AODA Compliance Checklist

Interactive Readiness Guide

ESSENTIAL ACCESSIBILITY

AODA Accessibility Requirements

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was enacted in 2005, mandating that organizations in Ontario comply with standards to become more accessible to people with disabilities.

As of January 1, 2021, all public sector organizations and all private organizations with 50+ employees must make web content accessible to WCAG 2.0 AA standards (excluding live captioning and pre-recorded audio descriptions).

Failure to comply can result in severe financial penalties:

- A corporation/organization can be fined up to $100,000 per day
- Directors and officers of a corporation/organization can be fined up to $50,000 per day[1]

Our interactive checklist will help you prepare and protect your organization from legal and financial risk.

Who must comply?

You are required to follow WCAG 2.0 AA standards to ensure compliance with AODA if you are:

- a public sector organization (government, municipalities, educational institutions)
- a private organization with 50+ employees (business, non-profit, private education)

The organization that controls the website must meet the accessibility requirements.

1: https://accessibilitycanada.ca/aoda/

What is WCAG?

Developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) provide technical specifications to improve the accessibility of web content, websites and web applications on desktop computers, laptops, tablets and mobile devices for people with a wide range of disabilities, including auditory, cognitive, neurological, physical, speech and visual disabilities.

Though not legally mandated, WCAG is widely considered the benchmark for achieving web accessibility.

Adhering to these guidelines will ensure that your website is accessible, not just in Ontario, but around the world, thus reducing the amount of resources needed to meet geographic specific standards.

What content must be accessible?

Any information found on a web page or web application, including text, images, forms and sounds must be accessible.

Automated Testing

There are many tools available that will perform an automated test on certain components of a website, mobile experience, app, or electronic document. They can be quite useful for doing preliminary inspections. Accessibility experts often use various tools in concert to effectively test a website.

Automated accessibility testing is a great way to learn more about the different reasons why persons with disabilities might encounter problems. However, this form of testing has limitations. Only about 30% of the WCAG 2.0 success criteria can be tested using an automated tool.

Testing Against WCAG 2.0

When we use the term “digital accessibility testing” we’re referring to the step-by-step process of thoroughly and diligently checking whether or not an internal or external-facing website, mobile app, software application, or learning management system is usable by people with disabilities.

Proper accessibility testing of these digital properties typically involves extensive manual scrutiny of individual web pages against the WCAG 2.0 success criteria, as well as tests of various functions such as product searches and online form submissions.

It can also mean using automated testing tools to check for accessibility of various, specific elements of the digital property. The best approach is usually a combination of both.

There are a number of tools to conduct preliminary automated testing. It is recommended that you determine which tools will work with firewall settings and design and developer teams who will use the same tools. QA teams will likely leverage even more tools to ensure compliance and usability. Here is a listing of free tools for you to peruse to get you started:

Code Validation

W3C CSS Validator software was created by the W3C to help web designers and web developers check Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). It can be used via their free web service, or downloaded and used either as a java program, or as a java servlet on a web server. This tool allows a comparison of style sheets to the CSS specifications, and helps find errors, typos, and incorrect uses of CSS. It will also advise when the CSS poses some usability risks.

Colour Contrast and Colour Blindness

The Colour Contrast Analyser is a downloadable tool that helps determine the legibility of text and the contrast of visual elements, such as graphical controls and visual indicators.

Mobile Accessibility

Two tools serve the mobile accessibility space. For Android, Accessibility Scanner checks for accessibility in Android apps. For iOS, Accessibility Inspector can be used to check for accessibility. Both apps are utilized by developer and QA audiences.

Document Accessibility

The Document Accessibility Toolbar (DAT) is a dedicated accessibility ribbon menu for Microsoft Word that makes it quicker and easier to create accessible documents. This toolbar features a range of hand-picked and custom-built functions to optimize and validate a document for accessibility. The PDF Accessibility Checker PAC 3 allows for the checking of PDFs for accessibility. It works even for people who do not have Adobe Acrobat Professional.

Web Accessibility

The WAVE by WebAIM tool is one of the favourites in the industry as it uses a simple Red, Yellow, Green icon to show errors, warnings and good areas. It also has an ARIA check and colour contrast analyzer built in, and you can turn on/off style sheets. Other tools offer specificity of analysis for content, design, developers and QA teams.

Manual and Functional Testing

Manual and functional testing are an essential component of determining web accessibility. These testing types involve using human expertise to check the automated tests and then having trained teams and persons with disabilities actually engage with the digital experiences directly. There simply isn't any technology that can replace this portion of accessibility testing. When conducting a manual review, a sample test plan should include the following components:

Ensure you're testing the most accurate environments for all users:

- Check Google Analytics to determine high trafficked pages.
- Cross reference this list against WebAIM's Screen Reader Survey and Low Vision Survey.

Cross check the accessibility features with HTML 5 Browser Accessibility to ensure all features are supported

Keyboard accessibility check

Code validation check

Automated accessibility tool check

User stories for manual and functional testing:

- Develop accessibility-related user stories, such as:
  - As a keyboard only user, I want the ability to reach all links (text or image), form controls and page functions, so that I can perform an action or navigate to the place I choose.
  - As a user who is hearing-impaired, I want closed captioning functionality so that I can have access to all information provided in video clips.
- Ask yourself these questions:
  - Why is the screen reader reading the sidebar before the main article?
  - Do I have to tab through every page and every navigation before getting to the content? (Why isn't there a skip to content link?)
  - What does image IMG_238429.jpg mean?
  - What did I miss on the page?

Getting Started

There are a number of ways organizations can ramp up their manual testing capabilities:

Option 1

Build an in-house team of accessibility testers to perform QA on digital properties in development.

Option 2

Hire an outside consultant to test your website, apps and/or electronic documents. They will provide you with a one time report outlining some issues and barriers encountered, but more testing will likely be required to understand the full scope of issues.

Option 3 (recommended)

Work with an accessibility partner on a continuous basis. They'll provide access to an expert team of testers who manually check digital properties in multiple environments using different assistive technologies. These partners also work with you to develop a prioritization report outlining the critical, high, medium and low-level issues, monitor your digital properties on an ongoing basis and integrate seamlessly into your backend systems to better collaborate with your team.

Use the interactive and printable WCAG 2.0 Level A and AA checklists in this guide to determine whether your organization's website meets the success criteria required for each level. ☑

WCAG 2.0 Level A Checklist

Project:
Digital Asset:

Date:

Success Criteria	Description	Notes	Pass/Fail	Complete
1.1.1 – Non-text Content	Provide text alternatives for non-text content			☐
1.2.1 – Audio-only and Video-only (Prerecorded)	Provide an alternative to video-only and audio-only content			☐
1.2.2 – Captions (Prerecorded)	Provide captions for videos with audio			☐
1.2.3 – Audio description or Media Alternative (Prerecorded)	Video with an audio has a second alternative			☐
1.3.1 – Info and Relationships	Logical structures			☐
1.3.2 – Meaningful Sequence	Present content in a meaningful order			☐
1.3.3 – Sensory Characteristics	Use more than one sense for instructions			☐
1.4.1 – Use of Colour	Don't use presentation that relies solely on colour			☐
1.4.2 – Audio Control	Don't play audio automatically			☐
2.1.1 – Keyboard	Accessible by keyboard only			☐
2.1.2 – No Keyboard Trap	Don't trap keyboard users			☐
2.2.1 – Timing Adjustable	Time limits have user controls			☐
2.2.2 – Pause, Stop, Hide	Provide user controls for moving content			☐
2.3.1 – Three Flashes or Below Threshold	No content flashes more than three times per second			☐
2.4.1 – Bypass Blocks	Provide a "Skip to Content" link			☐

WCAG 2.0 Level A Checklist (continued)

Project:
Digital Asset:

Date:

Success Criteria	Description	Notes	Pass/Fail	Complete
2.4.2 – Page Titled	Helpful and clear page title			☐
2.4.3 – Focus Order	Logical order			☐
2.4.4 – Link Purpose (In Context)	Every link's purpose is clear from its context			☐
3.1.1 – Language of Page	Page has a language assigned			☐
3.2.1 – On Focus	Elements do not change when they receive focus			☐
3.2.2 – On Input	Elements do not change when they receive input			☐
3.3.1 – Error Identification	Clearly identify input errors			☐
3.3.2 – Labels or Instructions	Label elements and give instructions			☐
4.1.1 – Parsing	No major code errors			☐
4.1.2 – Name, Role, Value	Build all elements for accessibility			☐
			RESULT	☐

WCAG 2.0 Level AA Checklist

Project:
Digital Asset:

Date:

Success Criteria	Description	Notes	Pass/Fail	Complete
1.4.3 – Contrast (Minimum)	Contrast ratio between text and background is at least 4.5:1			☐
1.4.4 – Resize Text	Text can be resized to 200% without loss of content or function			☐
1.4.5 – Images of Text	Don't use images of text			☐
2.4.5 – Multiple Ways	Offer several ways to find pages			☐
2.4.6 – Headings and Labels	Use clear headings and labels			☐
2.4.7 – Focus Visible	Keyboard focus is visible and clear			☐
3.1.2 – Language of Parts	Tell users when the language on a page changes			☐
3.2.4 – Consistent Identification	Use icons and buttons consistently			☐
3.3.3 – Error Suggestion	Suggest fixes when users make errors			☐
3.3.4 – Error Prevention (Legal, financial, data)	Reduce the risk of input errors for sensitive data			☐
			RESULT	☐

eSSENTIAL Accessibility is an Accessibility-as-a-Service platform that makes your digital assets compliant with AODA, ADA, WCAG, Section 508 and other global requirements. Our technology helps your organization deliver accessible web, mobile, and product experiences, ensuring people of all abilities have equal access.

To learn more about how you can make your web, mobile, and product experiences accessible and compliant with AODA requirements, visit www.essentialaccessibility.com

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