NSA ICT Accessibility Standards Overview

The NSA ICT Accessibility Standards are grounded in the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0—a stable, referenceable, international technical standard. The standards meet all current Federal Section 508 requirements, which are now aligned with WCAG 2.0 level AA standards.

Each Accessibility Standard corresponds with a testing requirement in the Accessibility Standards Scoresheet for ease in testing a web site or application. They are arranged in a specific order to get the greatest impact as accessibility is incorporated into a product.

Section 1: Keyboard

1.1 Can the keyboard be used to navigate instead of the mouse, particularly using the tab, shift-tab, arrows, alt-down arrow, spacebar, and enter keys?
1.2 Are keyboard alternatives available when appropriate?
1.3 Can all actions be executed by using the Enter key or Spacebar?

Section 2: Focus

2.1 Can all elements that a user needs to interact with receive keyboard focus and be reached using only the keyboard?
2.2 Is the current focus visually indicated on screen and programmatically exposed?
2.3 Does the focus move in a logical order or flow?

Section 3: Alternative Text

3.1 Is ALT text or other text equivalent provided for all non-text static elements with content?
3.2 Are links visually distinct with text that explains what will happen when the link is clicked?
3.3 Are all controls, feedback mechanisms, status indicators, navigational mechanisms, etc. meaningfully and consistently labeled throughout the interface?
3.4 Do interactive elements such as controls, form fields, and other form elements include sufficient information such as hints, help, mandatory format, length, values, status, and if the field is required? Are labels provided when user input is required?
3.5 Are all decorative elements coded as decorative?

Section 4: Navigation

4.1 Are appropriate text and code labels included to allow quick orientation and movement between pages and sections?
4.2 Is the reading order for assistive technology logical and intuitive?
4.3 Can the user skip navigation functions/sidebar and go straight to the content?
4.4 Is the user informed if the location of the focus changes?
4.5 Is the user informed when content changes dynamically?

4.6 Are tables used appropriately, clearly organized, and labeled?
4.7 If Frames are used, are they labeled with the title attribute?

Section 5: Content

5.1 Is true text used, instead of images, whenever possible?
5.2 Do the default text and background size and colors provide sufficient contrast?
5.3 Is an additional visual indicator provided when information or instructions are conveyed by color?
5.4 Does the application support a variety of text and background size and color combinations to support user selected settings?
5.5 Is information conveyed in multiple ways so that communication is not contingent on a single sense or ability?

Section 6: Flashing

6.1 Is flashing/flickering content avoided?

Section 7: Timing

7.1 Does the user have sufficient time to read and use content?

Section 8: Error Handling

8.1 Does validation identify the error, provide suggestions on fixing the error, and allow the user to fix the error?
8.2 When an action causes an error or validation message, is the focus located or placed near the error or validation message?

Section 9: Language

9.1 Are language tags specified?

Section 10: Animation and Multimedia

10.1 If animation (including scrolling, blinking, or moving information) is provided, can the user turn it off and access the information in a non-animated way?
10.2 If auto-updating is used, can the user turn it off?
10.3 Are accurate, synchronized captions and a descriptive transcript (or audio description) available for audio visual elements?
10.4 Are accurate, descriptive transcripts available for audio-only and video-only elements?
10.5 If audio automatically plays, can the user stop, pause, mute or adjust the volume?

Section 11: Other

11.1 Is an accessible alternative available for content or functionality within a system that cannot be made compliant any other way?

11.2 Are any image maps used client side image maps, or if not are redundant text links provided?

11.3 If a specialized applet, plug-in or software is required, is a link to download it provided?

11.4 If unique display techniques are developed, is text also written to the screen through the operating system?