

Section 3 Action Summary

Section summary and checklist of the 4 action items

ONE-LINE SUMMARY OF THIS SECTION

Ensure there is adequate contrast between the color of every single information-bearing element and its background.

BEST PRACTICE 01

- ☐ Determine which UI elements need which levels of color contrast by categorizing them into two groups: (1) information-bearing elements, and (2) decorative and disabled elements.

BEST PRACTICE 02

Exceed (or meet) the minimum color contrast requirements.

- ☐ **For Decorative and Disabled Elements:** there is no color contrast requirement.
- ☐ **For Information-Bearing Elements:** at least 4.5:1. An exception is made for some elements, and for these the minimum drops to 3:1. They include:
 - **Large Text (or images of text):** 14pt bold+ or 18pt reg+
 - **UI Controls:** any visual information provided that is necessary for a user to identify that a control is present and how to operate it. This includes (1) Non-text indicators such as the check in a checkbox, or an arrow icon indicating a dropdown menu, and (2) the control's various states (selected, focused, etc.), except for the disabled state.
 - **Graphical Objects:** parts of graphics required to understand the content.

Advice: Don't aim for the minimums, aim to exceed them.

BEST PRACTICE 03

- ☐ Avoid problematic color combinations, such as:
 - Red & Green (the biggest one to avoid)
 - Green & Brown
 - Green & Blue
 - Green & Gray
 - Green & Black
 - Blue & Gray
 - Blue & Purple

- ☐ Or, if your design truly calls for using problematic colors next to each other, really make sure there is a high contrast ratio between the two. Darken one color and lighten the other to make the contrast more pronounced, or play with the saturation, or slide the hues a little one way or another.

BEST
PRACTICE
04

- ☐ Check the contrast of your colors as you are designing, not once you're all done.
 - Manually checking the colors as you're picking them out will train your eye to recognize which colors pass and which don't, just by looking at a UI design.
 - And when you're in the habit of checking each new color you pick out, you're less likely to miss checking a color.

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