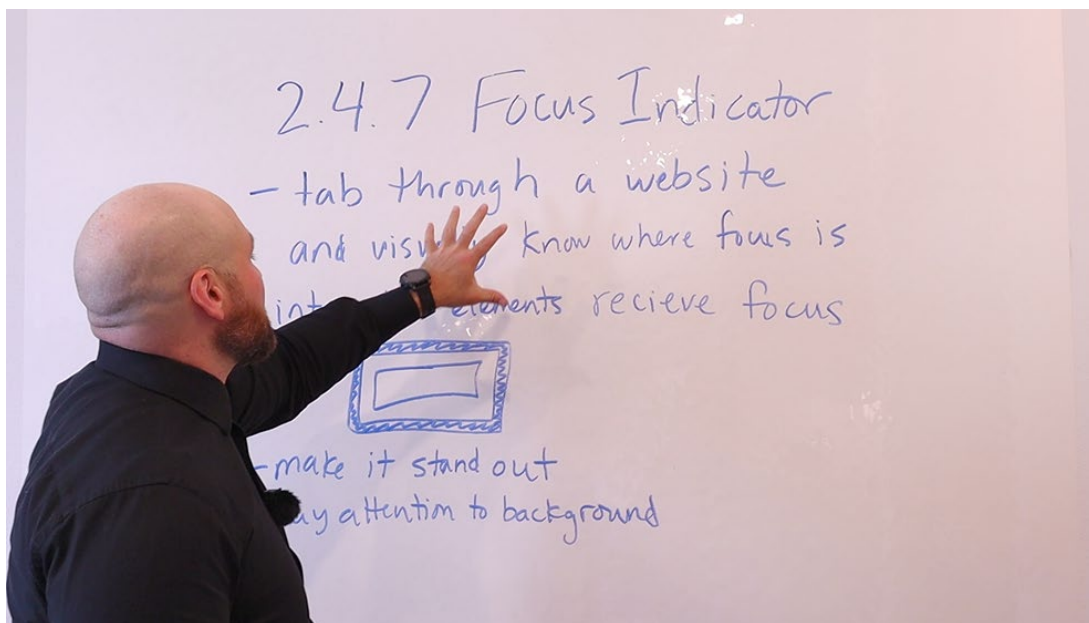# Kris's WCAG 2.2 AA Guide

By Kris Rivenburgh

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Contents

Explainer

Update: This guide now works from the newly released version of WCAG 2.2.

This guide covers the six success criteria necessary for AA conformance and retains one success criteria now reserved for AAA conformance.

Previous explainer:

This guide works from the W3C Candidate Recommendation Draft posted on January 25, 2023. Although it is likely the success criteria in this guide will officially be published as W3C standards in the WCAG 2.2 release, there is a chance they may be revised.

If there is a revision, this document will be updated and re-uploaded to accessible.org/wcag.

This guide is only for the seven new success criteria expected in the WCAG 2.2 AA release.

Technically WCAG 2.2 incorporates the success criteria found in the previously released versions of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, but I will only focus on new success criteria for this guide. For the additional success criteria found in previous versions, download my WCAG 2.1 AA guide at accessible.org/wcag.

WCAG stands for the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines which is a set of technical standards to make digital assets (e.g., websites, apps, etc.) more accessible to persons with disabilities. WCAG is authored by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

There were previously three versions of WCAG (1.0, 2.0, 2.1) and three conformance levels (A, AA, AAA). This guide was produced in anticipation of the fourth version, 2.2, which is expected to be released in May of 2023.

Think of success criteria as requirements or things you need to do to meet the different WCAG versions and conformance levels.

WCAG 2.2 AA is simply a newer, updated version of WCAG that includes more success criteria to help make the web more accessible.

Basically, with 2.2, the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) is adding in some stuff that they didn't include in 2.1.

Think of this guide as a cheatsheet from someone who studied really hard for a WCAG test. It's not going to cover every last detail – and it may not be completely right – but you'll at least get a great idea of the main points.

Introduction

The WCAG 2.2 AA success criteria are written fairly well and are mostly intuitive. This guide amounts to my plain English summary of each success criterion. I've also rewritten some success criterion titles to make them more common sensical.

This guide is excellent but imperfect and doesn't contain every last detail.

If you question something in the guide or feel you may qualify for an exception or a detail isn't outlined, reference the official WCAG source documentation – this is why I have it linked at the end of every success criteria.

Remember, this guide is only my interpretation of WCAG, it's not WCAG itself.

Even if my interpretation for a given success criterion is perfectly aligned, keep in mind that my interpretation is still only a condensed summary of the source and so there will always be something lost in the distilled version.

Note: I have slightly reworded and/or added to some WCAG success criterion titles to make them more understandable.

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Let's get through the legal stuff and then we'll dive straight into WCAG 2.2 AA.

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The original publish date of this document is March 30, 2023.

Accessibility

PDF/UA and WCAG 2.0 AA standards were followed in the creation of this document.

If you have any difficulty accessing the contents of this document, contact me at kris@accessible.org and I will ensure that you have full access to this guide.

WCAG 2.2

2.4.13 Focus Appearance (AAA)*

(This success criterion was previously necessary for AA conformance in 2.2 working drafts but has now been changed to a AAA success criterion in the finalized 2.2 release.)

This success criterion builds upon previous success criteria, 2.4.7 (requirement of a focus indicator) and 1.4.11 (requirement that non-text information have a minimum 3:1 contrast), to require that when a focus state is present, a baseline for visibility is established.

To meet this minimum threshold for visibility, you need to make sure one or both of the following are true for the focus indicator when it is in its visible state:

1. The focus indicator meets all the following conditions:

   o it encloses or creates a border around the focused element

   o there is a color contrast ratio of at least 3:1 when the element is in focused and unfocused states (this is because some websites style an element to change appearance when it receives focus), and

   o there is a color contrast ratio of at least 3:1 against adjacent non-focus-indicator colors (background or border colors).

2. The focus indicator meets all the following conditions:

   o it is at least as thick as 1 CSS pixel thick on all sides, or is at least as large as a 4 CSS pixel thick line along the shortest side,

   o there is a color contrast ratio of at least 3:1 when the element is in focused and unfocused states, and

   o there is a color contrast ratio of at least 3:1 against adjacent non-focus-indicator colors (background or border colors), or is no thinner than 2 CSS pixels.

The primary difference between the two requirements is that the first requires a solid, complete enclosure or border whereas the second requirement doesn't require the solid border and compensates by requiring a 4 CSS pixel thick length line on the shortest side.

Another notable difference is that the second requirement allows for a non 3:1 color contrast ratio against background or order colors so long as the focus indicator is at least 2 CSS pixels.

Plain English Explanation

Because this success criterion offers affordances to accommodate different design preferences, it gets confusing.

What 2.4.11 is after is making sure your focus indicator clearly stands out and is visible.

Think about a situation where a dark blue button receives focus and the focus indicator is only a slim dark gray line, it's easy for focus to be lost – even with a focus indicator. It's this type of situation that we want to avoid.

To make conformance with 2.4.11 as easy as possible, I recommend defaulting to a solid, enclosed focus indicator that is a minimum 2 CSS pixels.

After this, work to ensure that there is a minimum 3:1 contrast with the element and the background.

If you add a white border outside of your elements, this will make meeting the contrast threshold much easier.

2.4.11 Focus Appearance

2.4.11 Focused Not Obscured (Minimum)

When an element receives focus, the focus / focused element is not entirely hidden or blocked by other content or elements.

Plain English Explanation

We always want to make sure that focus / a focused element is never hidden. That's all 2.4.11 comes down to.

Pay attention to any sticky headers or footers, pop-ups, floating notifications, advertisements, third-party integrations or embeds, overlays of any kind, etc.

Also test your website under a condensed browser or on mobile devices to ensure that content remains unobscured.

If any scenario exists where an element is tabbed to but focus is hidden or blocked, make sure to make it so that focus is visible.

[2.4.11 Focus Not Obscured (Minimum)](#)

2.5.7 Dragging Movements

For any functions that require a dragging movement, provide an alternative where someone only needs to point and click a mouse or touch to select an item and place it elsewhere.

Plain English Explanation

This success criterion is not concerned with keyboard navigability but, rather, for the ability for someone to use a single point to accomplish the same ability to drag something.

Think about how you might drag and drop a box to rearrange its order.

On a desktop, you might use a mouse to click and drag the box to another place to change its position.

On a phone, you might use your finger to touch and hold the box to another place to change its position.

With this success criterion, we want to take out the dragging requirement by simply clicking or touching the box, releasing the click or lifting our finger, and then having the ability to click or touch where we want it to be placed.

In effect, a user will have the ability to mouse click a box at Point A, release the mouse click, and then click on the place the user wants the box to go, Point B, and accomplish the same movement and placement of the box without the need to drag the box.

[2.5.7 Dragging Movements](#)

2.5.8 Target Size (Minimum)

Make the target size for interactive elements at least 24 by 24 CSS pixels.

Exceptions are:

- The target is smaller than 24 by 24 pixels, but has spacing such that the target combined with the spacing takes up 24 by 24 pixels before another interactive target can be activated

- When the target does not meet the 24 by 24 exception, but there is another control that can accomplish the same function that does meet the size requirement

- When the target size is determined by the user

- The target is a text link in a sentence or list

- The low target spacing is essential (e.g., pins on a map that are in close proximity)

Plain English Explanation

It's important not to be distracted by the exceptions in this success criterion. The key takeaway is that clickable or touchable interactive elements are at least 24 by 24 CSS pixels.

By setting a minimum target size, this success criterion wants interactive elements to be easy to select, activate, enter inputs, etc.

Whether someone is using a mouse, a stylus, or a finger, they should be able to select and/or activate a target without missing the target or selecting another target.

Examples of interactive elements under this success criterion are buttons, sliders, checkboxes, form fields, submenu text links, linked icons, etc.

An easy illustration of this success criterion making a difference is when four social media icons are all next to one another, but they're all so small that it makes it easy to click on the Facebook icon when you really wanted to visit the Twitter page. This success criterion places a minimum size (or total size with space) on these icons of 24 by 24 pixels.

While you can meet this success criterion by adding 4 by 4 px of space to a 20 x 20 px element, I highly recommend making all of your interactive elements at least 24 by 24 px.

Again, the WAI is offering affordances that give us flexibility to meet success criteria in different ways, but its best if you keep it easy on yourself and go above and beyond the minimum requirements.

[2.5.8 Target Size (Minimum)](#)

3.2.6 Help Options Consistent

Whenever you have options for help that are repeated on multiple pages of your website, those options should remain consistent or predictable in their order and placement on those pages.

Plain English Explanation

If you offer help on your website, this success criterion requires that you make help options consistent on your website so that users can easily find it.

For example, if you have a support link in the footer, that support link should remain available in the footer in the same relative order and placement.

As another example, if there is a chatbot available on the bottom right hand corner of your website, that chatbot should remain on the bottom right hand corner of your website.

Contrast these example scenarios against a scenario where a website has a chatbot available on some product pages, but not others.

Other types of help include:

- contact details (e.g., phone number, email, hours)
- methods of contact (e.g., messaging, chat box, contact form, social media)
- FAQ and knowledgebase pages

Note that this success criterion does not require that you provide help, but that when you do provide help, help is consistent.

Also note that this success criterion does not necessarily apply to all pages of a website, but rather to a set of pages that share a common purpose and are created by the same author or organization.

For example, on an e-commerce website, a set of pages that share a common purpose would be product pages, but product pages are not the same as the pages that appear during the checkout process (e.g., cart, registration, payment, etc.) so the type of help,

whether you provide help, and where it appears on the checkout pages may be different from where it appears on the product pages.

However, whenever possible, I recommend maintaining consistency and predictability with help options.

[Consistent Help](#)

3.3.7 Redundant Entry

Information that has already been entered by the user and is required again, in the same session, is either auto-populated or selectable.

Exceptions:

- when re-entering the information is essential
- previously entered information is no longer valid

Plain English Explanation

Whenever possible, provide users with the ability to auto-populate or select to enter in previously entered information so they don't have to enter the same information twice.

Think of this success criterion as eliminating redundant, non-essential inputs or entries from users.

For example, when we're completing the checkout process at an e-commerce website, there's no need for us to re-enter the same information for our shipping address and our billing address if they're both the same.

For this reason, and to meet this success criterion, we need to make it so that the previously entered information can be auto-populated or selected so that we don't have to enter it again.

One exception is when we need to re-enter the information for a particular reason.

The obvious example of this is requiring confirmation of a password to ensure that we've entered the password that we intended to.

Also, there is an exception for when the previously entered information is no longer valid.

For example, a user previously selected two seats at a movie theater but those seats are no longer available.

[3.3.7 Redundant Entry](#)

3.3.8 Accessible Authentication

Users do not have to login by remembering a password or solving a cognitive test unless one of the following exceptions are met:

- Another authentication method that does not rely on a cognitive function test.
- A mechanism is available to assist the user in completing the cognitive function test.
- The cognitive function test is limited to recognizing objects.
- The cognitive function test is to identify non-text content such as a photo the user provided to the website.

Plain English Explanation

The key to meeting this success criterion is making sure that there is a way a user can login without having to remember their password or solve a cognitive test unless the cognitive test is one of those object recognition captchas (e.g., select all of the images with stairs).

The ways you can allow users to login without remembering a password include:

- Using properly marked up username / email and password fields so that the browser or password manager can identify the input purpose and automatically fill in the credentials.
- Ensure your website does not block the paste function for login fields.
- Integrate WebAuthn into your website so the user can authenticate using their device rather than username and password.
- Allow the ability to login through other methods such as a QR code or the OAuth method.

There are more creative ways you can enable users to login without remembering a password, but the key to meeting this success criterion is that users do not have to remember a password and/or solve a cognitive puzzle unless that puzzle is based on only object recognition.

However, it is recommended to avoid captchas altogether.

[3.3.8 Accessible Authentication](#)

Finished

Congratulations, you now know the six new success criteria found in WCAG 2.2 AA.

Thank you for reading my guide.

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- Code examples
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ADA Compliance Course

My ADA Compliance Course provides an SOP or step-by-step instructions that website owners can give to their web team to find (audit) and fix (remediate) the most commonly claimed accessibility issues in litigation. This course is specifically designed for practical ADA Compliance.

The ADA Compliance Course is available at ADACompliance.net.

Kris's Resources

Here are my channels and websites:

youtube.com/@adabook

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If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact me at kris@accessible.org.

Thank you very much.