



WATCH IT!
WEB ACCESSIBILITY
TOOL AND CHECKLIST:
IMPLEMENTATION AND TIPS



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1 INTRODUCTION

The Erasmus+ programme strives to promote equal access, inclusion, diversity and fairness in all of its pursuits. *Inclusion and diversity* have been set as one of the programme's horizontal priorities and organisations should adopt an inclusive approach to ensure accessibility of digital content to a wide variety of participants. Accessibility is equally important in the digital realm as it is in the physical world.

According to the [World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\)](#), websites, tools and technologies are accessible if they are created and built in a way that ensures that individuals with differing abilities cannot just perceive, comprehend and navigate them, but also actively engage with them and make contributions. Web accessibility focuses on ensuring that web content remains accessible to people with various differing abilities: auditory, visual, speech, physical, cognitive, neurological etc. [The Web Accessibility Directive](#) (Directive (EU) 2016/2102) establishes regulations for all Member States to ensure that websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies meet the accessibility requirements. These requirements are further explained in the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#) developed by W3C. The Directive complements the [European Accessibility Act](#), which covers a wide range of products and services in the private sector.

Web accessibility is recognised as a fundamental right and is incorporated into the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (Article 9), ensuring their equal access to information and communication technologies, including the internet. Furthermore, [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) (Article 26) mentions the rights of persons with differing abilities to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration and participation in the life of the community. All of the abovementioned obliges web developers, designers and authors (content creators) to adhere to these principles. While it is a precondition to have accessible websites (work done by developers and designers), this tool is primarily created to help authors make information on the web more accessible to people with differing abilities, as well as easy to find and understand.

This tool is structured in a way that examines key elements of web accessibility at three levels. Firstly, it explains 'WHAT' each element is, simplifying the technicalities for all users. It then emphasises 'WHY' these elements are vital for accessibility, highlighting their significance in ensuring equal access to information for all individuals. Finally, it outlines 'HOW' these elements can be optimised to meet accessibility standards, offering practical steps and tips to enhance inclusivity and ensure a smooth web experience for everyone.

2 WRITTEN CONTENT

2.1. Web content is accessible to screen readers

WHAT?

Screen reader is a tool designed to verbally articulate the content displayed on the screen. When getting started with a screen reader, users must become familiar with certain keyboard shortcuts since it does not rely on the use of mouse.

WHY?

For persons who are blind or with low vision, screen readers are main tools to access webpage content.

HOW?

Test created content and make sure that data available for graphs, charts, maps, SVGs etc. is also readable by screen readers.

TIP:

Some examples of useful free of charge tools to test content accessibility are [Screen Reader](#) and [NVDA](#).

2.2. Web pages have titles that describe topic or purpose

WHAT?

Web page title is a short description of a webpage that appears in the tab of a browser window.

WHY?

The title is typically the first content read by screen readers when the page is loaded.

2 WRITTEN CONTENT

HOW?

Think of a short title for every page that describes the page content and distinguish it from other pages (the page title is usually the same as the main heading of the page). The unique and most relevant information should be first (for example, put the name of the page before the name of the organisation). Web developers should have knowledge and skills to add page titles when creating a website.



2.3. Headings convey meaning and structure

WHAT?

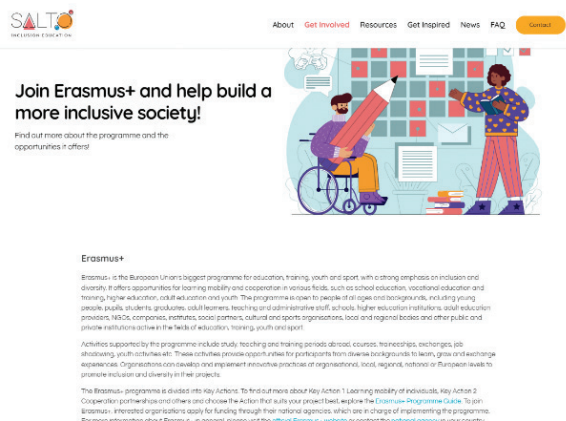
Headings and subheadings show up at the top of paragraphs of text as their titles and provide an idea of what paragraphs are about.

WHY?

When headings are clear and descriptive, users can find the information they seek and understand the relationships between different parts of the content more easily.

HOW?

Use short headings to group related paragraphs and clearly describe the sections. Good headings provide an outline of the content.



2 WRITTEN CONTENT

2.4. Content is clear and concise

WHAT?

Content should be both brief and comprehensive, written in short sentences and paragraphs.

WHY?

Clear and concise content helps persons with reading difficulties, as well as persons with differing abilities that make it difficult for them to understand non-literal word usage, specialised words or usage of figurative language.

HOW?

- Use simple and easy-to-understand language rather than complex words and phrases.
- Use full name in the first mentioning and put abbreviation/acronym in the brackets. For example, SALTO Resource Centre for Inclusion and Diversity in Education and Training (SALTO ID ET).
- Provide a glossary of lesser-known terms.
- If necessary, use images, illustrations, video, audio or symbols to make content easier to understand.
- Use simple formatting, as appropriate for the context (e.g., list formatting).

2.5. Hyperlinked text is underlined and written in a meaningful way

WHAT?

Hyperlinked text is a word or a phrase on a web page which is visually noticeable and which directs users to other pages within the same site or on external sites.


WHY?

Meaningful text in links is essential for users of assistive technology like screen readers and speech recognition software. Screen readers often list links, allowing users to instruct which link to open, emphasising the importance of meaningful text. Additionally, using underlines can assist colourblind and technologically less experienced users in recognising and interacting with links.

2 WRITTEN CONTENT

HOW?

The link text should describe the content of the link target. Avoid using 'click here' or 'read more'. In the link text indicate relevant information about the link target, such as document type and size or the full name of the page to which the user will be redirected, (e.g. [Guidelines on Development of Inclusion and Diversity Strategies \(PDF, 2 MB\)](#) or [SALTO Resource Centre for Inclusion and Diversity in Education and Training](#)).

TIP: Avoid links that open a new tab or window. Opening new links in the same tab or window makes websites easier to navigate, providing consistent and predictable experiences for all users, including those with differing abilities who rely on assistive technologies. This approach also gives users better control over their browsing and prevents confusion, especially on mobile devices. If necessary, provide an indication of the behaviour, e.g., use icon () or simply add *Link will open in new tab*.

2.6. Page components (e.g., buttons and icons) that have the same functionality are identified with same labels, names and text alternatives across website

WHAT?

A **button** can be in the form of an image or a text box and it provides the users with the opportunity to engage with your site. It can be designed in different sizes, colours and shapes. An **icon** is a graphical symbol that represents entities, concepts or actions, making it easier for web users to navigate the internet.

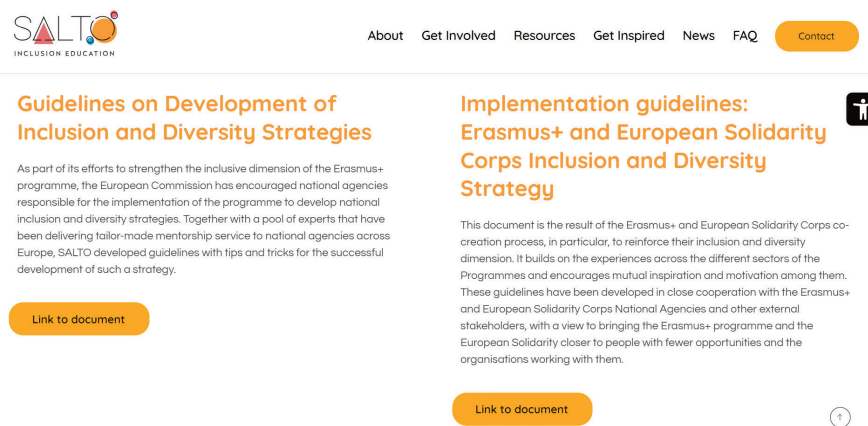
WHY?

Persons who are blind or with low vision rely on their familiarity with functions on the website while using screen readers. Because of that, if the labels, names and alternative texts are not the same, the site will be more difficult to use. Also, this feature is important for people with diverse cognitive abilities because it can reduce cognitive load and make the site easier to use and less confusing.

2 WRITTEN CONTENT

HOW?

Keep all identification consistent across website (e.g., use the same icon of magnifying glass across your website for “search” function or the button of same size, colour and shape for downloading a publication).



The screenshot shows the SALTO Inclusion Education website. The header includes the SALTO logo and navigation links: About, Get Involved, Resources, Get Inspired, News, FAQ, and a Contact button. Two articles are displayed side-by-side. The left article is titled 'Guidelines on Development of Inclusion and Diversity Strategies' and includes a paragraph of text and an orange 'Link to document' button. The right article is titled 'Implementation guidelines: Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy' and includes a paragraph of text, an orange 'Link to document' button, and an accessibility icon (a person in a wheelchair) in the top right corner of the article content area.

2.7. Instructions on the website are clear and they tend to multiple senses

WHAT?

Instructions on the web pages explain how to access specific external site content or content on the same site, but with a different web address (e.g., articles, registration forms, tools etc.).

WHY?

Persons who are blind or with low vision cannot perceive shape or size or use information about spatial location or orientation. This is due to the nature of the assistive technologies they use.

HOW?

Instructions should rely on the ability not only to perceive shape, size, visual location, orientation or sound. Think of multiple ways to perceive them.

TIP:

Instead of *Enter your first name in the box* use *Please fill in your first name in the text box marked 'First Name' at the top of the page, just below the title.*

3 MEDIA CONTENT

3.1. Images and other visual elements on the websites include meaningful and contextual alternative text (alt text), unless they are purely decorative

WHAT?

Alternative text provides a textual description of the content or function of an image, drawing, diagram or other visual elements.


WHY?

Alternative text is vital for ensuring accessibility, allowing screen readers to convey the content of images to users who are blind or with low vision.

HOW?

Add concise and accurate descriptions of images, drawings, diagrams or other visual elements through the website's administrative interface. These descriptions should effectively convey the purpose or content of the image to ensure a meaningful experience for all users, including those who are blind or with low vision.

ATTACHMENT DETAILS



May 8, 2023
638 KB
2560 by 1707 pixels
Original image: [ID_Forum_Bucharest.jpg](#)
[Edit Image](#)
[Delete permanently](#)

Alt Text

TIP: Text should be functional and provide an equivalent user experience, not necessarily describe the image (e.g., appropriate text alternative for a search button would be "search", not "magnifying glass").

3 MEDIA CONTENT

3.2. All videos feature captions/subtitles options

WHAT?

Captions refer to the text representation of spoken content that is synchronised with the audio and provide accessibility for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Subtitles, include text translations of spoken content in different languages for non-native speakers, enhancing the overall accessibility and inclusivity of the content.

WHY?

Captions and subtitles ensure that audiovisual content is accessible to a broader audience. They cater to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and facilitate comprehension for non-native speakers or those who have difficulty understanding the audio.

HOW?

Ensure that shared videos contain high-quality captions/subtitles. If you consider creating them yourself, refer to the guidelines on [how to make captions](#).



TIP:

Avoid using [flashing elements](#) in video content as they may trigger seizures in individuals with photosensitive epilepsy. If it is not possible to avoid them, include a warning, e.g., *This film contains flashing lights which may not be suitable for photosensitive epilepsy.*

3 MEDIA CONTENT

3.3. All video files have audio description or full text description

WHAT?

Audio description refers to an additional narration track that verbalises key visual elements, actions or scenes within the video, enabling individuals who are blind or with low vision to comprehend the content.

Full text description, on the other hand, provides a detailed written account of the visual content, typically provided alongside the video.

WHY?

Audio descriptions and full text descriptions are crucial for making video content accessible to individuals who are blind or with low vision. These descriptions provide essential context and details about visual elements, ensuring an inclusive viewing experience for all users.

HOW?

You can either outsource description creation due to the specialised skills and time required or turn to [guidelines on creation of descriptions](#).

3.4. All audio-only content has transcripts

WHAT?

Transcripts serve as textual representations of both speech and non-speech audio elements, enabling users to comprehend the auditory content through written text.

WHY?

Transcripts are essential for ensuring that persons who are deaf or hard of hearing can access the content effectively. Additionally, they benefit individuals who prefer processing written information over audio formats, enhancing overall accessibility and user engagement.

HOW?

Begin by verifying whether transcripts are already incorporated into the audio-only content. If transcripts are not currently available, explore the option of outsourcing the creation of transcripts to professionals with the necessary expertise or refer to the [guidelines on creating accurate transcripts](#).

4 LITERATURE

1. Web Accessibility Checklist
(<https://www.webaccessibilitychecklist.com/>)
2. WAI: Strategies, guidelines, resources to make the Web accessible to people with disabilities
(<https://www.w3.org/WAI/design-develop/>)
3. WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)
(<https://wcag.com/authors/>)
4. Understanding WCAG 2.0
(<https://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20/>)

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