

Product Accessibility Cheat Sheet



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ACCESSIBILITY

The new gate to digital product procurement and sales: accessibility.

Is your digital product accessible for people of all abilities, including those with disabilities? Accessible products are ones that are created with every user in mind -- ensuring the maximum number of people can fully engage and use your product without barriers.

Digital accessibility requirements are based on a set of technical standards called the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, or WCAG. Proof your product is accessible, in accordance with WCAG, comes in the form of a VPAT – or Voluntary Product Accessibility Template.

Edge Out the Competition

Whether selling into the public or private sector, documented proof of accessibility is becoming a mainstream requirement in RFPs. If you don't have it, you're jeopardizing both new and existing contracts. If you do, you're likely edging out the competition. In certain instances, accessibility is a legal mandate, based on regulations such as Section 508. But in others, companies are simply expecting accessible products, prioritizing those that are as they make their buying decisions.



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To design, develop and deploy accessible products, here's what you need to know:

- **Evaluate the current state of your product's accessibility** with manual testing and analysis. Walk through your users' critical flows to identify barriers.
- **Manually test those flows** using a variety of assistive technologies (AT) on multiple browsers (it's important tests are conducted by individuals with disabilities who are native AT users).
- **Prioritize correcting identified issues** based on their impact to the end user.
- **Complete a VPAT, or Voluntary Product Accessibility Template**, which is the de facto way in which you can detail your product's level of accessibility as part of the procurement process.
- **Mitigate legal risk for yourself and your customers.** Integrating a widget or product that doesn't meet accessibility standards is a legal and reputational risk they simply won't take.
- **Shift left. Conform to accessibility standards early and often** -- from accessible design to accessible code. While different accessibility standards may apply, WCAG should be considered your starting point.
- **Don't stop with VPAT.** Build accessibility checkpoints throughout every product sprint and feature release.
- **Don't wait.** The most expensive time to fix an accessibility issue is either when you're being sued, or when your customers are cancelling you because of it.

No need to go it alone.

eSENTIAL Accessibility partners with companies, providing your internal team the tools, testing, training and legal support needed to confidently create products, platforms, widgets and software that are usable for all.

Engage with our team today. 

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