Idaho Commission for Libraries

Intro to Accessible Web Design

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Agenda

- What is accessible design?
- Why does it matter?
- Overview of best practices
- Resources
- Questions

What is accessible web design?

Aims to eliminate barriers

E**ssential** for some,
useful for all

Examples of Assistive Technology

Visual disabilities

- Screen magnifiers
- Screen readers
- Speech recognition software
- Refreshable Braille displays

Hearing disabilities

- Automatic transcription software

Physical disabilities

- Joysticks
- Trackballs
- Head pointers

Also consider …

- Translation tools
- Digital literacy and general literacy

Legal Considerations

- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act – Federal Electronic and Information Technology
- Americans with Disabilities Act
  - Public entities must ensure accessibility in digital as well as physical environments

Digital Access *for all* Idahoans Plan

2.3.2 Goal 2: Improve online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services

2.3.2.1 Increase accessibility of state websites and online services

As more government services and daily life (e.g., school, work, healthcare) move online, Idahoans may not be able to use these services, even if they have an active internet connection, due to many barriers, such as having a disability, poor website design, and lack of in-person support. This is especially true in instances where digitally-based services replace or reduce access to more traditional service delivery methods.

Accessible design = better design

Four Principles of Web Accessibility

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

Perceivable

- Users must be able to comprehend your content
- Example: See and hear content

Operable

- Users must be able to interact with your content
- Example: Use the computer by typing or by voice

Understandable

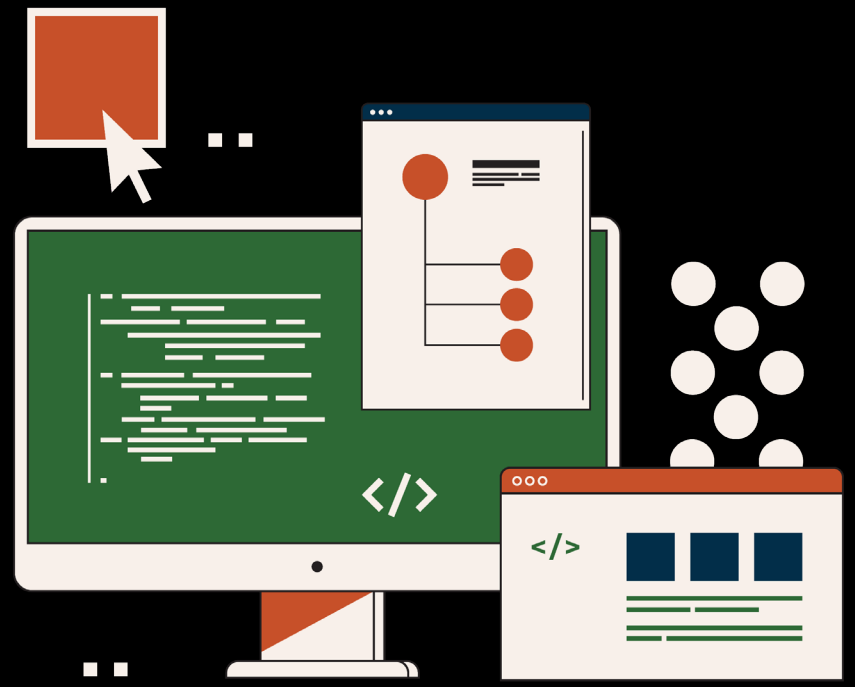
- Users must be able to understand your content.
- Example: Clear and simple language

Robust

- Your content should be accessible through multiple, evolving technologies.

Best Practices

- Headings / section titles
- Alt text
- Descriptive hyperlinks
- Simple text styling
- Accessible colors



Headings / Section Titles

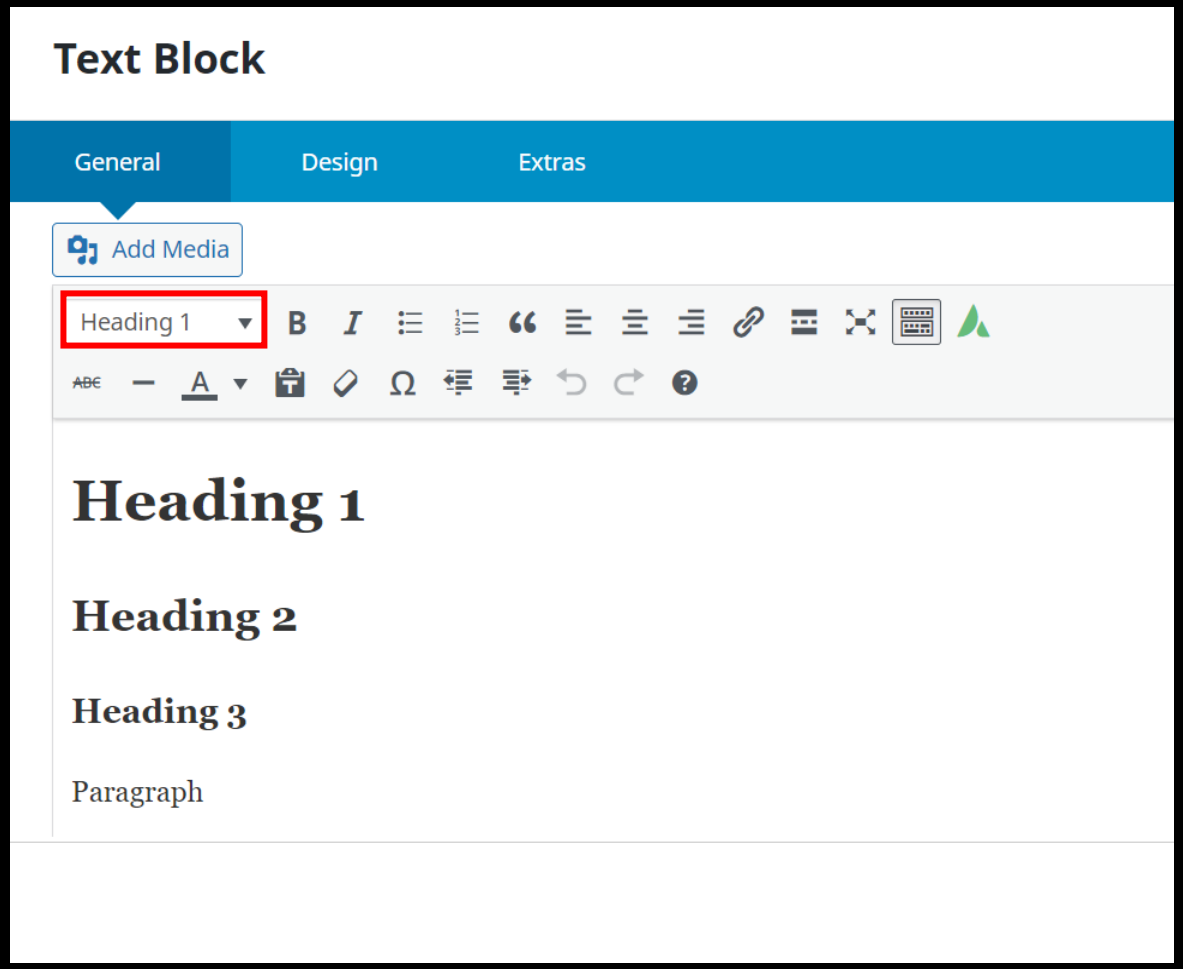
- Map out a logical structure for content
- Don't skip heading levels
- Well-structured headings:
    1. Allow screen readers and other assistive technology to skip from section to section
    2. Improve search-engine optimization

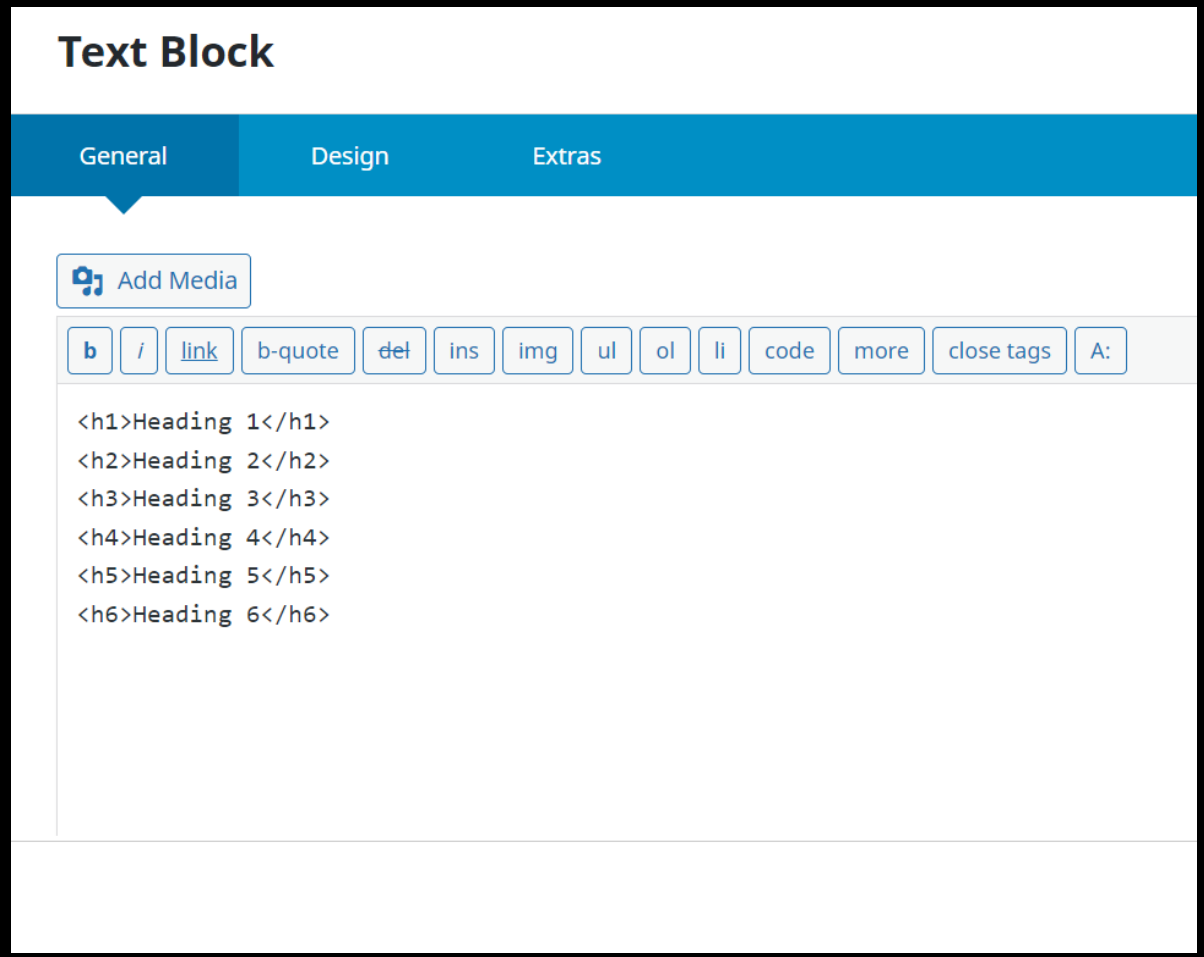
H1: My Favorite Recipes

- **H2:** Quick and Easy
  - **H3:** Spaghetti
  - **H3:** Hamburgers
  - **H3:** Tacos
    - **H4:** Beef Tacos
    - **H4:** Chicken Tacos
    - **H4:** Fish Tacos
- **H2:** Some Assembly Required
  - **H3:** Tuna Casserole
  - **H3:** Lasagna
    - **H4:** Vegetable Lasagna
    - **H4:** Beef Lasagna
- **H2:** All-In
  - **H3:** Crab-Stuffed Filet Mignon with Whiskey Peppercorn Sauce
  - **H3:** Sun Dried Tomato and Pine Nut Stuffed Beef Tenderloin

Example from WebAIM

Adding Heading Tags





Alt text

- Several functions:
  - Screen readers announce text in place of images
  - Browsers present alt text if an image fails to load
  - Search engines use alt text to assess pages
- Best practices:
  - Accurate
  - Relevant (context matters)
  - Succinct
  - Not redundant
    - Don't say "image of" / "photo of"
  - Leave blank if purely decorative

Example of Alt Text with Various Context

- **Alt text with no context:**
  - A mostly empty stadium.
- **Alt text on a page about recent turnout for track tryouts:**
  - Harvard Stadium with two lone runners bounding up the steps
- **Alt Text on a page about renovation projects:**
  - Harvard Stadium with cracked concrete pillars.

Example image and text from Harvard University

On a related note…

- Avoid text in images
  - Bad user experience for those who need to enlarge, transform, or translate text
  - Bad user experience for those using a text-only browser
  - Harder to update/maintain
- Be thoughtful in designing charts, infographics, diagrams, maps, etc.

Hyperlinks

- Use clear, descriptive, concise link text
- Avoid vague text like "Click here" and "Read more"
- Ensure links with different destinations do not have the same link text

Text Styling

- Leave your text plain
- Use fonts that are commonly available – this helps ensures consistency across devices
- Use bold and italics sparingly
- Do not underline text

Accessible Colors

- Don’t use color alone to convey meaning
- Check contrast – there are many online tools available

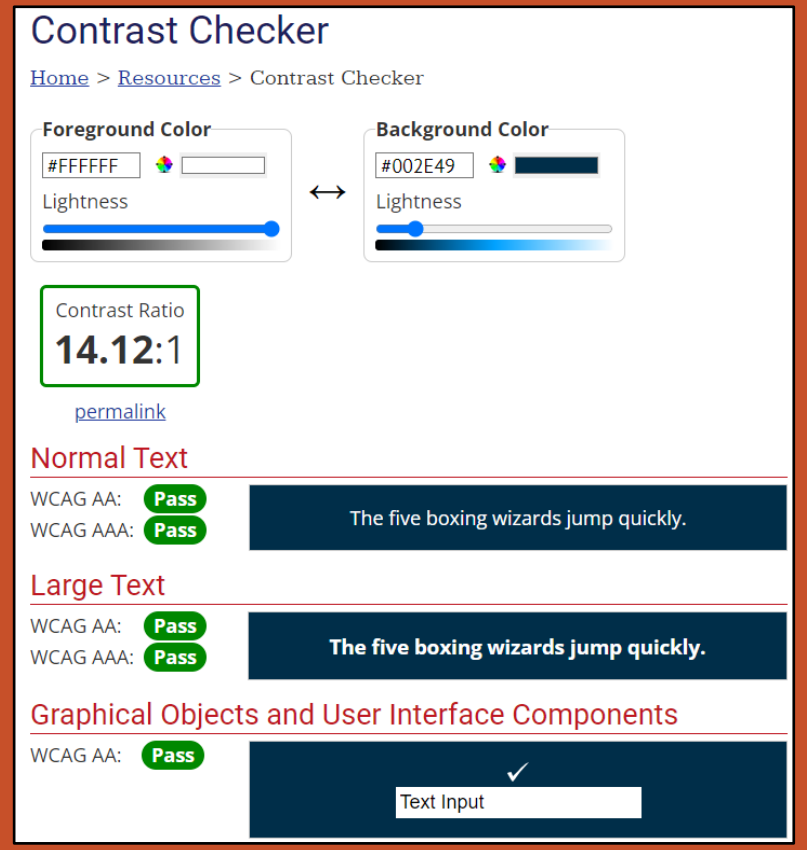
This is easy to read

This is not

Measuring Color Contrast

WCAG Minimum Requirements

- Regular Text
  - 4.5:1 (AA)
  - 7:1 (AAA)
- Large Text
  - 3:1 (AA)
  - 4.5:1 (AAA)
- Graphical Objects & UI Components
  - 3:1
- Hyperlinked Text
  - Link text to body text 3:1

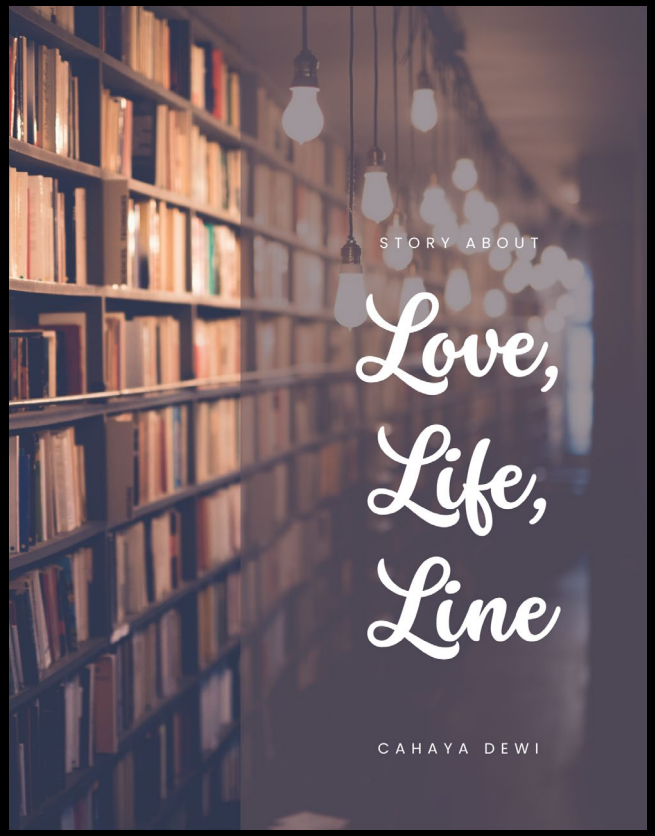


Webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker

Color contrast	→	Addresses glare on devices
Alt text	→	Search-engine optimization
Avoiding text as images	→	Better for social media algorithms

The Canva Dilemma

- Choose templates thoughtfully
  - Here are a few to avoid
- Plan to do a bit of extra work to ensure Canva creations are accessible



Additional Resources

- WebAIM
- WAVE tool
- Boise State University's accessibility resources and guides

Computing and Phone Accessibility 101

Tuesday, September 19

10:30 a.m. MDT

Zoom

University of Idaho Extension's Digital Economy Program
and the Idaho Assistive Technology Project

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Questions?