DIY ADA and WCAG Compliance Guide Book

Table of Contents

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Introduction

Welcome to your comprehensive guide to achieving ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) compliance for your website. Ensuring your site is accessible to all users, including those with disabilities, is not only a legal requirement but also a moral imperative. By following this guide, you will learn how to make your website accessible, enhancing user experience and expanding your reach. For those seeking expert assistance, we also introduce the option of partnering with industry leaders in ADA and WCAG compliance to ensure your site meets all necessary standards.

Chapter 1: Understanding ADA and WCAG Guidelines

Objective:

Familiarize yourself with the ADA standards and WCAG 2.1 guidelines.

Explanation:

The ADA prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities, ensuring equal access to public accommodations, including websites. WCAG 2.1 provides a set of guidelines to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. These guidelines are organized under four principles: Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust (POUR).

Action Steps:

1. **Read the WCAG 2.1 Guidelines:**
   - Visit the W3C WCAG Overview.
   - Understand the structure and levels of conformance (A, AA, AAA) by reading the W3C WCAG Overview.
2. **Understand Key Principles:**
   - **Perceivable:** Ensure information and user interface components are perceivable (e.g., text alternatives for non-text content).
   - **Operable:** Make all interface components operable (e.g.,

keyboard accessibility).

- **Understandable:** Ensure that information and user interface operation are understandable (e.g., readable text).
- **Robust:** Ensure content is robust and can be interpreted by a wide range of user agents and assistive technologies.

3. **Explore Techniques and Failures:**
    - Visit W3C Techniques for WCAG 2.1 to review specific techniques for meeting each success criterion.
    - **Summary:** Review specific techniques and common failures from W3C Techniques for WCAG 2.1 to learn best practices and what to avoid.

Chapter 2: Conducting an Accessibility Audit

Objective:

Identify existing accessibility issues on your website.

Explanation:

An accessibility audit helps pinpoint areas of your website that need improvement to meet ADA and WCAG standards. Various tools can assist you in scanning your site for common accessibility issues.

Action Steps:

1. **Use Automated Tools:**
   - **Summary:** Install and run browser extensions like WAVE, Axe, or Lighthouse to scan for accessibility issues.
2. **Analyze Reports:**
   - **Summary:** Review tool-generated reports to identify issues such as missing alt text and insufficient color contrast.
3. **Compile a List of Issues:**
   - **Summary:** Document and prioritize identified issues based on their impact on accessibility, focusing on critical problems first.

Chapter 3: Improving Website Navigation

Objective:

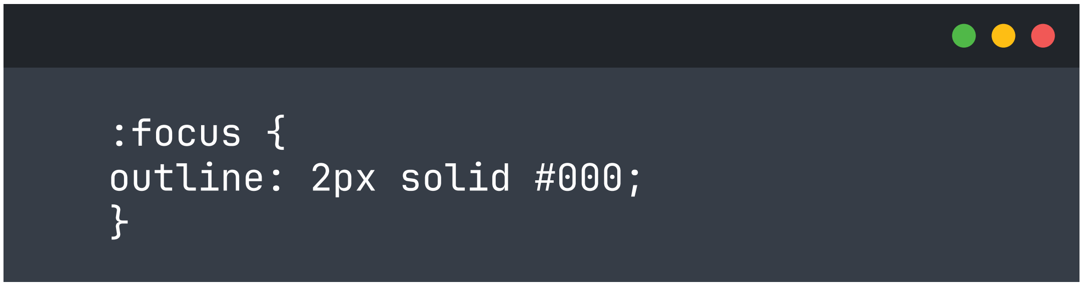
Ensure users can navigate your site easily using a keyboard.

Explanation:

Many users with disabilities rely on keyboard navigation. Making sure all interactive elements are keyboard accessible is crucial for creating an inclusive experience.

Action Steps:

1. **Ensure Keyboard Accessibility:**
   - **Summary:** Test your site with only the keyboard (Tab, Shift+Tab, Enter, Arrow keys) and ensure all interactive elements are accessible.
2. **Implement Skip Navigation Links:**
   - **Summary:** Add skip links to allow users to bypass repetitive content, enhancing navigation for keyboard users.
3. **Verify Focus Indicators:**
   - **Summary:** Use CSS to ensure focus indicators are visible, helping users know which element is currently focused:



```
:focus {
outline: 2px solid #000;
}
```

Chapter 4: Enhancing Text Readability

Objective:

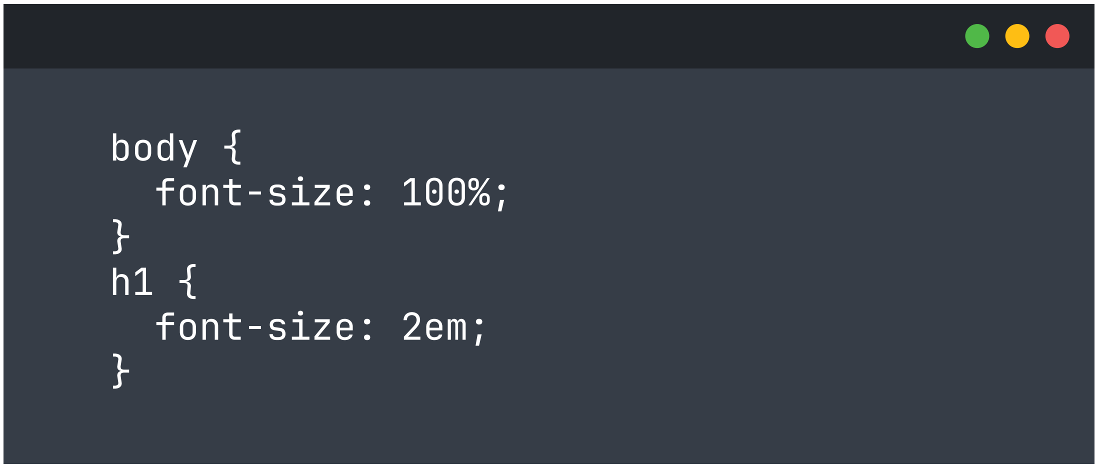
Make text content easily readable for users with visual impairments.

Explanation:

Readability involves ensuring text can be easily distinguished from the background and resized without loss of functionality.

Action Steps:

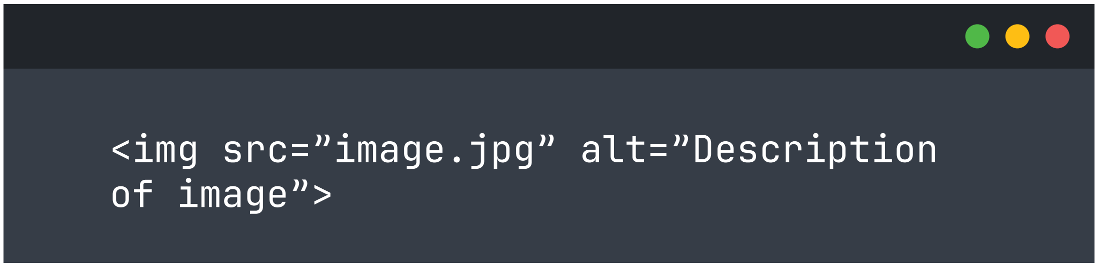
1. **Ensure Sufficient Color Contrast:**
   - **Summary:** Use tools like Contrast Checker to verify contrast ratios, aiming for at least 4.5:1 for normal text.
2. **Use Relative Units for Fonts:**
   - **Summary:** Use relative units like ems or percentages for font sizes to allow text resizing without breaking layout:



```
body {
  font-size: 100%;
}
h1 {
  font-size: 2em;
}
```

3. Provide Text Alternatives:

- **Summary:** Add descriptive alt text to all images and use aria-labels for complex graphics to ensure content is accessible to screen readers:



```
<img src=”image.jpg” alt=”Description
of image”>
```

Chapter 5: Optimizing Forms

Objective:

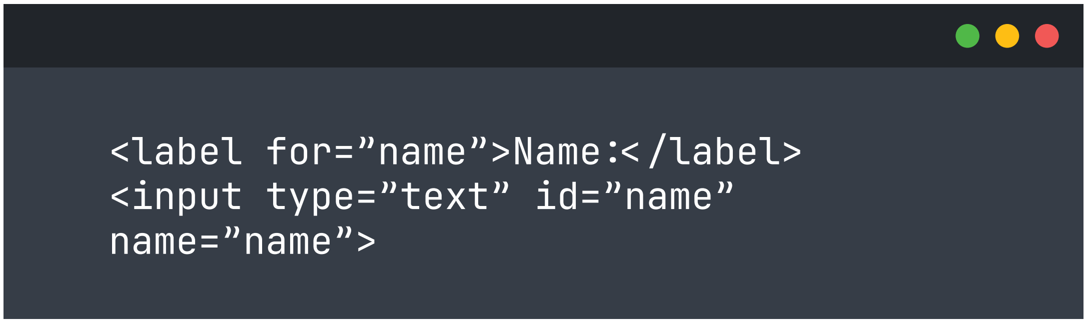
Make forms accessible for all users, including those using assistive technologies.

Explanation:

Accessible forms allow users to interact with and submit information easily, even if they rely on screen readers or other assistive devices.

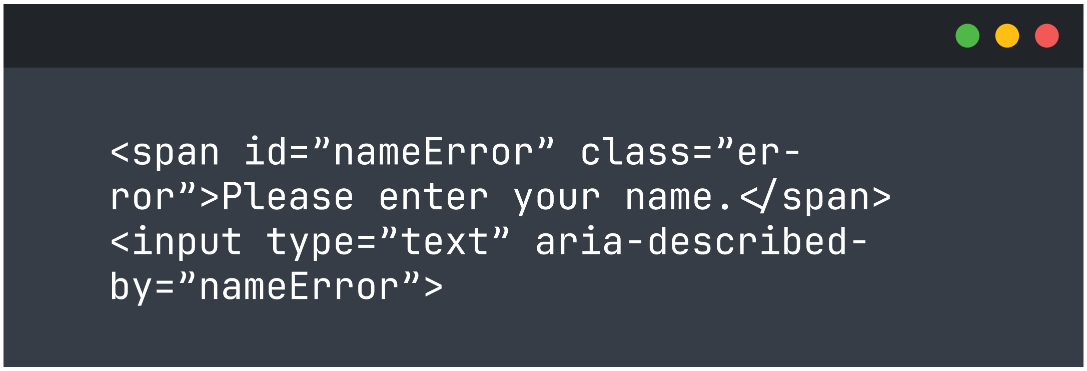
Action Steps:

1. **Label All Form Fields:**
    - **Summary:** Ensure each form field has a clear, programmatically associated label to assist screen readers:



```
<label for=”name”>Name:</label>
<input type=”text” id=”name”
name=”name”>
```

2. **Provide Informative Error Messages:**
   - **Summary:** Ensure error messages are clear and linked to form fields using aria-describedby:



```
<span id=”nameError” class=”error”>Please enter your name.</span>
<input type=”text” aria-describedby=”nameError”>
```

3. **Ensure Keyboard Navigation:**
   - **Summary:** Test forms using only the keyboard to ensure all elements are navigable and interactive.

Chapter 6: Making Multimedia Accessible

Objective:

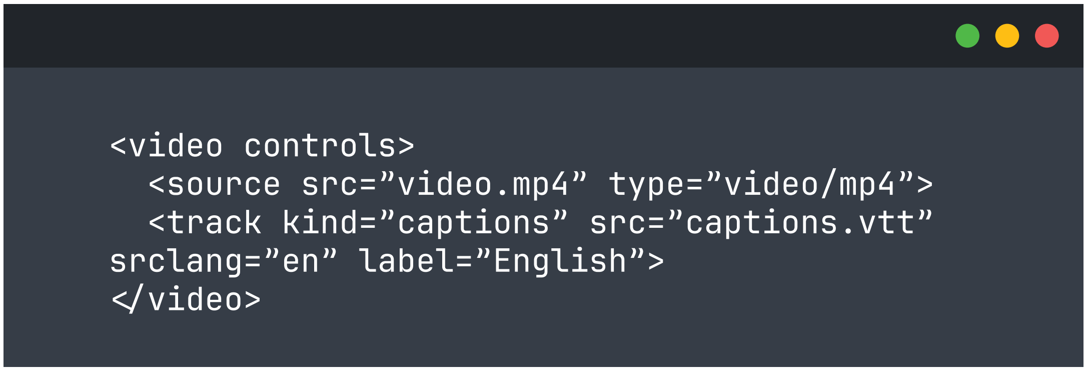
Ensure all multimedia content is accessible.

Explanation:

Multimedia, including audio and video content, must be accessible to users with hearing or visual impairments.

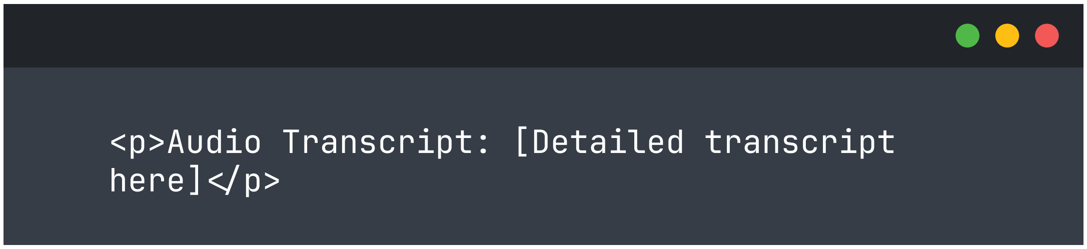
Action Steps:

1. **Provide Captions:**
   - **Summary:** Use software or services to generate accurate captions for audio and video content:



```
<video controls>
  <source src=”video.mp4” type=”video/mp4”>
  <track kind=”captions” src=”captions.vtt”
srclang=”en” label=”English”>
</video>
```

2. **Provide Transcripts:**
   - **Summary:** Create detailed text transcripts for audio and video content to describe spoken dialogue and visual elements:



```
<p>Audio Transcript: [Detailed transcript
here]</p>
```

3. **Ensure Accessible Media Players:**
   - **Summary:** Use media players that support keyboard navigation and are compatible with screen readers, and test them for accessibility.

Chapter 7: Ensuring Robust Code

Objective:

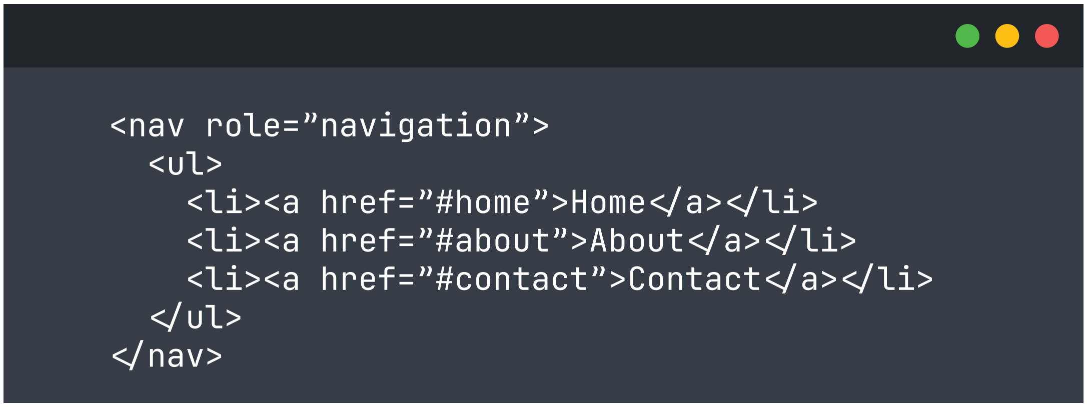
Validate your website’s code to meet accessibility standards.

Explanation:

Clean, valid code is essential for ensuring that assistive technologies can interpret and interact with your website effectively.

Action Steps:

1. **Validate HTML and CSS:**
   - Use W3C validators to ensure HTML and CSS follow web standards.
   - Visit W3C Validator for HTML validation.
   - Visit W3C CSS Validator for CSS validation.
2. **Use ARIA Roles and Properties:**
   - **Summary:** Enhance dynamic content with ARIA roles and properties for better accessibility:



```
<nav role=”navigation”>
  <ul>
    <li><a href=”#home”>Home</a></li>
    <li><a href=”#about”>About</a></li>
    <li><a href=”#contact”>Contact</a></li>
  </ul>
</nav>
```

3. **Regularly Review Code:**
    - **Summary:** Conduct regular code reviews and use version control to manage changes and ensure continuous compliance and code quality.

Chapter 8: Testing with Assistive Technologies

Objective:

Ensure your site works well with assistive technologies.

Explanation:

Testing with assistive technologies helps identify practical accessibility issues that automated tools may miss.

Action Steps:

1. **Test with Screen Readers:**
   - **Summary:** Use screen readers like JAWS and NVDA to test your site and ensure content is correctly announced and accessible.
2. **Test Keyboard Navigation:**
   - **Summary:** Ensure all site features can be accessed and navigated using only the keyboard, adjusting as needed for full functionality.
3. **Gather Feedback from Users:**
   - **Summary:** Collect feedback from users with disabilities to identify and address usability issues, integrating their insights into your accessibility improvements.

Chapter 9:
Reviewing and Updating Regularly

Objective:

Maintain ongoing compliance with ADA and WCAG guidelines.

Explanation:

Accessibility is an ongoing process. Regular reviews help identify new issues and ensure your site remains compliant as content and technologies evolve.

Action Steps:

1. **Schedule Regular Audits:**
   - **Summary:** Conduct periodic accessibility audits using automated tools and manual checks to identify and fix new issues.
2. **Update Content and Code:**
   - **Summary:** Ensure all new content and code changes comply with ADA and WCAG standards by following established best practices.
3. **Stay Informed on Guidelines:**
   - **Summary:** Keep up to date with changes and updates to accessibility guidelines and standards to maintain compliance and improve user experience.