

## ADA Compliance One-Pager © 2023 [Kris Rivenburgh](#), author of [The ADA Book](#)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. Although the ADA doesn't directly address websites, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has interpreted the ADA to apply to websites under Title II and Title III of the ADA. However, the DOJ has not outlined exactly how to make a website ADA compliant.

The [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG) are independently published technical standards for web accessibility. WCAG is frequently referenced as a guide for website accessibility worldwide, but it is not the law. The most commonly cited version is WCAG 2.1 AA, which contains 50 success criteria or things to do to make a website accessible.

Plaintiffs' lawyers have taken advantage of this gray area in the law, suing entities large and small, for discriminating against people with disabilities due to allegedly inaccessible websites. Plaintiffs' lawyers utilize the WCAG standards, often deeming technical non-conformance (not meeting all WCAG success criteria) as non-compliance. [Meaningful access](#) is the legal standard under the ADA.

The best practices for ADA Compliance are [WCAG 2.1 AA](#) conformance and a conspicuously posted [accessibility statement](#) (but this doesn't mean strict WCAG conformance is necessary to be considered ADA compliant). To become fully conformant, you will need to manually audit (find issues) and remediate (fix) your website. While [automated scans](#) can help flag several issues for review, they are limited and many key issues cannot be detected. Remediation is also fully manual; you will need to fix code and content (images, audio, video, text, documents). There are no automated solutions for auditing or remediating a website. A widget or plugin cannot make a website accessible because it does not fix code or content; when activated it only renders superficial adjustments for a few issues.

Because genuine [audit and remediation services](#) are time-intensive and require expertise, they can easily cost \$3,500 and up. However, content remediation is easy to learn and is something even non-technical beginners can work on. Also, with the help of an experienced developer, code can be remediated so long as the developer is instructed on what and how to remediate.

The best approach to accessibility, preventing litigation, and following best practices for ADA compliance is to be proactive and start immediately working on resolving issues rather than waiting for perfect conditions. Great strides can be made with just a do-it-yourself approach.

To reduce risk of litigation as you improve accessibility, prioritize and work on the accessibility issues that are most likely to lead to lawsuits first and then work towards full [WCAG](#) conformance. The three most commonly claimed issues involve 1) missing alternative text, 2) no programmatic labels for form fields, and 3) a lack of keyboard navigability. The [ADA Compliance Course](#) provides detailed instructions on how to find fix the 15 most commonly claimed accessibility issues.

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