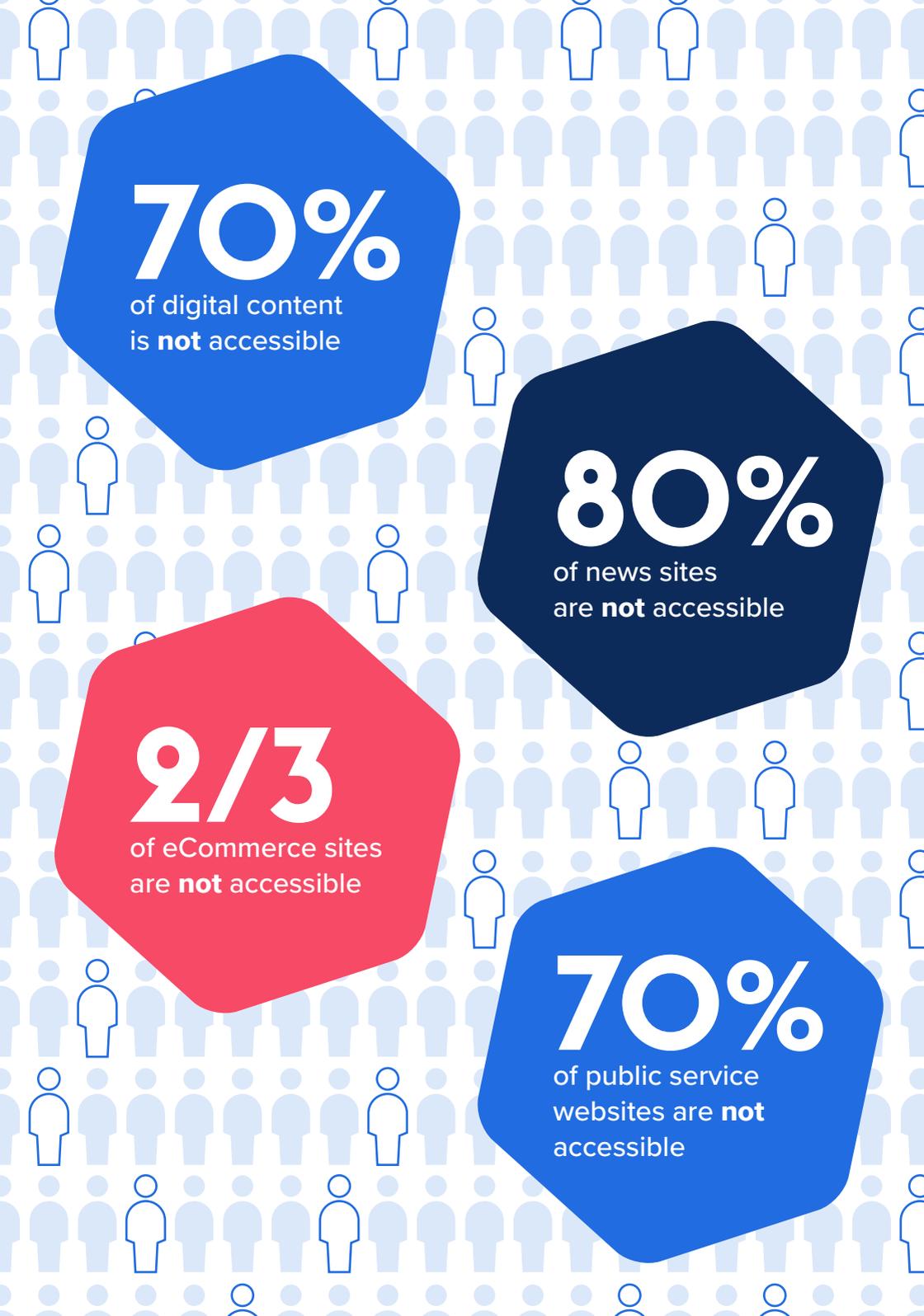
The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of stylized human icons. Each icon consists of a solid light blue circle for a head and a white outline for a torso and legs. The icons are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some icons appearing as solid light blue shapes and others as white outlines, creating a subtle visual rhythm.

## The moral obligation

Did you know that over one billion people in the world have an impairment that affects their ability to use the web?

Yes, you read that right;

**over one billion people.**

The background of the entire image is a repeating pattern of stylized human icons. Each icon consists of a solid blue circle for a head and a white outline for a torso and legs. The icons are arranged in a grid-like pattern, with some appearing as solid blue shapes and others as white outlines, creating a textured, population-like background.

**70%**

of digital content  
is **not** accessible

**80%**

of news sites  
are **not** accessible

**2/3**

of eCommerce sites  
are **not** accessible

**70%**

of public service  
websites are **not**  
accessible

And the thing about disabilities is that they're not always obvious.

## In fact, 80% of disabilities are invisible.

From color blindness and deafness to dyslexia and autism, there are tons of reasons why someone may struggle to access a website that doesn't cater to their needs.



**1 in 25** people are **blind** or **visually impaired**  
**285m** affected



**1 in 12** men are **color blind**  
**300m** affected



**1 in 10** people have **dyslexia**  
**700m** affected



**1 in 11** people are **65+ today**,  
this will reach **1 in 6 by 2050**  
**600m** affected

Now, we're sure you'll agree these are some pretty big numbers. But it can be easy to overlook what these numbers actually mean.

So here's the deal; these numbers signify billions of people who are unable to shop for food or communicate with friends online, people who can't easily find local restaurant opening times or book cinema tickets in advance.

Put simply, without ensuring digital accessibility for all, we're preventing some people from enjoying the same internet-based magic as the rest of us, sometimes even at the most basic human level.

## This has to change.

At Contentsquare, we have one mission: to empower brands to create better digital experiences for all. And that starts with building websites that everybody can use, no matter what their age, impairment, or personal situation.

This is everyone's responsibility and your actions towards building a more inclusive web can make a real difference to the lives of billions **(yes, billions!)**.

## The commercial argument

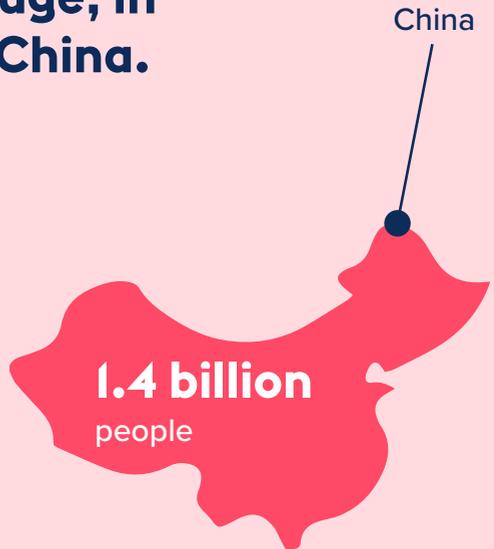
Here's another one for all you number crunchers out there. The argument for digital accessibility extends way beyond the moral obligation of building websites for all; it has huge financial and commercial implications too. This means accessibility is not only good for ensuring equal access to everyone on an ethical level, but it's also good for business.

**And that's because the disability market is huge; in fact, it's larger than China.**

**1.85 billion**  
people

**\$1.9 trillion**  
annual disposable  
income

The Disability Market





**71%**

of customers with accessibility needs will leave a website they find difficult to use.



**82%**

of consumers will pay more money for the same item on a competitor's website if that site is more accessible.



**30%**

of your potential audience is lost before you've even started if your website isn't accessible to those with impairments.

It doesn't matter how hard you've worked, how creative your homepage is, or how much money you've put into that campaign; thousands of people in your audience will simply tune out if they can't access your site.

**And they'll probably think less of your brand in the future.**

And you'd better believe that'll have a knock-on effect on your bottom line. So for any brand looking to grow revenue in today's competitive world, digital accessibility is an absolute necessity. What's more, websites that comply with accessibility standards can enjoy improved rankings in Google.

## **Prioritizing digital accessibility on your site will (quite literally) impact your SEO efforts and help you drive more organic traffic.**

And that's because embracing web accessibility doesn't just benefit those with impairments, it benefits everybody – especially in the eyes of Google. Accessible web design naturally comes with fewer points of friction and frustration. Clear, concise, well-structured websites are gold, so if your site is easily crawlable, well written, and has clear navigation and content hierarchy, Google will want to show your content to more people. Which will improve your ranking on the search engine results page and help you drive more organic traffic to your site.

You'll see huge improvements in customer experience and loyalty too. If a customer finds your site easily and uses it without problems, they're more likely to stay there longer, come back more often, and spend more money. They're more likely to tell their friends. They're more likely to share your content on social media. They're more likely to advocate for your brand. For free.

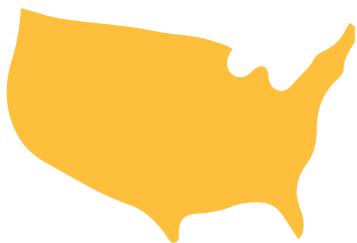
**A brand that demonstrates a commitment to accessibility for all can enjoy a strengthened brand presence and an increase in positive sentiment and word-of-mouth recommendations.**



## The legal necessity

And the arguments for accessibility extend further still. Did you know that governments across the world are implementing web accessibility standards across their online content? And while these regulations have been a hot topic for public sector websites for a while now, we're starting to see progressively stronger constraints for private websites, too.

The world is waking up to the importance of digital accessibility for all, which means ensuring your website complies with regulations is a must if you want to remain competitive.



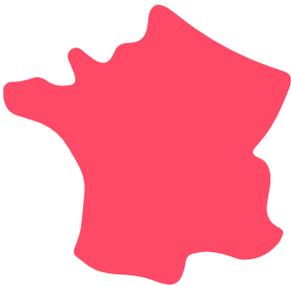
### US

While there are no specific US laws that relate to the accessibility of commercial websites, they are covered under the Americans Disability Act (ADA) Title III. Government websites must meet Section 508 regulations; which state that all digital content developed, procured, maintained, or used by the federal government must be accessible to people with disabilities.



## UK

Commercial site owners are required to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to ensure access to people with disabilities in line with the Equality Act 2021, while public websites must adhere to the Accessibility Regulations 2018.



## France

The certification standard for public websites in France is the Référentiel Général d’Accessibilité pour les Administrations (RGAA) which defines the set of requirements and evaluation process for determining if a website is accessible.



## European Union

The European Union Directive on the Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications uses the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 to ensure public sector websites are “Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust.”



# The toothbrush argument

Initially created in 1960 for US patients with limited motor skills, electric toothbrushes have revolutionized how millions of us brush our teeth – and not just those of us with disabilities. They’ve made it easier for everyone around the world to maintain good oral hygiene. And this is just one example of why accessible design is so important.

# How to build a beautifully accessible website for everyone

The first step in tackling digital accessibility is understanding the various types of impairment and how these affect millions of people around the world. With greater knowledge comes greater responsibility...and that's how we're going to start building better digital experiences for all.

So let's take a look at each type of impairment, plus the most important digital accessibility guidelines you need to action. We've included some handy checklists you can use to audit your own website, too.



# 1. Visual impairments



Such as...

## **Blindness** (39 million people)

A loss of sight that cannot be corrected with eyeglasses.

## **Cataracts** (5 million people)

Cataracts are cloudy patches that develop on your eye lens which cause blurry, misty vision and eventually blindness.

## **Low vision** (2.2 billion people)

Though not fully blind, people with low vision have limited sight making it hard to do everyday activities.

## **Glaucoma** (80 million people)

Glaucoma is when the optic nerve becomes damaged and is a leading cause of blindness for people over 60 years old.

## **Color blindness** (300 million people)

People who are unable to distinguish between certain colors.



## So, how do people with visual impairments navigate the web?

Blind people use screen readers; a text-to-speech software that reads out the content of a webpage. The screen reader will scan the site's navigation, plus the headings within each page, to quickly find the right content. They also use a keyboard (hitting Tab and Enter to jump to active elements on a webpage) rather than a mouse and trackpad. This means blind people rely entirely on well-structured content and a clear navigation system to access the web.

Unlike blind people, those with low vision or color blindness navigate your site in its typical fashion – but there are still plenty of stumbling blocks in the way. From fonts that are too small to information that uses color alone to convey its message (think bar charts or hyperlinks in blue); many websites are simply not built for those with visual impairments.

Fortunately, adapting your site for the visually impaired is relatively straightforward, though it will require some time and resources. Firstly, it'll be a case of updating your website's Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) style guide to fix text and typography issues quickly. Other accessibility must-haves may be longer-term projects (such as updating content and optimizing site structure), but the payoff will be worth it to ensure equal access for all.

So let's take a look at how to make your site accessible for the visually impaired...



# 1.1 Contrast ratio

**Colour Contrast Checker**

**Aa** 11.21

Pass Pass Pass Pass

AA Large AAA Large AA Normal AAA Normal

Background Colour **#dbe8fa**

Hue 215°

Saturation 0.76

Lightness 0.92

Foreground Colour **#0d2b5a**

Hue 217°

Saturation 0.75

Lightness 0.2

The contrast ratio is a number between 1 and 21 (where 1 is the same color and 21 is black/white) that determines how easy the contrast between text and its background is to read.

An accessible contrast ratio makes it easy for people with low vision, cataracts, glaucoma, and other sight conditions to interact with your website. Use a font that's not contrasted enough, and you'll be excluding one hell of a lot of people from your content.

In general, an accessible contrast ratio is **4.5:1**.

**For bold text larger than 18.5px  
or any text larger than 24px**

an accessible ratio is **3:1**.



Check yourself before you wreck your customer's experience:  
Install **Google's Color Contrast Checker Chrome extension**  
to easily check your website's contrast ratio.



## 1.2 Navigation, content hierarchy, and headings

Ensure the navigation on your site is clear and concise to aid those using screen readers. This means making sure you include only the most relevant and important links in your top navigation, otherwise it could take them a while to get to what they need – creating a bad customer experience.

Then, make sure the content on each page is well structured using formatted headings (H1, H2, H3) with a sensible content hierarchy.

As well as ensuring the correct formatting, make sure your headings are visually distinct from paragraph text (by using larger font sizes and heavier font weights) to make it as easy as possible for those with low vision to scan text, and those using screen readers to easily jump to the right content.

```
<h1>My heading</h1>

<p>This is the first section of my document.</p>

<p>I'll add another paragraph here too.</p>

<ol>
  <li>Here is</li>
  <li>a list for</li>
  <li>you to read</li>
</ol>

<h2>My subheading</h2>

<p>This is the first subsection of my document. I'd love people to be able to find this content!</p>

<h2>My 2nd subheading</h2>

<p>This is the second subsection of my content. I think is more interesting than the last one.</p>
```



## 1.3 Text and typography

**Text size:** Small text is difficult to read for those with low vision. Aim to use a font size of at least **14px** across your entire site (16px is even better).

**Alignment:** Don't justify text. If text is forced to fit a given space, some words will have more whitespace in between than usual, making it hard to figure out where one word ends and the next starts. So use left alignment as much as possible.

**Spacing:** White space makes it easier for the user to know what to read and where to begin, so make sure to use lots of paragraphs to break up your text.

**Capitalization:** Some screen readers read capitalized text letter-by-letter, so make sure you use sentence or title case throughout your site.



## 1.4 Forms

Email
Password



In this example, the contrast ratio is low and the font size is small, making it difficult for someone with low vision to understand the form. Placeholder text is also used instead of a hint.

<b>Email:</b>
<input type="text"/>
<b>Password:</b> Must have at least 6 characters
<input type="text"/>



The font size is large and easy to read, and the contrast ratio is at least **4.5:1**. The label and a hint are also placed outside the form for clarity. An accessible masterpiece!

It's important to ensure all forms are correctly labeled for autofill software, as this helps make the web quicker and more accessible for those who may struggle to type.



## 1.5 Links

To find out more click [here](#)



To find out more click [here](#)



Links conveyed with color are inaccessible to color blind people. Instead, add extra emphasis on clickable links (by increasing the font-weight or underlining) to make them clear for everyone.

## 1.6 Alt text



### **Alt text:**

Woman in sportswear sat on yoga mat next to dog.

Alt text tells people basic and essential details about an image. This makes images on your site accessible to those using screen readers, but also those with slow internet connections where images may not load.



## 1.7 Accessible graphs



Color blind people can't access graphs that use color alone to convey information. Make sure any graphs or charts use texture to convey their meaning, too.

## 1.8 Clear language

Using clear language doesn't just benefit those using screen readers or with visual impairments, it really does benefit everybody. So here are a few copy tips:

- Don't use dashes if you can avoid them. Write '5 to 7' instead of '5-7'.
- Expand abbreviations. Write 'January' instead of 'Jan'.
- Extend acronyms at least once or twice. Write 'National Health Service' instead of 'NHS'.
- If using hashtags, make sure you capitalize each word.  
#JustLikeThis

# The visual impairment checklist:



Does your site have...

- A contrast ratio of 4.5:1?
- Clear and concise site navigation?
- A sensible content hierarchy and headings?
- A font size of at least 14px across all pages?
- Left or centrally-aligned text?
- No unnecessary capitalization?
- Understandable forms?
- Accessible links?
- Alt text on images?
- Accessible graphs?
- Clear language?
- Expanded abbreviations?
- Extended acronyms (at least once per page?)
- Correctly capitalized hashtags?



**2.**

# **Auditory impairments**



Such as...

## **Disabling hearing loss** **(466 million people)**

People with hearing loss greater than 35 decibels (dB) in their better hearing ear.

## **Tinnitus** **(over 16 million people)**

People who hear noises not caused by sounds coming from the outside world, such as ringing or humming.



## How might those with auditory impairments struggle to use the web?

People with hearing loss or tinnitus will struggle to engage with content that uses only sound to convey a message – such as informational videos that rely on voiceovers alone. And with roughly **6.1%** of the world’s population living with hearing loss, that’s a lot of people you could be excluding from your content.

But actually, it’s not just deaf people who watch content without sound. When Instagram first launched videos, more than **5 million** were shared within **24 hours** – and **85%** of people watched them without sound. That’s people commuting on trains, out with friends, in public spaces, or who simply just prefer watching without sound. For whatever reason, it seems there’s a pretty large number of us watching videos in silence. So let’s start making stuff accessible to everyone.

**Videos with captions generate a 12% increase in viewership on average.**

# Spotlight on



## **Maurice-Matar Wehbe is a product designer and accessibility consultant.**

Born deaf, he needs subtitles or transcripts to access video content and is unable to communicate via telephone. This means he often struggles with badly designed client services that don't cater to his needs. Though Maurice relies heavily on live chat features and emails with a fast response, these channels are often overlooked in favor of telephone communication; something that isn't accessible to him.

**“Sometimes I never get an answer by email or chat, but when my friends call on my behalf we get an answer immediately,”** explains Maurice, which is really frustrating.

These inaccessible services mean that Maurice regularly struggles to find the information he needs, and when he does, he often finds it inaccessible to those with auditory impairments.

And sadly this has caused him to lose money.



So what can brands do to help people with disabilities? For Maurice, it's all about moving from awareness to education. "It's not only about adapting the web," he explains, "It's about understanding the users." And for that, he says we need to stop 'accessibility washing' and pretending those with disabilities don't exist.

That's why Maurice fights daily for a more accessible digital world, believing the key to this relies on education and awareness on all companies levels.

**“Hire designers with disabilities and hire people with disabilities to co-create with them,” is Maurice’s top tip for brands.**

He believes that accessibility isn't just about helping people with disabilities, it's a modern-day requirement; a service with high value and high impact. "It deserves as much attention as any other field."





## 2.1 Subtitles and captions

Adding captions or subtitles means that everyone can enjoy and connect with your content in real-time. Those with auditory impairments are still included in the video experience, but it also allows anybody to watch in silence if they choose to and still follow along.

To create a positive customer experience, giving the viewer the option to watch with or without sound is a real winner – no more awkwardly watching on low volume on the train. And if you want to emphasize something important, you can highlight or change the color of the text for an even greater impact.



For live events and webinars, try to include subtitles to ensure inclusivity. However, if you don't have the resource or tools for this, sharing a transcript of all content afterward is a good first step.



## 2.2 Visual notifications

Don't rely on sound alone to alert your customers to on-site events, whether that's brand new content or an offer. Make sure all of your notifications are visual as well.

**Hey, new offer alert!**



## 2.3 Sign language

While subtitles and captions help make content inclusive for everyone, sign language is your accessibility gold card. Giving deaf people the option to either read along or follow an interpreter is a fantastic way to supercharge your customer experience.

Though this will require slightly more time and resources, it's worth bearing in mind for any larger projects where you want as much reach as possible.

# The auditory impairment checklist:



Does your site have...

- Subtitles and captions on all video content?
- Visual notifications?
- Sign language options?





# 3. Physical impairments



Such as...

## Paralysis

The loss of the ability to move some or all of your body. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates there are **250,000 to 500,000** new cases of spinal cord injury globally every year.

## Lack of motor control:

People who are unable to direct and regulate their movement.





Whether someone was born paralyzed or became paralyzed following an accident or medical condition, it will likely affect their ability to do everyday activities in some way. Things like going to the shops, trying on clothes in a changing room, or visiting the library become difficult, sometimes even impossible tasks. This means for those with impairments, the internet is often a lifeline; somewhere they can order things for home delivery, stay in touch with friends, or find the information they need about their condition.

## How might those with physical impairments navigate the web?



People with physical or “motor” impairments experience weakness or limitations of muscular control. This can include anything from lack of sensation or coordination to tremors and paralysis, meaning they’ll often find it difficult or impossible to use a mouse or touchscreen.

For some, this requires specialist equipment to use the web – such as voice recognition software or specialist mouses – and for others, this means relying heavily on using a keyboard alone. But while those with physical impairments may need their own tools to get onto the web initially, there are still things you can do to make your site more accessible for them when they’re there.

# Spotlight on



**Daryl is a digital advertising consultant and tech start-up founder with a passion for technology, entrepreneurship, and accessible travel.**

A wheelchair user since he was eight, Daryl has a genetic condition called Spinal Muscular Atrophy which causes acute physical weaknesses over his entire body.

“To put this into perspective,” he says, “I cannot handwrite, lift a cup of coffee nor walk at all.”

Due to the ease of navigating using touch, Daryl often uses his smartphone to browse the internet and send emails. “However, I find websites which are badly optimized for mobile extremely difficult to use,” he explains. “Problems such as elements that are too close together or overlapping, pop-ups, small buttons, incorrectly formatted forms, or multi-faceted navigation with small links” all make accessing websites difficult – and these things have a huge impact on Daryl’s quality of life.



“Inaccessible websites make it harder for me to manage my digital assets, interact with family and friends, and access digital services such as medical appointments and tax submissions, which can result in fines or worse. It also increases my reliance on others to do things for me,” he says. Daryl relies heavily on autofill features, too: “If a form is labeled incorrectly, my autofill tools cannot predict the information needed for the field, which can be time-consuming.”

“While a lot has been done to improve website accessibility for those who have visual disabilities, sadly not much has been done for those with physical disabilities,” he concludes. “We need better-recognized standards for websites and better enforcement to ensure big websites follow those standards.”

## Daryls’ top tips for digital inclusivity:

- Follow web standards such as W3C, WCAG, or Google quality guidelines
- Ensure you have a highly organized navigation
- Structure text correctly using the right schema (H1, H2, H3, P)
- Keep pop-ups and intrusive ads to a minimum
- Ensure webforms, payment gateways, and login fields are formatted correctly to allow autofill tools to fill in the information



## 3.1 Navigation, content hierarchy, and headings

Those with physical disabilities will commonly use a keyboard alone to navigate your website, which means ensuring your navigation is concise with a sensible hierarchy is key. This means they should be able to find what they're looking for quickly, without having to Tab their way through 50 different navigational links.

### Go mouse-less!

Try it out yourself by using only the Tab, Shift, Space, and Enter buttons on your website, and see how accessible you find things.

- **Tab:** Cycle through all interactive elements on the page from top to bottom
- **Shift + Tab:** Cycle through all interactive elements on the page from bottom to top
- **Enter / Space:** Interact with elements, such as clicking on links, checking a box, or displaying a drop-down menu

If your navigation is messy or there are too many links on your homepage, you'll likely struggle to find what you're looking for with ease – so it's worth stripping things back as much as you can. Again, this won't just help those with physical impairments, but will create a more streamlined and simple site for all of your customers to use; a real win-win!



## 3.2 Focus indicators

Focus indicators are the visual changes that highlight the interactive elements on your website. These are provided automatically by web browsers and usually appear as boxes that move around the site as you press Tab. While these are generally accessible, it's worth updating your CSS to make the focus indicator even more visually apparent; whether upping the background contrast or increasing the font size or weight, too.

## 3.3 Accessible forms, links, and media

Ensure your forms, links, and all other functionality on your site is accessible by keyboard. Your embedded media players or web applications need full keyboard support too, which means making sure the keyboard focus is not trapped within the program, but can still navigate throughout the entire page.



If you're not sure, then try it out yourself. If you're unable to watch an embedded video (or similar) using your keyboard alone, or if you get stuck within the media player and can't tab out of it, then you need to amend your website because it's inaccessible.

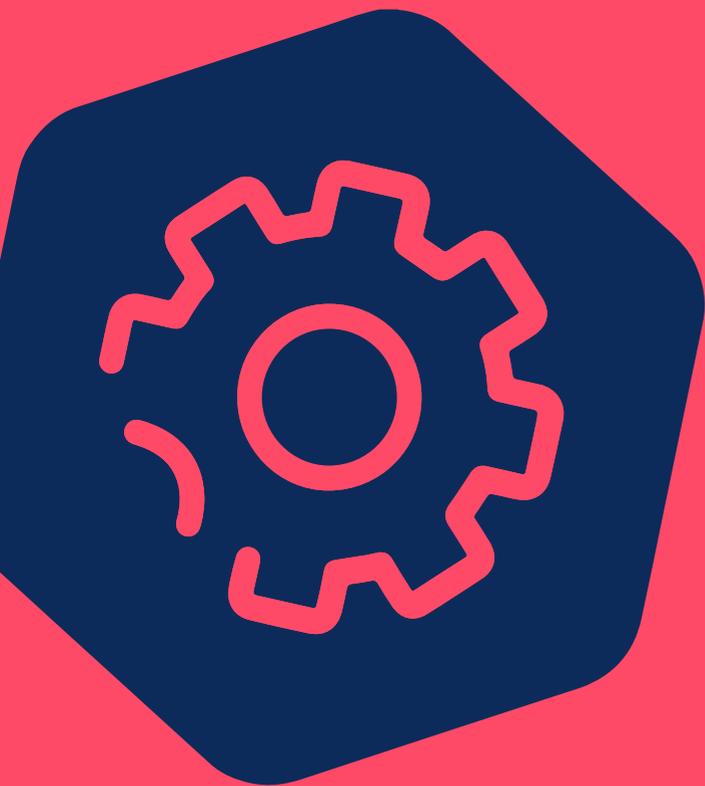
# The physical impairment checklist:



Does your site have...

- Clear and concise site navigation?
- Clear focus indicators?
- Accessible forms and links?
- Full keyboard support for embedded content?





**4.**

# **Cognitive impairments**



Such as...

## **Dyslexia** (700 million people)

A common learning difficulty that causes problems with reading, writing, and spelling.

## **Memory loss** (up to 20% of adults over 65)

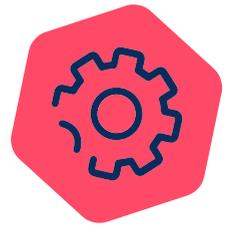
People who struggle to remember past events, new events, or both.

## **Autism** (one in 270 people)

A lifelong developmental disability that impacts a person's social skills, communication, relationships, and self-regulation.

## **ADHD** (2.8% of the global population)

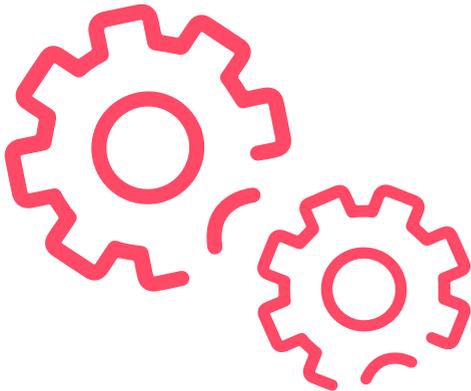
People who are easily distracted and often struggle with short-term memory and completing instructions.



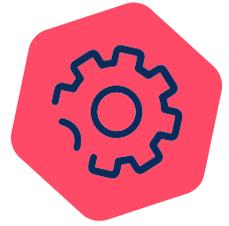
## How do those with cognitive impairments navigate the web?

Cognitive and learning disabilities impact how people process information. They may affect someone's ability to comprehend a large block of text or make it hard for someone to concentrate on a webpage for too long. They can also impact people's memory and problem-solving skills.

This means that while those with cognitive disabilities use the internet with a mouse and keyboard – there are still ways of making your website content more accessible to them when they're there.



# Spotlight on

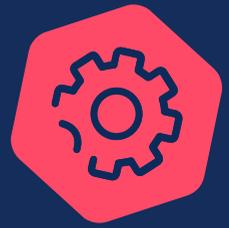


**Carlota Merkiled is an office manager and mother of three with a passion for extinct civilizations, cosmos, and art.**

She's also autistic, which means her brain works in a slightly different way to other people. With an invisible disability, Carlota often finds she has to justify herself to people, and constantly runs the risk of being judged by those who don't understand her disability.

Autistic people sometimes find it hard to communicate with and understand others, can become overwhelmed by too much information, and often feel anxious in unfamiliar situations and settings.

When accessing the internet, they get distracted by web pages that are too cluttered, instead favoring sites that are consistent and dependable with a predictable layout and navigation.



When text is written too small, Carlota struggles to find what she's looking for. Instead, she prefers images and graphics that help with her comprehension.

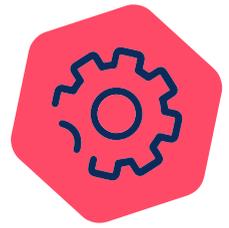
“I like it when there are pictograms,” she says, as these allow her to understand information visually without needing to read too much text.

For Carlota, an inaccessible website means a lack of brand loyalty and a feeling of exclusivity. “It gives a bad image of the company, with the idea their content is not available to everyone,” she explains.

## **Her top tip for brands?**

**“Small things always seem to be hidden, so it's necessary to make sure all information is easy to find.”**





## 4.1 Font size and type

Making your website accessible to those with cognitive impairments is all about simplicity – and this starts with your font. It's best to use a sans serif typeface such as:

Arial

Century Gothic

Tahoma

These are plain, evenly spaced, and don't have any 'hooks' on letters that can cause distraction.

Choose a font size of **14px or larger**, too.

## 4.2 Emphasis on text

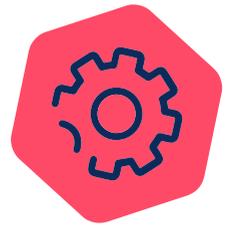
To add emphasis to your text, you should **avoid** using:

CAPITALS

or *italics*

as this can make letters harder to read.

Instead, use bold font or include boxes or borders around text to add weight if needed.



## 4.3 Images

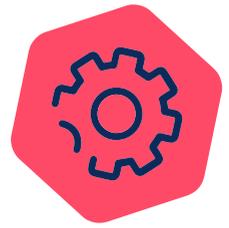


Where text may sometimes be difficult to understand, images are great for visually explaining things – especially for those with dyslexia or ADHD. Take a look at your website and see if any sections could be turned into (or at least accompanied by) an image as this will help to break up text and make your content more engaging.



And remember to add alt text in case the person is using screen reading software.

Site speed is an important ranking factor in Google, so make sure to optimize and resize your images so they don't kill your page performance.



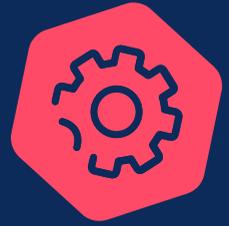
## 4.4 Simple, clean design

With heightened sensory awareness, people with autism and other cognitive impairments can become distracted by web pages that are cluttered. If you use multiple colors or have lots of different elements on each page, you might want to rethink your website design.

Autistic people favor consistency and simplicity, which means using the same fonts, colors, and hierarchy throughout your site. Luckily most companies use consistent branding across their website anyway, so it'll likely be a case of ensuring the overall branding is accessible rather than having to redesign your site page by page.

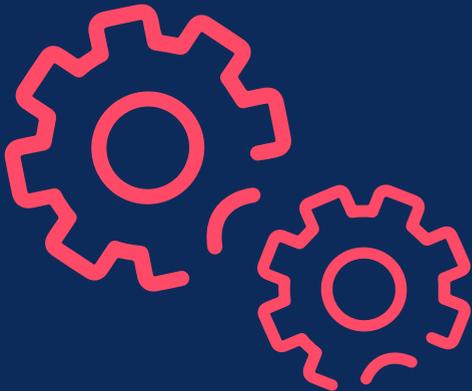
**And remember to use white space and lots of paragraphs too.**

# The cognitive impairment checklist:



Does your site have...

- Font sizes larger than 14px across the site?
- No italicized or capitalized copy?
- Helpful images?
- A simple and clean design?





# Digital accessibility: the round-up

So we've covered a lot of information, useful statistics and personal experiences in this report. We've also loaded you up with actionable advice to ensure your website is as accessible as possible. We've explained why this is so important, and made a case for both the moral and financial implications of designing experiences for all.

But here's the most important takeaway:

**Stop making digital accessibility  
an afterthought.**

## The digital accessibility bake-off

Bake it into your website from the very beginning. Make sure accessibility is the flour in your digital experience cake – not the icing on the top. You wouldn't throw more self-raising flour at a flat cake; so don't build a great website first and then try to make it accessible afterward. Chances are you'll be left with a horrible, lumpy cake that isn't really working for anyone.



## Make digital accessibility a priority, and your cake will rise on its own.

Ensure anything really important on your website is available in a variety of ways, such as audio, text, and graphics. Give people the option to access your content in the way that suits them best and you'll be taking huge steps towards digital accessibility for all – and better customer experiences, too.

Finally, not only will prioritizing accessibility from the very start save you time and money fiddling around later down the line, but you'll begin to think with an accessible-first mindset. And if we all work together on this, the world will be a better, kinder, and more inclusive place – one with spoons for all.



CONTENTSQUARE

# The Contentsquare Accessibility Checklist:

At Contentsquare, we're committed to raising awareness of the importance of digital accessibility, plus educating brands on how to implement inclusivity standards on their own sites. That's why we've put together this step-by-step checklist for you to ensure your website is accessible to all.

## So, to create a more inclusive digital experience for everyone, make sure your website has...

- A clear and concise site navigation
- A simple and clean design
- A sensible content hierarchy and clear headings
- A contrast ratio of 4.5:1 across all text and assets
- A font size of at least 14px across all pages
- No italicized, or capitalized copy
- Left- or centrally-aligned text (not justified)
- Accessible forms
- Accessible links
- Alt text on all images
- Clear language
- Expanded abbreviations
- Extended acronyms (at least once per page)
- Correctly capitalized hashtags
- Subtitles or captions on all video content
- Visual notifications (that don't rely solely on sound)
- Sign language options for video content
- Clear focus indicators
- Full keyboard support for embedded content
- Helpful images where possible

# Appendix of referenced sources

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