



# How to Make Your Website Accessible to People with Disabilities

Not everyone realizes that many people with disabilities struggle to navigate the internet. Often assumed to be an open-source for information and services, it does not open itself up to all users in the same way. Many websites contain barriers for people with disabilities that prevent them from reading information and ordering products.

However, not every business owner is aware that their website isn't suited for people with disabilities. That's why every business should use an ADA website compliance checker.

Here, we'll go over what an ADA compliance check involves and how it makes your website easier for everyone to access.

## **What is the ADA?**

ADA stands for the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It outlaws discrimination against people with disabilities when it comes to jobs, schools, transportation and any open or public area.

In 2010, the Department of Justice adopted new guidelines that included access rights to websites. This

placed websites under the legal class of public spaces determined in the ADA.

## What does it say?

According to the guidelines adopted by the DOJ, there are four main criteria to achieve:

**Perceivable:** information must be provided in a way for users to be able to perceive. This includes having text alternatives to non-text based content and text that stands out against the background through contrast.

**Operable:** websites must be able to be operated with ease. This includes ease of use with keyboard, enough time to engage with content, and ease in navigating across the website.

**Understandable:** information must be understandable to a user. This means any information, when perceivable, must make sense and be set out in a predictable way.

**Robust:** websites must be able to be used by a wide range of users. Attempts to make it compatible with assistive technology.

## ADA Compliance Checkers

Compliance checkers make accessibility as easy as possible. Using different methods, these checkers test each page of your website to make sure it suits people with disabilities:

- The first method for checking uses AI or pre-programmed software. This software will run a series of generic tests on a website to see if it passes these tests. A compliance score then can be evaluated and sent to the website owner.
- The second is human checking. This service has an expert go through your website and see its compliance with the ADA. While it may be more expensive and may take longer, this approach catches problems a generic testing program would miss.

## Why is it Important?

Access to information stands alongside important rights related to free expression and belief. The UN lists the ability to 'seek, receive, and impart information' as part of its Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the US, this idea has been expressed in the ADA as part of the civil rights legislation of the 1990s. Though passed in the 1990s, these civil rights issues are recently finding their way into the court system across the country.

The user's right to equal access also stands alongside a business's desire not to be sued. A business cannot argue ignorance when it comes to matters of website ADA compliance. So it remains important for businesses to check their own websites for issues.

## Final Thoughts

The internet has been a gift for most people. Open access to a world of information can provide everyone with the same opportunities. However, websites that fail to comply with ADA guidelines are excluding an important group of people from enjoying the same equal access granted to everyone else.