

Digital Accessibility Open Office Hours

Manual Accessibility Checks for Non-Programmers

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POUR: Principles of Accessibility

- **P**erceivable
- **O**perable
- **U**nderstandable
- **R**obust

The principles provide guidance. If these characteristics are met, then barriers will be avoided.



Created by Vectplus
from Noun Project

Choosing Accessibility to Avoid Barriers

Stages of Accessibility Checking

1. Automated checking

- Use an accessibility checker within a program to test a document
- Use an external tool to test a website.

2. Manual testing

- Perform non-automated checks such as keyboard navigation, testing color contrast ratios, and validating appropriate ALT text within a document or website

3. Testing with assistive technologies (AT)

- This final stage of testing should be completed by an experienced user who understands the AT.



Components of Manual Accessibility Checking

Visual

- Things we can look at as soon as we open the document or page
- Things we can check by looking at “backend” (formatting and alt text)

Operational

- Making sure we can use a document or page when we zoom ($\geq 200\%$)
- Making sure we can use a document or page with only a keyboard

Visual Checks

- Perceivable:
 - Fonts and font sizes
 - Image resolution
 - Color contrast ratio
 - Alt text
 - Captions or time-based transcripts
- Operable:
 - Consistent navigation
- Understandable:
 - Headings
 - Meaningful hyperlinks (link text)
 - *Meaningful* alt text
 - Acronyms, abbreviations expanded
 - Guidance, error messages

Sources:

[Johns Hopkins University: *Manual Accessibility Testing Guide*](#)

[Harvard University: *Manual Testing for Accessibility*](#)

[Pope Tech: *A beginner's guide to manual accessibility testing*](#)

Operational Checks

- Zoom ($\geq 200\%$)
 - “Cut off” pages or missing scroll bar
 - Interactive elements still work
- Keyboard only (A TEST)
 - A = Arrow keys
 - T = Tab (+ Shift)
 - E = Enter
 - S = Spacebar
 - T = Ten (F10 key)
- Also:
 - Logical reading order
 - Skip/bypass options
 - Forms: Focus indicators
 - Control options for embedded media
- Don’t forget interactive and pop-up elements!

Sources:

[Johns Hopkins University: *Manual Accessibility Testing Guide*](#)

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[Pope Tech: *A beginner’s guide to manual accessibility testing*](#)



Time for Demonstrating the Checks!



Keyboard Shortcuts

Keystroke	Action
Arrow keys	Navigate interactive elements: • Radio, drop-down menus, tabs Operate interactive elements: • Increase and decrease slide values Scroll the page (if not on an interactive element)
Tab	Navigate down page using elements that allow focus (interaction)
Shift + Tab	Navigate back (up) using interactive elements
Enter	Interact: • Activate a link or button • Select an option
Spacebar	Interact: • Activate a link or button • Select checkboxes, radio buttons • Expand drop-downs • Scroll page
F10	Activates (focus) browser menu

- A = Arrow keys
- T = Tab (+ Shift)
- E = Enter
- S = Spacebar
- T = Ten (F10 key)

Source:

[Pope Tech: A beginner's guide to manual accessibility testing](#)



Resources

For more information, please see these online resources:

- [JHU Digital Accessibility website](#)
- [JHU Quick Check for Accessibility document](#) (login required)
- [Easy Checks for Web Accessibility](#) by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)
- [Word and PowerPoint Accessibility Guide](#) by WebAIM (Web Accessibility in Mind)
- [Testing Web Content for Accessibility](#) by WebAIM

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References

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Lewis, Whitney (2025, January 16). *A beginner's guide to manual accessibility testing*. Retrieved from Pope Tech Web Accessibility Platform: <https://blog.pope.tech/2023/03/01/a-beginners-guide-to-manual-accessibility-testing/#keyboard>



Visual Check Examples

1. All text is legible – font sizes are at least 11 points and decorative fonts are avoided.
2. Links have meaningful names – “Fall activities article” rather than “click here.”
3. Color contrast between font color and background color must be at least 4.5:1.
4. Can you enlarge fonts to 200%
5. Is the ALT text for images meaningful?



Operational Check Examples

5. Can you navigate through a website, form or document with keyboard only?
6. Can you navigate the page or document in logical order?
7. Is there a skip link? (for websites to bypass menus)
8. Is there a visible keyboard focus indicator present?
9. Can you navigate through any pop-up boxes with the keyboard and close them with the escape key?



http://www....

