# References

[1] Links list – Provide link text that identifies the purpose of the link without needing additional context. Assistive technology can provide users with a list of links that are on the Web page. Link text that is as meaningful as possible will aid users who want to choose from this list of links. Meaningful link text also helps those who wish to tab from link to link. Meaningful links help users choose which links to follow without requiring complicated strategies to understand the page.

[2] Consistent identification of functional components - Ensure consistent identification of functional components that appear repeatedly within a set of Web pages. A strategy that people who use screen readers use when operating a Web site is to rely heavily on their familiarity with functions that may appear on different Web pages. If identical functions have different labels on different Web pages, the site will be considerably more difficult to use. It may also be confusing and increase the cognitive load for people with cognitive limitations. Therefore, consistent labeling will help. If there are two components on a web page that both have the same functionality as a component on another page in a set of web pages, then all 3 must be consistent. Hence the two on the same page will be consistent.

[3] Headings- Use headings to identify the most important content on a webpage. People who use assistive technology use headings for navigation, jumping from one heading to the next to skim read a page. Avoid using headings for stylistic purposes. Headings will be most effective when there are not too many or too few.

[4] Alt text – Label photos, graphs, and non-decorative visual content with text labels. People who navigate the internet with screen reading software use alt text to understand pictures. Include a brief description of each image (fewer than 125 characters.) Alt text will be most effective when it describes the essential elements of the picture without repeating information that is already present in the surrounding text. It isn’t necessary to say, “Picture of…

[5] Markup Language – Hide markup language so it is not heard. Users of assistive technology can often hear computer code for formatting and navigation that is invisible to sighted users.

[6] First-letter navigation – When writing text, put the most meaningful content in the first word. People who navigate combo boxes and links lists with assistive technology often jump to the desired item by searching for a keyword by the first letter (“m” for “Massachusetts” in a list of states, for example, or “c” for “contact us” in a links list. When writing active text, “Hours of Operation” will be easier to locate than, “Museum Hours.”

[7] Visual language – Offer Descriptions that are universally understandable. People who navigate a webpage with audio feedback do not experience page location and color as sighted users do. Avoid language that directs users to go to the left or right side of the page, to the upper or lower corner, select the red or square button, select the magnifying glass icon, choose from the column that appears next to… etc. People who use assistive technology often use key commands to perform tasks, particularly if they are not able to see the screen well enough to point and click with a mouse. Directions that say, “click on,” “drag,” or “point to” may be confusing.

[8] Broken elements – Check to ensure that all active elements are functional with keyboard commands. People who use screen reading software usually interact with active text such as links or buttons by pressing ‘enter’ or the space bar instead of clicking with a mouse. Sometimes, an item that is active for a sighted user cannot be activated by these methods, causing them to appear broken to a person who uses keyboard commands.

[9] Missing item – Ensure that the cursor can focus on all visual elements. When improperly labeled, a person who uses assistive technology may be unable to focus on an element in order to interact with it. To the user, it appears that it’s missing.

[10] Choice of element –Consider using a different element for this task. A person who uses assistive technology may be able to perform a given task more efficiently if a different element (combo box rather than edit field, radio button rather than checkbox, etc.) were used. For consistency, consider using the same element to perform similar functions on the same page.

[11] Unlabeled element – Add label to facilitate interaction with an element. Without labels, a person who uses assistive technology may not be able to identify buttons or tabs. Check all elements to make sure they’re clearly labeled.

[12] Volatility –Ensure that cursor responds as expected. People who use assistive technology use keyboard commands rather than a mouse to navigate a website. When a user is thrown out of an element unexpectedly, or the cursor goes to a location that wasn’t desired, the absence of secure cursor control feels like volatility.