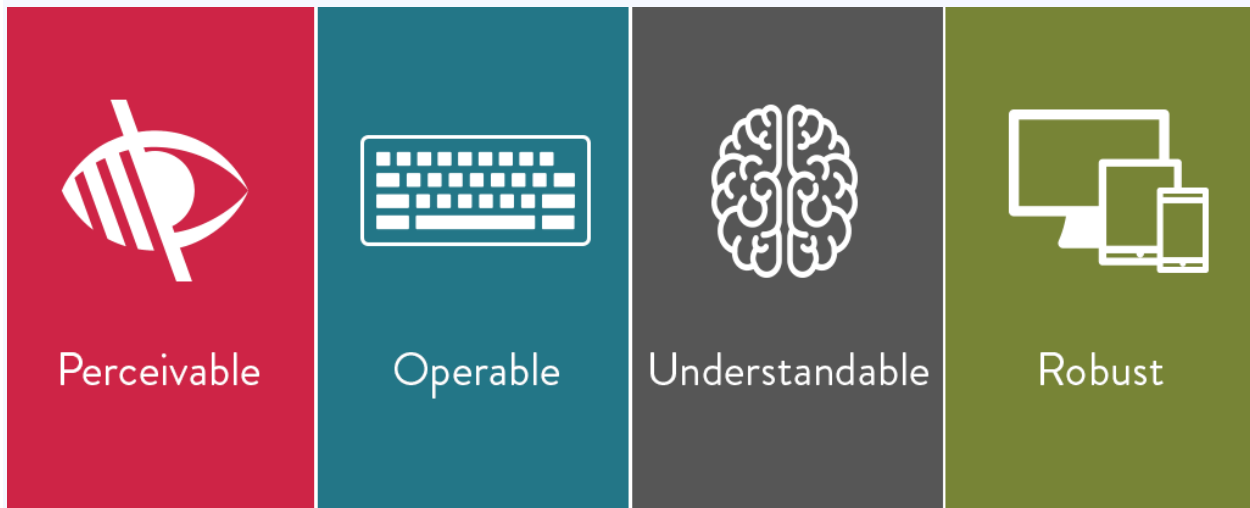


An Eye-Opening Look at Lack of Web Accessibility continued...



“Trying to access crucial information online is a problem that happens daily for more than one billion people with disabilities worldwide. Today, 15% of the world’s population experience some type of disability. Despite accessibility becoming a priority for many companies over the last few years, when it comes to digital accessibility, brands still have a long path ahead.

A survey by the [English company Click-Away Pound](#) showed that 69% of respondents abandon websites due to a lack of accessibility. In addition, 86% said that they would spend more if online stores were affordable. So, here’s the ugly truth for businesses: whoever is not thinking about this subject is not just impeding people from having free access to information and services on the internet, but is also losing money.

Digital accessibility means breaking down barriers on the internet for people with disabilities. In other words, it’s the ability for a piece of content or online experience (whether it’s on mobile or desktop) to be fully understood by users who have disabilities — regardless of whether it’s visual, hearing, physical or cognitive. Digital accessibility best practices range from code improvements that allow screen readers to read, for example, to the inclusion of alternative text in images and videos that describe behaviors.

According to a [study conducted by WebAIM in 2020](#), the vast majority (98%) of websites and tools are designed without considering the different types of disabilities and end up offering a poor and incomplete experience for them.” – [rockcontent.com blog, Moema Vianna, Author. August 24, 2022](#)

Whether your website contains online shopping, image galleries, local events and information, graphs, diagrams, links, documents or any other digital content, if it’s not accessible, you are missing out on not only money through purchases, but on being the

connector to stories, information and events your website is intended to be. After all, you started a business to connect to people, right? To be a pathway to the community, to your talent, to your knowledge or to your products. If your content isn't accessible, this pathway is blocked by a huge unseen barrier called lack of digital accessibility. If a huge physical barrier were blocking the street or driveway to your brick and mortar, you would do whatever it took to remove it so everyone could access your building. Though a barrier to the entrance and navigation of a website is often not as obvious to the business owner, it is just as critical and impeding – if not more so – to people with disabilities.

This article from the American Bar Association is a great read to continue thinking about and planning for full web accessibility compliance. It speaks to the need, the law, the practice, and the many failures in website accessibility but leaves us with the hope that, through awareness, knowledge, training and true desire for web content to be barrier-free and fully accessible to all, we can all do our part in creating accessible web content, advocating for people with disabilities, sharing stories and important information to educate our communities about why accessibility matters and the perils of noncompliance.

“Building accessibility into a website from the beginning is less costly than trying to rearchitect the site after litigation ensues. By counseling clients from the beginning to use the WCAG 2.0 guidelines, clients can avoid having to go back and correct inaccessible pages and features post-litigation or post-rulemaking. Although the DOJ has not issued guidelines on accessibility, and will not for some time, it has made it clear through consent agreements and statements of interest that the ADA applies to websites and that they will enforce it.

As outlined above, advocacy groups have become more active in filing lawsuits, and business clients are losing customers and users if inaccessible websites shut out disabled potential customers. As more of our lives go online and Internet life becomes ubiquitous, it is unlikely that the ADA will continue to be interpreted in some jurisdictions to require a physical place to apply. The mandate is therefore clear: whether connected to a physical place or not, websites must be ADA accessible, and the best way thus far to accomplish that is to follow the WCAG 2.0 guidelines.” – *Source: American Bar Association article, Meredith Mays Espino, December 20, 2016*

[Read the full article from the American Bar Association](#) ►