

**Visual Studio Code**  
Inclusivity & Ergonomics

# Inclusivity

The definition of an inclusive software package is one which does not exclude people based on their cultural and economic background as well as their gender or any disabilities they may have. Visual Studio code is an example of an inclusive software package as it caters to a lot of different people and needs out of the box.

For people with visual impairment, Visual Studio Code provides a screen reader mode which will read the text content of menus, selected text or messages such as errors. This also works with the debugger which means that almost the whole programming process can be narrated for the blind or vision impaired. There is also an option to increase the interface size easily (Ctrl +/-) which allows smaller text to be easily visible on lower resolution displays or for people who normally require glasses. To also assist with colour deficiencies that some people may have, VS Code supports custom presets and includes custom presets to assist those who are unable to distinguish various colours. These presets include a High Contrast theme.

For people with physical disabilities, VS Code provides a way to navigate the whole application with a keyboard. This enables people with limited movement to still use the software even without a mouse.

VS Code is also inclusive of those who do not have large amounts of money to spend on software for web development such as Dreamweaver. VS Code is available as open source, contributable and free software. This means that it is relatively easy to contribute new ideas and features that may be included in a future public release.

Visual Studio code also provides an interface for extensions to be written allowing the functionality of the application to be virtually limitless. These extensions can provide extra support for languages, custom languages, debugging, interface and many others. Microsoft also provides a broad range of high quality and reliable extensions for the app which means no money has to be spent on extending the app to do what you want it to do. At its core VS Code is a text editor however it can be extended to be a complete development environment.

Visual Studio Code is able to do a lot considering how simple menus are. Things are placed in logical spots which are consistent with the operating system the software is installed on. VS Code also includes searchable settings so it is easier to adjust find and adjust accessibility settings.

# Ergonomics

Ergonomics relates to how comfortable something is to use. VS Code has become a popular tool for software development because of its ease of use and availability of documentation and tutorials on how to use it.

Visual Studio Code is intuitive to use because its core features are tied to the operating system it is running on, meaning it is consistent to the platform its installed on and therefore does not require a change of workflow when using the app. The application also makes use of the platform’s default control keys for editing documents such as Ctrl + S for saving on Windows and Cmd + S on Mac OSX. This consistency provides an intuitive interface which aids with the ergonomics of the software, and allows new users to understand the software quickly.

Visual Studio Code is also user friendly in that all its context menus are named appropriately for each locale it is available for. The help menu is also clearly visible. One negative aspect of Visual Studio code relating to help is that commands are not searchable without knowing the search commands command. This is a flaw which can be addressed, and is not mission critical, but it is one that affects the user’s experience of the software.

Visual Studio codes error messages are easily understandable to all users. They provide information about the source of the error, a brief description of the error, and a code to use to find more information on the error that occurred. Clicking on error notifications will also take the user to a help page for more information.

Visual Studio Code’s success as a tool for a vast range of people is partly responsible to its extensibility through colour themes. Many themes found on the extensions page are related to themes found in other programs which can be comforting to some users who have become accustomed to things looking a certain way.

Visual Studio Code provides an extension store which allows for easy installation of extensions in a way that is useable by everyone. Visual Code’s new settings menu also allows for non-developer people to configure the software as previously it was json based and now it is graphical.

For efficiency during projects, VS Code allows a “split workspace”. This means that multiple files can be open at the same time in the same window allowing for quick previewing of markdown documents or side by side editing of code and documentation. The split workspace is a modern feature in software development tools which has enabled work to take place more efficiently even on systems with a single monitor.