BUREAU OF INTERNET ACCESSIBILITY

THE DEFINITIVE MOBILE ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST:

Open your mobile website and apps to a wider audience

Everyone benefits from strong app and mobile web design. By applying this checklist, you can help make sure the content on your Android, iOS, and any mobile-based platform can be used independently by people with disabilities. Additionally, by focusing on intuitive user experiences and ease of use, the techniques outlined here make mobile websites and apps more user-friendly and enjoyable for everyone.

Drawing from proven mobile accessibility practices, like those in the latest version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), these design considerations can help your organization create accessible and compliant experiences. Overcome the limitations of mobile devices and ensure a seamless mobile web for all your users, whether they have a disability, use assistive technology like a screen reader, or simply appreciate a perfectly-functional app.

Design for smaller screens

The mobile experience introduces screens that are much smaller than desktop and laptop computers. Because mobile users are reading and interacting with content with limited screen space, the information needs to be displayed thoughtfully and all interactivity needs to consider the smaller sizes of touch targets.

- [ ] The amount of content displayed at a time is reasonable
- [ ] Buttons and controls are large enough to view and select by touch
- [ ] Buttons and controls have enough inactive space around them so neighboring controls aren't selected by mistake
- [ ] Form fields are positioned below their labels

Make gestures simple and provide options

Gestures, such as directional swipes or singular taps, are how mobile devices are typically controlled; however, default gestures do not work for everyone. Complex gestures, like drawing shapes, using multiple fingers, or tapping numerous times are difficult or impossible for some people to understand or perform. Therefore, it's important that mobile gestures are accompanied by more-traditional options and do not interfere with assistive technology or alternate control methods.

- [ ] Touchscreen gestures are simple to perform
- [ ] Multiple or alternate forms of gestures are available
- [ ] Touch controls activate upon release (up event), not initial touch (down event)
- [ ] Functionality triggered by shaking, tilting, or moving the device can be disabled
- [ ] Functionality triggered by device motion can be operated by more typical interface components
- [ ] Multipoint or path-based gestures have single-pointer or non-path-based options

Provide indicators for gestures and actions

Gestures aren't always intuitive, especially when they different from app to app, just as it is not always obvious to everyone what actions are available to take at a given time. So that users don't unintentionally do things like open a menu they didn't mean to or lose their place in a process, always strive to show context and instructions for how exactly to operate a mobile website or app.

- [ ] On-screen indicators and accessible text show how to use gestures
- [ ] On-screen indicators and accessible text show that elements are actionable
- [ ] Actionable elements are grouped intuitively
- [ ] Clear, text-based instructions are provided for complex interaction

Allow multiple methods for input and data entry

One of the most distinctive features of smartphones and mobile devices is touchscreen capability; however, not everyone can make equal use of navigating and providing input by precise touch gestures. Content must also not be built in a way that prevents other operational or input methods, beyond touch. Supporting alternative input devices, like external keyboards, pointers, and other accessible options makes your mobile content more usable to people who have difficulty using touchscreens.

- [ ] Virtual keyboard is set to the required type of data entry
- [ ] Methods for data entry are simple and predictable
- [ ] Keyboards and other input devices are supported for touchscreen content

Enable zooming and text resizing

The smaller screen size of mobile devices and some people's preference to increase the size of content make it vital for developers and designers to ensure content works as expected, even when magnified or resized. Responsive design practices enable content to adjust its size and positioning based on device or software specifications and user settings. On-page options for settings like text resizing can be helpful for increasing user-friendliness.

- ☐ Text can be resized at least 200% without using assistive technology
- ☐ Content is presented without loss of information or function when magnified
- ☐ Content does not require scrolling in two directions when magnified
- ☐ Browser's pinch-to-zoom is not blocked

Make sure orientation and layout don't limit use

Some mobile experiences are initially designed in either portrait or landscape views, yet some people need or prefer the option to switch screen orientation or always use a fixed orientation. Additionally, all users find mobile websites or apps easier to use when pages work as expected and there is consistency between related pages or functions.

- ☐ Screen orientation can change between portrait and landscape
- ☐ Page layout is consistent and predictable

Make structure and navigation available to all users

Even though less content may be shown at one time, proper organization and labelling of mobile content is equally important as it is in the desktop experience. All content and pages need to be intuitively navigable visually and with any assistive technology that might be used, like a screen reader. Make pages easy to find, make controls easy to understand, and make sure the experience is optimized for everyone, no matter how they consume the material.

- [ ] Pages have descriptive titles
- [ ] Headings are properly-nested, in an appropriate reading order, and available to assistive technology
- [ ] Menus, controls, and links work with touch and keyboard
- [ ] Menus, controls, and links are clearly labelled, with and without assistive technology

Provide text alternatives for graphics and media

Just like on a desktop website, or any digital platform, alt text is critical. This allows assistive technology users, those with a slower internet connection, or others to access the information or meaning conveyed in an image, graphic, or other non-text content. The only exceptions are when images are purely decorative, meaning they convey no new information, or when the content is already repeated as text in an easy-to-find place.

- [ ] Graphical content has an accessible text alternative
- [ ] Videos provide synchronized and accurate captions
- [ ] Videos provide text transcripts and, as needed, audio descriptions
- [ ] Digital text, not images of text, is used when possible

Use color effectively

Colors are important to brand and interface elements. By all means, color should be used creatively and effectively, but doing so requires it be used thoughtfully. The main considerations for color are sufficient color contrast and avoiding color as the only visual cue for important information. While proper color use is equally important on desktop and laptop devices, mobile devices come with smaller screen sizes and are more likely to be used outdoors or in other settings where it can be more difficult to read what's on screen. Therefore, color contrast and avoiding the use of color alone aren't critical only for individuals with color blindness or low vision, but for almost everyone.

- [ ] Most text has a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1
- [ ] Large text has a contrast ratio of at least 3:1
- [ ] Interface and graphical components have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1
- [ ] Information or meaning (like an error) is not conveyed by color alone

LET'S CONTINUE YOUR ACCESSIBILITY JOURNEY TOGETHER!

Schedule a free and confidential 30-minute consultation.

The Bureau of Internet Accessibility has helped over 75,000 companies achieve, maintain and prove digital compliance for over 20 years, including:

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