

Best practices for accessibility with Adobe® Flex® 4

Building applications that can be used by individuals with disabilities

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To reach as wide an audience as possible, developers of Flex applications need to ensure that their applications built with Adobe Flex can be used by individuals with disabilities. Conforming to regulatory requirements such as Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 helps developers build applications that are accessible to users, regardless of disability. Compliance with such guidelines may be a formal requirement on some projects.

This document covers general principles and best practices of accessible design that apply to all Flex applications independent of the disabilities the target user audience may have. Developers who are familiar with accessible software design practices used in other development contexts will likely be familiar with the best practices described in this document for Flex 4 applications.

Achieving accessibility

An application is not made accessible by simply switching on or enabling accessibility. Likewise, accessible applications are not created merely by exposing accessibility information for individual components, although this is a necessary first step. Accessibility is achieved through correct design of the application and user interaction, and by applying accessibility information to individual components, groups of components, and to the application as a whole. Developers must consider how user interface items interact together, how they flow from one to another, and how the user will interact with them. This document includes guidelines for the design and development of accessible Flex 4 applications, and covers the following topics:

- Enabling Accessibility in Flex projects
- Embedding Accessible Flex Applications
- Accessible Flex Components
- Accessibility Properties
- Setting Component Name Information
- Checking for the Presence of Assistive Technology
- Textual Equivalents
- Keyboard Accessibility
- Reading Order
- Reading and Tab Order in Practice
- Skipping Repetitive Components