

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hands and arms. The person is wearing a yellow, ribbed-sleeved sweater. Their hands are positioned on a laptop keyboard, suggesting they are working or coding. The background is dark and out of focus.

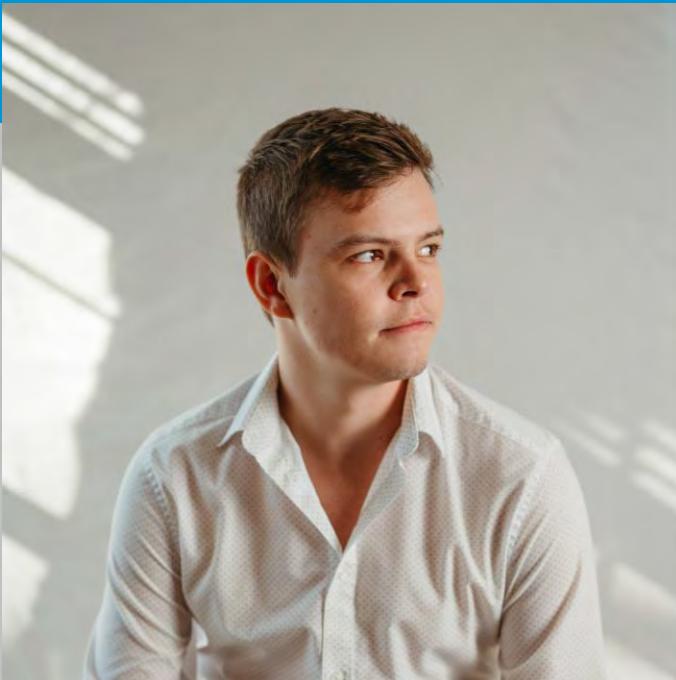
TRAVEL SOUTH DAKOTA

# DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY + UX WORKSHOP

JANUARY 2026

**miles**  
PARTNERSHIP

# With You Today:



**August Erickson | CPACC**  
*Director of Development Services  
at Miles Partnership*



# Today

1. Digital Accessibility Refresher
2. Group Exercise
3. How to Get Started
4. Live Demo
5. Travel South Dakota's Efforts
6. Audience Q&A





## INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE

### What is Digital Accessibility?

The process of ensuring digital products (primarily websites) are accessible to those with disabilities.

At a very high-level this entails continuous analysis of digital products, to remove any digital barriers detected.



## Important Acronyms:

**ally** » (Digital) Accessibility

**UX** » User Experience

**ADA** » Americans with Disabilities Act

**WCAG** » Web Content Accessibility Guidelines



# What Are the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)?

- Internationally recognized **guidelines**, published and maintained by W3C.
- WCAG outlines specific success criteria which are designed to remove digital barriers for individuals with disabilities, and ensure digital content can be analyzed by **assistive technologies**.
- In short, they're the '**Gold Standard**' of digital accessibility.



# What Are Assistive Technologies?

- Any technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible.
- Some examples include:
  - Screen readers
  - Screen magnifiers
  - Speech input devices



# Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

## Versions

- The current version of WCAG is **2.2** – which was finalized by W3C on October 5<sup>th</sup> 2023.
- Each version of WCAG is built “on top” of previous versions.
- As an example, WCAG **2.2** introduced 9 NEW success criteria, which were not outlined in WCAG **2.1**



# Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

## Conformance Levels

- **Level A** is the minimum level of conformance.
- **Level AA** includes all Level A and AA success criteria and is the most widely used conformance level.
- **Level AAA** is the highest possible level and includes all Level A, AA, and AAA success criteria.
  - It is **not** recommended that Level AAA conformance be required as a general policy, as it is not possible to satisfy all Level AAA success criteria for some content.



## Success Criterion 1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum)

(Level AA)

The visual presentation of text and images of text has a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1, except for the following:

### Large Text

Large-scale text and images of large-scale text have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1;

Foreground	Background
Hex Value #3479B2	Hex Value #FFFFFF
Color Picker	Color Picker
Alpha 1	
Luminance	Luminance

Foreground	Background
Hex Value #3479B2	Hex Value #FFFFFF
Color Picker	Color Picker
Alpha 1	
Luminance	Luminance

[Understanding Contrast \(Minimum\)](#)

[How to Meet Contrast \(Minimum\)](#)

Contrast Ratio  
**4.64:1**



**Ratio of 1.17:1**



**Ratio of 1.43:1**



**Ratio of 2.64:1**



**Ratio of 8.9:1**





Contact Us

## Stay in Touch

Sign up to receive emails on the latest topics and trends in destination marketing and the tourism industry.

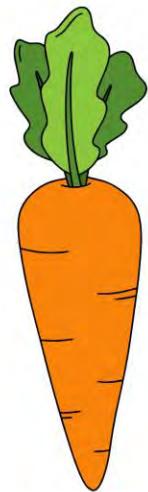
Your email here



We promise to be considerate with your inbox. We'll never share or resell your information, and we'll always stick to the terms of our [privacy policy](#). You can unsubscribe anytime.



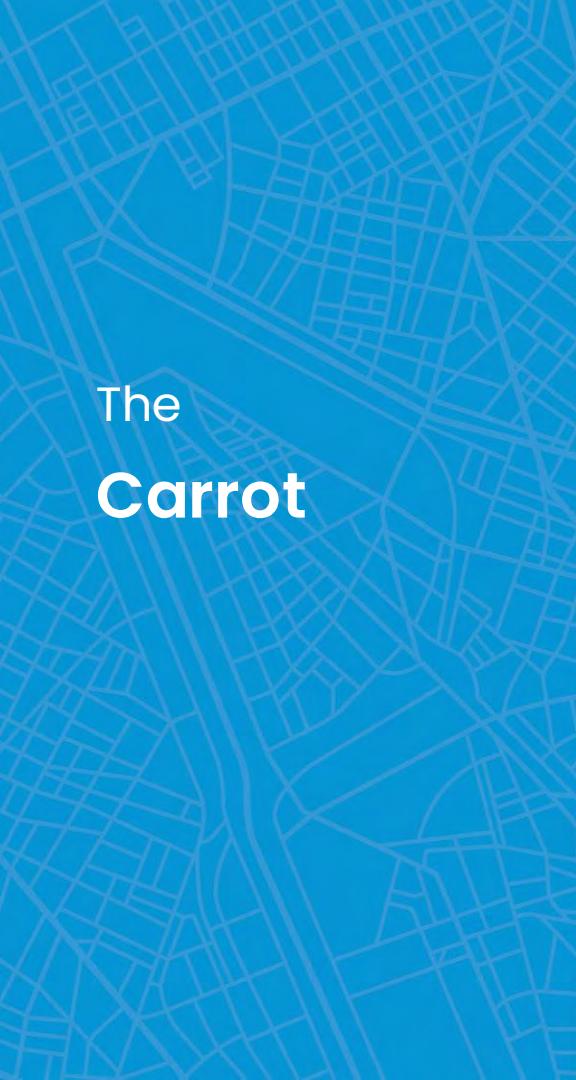
# The Carrot & The Stick



Rewards / Benefits



Punishment / Ramifications



# The Carrot

Digital accessibility **increases your potential customer / visitor base**

- 1 in 4 adults in the Untied States have some type of disability (*CDC 2025*)
- Travelers with disabilities take an average of 3.7 leisure trips per year (*State of the American Traveler 2025*)
- Travelers with disabilities are more likely to utilize online resources for trip planning than all other travelers (*State of the American Traveler 2025*)



# The Carrot

## Digital accessibility **has substantial SEO benefits**

- Example: Alternative (alt) text for images
  - Allows search engines to properly index images



» **Alt text:** Man laughs with friends while working on his laptop at a coffee shop.



Let's Talk About

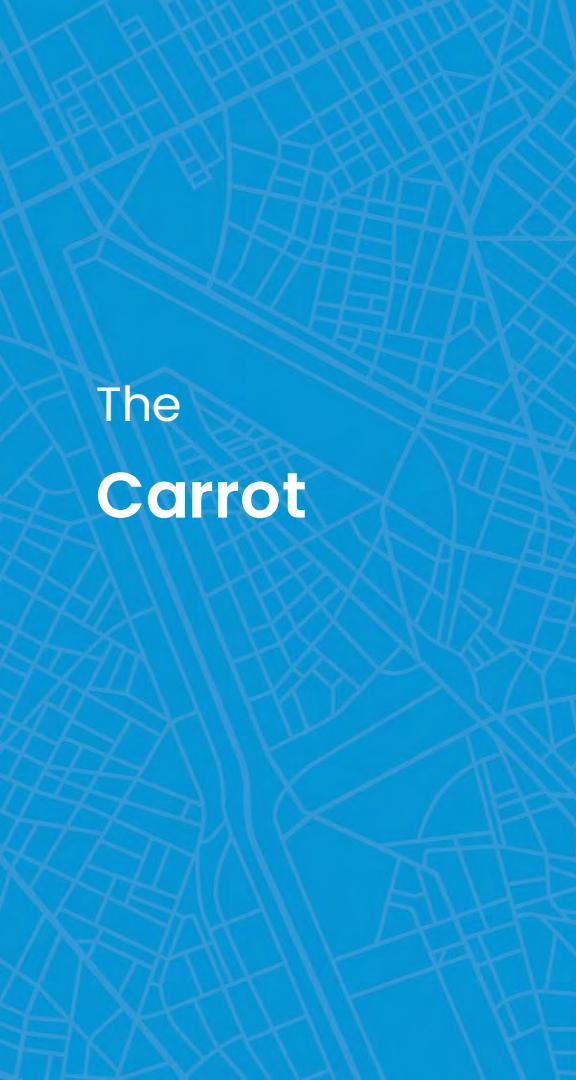
# The Curb-Cut Effect



## The Curb-Cut Effect

By prioritizing digital accessibility, you're creating a better user experience for ALL





# The Carrot

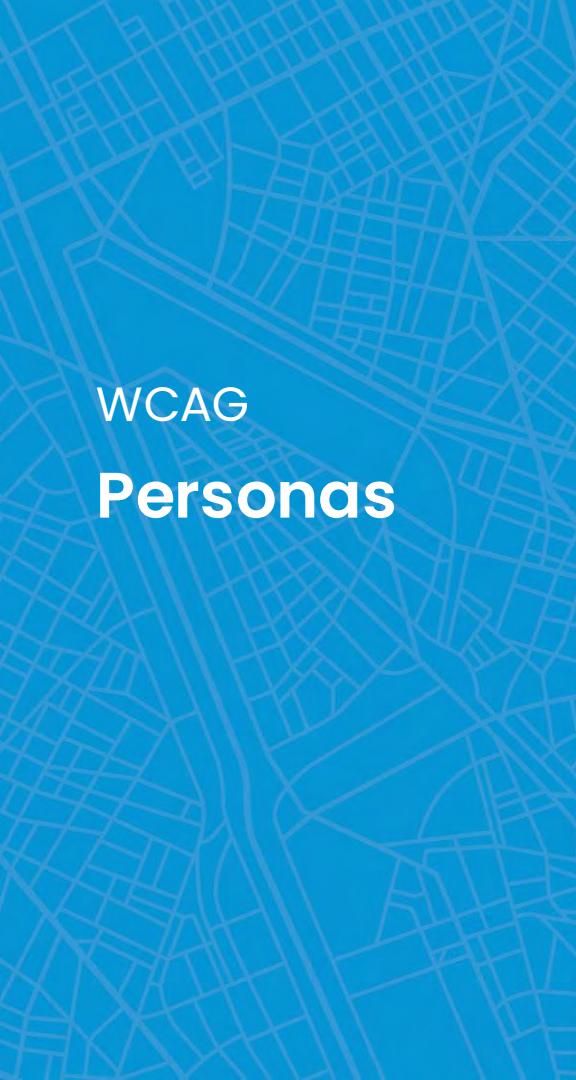
## Example of the **curb-cut effect** in web development

- Prime example with websites is color contrast requirements.
  - Designed to benefit those who are color blind and/or have low vision
- Color contrast requirements also benefit:
  - Users with low quality monitors
  - Users relying on devices with smaller screen sizes
  - Older users with deteriorating eyesight





THE CARROT OF DIGITAL  
ACCESSIBILITY FOCUSES  
ON THE PEOPLE BEHIND  
THE MISSION



WCAG

## Personas

Personas allow us to view digital accessibility through a **'human' lens**

- W3C outlines 9 separate personas, tied to the WCAG success criteria.
- These personas highlight the effect of accessibility barriers and the broader benefits of accessible websites.





Break Into

# Groups

## Instructions:

- Introduce yourself to your group
- Review your persona
- Try to conduct your task at hand
- Prepare to share



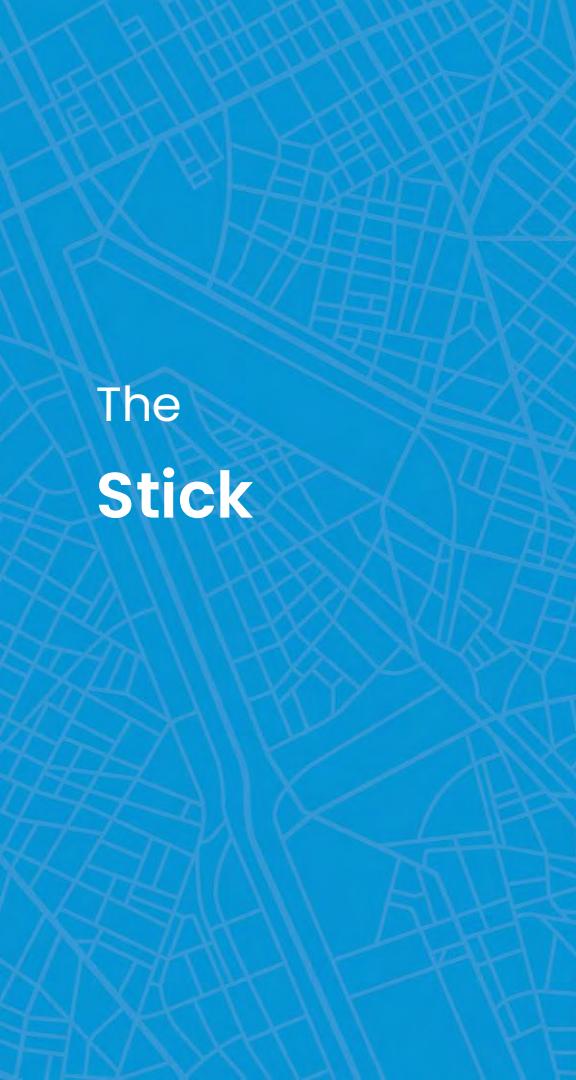
Break Into

# Groups

## Let's Share:

- Read off your persona
- What was the task you were asked to do?
- Were you able to complete the task?
- How did you *feel* during this exercise?





# The Stick

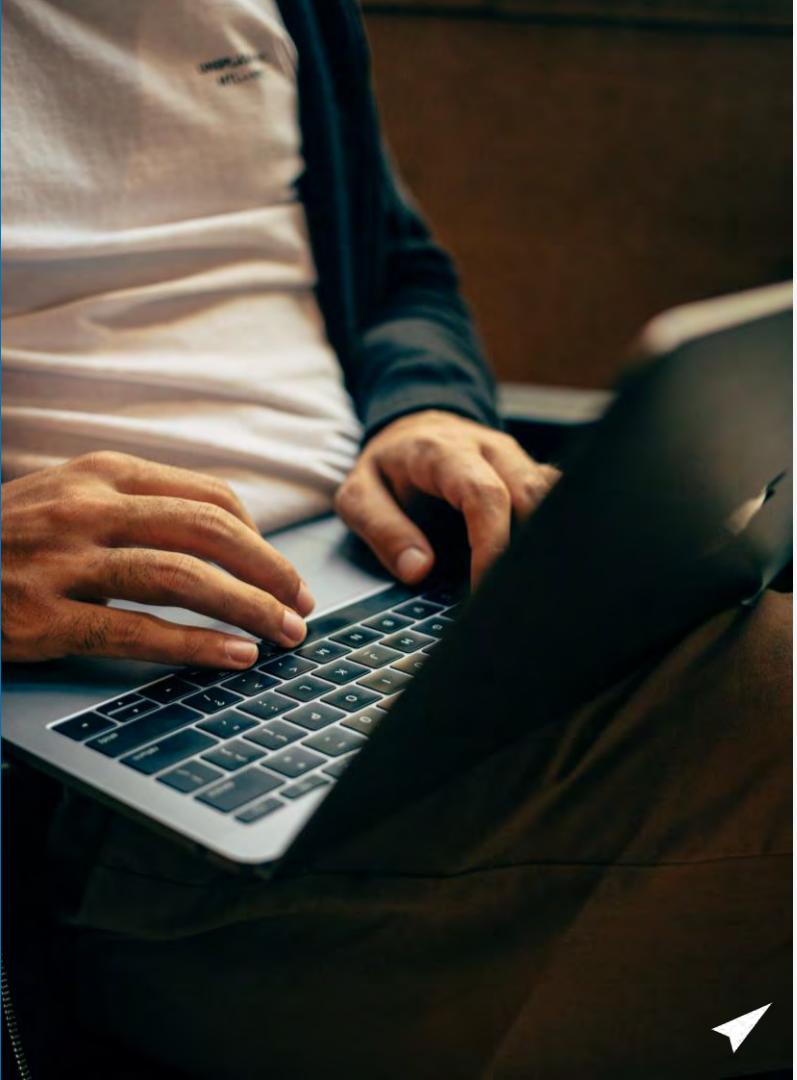
Digital accessibility is a **legal requirement** (under the ADA)

- Prioritizing digital accessibility reduces your legal risk.
- You reduce your legal risk by conforming to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)



## The Legal History of Digital Accessibility:

- » **1990:** The ADA is signed into law by George H.W. Bush
- » **1991:** The first website goes live on the world wide web
- » **1994:** The World Wide Web Consortium (w3C) is founded
- » **1996:** The DOJ takes the “position” that the ADA applies to web content - without providing guidelines of what makes a website accessible



## The Legal History of Digital Accessibility:

- » **1999:** The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 1.0) is introduced by W3C
- » **2008:** WCAG 2.0 is introduced by W3C
- » **2017:** Lawsuits against websites begin to rise (Winn-Dixie lawsuit)
- » **2018:** WCAG 2.1 is introduced by W3C
- » **2023:** WCAG 2.2 is introduced by W3C



# The Legal Landscape of Digital Accessibility

- WCAG are guidelines, **not formal law**. However, WCAG is cited on the ADA website.
- WCAG is referenced in both existing federal and state legislation.
  - Section 508 (federal) references WCAG 2.0 AA
  - California and Colorado's state legislation references WCAG 2.1 AA



A group of diverse business professionals in a formal office setting. In the foreground, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a light-colored blazer, sits at a desk with her hands clasped. Behind her, five men in suits stand in a row, looking towards the camera. The background features bookshelves and framed portraits, suggesting a professional environment.

THE STICK OF DIGITAL  
ACCESSIBILITY FOCUSES  
ON LEGAL & FINANCIAL  
REPERCUSSIONS

# Digital Accessibility Lawsuits in 2025 (United States)

- **97%** of the digital accessibility lawsuits filed were against desktop websites.
  - Mobile websites only accounted for **3%**
- **Over 40%** of the lawsuits filed at the federal level were against businesses / organizations with previous lawsuits.
- **25%** of the lawsuits filed were against websites using an accessibility widget
  - Many of these lawsuits reference the widgets themselves as the barrier.





[About Us](#)

[FLAVORS & PROMOTIONS](#)

[Join the ICEE Family](#)

[DOING BUSINESS WITH ICEE](#)

[ICEE Hope](#)





About Us

FLAVORS & PROMOTIONS

Join the ICEE Family

DC



Accessibility Menu (CTRL+U)

us English (USA)

Accessibility Profiles

XL Oversized Widget



Screen Reader



Contrast +



Smart Contrast



Highlight Links



Bigger Text



Text Spacing



Pause Animations



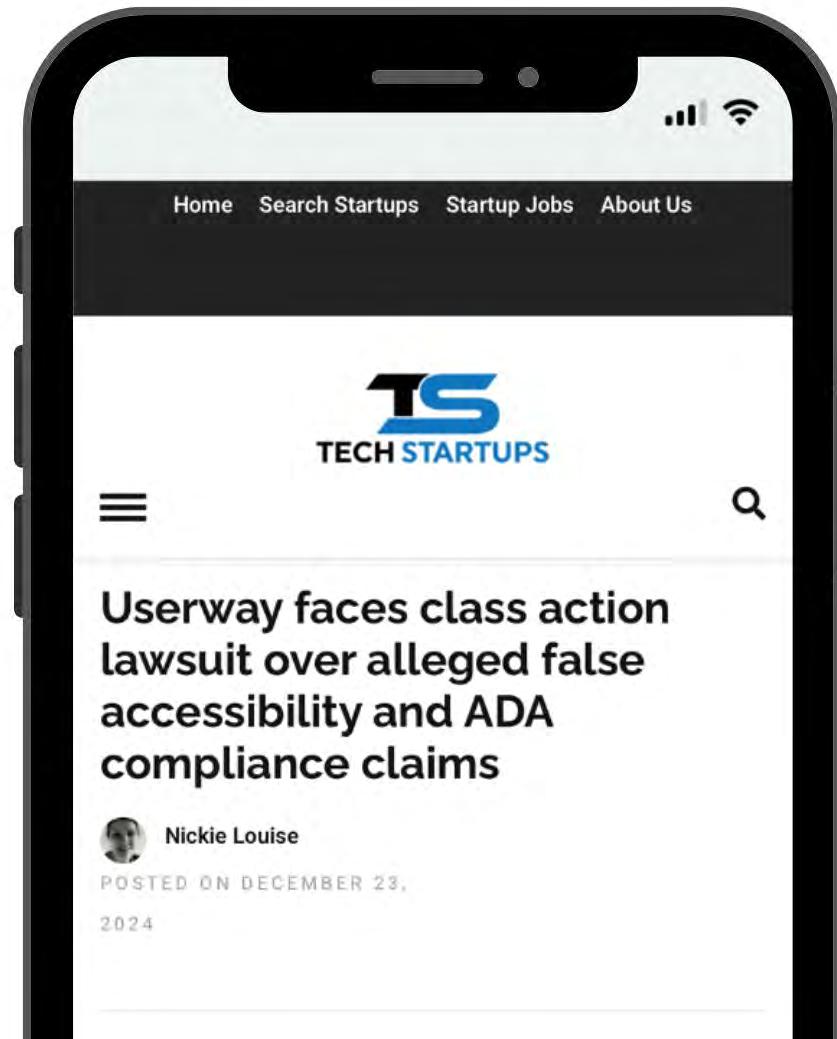
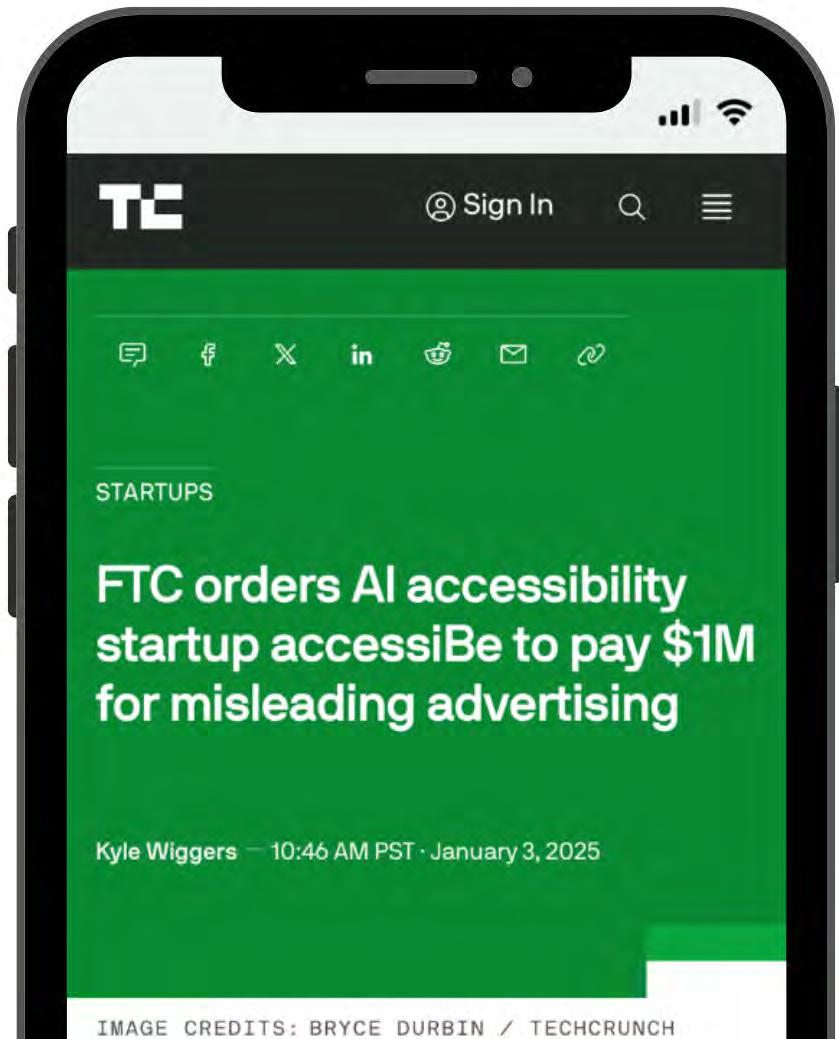
Hide Images

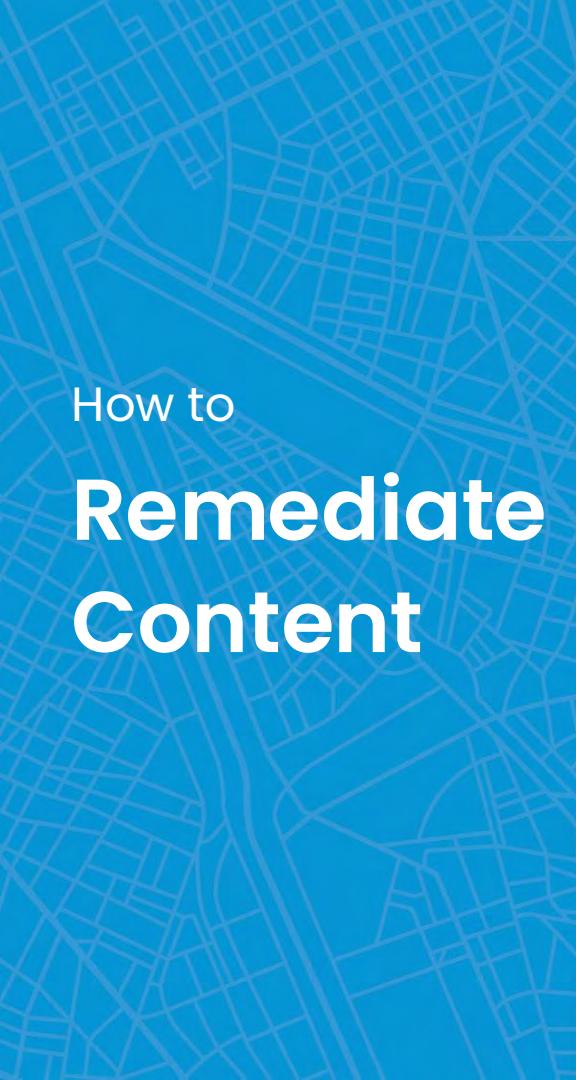


Df  
Dyslexia Friendly

Report a Problem

Manage





How to

# Remediate Content

**Work with your web provider, internal digital team, and/or a 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider:**

- Analyze your website to detect accessibility issues (WCAG 2.2 AA violations).
- Then conduct prioritized remediations to resolve these issues.





# How to Analyze Your Website

**Through a combination of automated scans and manual user testing**

- **PHASE #1:** Automated scans look for code / structure-based issues based on the WCAG 2.2 AA success criteria.
- **PHASE #2:** Manual user testing consists of testing your website relying on keyboard navigation and/or assistive technologies.



# How to Analyze Your Website

Potential providers for automated  
scans:

**deque**

**UsableNet**



**Siteimprove**



Save \$500 on passes for the Food & Wine



## NEWS

American Airlines Is Cutting These 5 U.S. Routes From Austin Airport

By Michael Cappetta



## NEWS

United Just Made a Big Change to Its Basic Economy Tickets

By Alison Fox

 Siteimprove Accessibility Checker

Issues Explorer

Issues overview

A 1.1.1 Non-text Content

**Image missing a text alternative**

All non-decorative images must have a text alternative (also known as "alt text").

Why is this an issue ▾

Occurrences of this issue 1

 <https://www.travelandleisure.com/travel-tips/austin-airport-5-new-routes-500-off-food-wine-passes-948ca9b24802594131974.jpg>

→ Add a text alternative for the image.

Image



ted This Idyllic  
front Mexican  
to Learn What  
ad's 'Year of the  
' Was All About

Kachroo-Levine



How to Analyze  
**Your  
Website**

**Siteimprove Live Demo**



**Siteimprove**



# How to Prioritize **Ally Efforts**

**When conducting remediations,  
ensure you're following a prioritized  
approach**

- **Priority #1:** Global Elements
- **Priority #2:** Homepage
- **Priority #3:** Template Based
- **Priority #4:** Individual Remediations

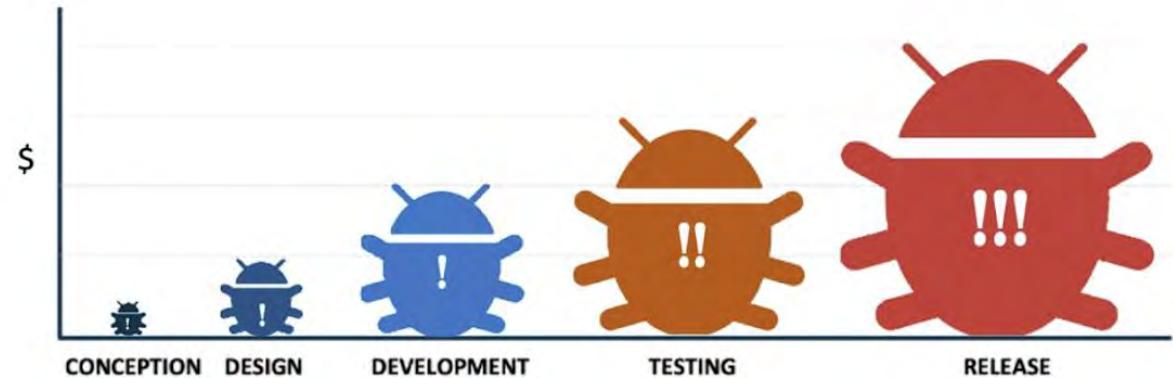


Embody A

# Shift-Left Approach

**Goal is to address accessibility issues as early as possible**

- The time and cost to remediate accessibility issues **drastically increases** over time



Let's Review

# Actionable First Steps

# Actionable First Steps

## Create and publish an accessibility statement on your website

- Conveys your organization's **commitment to digital accessibility**
- **Provides contact information** in case users encounter a digital barrier
- Use the **W3C statement generator**
- To be linked in the **footer of your website**





[Who We Are](#)

[Why We're Here](#)

[How We Think](#)

[Join Our Team](#) Hiring

[Our Commitment to DEI](#)

[Advertising Opportunities](#)

[Contact Us](#)

## Stay in Touch

Sign up to receive emails on the latest topics and trends in destination marketing and the tourism industry.

Your email here



We promise to be considerate with your inbox. We'll never share or resell your information, and we'll always stick to the terms of our [privacy policy](#). You can unsubscribe anytime.

© 2024 Miles Partnership, LLLP

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Accessibility Statement](#)

[LinkedIn](#) [Instagram](#) [Facebook](#)

Miles Partnership South Pacific

Odyssey Studios

Ad+genuity

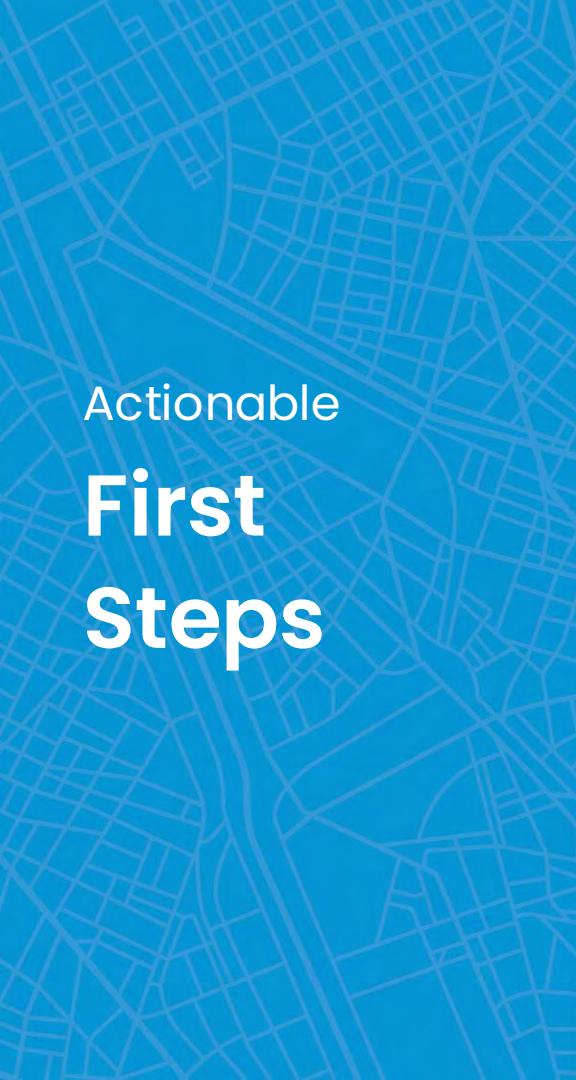
Tourism Exchange USA

Coraggio Group

Black Diamond

Wayfinder





# Actionable First Steps

## Add captions to video-based content used on your website

- YouTube and Vimeo support **automatic captioning** (powered by AI)
- Edit the automatic captions provided to ensure there's **proper punctuation**



# **Digital Accessibility should be viewed as a process, not a project**

- Digital accessibility is an ongoing initiative
  - Modern websites are incredibly dynamic
  - Accessibility guidelines change over time
- It's best to address new accessibility issues as they arise, to **continue** to facilitate the best user experience possible for those with disabilities.



# When it comes to digital accessibility, never speak in absolutes



“Fully ADA Compliant”



“Meets WCAG 2.2 AA Conformance”



“In an effort to progress toward satisfying WCAG 2.2 AA conformance”



Travel South Dakota's

# Digital Accessibility Efforts



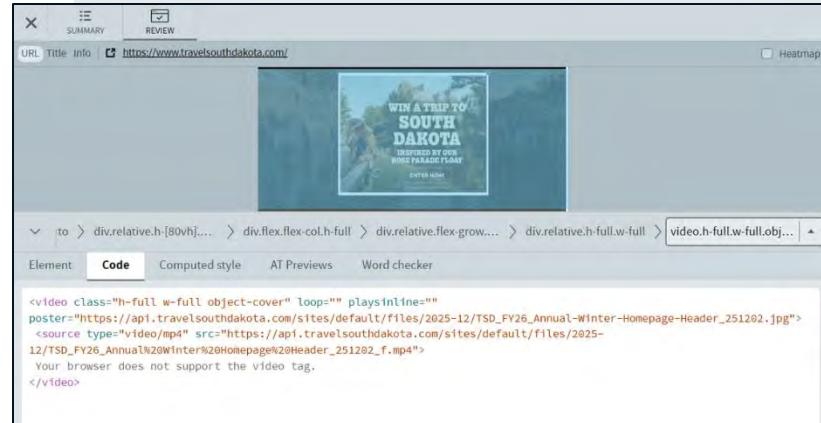
## South Dakota's Efforts

# Holistic Approach: Content + Website Optimization

## SOUTH DAKOTA ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES

South Dakota invites visitors of all abilities to experience our state's natural wonders, awe-inspiring beauty and wide-open spaces.

Whether you're planning to visit landmark attractions like Mount Rushmore National Memorial and Badlands National Park or take part in South Dakota's renowned hunting and fishing, we hope this page can help you build your ideal vacation itinerary in the 605 state.



The screenshot shows a web browser interface with the URL <https://www.travelsouthdakota.com/>. The page content includes a video player with a thumbnail image for a contest. The thumbnail features a landscape with the text 'WIN A TRIP TO SOUTH DAKOTA INSPIRED BY OUR MOST PARADE-PLAY' and a 'ENTER NOW' button. Below the video player, the browser's developer tools are open, specifically the 'Code' tab, showing the HTML code for the video element. The code is as follows:

```
<video class="h-full w-full object-cover" loop="" playsinline="" poster="https://api.travelsouthdakota.com/sites/default/files/2025-12/TSD_FY26_Annual-Winter-Homepage-Header_251202.jpg"><source type="video/mp4" src="https://api.travelsouthdakota.com/sites/default/files/2025-12/TSD_FY26_Annual%20Winter%20Homepage%20Header_251202_f.mp4"></video>
```

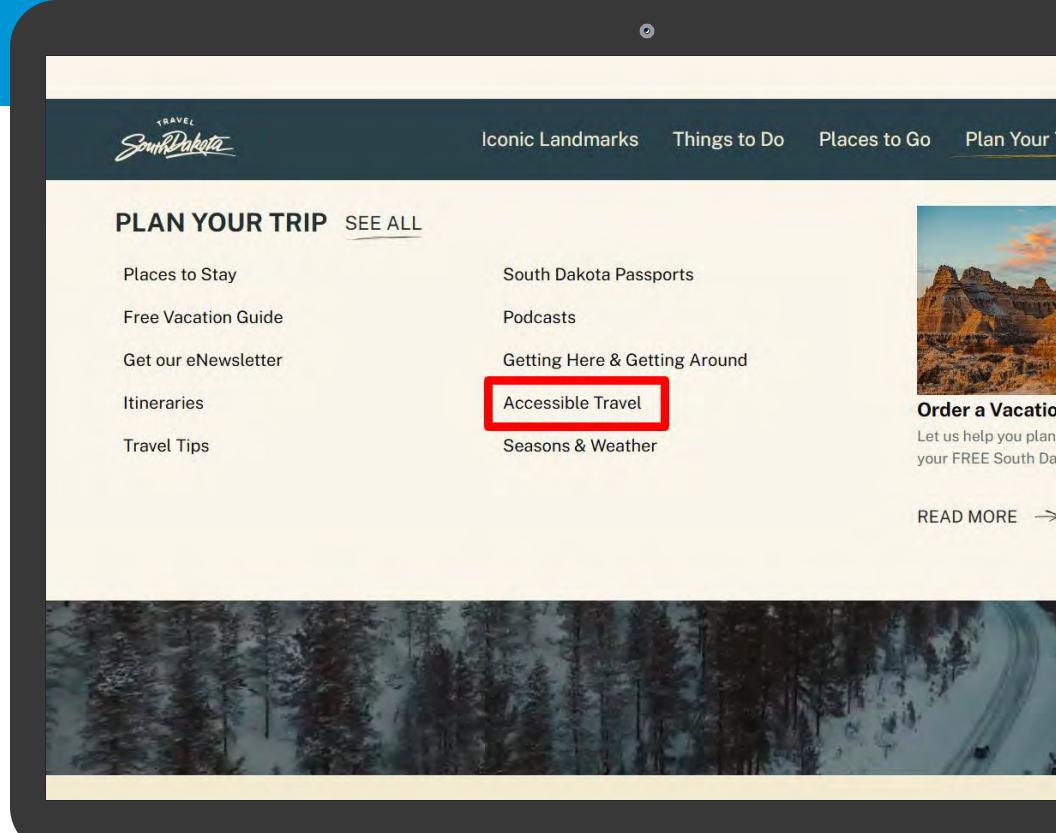
Your browser does not support the video tag.

## South Dakota's Efforts

# Custom Content

Custom content for travelers with disabilities.

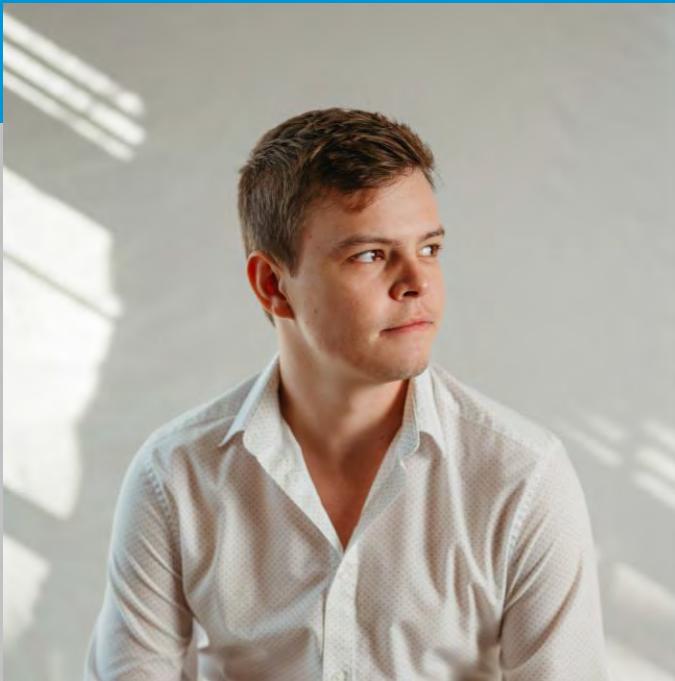
- Blog posts
- Itineraries
- Planning resources



The screenshot shows the 'PLAN YOUR TRIP' section of the Travel South Dakota website. The section is titled 'PLAN YOUR TRIP' with a 'SEE ALL' link. Below the title are several links: 'Places to Stay', 'Free Vacation Guide', 'Get our eNewsletter', 'Itineraries', 'Travel Tips', 'South Dakota Passports', 'Podcasts', 'Getting Here & Getting Around', 'Accessible Travel' (which is highlighted with a red box), and 'Seasons & Weather'. At the bottom of the section, there is a large image of a snowy forest.



# Let's Connect!



**August Erickson | CPACC**  
[August.Erickson@miles  
partnership.com](mailto:August.Erickson@milespartnership.com)



A large, light blue parallelogram is positioned in the upper left quadrant, tilted diagonally. Below it, a white triangle is tilted diagonally to the right. The background is white.

# Q&A