

What *is* **accessibility**, anyway?

Adam Thiel, CPACC
Oklahoma ABLE Tech



Today's Roadmap

1. Who is ABLE Tech?
2. Intro to Accessibility
3. Laws & Guidelines
4. Four Core Skills
5. Q&A



**So, who
is**



**...and why are
they talking to
me?**



Who we are

- Oklahoma ABLE Tech is **Oklahoma's Assistive Technology (AT) Act Program.**
- There's an AT Act Program in **every U.S. State and Territory.**
- We're a sponsored program of



What we do

- AT evaluations, consultations, and demonstrations.
- Short-term device loans
- Financial loans
- Refurbish durable medical equipment (DME)
- Digital accessibility training and

For more info, go to
okabletech.org

Intro to Accessibility

Accessibility Defined

Accessibility is the practice of making information, activities, and environments **usable** and **meaningful** for as many people as possible.

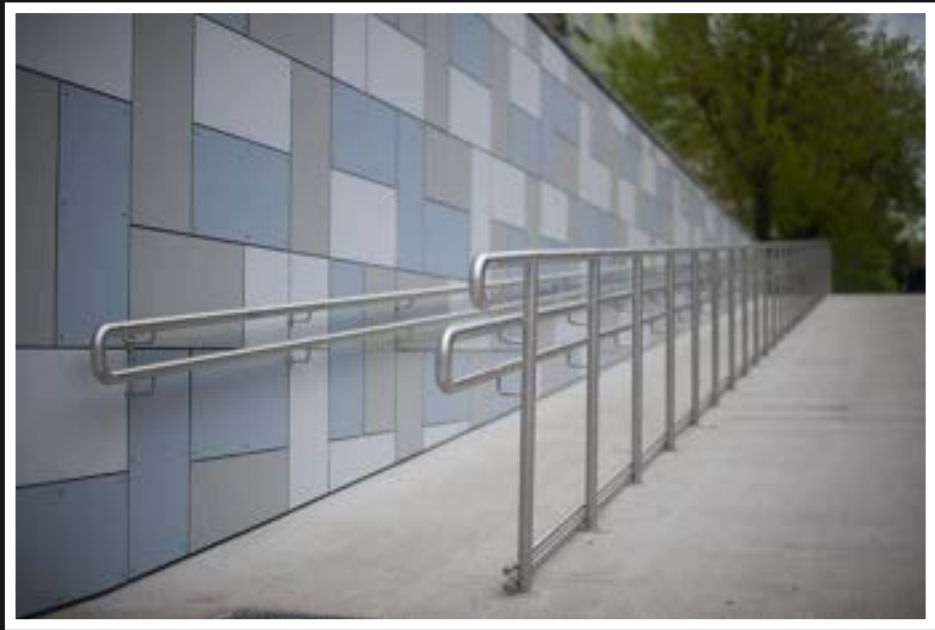
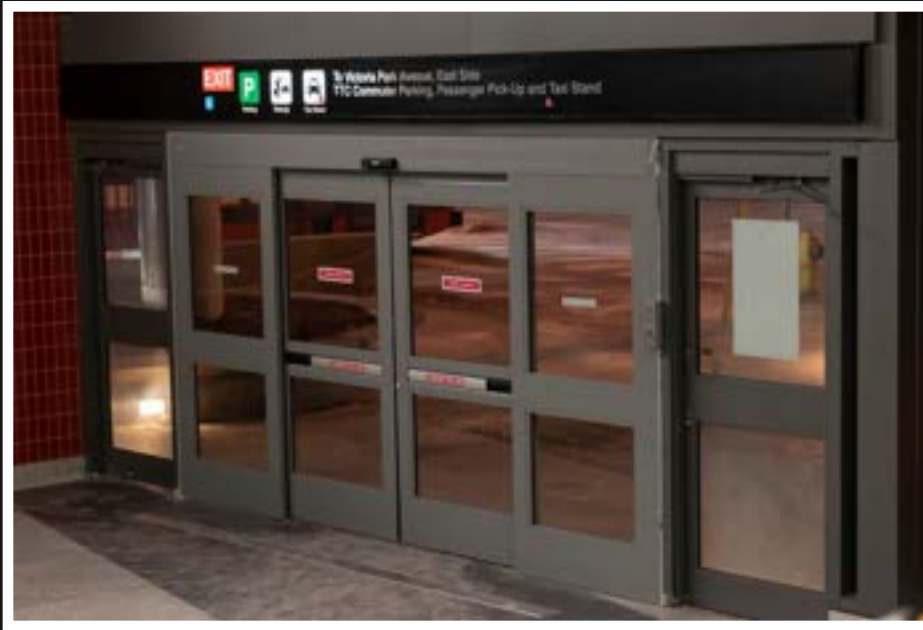
In other words, it means ensuring **everyone, including people with disabilities**, can receive, understand, and act upon information and services **as easily as everyone else**.

Up to **1 in 4 adults** in the U.S.
(around **27%**) have a disability.





What are some
examples of
accessibility you have
seen before?



Accessibility benefits
everyone.

Laws & Guidelines

Legal Backing

- Americans with Disabilities Act (**ADA**)
- **Section 508** of the Federal Rehabilitation Act
- Oklahoma's Electronic Information and Technology Accessibility Act (**EITA**)
- And more!



ADA Title II Update

- Requires **all state and local governments** to make their web and mobile apps accessible by **either April 2026 or 2027**.
- Sets **WCAG 2.1 AA** as the standard to meet.
- Check out the [Department of Justice's \(DOJ\) Fact Sheet](#) to learn more.

The What-CAG?

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

- International accessibility standard
- Defines how accessible tech should work
- Levels of conformance: **A**, **AA**, and AAA



Organizations Affected

- State and local government offices
- State and local police departments, courts, and election offices
- Public transit agencies
- **Public schools, community colleges, and universities**
- **Public libraries**
- Public hospitals and healthcare clinics



and more!



And Vendors, too!

- Any content or tool created by a vendor must be accessible, too.
- Start asking for and vetting VPATs and ACRs. If a vendor doesn't know what those are, that's a big red flag.
- Add accessibility language to your contracts starting yesterday.



What content is covered?



Document
s



Web Content



Mobile
Apps

NOTE: Includes both **public and internal** content!

So, what types of
digital content need to
be **accessible**?

Technically *Everything**

- Websites & Mobile Apps
- Documents
- Social Media
- Videos
- Public & Internal content
 - See the [DOJ's Fact Sheet](#) for info on exceptions
- Third-party products & software



Four Core Skills **for Digital Accessibility**

The Four Core Skills



Use good
structure



Create
equivalent
experiences



Make
content
readable



Use color
carefully

Core Skill 1:
**Use good
structure**



Structure is...

- **Crucial** for people using assistive technology (AT)
- **Easy to add** with tools built into your software

How People with Disabilities Use the Web Introduction How do people who cannot move their arms use your website? What about people who cannot see well or at all? Or people who have difficulty hearing or understanding, or have other disabilities? This resource introduces how people with disabilities, including people with age-related impairments, use the Web. It describes tools and approaches that people with different kinds of disabilities use to browse the Web and the barriers they encounter due to poor design. It helps developers, designers, and others to understand the principles for creating accessible websites, web applications, browsers, and other web tools. This resource includes the following pages

Stories of Web Users - stories of selected scenarios of people with disabilities using the Web, to highlight the effect of barriers and the broader benefits of accessible websites and web tools.

Diverse Abilities and Barriers - explores the wide range of diversity of people and abilities, and highlights some of the types of barriers that people commonly encounter due to inaccessible design.

Tools and Techniques - introduces some of the techniques and tools that people with disabilities use to interact with the Web, such as browser settings, text-to-speech, voice recognition, and many more.

Related resources

Accessibility Principles - introduces some of the web accessibility requirements and provides references to the international accessibility standards from the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

Web Accessibility Perspectives Videos: Explore the Impact and Benefits for Everyone - short videos highlighting accessibility features that are essential to people with disabilities and useful for all.

Better Web Browsing - tips on how to customize your particular web browser and computer setup to benefit from accessibility features.

Headings

- Headings **organize** your content into **sections**.
- They should follow a **logical hierarchy**, just like a Table of Contents or outline.
- They help create a **similar experience for everyone**.



Core Skill 2:

**Create
equivalent
experiences**

Image Descriptions

Image descriptions (a.k.a text alternatives) provide meaning to visual objects for people that can't see them.

Every image needs some kind of image description, and **alt text** is the most common way to do this.

A yellow coiled telephone cord is visible, starting from the top left, curving around the text, and ending at a yellow telephone handset on the right side. The background is solid black.

How would you
describe an image to
someone over the
phone?

Context is King

Context is the most important thing when writing alt text.

The same image, but used in a different context, will need different alt text.





Killer dog on the loose!



Authorities are searching for a **vicious dog** attacking people in Downtown Park!

If you see this deceptively cute beast, do not approach it!

Save yourself!

Core Skill 3:

**Make content
readable**

Reading Level

Public-facing content should aim for an **8th grade reading level or lower.**

Use a tool like [Hemingway](#) to quickly check your content's reading level.

The screenshot displays the Hemingway app interface. At the top, there are 'Write' and 'Edit' buttons. Below them, the 'Readability' section shows 'Grade 2' in green and 'Good.' in white. A 'Words: 189' section is also visible. On the right side, there are five colored boxes providing specific feedback: a blue box for adverbs, a green box for passive voice, a purple box for phrases with simpler alternatives, an orange box for hard-to-read sentences, and a red box for very hard-to-read sentences.

Metric	Count	Goal
Adverbs	2	4 or fewer
Passive voice	1	4 or fewer
Phrases with simpler alternatives	0	-
Hard to read sentences	0 of 18	-
Very hard to read sentences	0 of 18	-

Use Plain Language

- **Spell out acronyms** at least the first time you use them **or just don't use them.**
- **Avoid “legalese”** — a.k.a. hard to understand and overly technical jargon.
- Use **active voice.**
- Use the **same terms consistently.**

Plain Language in Action

Before

Timely preparation, including structural and non-structural mitigation measures to avoid the impacts of severe winter weather, can avert heavy personal, business and government expenditures. Experts agree that the following measures can be effective in dealing with the challenges of severe winter weather.

After

Severe winter weather can be extremely dangerous. Consider these safety tips to protect your property and yourself.

Learn more about plain language at [PlainLanguage.gov](https://www.plainlanguage.gov).

Fonts

Choose **simple fonts** and make them **large enough to be easily read**.

Use **12 pt. minimum** for most documents.*



I can't wait to see you later!



I can't wait to see you later!



I can't wait to see you later!

Core Skill 4:
Use color
carefully

Color Contrast



Everybody sees
color differently!

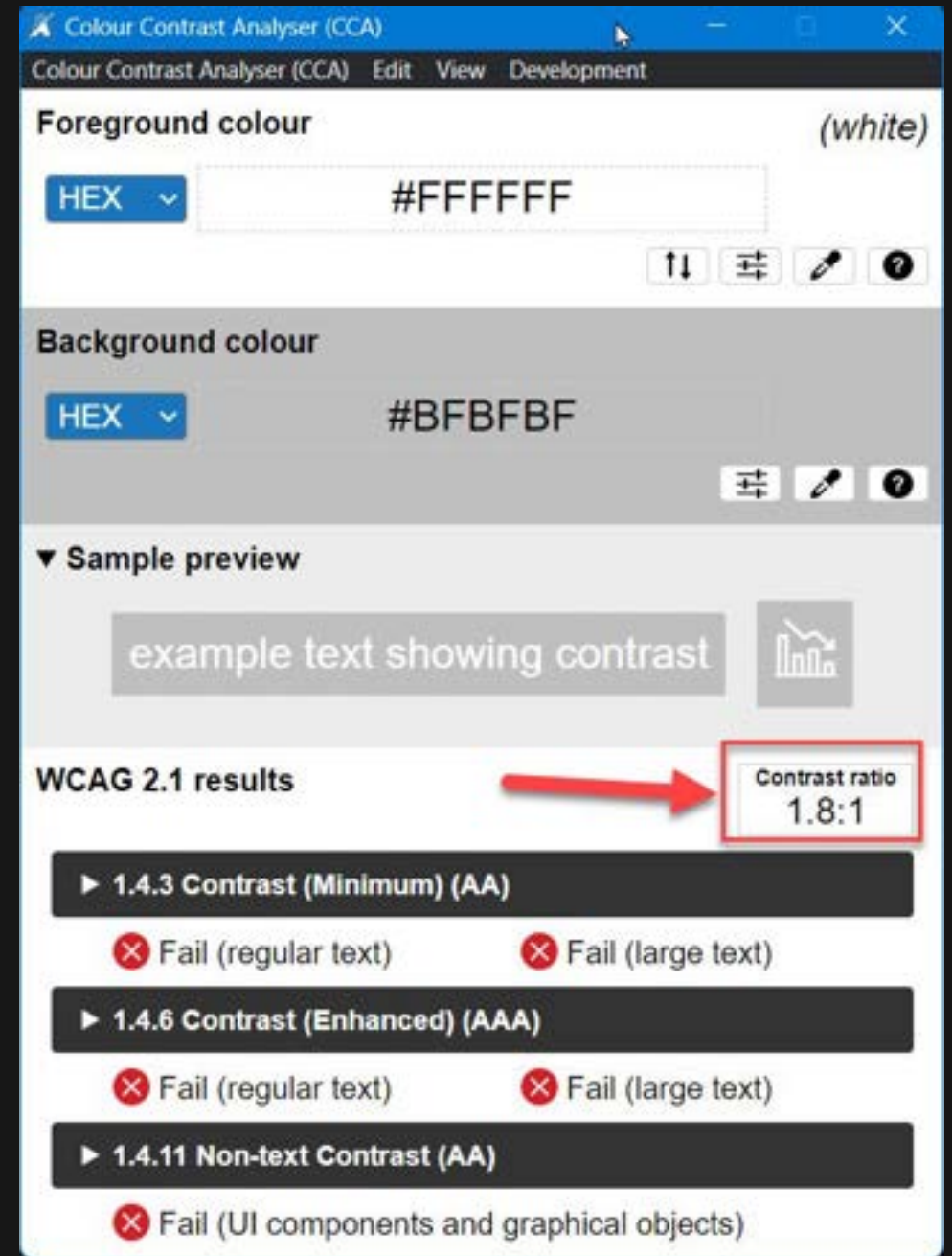
So, we **can't rely on
our eyes** to know if
something has
enough **color
contrast**.

Contrast Checker

Popular contrast checkers:

- [TPGi's Colour Contrast Analyser](#)
- [WebAIM's Contrast Checker](#)

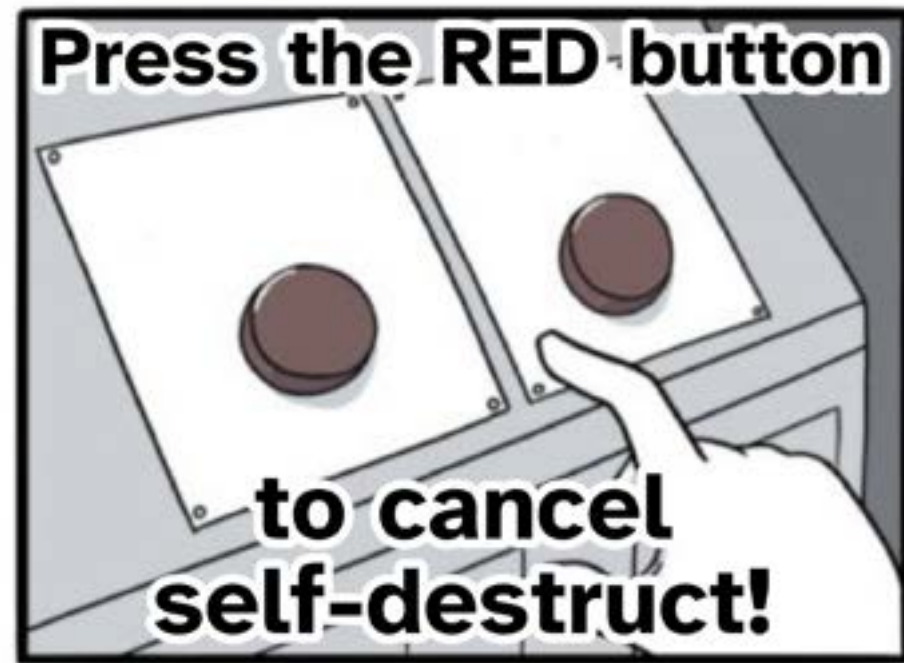
Minimum Contrast Ratio



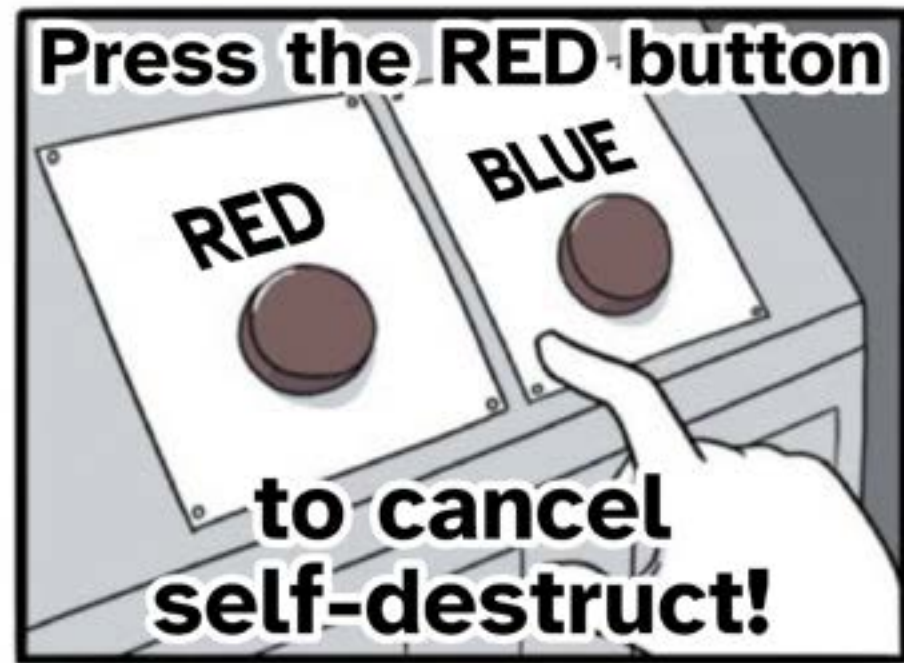
Use of Color

Don't use color as the **only way** to tell different parts of your content apart.

People who are **colorblind** or have **low vision** may not be able to tell them apart!



It's OK to use color,
but **use at least one
other way too**, like a
symbol or text.



Q&A

Help keep the lights on!



Survey link: tinyurl.com/2drb5je6

**Questions? Ask
us!**

abt.a11y@okstate.edu

Thank You!

