Blackboard

First steps for finding obvious accessibility problems

The U.S. Office for Civil Rights has set WCAG 2.0 AA as the standard for measuring web accessibility. WCAG 2.0 is an international standard published by the W3C. You can learn to test for the most obvious WCAG 2.0 accessibility problems using free automated tools.

Three levels of WCAG 2.0 accessibility testing

WCAG 2.0 accessibility testing is a three-level process:

LEVEL	TYPE OF WCAG TEST	DESCRIPTION
1	Automated Basic	Automated testing for basic accessibility errors. See instructions below.
2	Manual Intermediate	Manual testing for intermediate errors. Requires formal accessibility training.
3	Manual Advanced	Manual testing for advanced errors. Requires additional formal accessibility training as well as analytical reasoning and experience.

Level 1 testing steps

1. **Use WAVE to run basic accessibility testing**

   a. Open a web browser. Examples: Chrome, Firefox, IE or Safari.
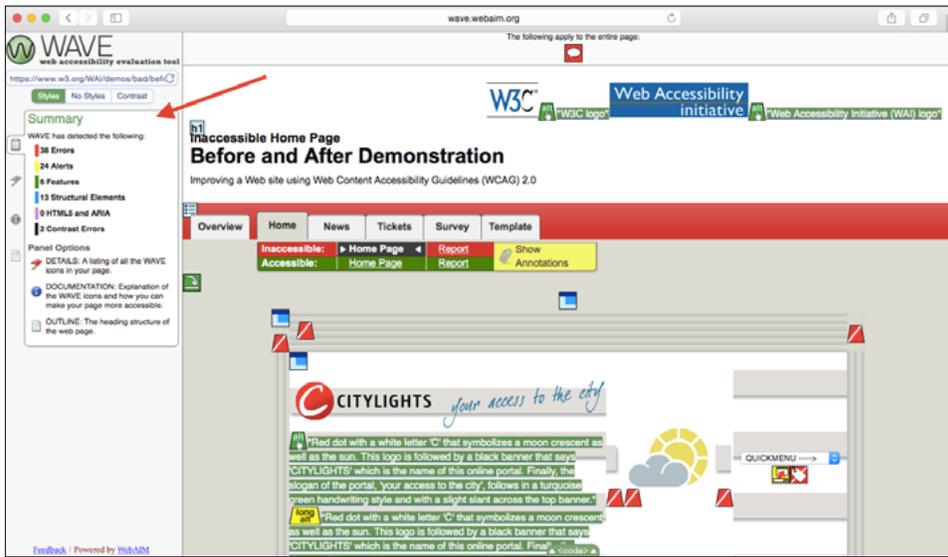   b. Type **wave.webaim.org** in the browser address bar and press enter.

   c. Enter the URL of the web page you want to test in the form field on this page. For example, if you want to test a page with many accessibility errors, you could enter **https://www.w3.org/WAI/demos/bad/before/home.html**

d. Run the WAVE evaluation tool by pressing the arrow button.

e. **Review the WAVE results.** WAVE returns a copy of the page with icons added to show accessibility errors, features, and alerts. On the left side of the screen you will see a summary of the results. The first item in the summary will be your total number of errors. In the example below, 38 errors were found.

Summary breakdown

ICON COLOR	MEANING	ACTION
Red (Error)	Accessibility error.	Learn more about this error and try to fix the problem.
Green (Feature)	Positive. Accessibility feature done right!	No action required.
Yellow (Alert)	Alert. Potential accessibility error. Requires manual testing	For now, skip these icons. To test accurately, you will need to have taken accessibility training.
Blue (Structural) or Purple (HTML5, ARIA)	Neutral. Technical information about how this web page was built.	For now, skip these icons. No testing required.
Purple (HTML5, ARIA)		

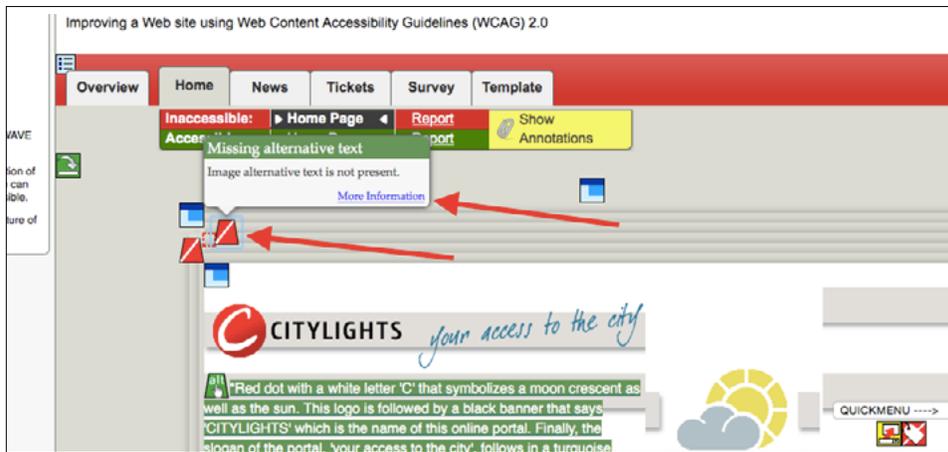For more information on how to use WAVE see WAVE Help.

2. **Identify basic accessibility errors**
   Should any errors in WAVE be found, then the page does not meet WCAG 2.0 AA standards. Each issue found will require immediate resolution.

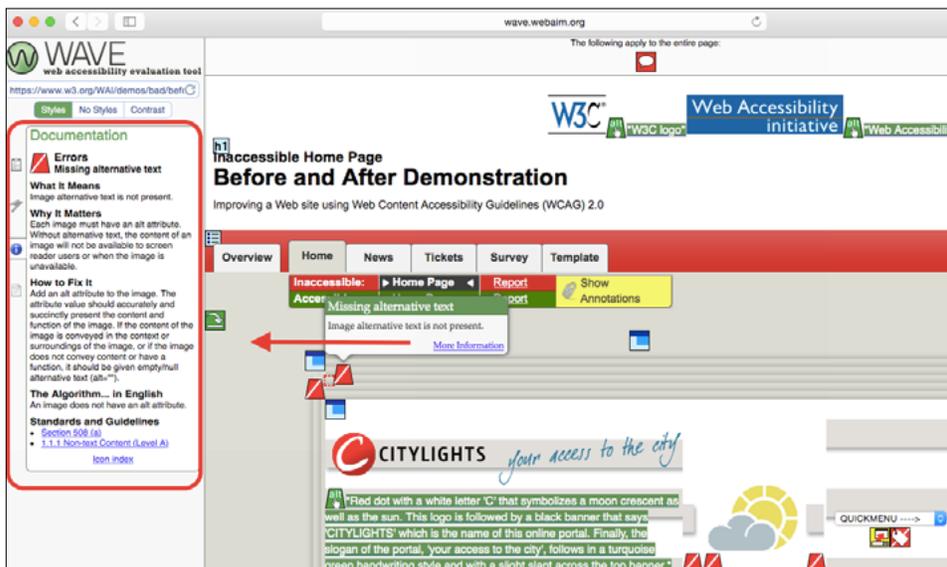3. **Understand and fix basic accessibility errors**
   Learn more about each error and how to fix it by doing the following:
   1. **Error**—Locate the red error icons that have been added to the page you are testing. Click on an icon to see a brief description of that particular error.

   2. **Details**—Click on the "More Information" link to see documentation including:
      i.   What it means
      ii. Why it matters
      iii. How to fix it

   3. **Fix**—Use what you learned in the Documentation sidebar to repair the error.
   4. **Need help**—For additional help on fixing an error, check out these free resources:
      i.   Blackboard accessibility
      ii. WebAim—a trusted, practical and free resource for learning more about web accessibility.
           a. Search the WebAim site – webaim.org
           b. Read WebAim articles – webaim.org/articles/
           c. Ask questions on the WebAim Mailing List – webaim.org/community/
4. **Accomplishing zero errors**
   When you see "0 errors" in the WAVE summary you have successfully eliminated all basic accessibility barriers and completed Accessibility Level 1.

FAQs

1. **When I tried to run the WAVE tool, I got a "Forbidden" error. What should I do?**
   This error happens on occasions. Refresh and press the submit button again.

2. **Is the page fully accessible if WAVE reports "0 Errors"?**
   Testing for accessibility is a 3 level process. You have completed Level 1. For more information about Level 2 and 3 see the Three Levels of WCAG 2.0 Accessibility Testing section of this document section of this document located on page one.

3. **What are WAVE alerts? Do I need to worry about them?**
   WAVE alerts are items that require manual testing and additional knowledge of web accessibility. If you are new to web accessibility, we recommend formal training and/or hiring an accessibility expert to do Level 2 and 3 testing.

4. **What do I do next? How can I learn more about web accessibility?**
   Find out more about web accessibility by going to Blackboard Accessibility resources.

5. **I have Chrome and can install browser extensions. What other free web accessibility testing tools are available?**

   - **aXe: the Accessibility Engine:** Get the aXe Chrome Extension for free.
   - **WAVE Chrome Extension:** Get the WAVE Chrome Extension for free.