

Your Go-To Guide for Accessibility Resources

Designing for accessibility is more than a legal requirement - failing to consider accessibility excludes millions of people from using your product. We all know this is the right thing to do, but it can be difficult to know where and how to start. We asked our team to share their favorite resources, books, and tools related to accessibility. While this isn't an exhaustive list, we hope it serves as a starting point to help spark your next move towards creating accessible experiences.

Glossary:

Accessibility: Designing accessible experiences is creating products that work for as many people as possible with differing degrees of ability, including mobility issues, low vision, hearing impairments, varying cognitive abilities, and more.

Inclusivity: Designing inclusive experiences is creating products that are inclusive of a diverse group of users, looking at traits such as ethnicity, gender, race, age, or socioeconomic status.

Universal Design: Universal Design is the design of environments, products, and experiences that are accessible to all users regardless of background, physical or cognitive ability, age, etc.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG): You'll hear this term often! These are the globally recognized standards and guidelines for creating accessible web experiences.

POUR Method: The four main guiding principles in web accessibility. Is your site perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust?

How to approach accessibility research:

1. **Think deeply about how people with disabilities may experience using your product.** This will help inform what kind of research you'll need and what the goals are.
2. **Plan to test with users who have varying degrees of impairments.** Talking to users with varying levels of physical or cognitive ability can help you understand the complete experience.
3. **Thoughtfully screen participants to understand their needs.** Ask participants what assistive technology or at-home set-up they use to understand what they'll need to participate in research.
4. **Consider what location will be most convenient for your participants whether remote, in a lab, or at home.** Each of these has its benefits for reaching various populations!
5. **Integrate accessibility findings into ongoing testing and reporting.** By analyzing findings for the entire population side by side, you can balance any discrepancies, weigh your options, and brainstorm solutions that help everyone.
6. **Conduct regular, in-depth usability testing focused on accessibility.** Test early and often to discover issues as they arise and head off expensive mistakes before they come to fruition.

Step into their shoes:

When designing or researching something new, our team likes to ask the following questions. Encourage everyone on your team to make this a habit!

1. Who is this experience for?
2. Who might be impacted by this experience?
3. Who might struggle to use this product?

Helpful tools:

Usability.gov Web Design and Usability Guidelines

WCAG Checklist

WAVE Web Accessibility Tool

Color Blindness Simulator

Microsoft's Inclusive Design Principles Activity Toolkit

Communicating With and About People with Disabilities, CDC

Recommended reading:

A Web for Everyone: Designing Accessible User Experiences, by Sarah Horton

Accessibility for Everyone, by Laura Kalbag

Design For Real Life, by Eric Meyer & Sara Wachter-Boettcher

100 Things Every Designer Needs to Know About People, by Susan Weinschenk

Mismatch | How Inclusion Shapes Design, by Kat Holmes

Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, by Steve Krug

About Us: Essays from the Disability Series of the New York Times,
by Peter Catapano & Rosemarie Garland-Thomson

Articles and resources from our team:

6 Steps For Conducting Successful Accessibility Research From Start To Finish

Debunked: 6 Myths about Accessible Research and Design

How to Build Team Alignment to Create More Inclusive Experiences

Building Inclusivity Into Your Research Operations Practice

Want to talk to our team about accessibility research?

Contact us at info@answerlab.com



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