

Manual testing and web accessibility: What you need to know

Manual testing allows for real, trained professionals to evaluate your website's level of accessibility using assistive technology and techniques used by people who are blind, have low vision, have colorblindness, have hearing impairments, have limited mobility, or have cognitive disabilities. Automated testing can only catch up to a portion of the WCAG 2 criteria, so manual testers are needed to find the errors that software can't.

What does the manual testing process look like?

1 Get acquainted

After you are established as a Siteimprove Customer, the Siteimprove Manual Testing team will spend some time getting to know you, your team, and your website during a discovery call. During the call, you will discuss our URL sign off form, estimate a process timeline, and identify who will serve as your go-to resource and contact throughout the manual testing process.

Please note: In order to secure a spot in the queue and be assigned a testing start date, we require your signature on our URL sign off form. We typically cannot start testing for at least 30 days after you purchase manual testing (if you need testing to start sooner, please let us know before purchasing).

2 Website evaluation

An accessibility tester will navigate each page without the use of a mouse, use a variety of screen readers that convert text to spoken audio, and leverage semi-automated tools to scan for non-compliance with WCAG

Software they'll use:

- JAWS and NVDA on Windows 10
- VoiceOver on iOS
- Navigating only using the keyboard
- Chrome and Firefox

Website Evaluation (cont'd) They'll test for things like:

- **Page titles:** The team looks for page titles that are unique, meaningful, and concise. Page titles are what is visible in tabs or bookmarks and should be appropriate to the page content and/or task. They are also the first thing read by assistive technology users.
- **Headings:** They check that headings fit a logical page structure. They also determine if headings accurately and concisely describe the content, and they find areas on the page that would benefit from having an additional heading.
- **Visible focus:** As they navigate pages as keyboard users, the team looks for a visible change when an element receives focus.
- **Forms:** They inspect forms for accessible labelling, required field flagging, error messaging and announcements to screen reader users, and more.
- **HTML5 and WAI-ARIA attributes:** Testers check to make sure these elements are used correctly.

3 Website review

Website ReviewThe Siteimprove team will provide you with a copy of the audit results and review them with your team on a conference call for up to one hour. They will explain key issues identified in the manual audit, provide expertise about why they are problematic for disabled users, and answer your questions about accessibility.

Accessibility is a process, not a project

Including manual testing as part of your accessibility efforts and processes allows for a more balanced and comprehensive approach to compliance.

It's important to think of web accessibility not as a one-time project, but rather as an integral process for your overall business and organizational strategy.

Contact us

About the team



Testers are trained in the use of assistive technology used by people who are blind, have low vision, have limited mobility, or have learning disabilities



Navigating only using the keyboard



Chrome and Firefox



JAWS and NVDA on Windows 10; VoiceOver on iOS

Let us help you select a representative sample of pages for your site.