

Accessibility Testing -

Why Should Organizations Mandate It Before Their Product Goes Live



Preface



Making the Internet Accessible for Individuals, Businesses, and Society

Imagine living in a world where you couldn't handle all the features offered by your smartphone, or you could only use your PC's keyboard without having access to the mouse or touchpad. What would you do if the words on your screen were too vague or the tutorial video you are watching didn't have clear audio?

Technology should not discriminate against a person just because they cannot access it fully. Accessibility Testing provides a solution for the exact problem.

Accessibility Testing is a revolutionary new addition to the quality engineering segment. It empowers the masses and doesn't limit the technology to a select few users. According to the World Health Organization, 15% of the global population is specially-abled, making their digital representation crucial.

Market valuation for accessibility testing will cross US\$ 606.46 Million by 2027

– Strait Research

Technology has, no doubt, changed our lifestyles, but a lot remains the same when it comes to the way we access it. Organizations need special efforts to ensure that the product or service they are creating is for 'everyone.' Accessibility testing focuses on verifying usability and makes sure that an application can be accessible by people with disabilities



The Need for Accessibility Testing

75% - The number of Daily Internet Using Americans with Disabilities

2,500 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title III website accessibility lawsuits filed

Over 51 million - Accessibility Errors Detected in Top 1,000,000 Websites

We are now living in a world where inclusivity and representation matter. While new emerging tools and technologies have accelerated innovation, we don't hear much about the said innovations being used for the benefit of the less privileged communities

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Accessibility is a core value at Apple and something we view as a basic human right

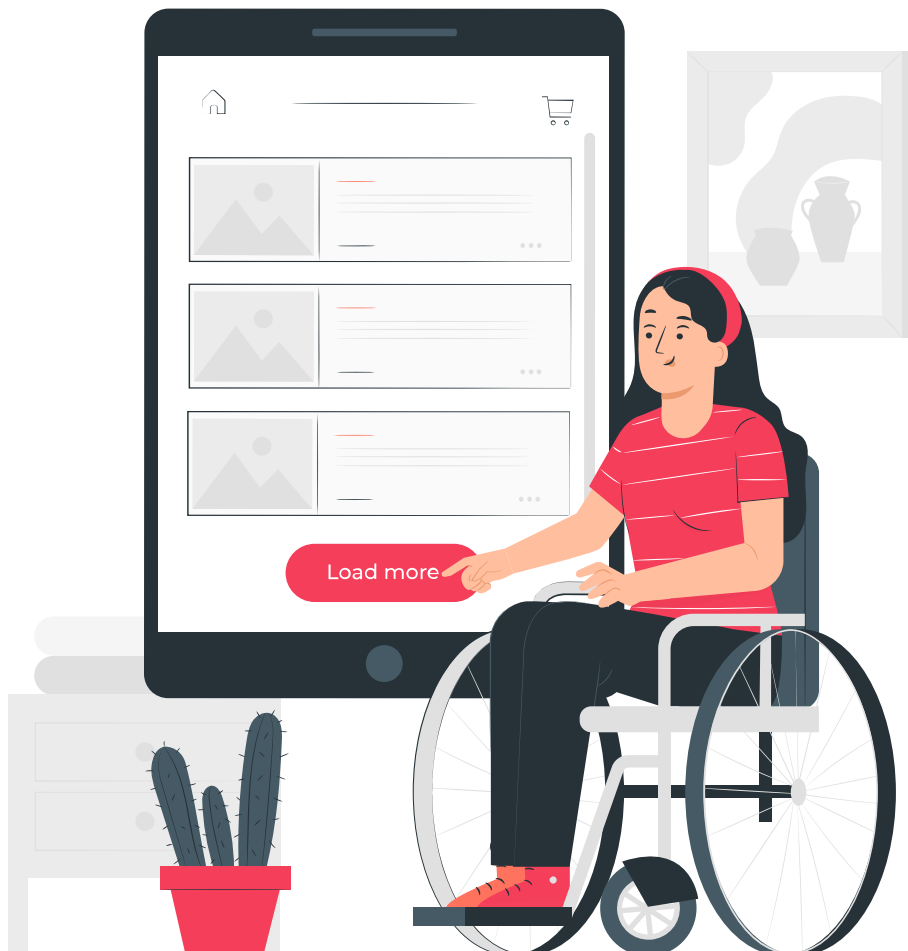
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— Sarah Herrlinger, Director of Global Accessibility Policy and Initiatives, Apple

Accessibility Testing is not just for higher profit margins or greater market share. It is also to assure that you as a business provide equal opportunities and ensure that everyone can explore the digital world freely.

Accessibility is often abbreviated “A11Y” because the word has 11 letters between A and Y. Pronouncing this word is itself ironic for what accessibility intends to do. So, a 4-letter word is much better than a 13-letter word. By adding Accessibility Testing to your product development culture, you can expand your user base by providing the differently-abled community members access to online resources and technology. You will not restrict anyone from using your product.

When you start considering accessibility in the design, it becomes an in-built part of your work. Furthermore, you’ll stay in tune with compliance and legal guidelines and make disabled customers happier.



Digital accessibility standards and discrimination laws

Achieving digital accessibility is challenging because there are no specific laws that developers would follow. Some guidelines give an idea, but they too create a lot of grey areas. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and User Agent Accessibility Guidelines (UAAG) standards tell developers about the best practices, but they are not laws. Getting familiar with these standards and guidelines is the first step toward achieving greater accessibility.

Accessibility testing should take into account the demands of people with special needs who fit into the groups listed below



Visual



Cognitive



Auditory



Language



Physical



Learning



Speech



Neurological



World Wide Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

The World Wide Consortium (W3C) defines accessibility standards under four benchmarks. The key points addressed here include:

Perceived Accessibility: Users should access the information and user interface according to their preferences.

Example

- Alt Texts for Images
- Subtitles for videos

Operable Accessibility: Navigation must be simple and operable for all users.

Example

- Keyboard Navigation
- No Time Limitations

Understandable Accessibility: The content in the UI must be understandable without restrictions.

Example

- Voice notes
- Braille Displays

Robust Accessibility: The content must be robust enough to be properly interpreted by different user agents, including assistive technologies.

Example

- Valid HTML and ARIA tags
- Browser Compatibility



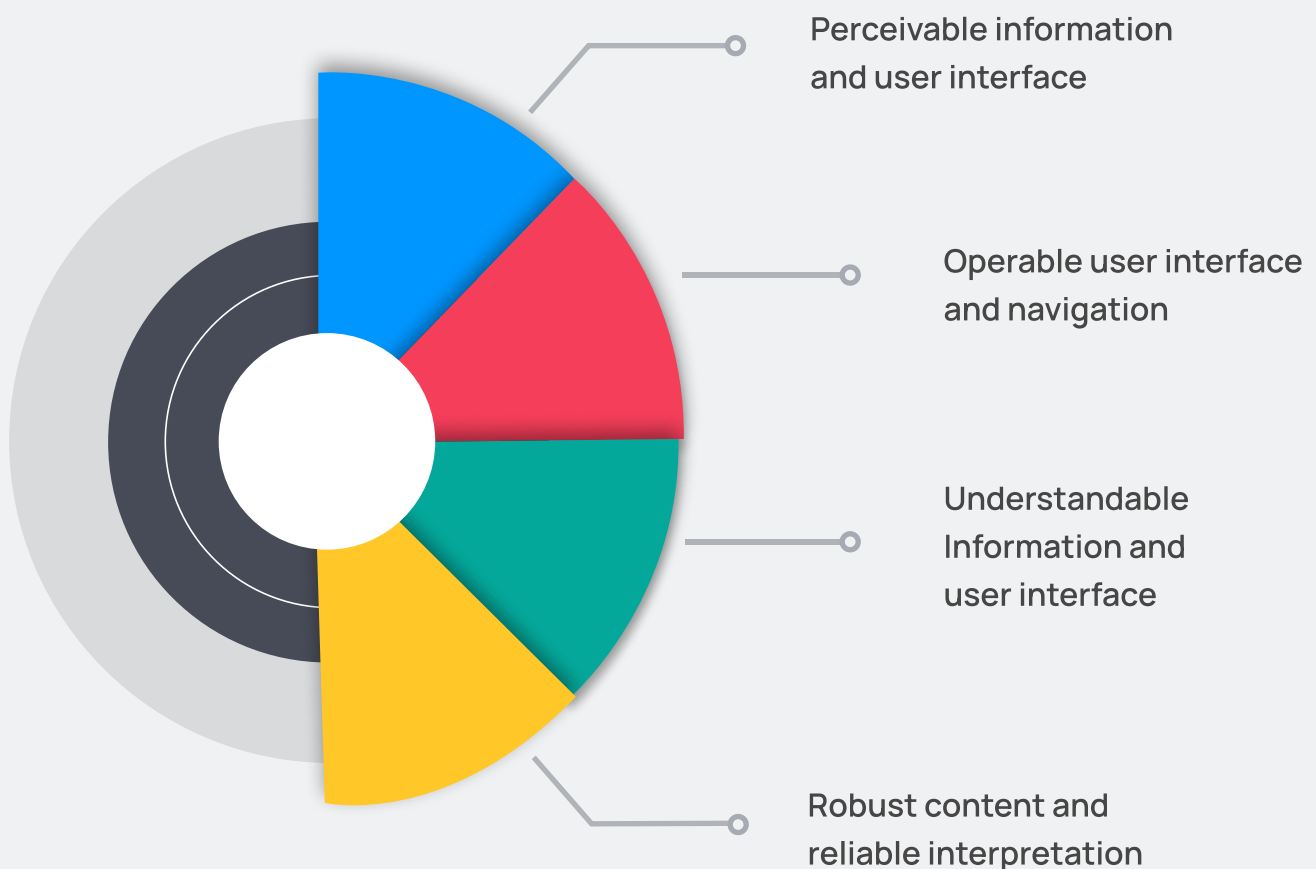
ADA

ADA deems it illegal for businesses to provide goods and services to the general public without confirming that the products and services are accessible by people with disabilities. While it doesn't mention digital accessibility, many lawsuits are filed under the ADA.

Section 508

Section 508 requires federal agencies to make their digital assets accessible to the differently-abled.

Four primary principles of WCAG 2.0



Best Practices

With the need for digital inclusivity becoming a crucial requirement, many companies have taken the initiative to make their platforms accessible for all. Some leading examples set by organizations would be:



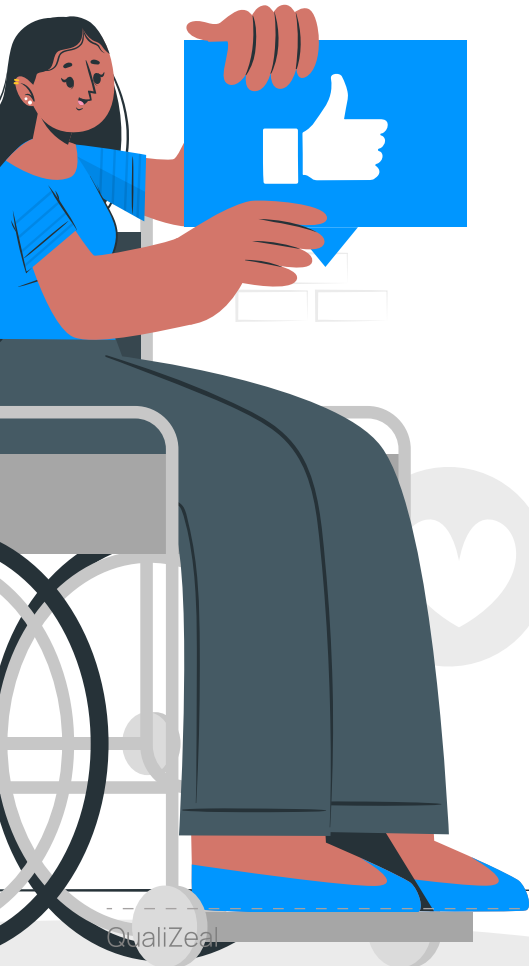
Reddit introduced an alt-text feature on all its platforms to make it easy for its visually impaired users to navigate through the platform. They also have thousands of volunteers who provide detailed video descriptions and images.



Google's voice command was designed keeping the requirements of the differently-abled in mind.



Netflix's interface comes with voice commands, keyboard navigation, and a layout that is easy on the eyes. Apart from working on their product, they have also added shows and movies representing disabled characters as integral parts of the stories.



Images with Alt Text

If your application, website, or social media channels use images to communicate, make sure that it comes with an alternative text so that the users understand the message behind it.

Friendly Keyboard Navigation

Mouse and touchpads are not friendly to every user. The application should have features for keyboard navigation, i.e., tab switch between links, alt + tab to switch between the windows, and so on.

Color sensitivity

People with vision impairment are sensitive to colors. Always avoid high or low contrast, high brightness, and extravagant, over-the-top colors for fonts and background.

The Choice to Disable Images and Videos

Web browsers have already implemented this feature where the user can choose to disable images. This helps people with vision issues and the users who are from areas with slow internet connectivity.

Properly Label Your Forms

Don't make forms too complicated. It should allow users to fill it comfortably without any interruption.

Avoid "More" or "Click Here" Links

Always avoid hyperlinks like "More" or "Click Here" for redirecting to other pages. Instead, provide all the information on one page. People with neurological disorders don't like navigating around so many windows.

Offer Dark Mode

Dark mode improves readability and reduces the strain on the eyes. It benefits users with low vision and light sensitivity issues. Keep in mind, that dark mode can ruin the navigation experience if the features are not implemented properly.

Podcasts with Transcripts

Transcripts help people with hearing issues understand the content.



Benefits

Accessibility testing and making a product reach out to marginalized communities are beneficial on multiple fronts. It expands the business, brings goodwill, and inspires your peers. Many companies have seen a paradigm shift in their reputation once they started considering digital representation and worked on it.



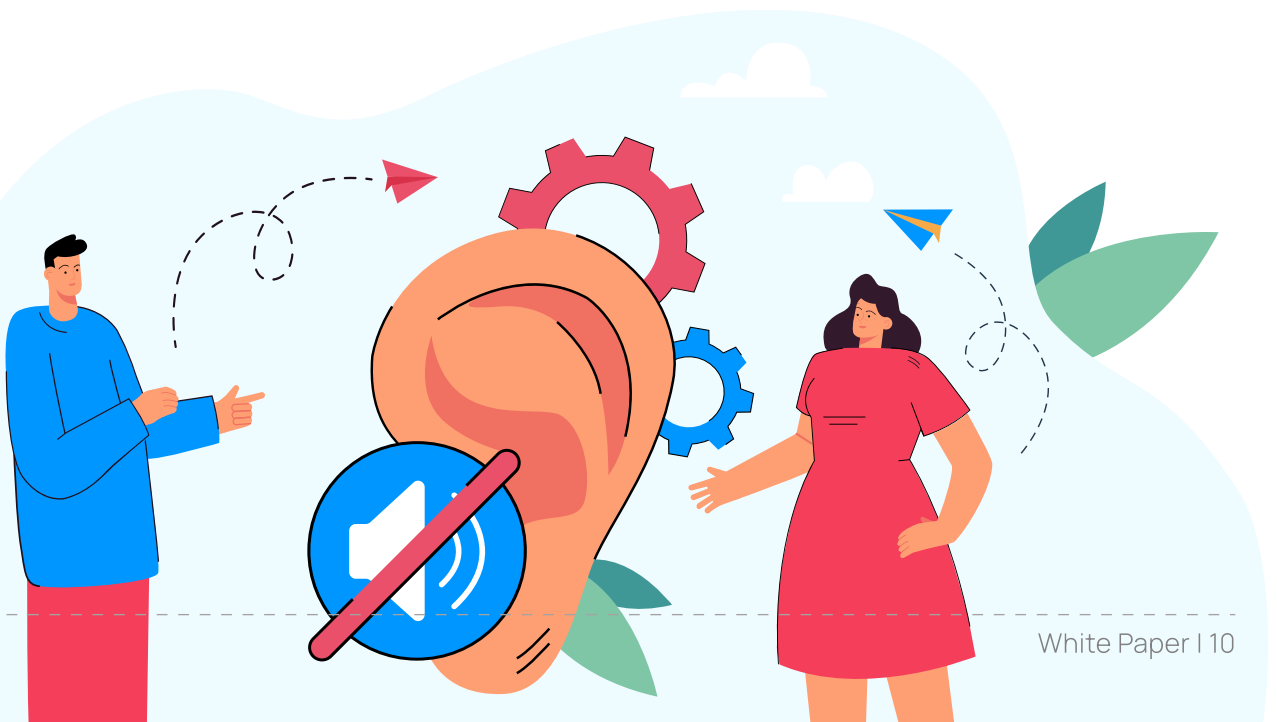
Apple's iTunes U educational program was initially not accessible to blind students on which the company worked and made it accessible on Mac and Windows. It was very popular among students and teachers and had more than 1 billion downloads.



Google has implemented features considering multiple disability needs in color, autocomplete, voice and speech recognition, etc. Today, Google is the platform of choice as a search engine, a cloud storage system, an email domain, etc



UK's First **Direct Bank** was voted as the top bank preferred by disabled customers in a survey conducted by which.co.uk. The bank has added fingerprint and facial recognition features on their app and other digital portals, improving compatibility with personalized settings for websites, screen readers, etc.



Accessibility Benefits

Expands User Base

Creating accessible experiences would develop a positive reputation for you in the market. If you put additional effort into reaching out to your prospective customers, the customers also respond positively. Accessibility tags also make your online presence discoverable among more users.

Improve Automation Efforts

Many of the test automation efforts rely on the same tags that are used for accessibility testing. A digital entity that adheres to accessibility guidelines would easily pass test automation checks, assuring a seamless product testing and development phase.

Improves User Experience for Everyone

Digital accessibility with best practices creates a better user experience in navigation, forms, purchase, and payment. The website loads much faster, the instructions become easier to read, and the checkout process more straight forward.

Build an Inclusive Brand Image

Digital experience accessible for all users highlights the corporate responsibility of the business. It is suitable for the brand reputation as it showcases your commitment to communicating with a greater demographic in a meaningful way.

Mitigates Legal Risks

The number of web accessibility lawsuits is snowballing in the US and Europe. Adhering to compliance guidelines would save you from legal troubles. Testing tools would readily fix common problems persisting in this area, and at the same time, you will create your brand image as proactive and consistent.

Accessibility testing matters and not just for legal reasons

Digital accessibility compliance is a complicated process, but its successful implementation would ensure that you reach out to more people interested in purchasing your product or service. Unless we ensure that everyone regardless of their abilities has access to it, the idea of diversity, inclusivity and the promise of universality will not be achieved. It will increase your prospects of reaching out to more customers. It ultimately increases the profits and keeps your employees under less pressure to create the next big thing.

At QualiZeal, we believe that the only way to provide equal digital accessibility is through a thorough analysis and modification process backed by the best industry experts. Our team would ensure that post-testing and implementation, accessibility will never be an afterthought of any product development phase. We offer the right technology and tools to assist you in your journey to implement complete digital inclusivity. With a combined power of automation and human expertise, our team would provide the right design for your product for progressing accessibility.

Achieving Digital Accessibility is a long road ahead, but we are willing to travel and bring as many people together on the ride.

