# A Beginner's Guide to ADA and Online Content

The World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1)

The WCAG is a set of accessibility standards created by the World Wide Web Consortium in partnership with various other groups to help guide web content producers in making their work more accessible to all, including users with disabilities. Website - https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/glance/

**WCAG 2.1 is the technical standard featuring 13 guidelines under 4 categories:**

1. Perceivable
2. Operable
3. Understandable
4. Robust

**1. Perceivable**

- Present content in alternative forms (like adding captions to videos) without losing the meaning or coherence of said content (if a user increases the font size on the page, does the page structure stay intact?)
- Use contrast in images and text to ensure content is readable
- Every image should contain a caption and alt text – unless those images are purely for decoration or spacing (in which case they should be implemented so that they can be ignored by assistive technology)

As the WCAG 2.1 perceivable guidelines state:

**Guideline 1.1 Text Alternatives:** Provide text alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed into other forms people need, such as large print, braille, speech, symbols or simpler language.
**Guideline 1.2 Time-based Media:** Provide alternatives for time-based media.
**Guideline 1.3 Adaptable:** Create content that can be presented in different ways (for example simpler layout) without losing information or structure.
**Guideline 1.4 Distinguishable:** Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background.

**2. Operable**

- Having a website that can be navigated with a keyboard
- Making sure moving sections can be paused if a user needs more time
- Ensuring pages and sections are clearly labeled so users can decipher where on the website they are

As the WCAG 2.1 operable guidelines state:

**Guideline 2.1 Keyboard Accessible:** Make all functionality available from a keyboard.
**Guideline 2.2 Enough Time:** Provide users enough time to read and use content.
**Guideline 2.3 Seizures:** Don't design content in a way that is known to cause seizures.
**Guideline 2.4 Navigable:** Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are.
**Guideline 2.5 Input Modalities:** Make it easier for users to operate functionality through various inputs beyond keyboard.

**3. Understandable**

- The language of the page should be programmatically identifiable
- Navigation is consistent across the website
- Areas of the website that require user input (like contact forms) have ample instructions included

As the WCAG 2.1 understandable guidelines state:

**Guideline 3.1 Readable:** Make text content readable and understandable.
**Guideline 3.2 Predictable:** Make Web pages appear and operate in predictable ways.
**Guideline 3.3 Input Assistance:** Help users avoid and correct mistakes.

**4. Robust**

- Use standard HTML tags that are universally recognized by browsers.
- Code needs to follow current web standards
- Code should properly validate (all tags that open should be closed) to ensure assistive technologies can properly understand and render the content.

As the WCAG 2.1 robust guidelines state:

**Guideline 4.1 Compatible:** Maximize compatibility with current and future user agents, including assistive technologies.