

WordPress Meetup Activity

Accessibility Testing in WordPress

60 minutes · Beginner · WordPress Playground

playground.wordpress.net

By the End of This Activity, You Will Be Able To:

1. Identify the three most common accessibility issues on WordPress sites
2. Run an automated scan and read the results
3. Fix missing alt text, incorrect headings, and non-descriptive links
4. Test a page using only your keyboard -- no mouse
5. Explain the difference between what a scanner catches and what needs a human

What You Need

1. playground.wordpress.net -- opens in your browser, no install needed
2. A modern browser (Chrome or Firefox recommended)
3. No WordPress account needed -- Playground starts automatically
4. No prior accessibility experience needed
5. Accessibility Checker plugin -- we install it together in Part 2

Activity Overview

Part 1 -- What Is Web Accessibility?

10 min

Part 2 -- Automated Testing with Accessibility Checker

20 min

Part 3 -- Fix Common Issues

20 min

Part 4 -- Keyboard Navigation Test

5 min

Debrief

5 min

What Is Web Accessibility?

Who benefits:

- People who are blind or have low vision
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing
- People with motor impairments (can't use a mouse)
- People with cognitive differences
- Temporary impairments -- a broken arm, bright sunlight
- Aging users with changing abilities

WCAG at a glance:

- WCAG 2.2 Level AA is the current standard -- WordPress targets 2.2
- Level A = minimum / Level AA = standard / Level AAA = enhanced
- Many countries require AA compliance by law
- Automated tools catch ~30% of issues
- The rest requires human judgment

Automated Testing with Accessibility Checker

1. Dashboard sidebar → **Plugins** → **Add Plugin**
2. Search: **Accessibility Checker by Equalize Digital**
3. Click **Install Now** → **Activate**
4. Go to **Posts** → **Add Post**. Add: a title, some text, an image (no alt text), headings in wrong order, a link that says "click here". Publish.

Reading the Scan Results

Problems

Issues that fail a WCAG rule. Must be fixed.

Needs Review

Items requiring human judgment.
Cannot be auto-detected.

Dismiss

Mark as reviewed -- will not re-flag until you reset it.

Terminology note: 'Problems' was previously 'Errors'. 'Needs Review' was 'Warnings'. 'Dismiss' was 'Ignore'. Use these current terms (plugin v1.38+).

After scanning: review Problems tab first, then Needs Review.

Fix Common Issues

1. Click on the image block in the editor
2. In the block Settings panel (right sidebar), find "Alt text (alternative text)"
3. Type a clear description of what the image shows
4. Update the post → re-run the scan

Fix 2 -- Fix Heading Order

Wrong

H1: Post Title

H2: Section heading

H4: Sub-section (skipped H3!)

Correct

H1: Post Title

H2: Section heading

H3: Sub-section

Click the heading block → change level in toolbar dropdown → Update → Rescan

Fix 3 -- Fix Non-Descriptive Link Text

Screen reader users often navigate by jumping from link to link. If every link says "click here" -- they cannot tell where it goes.

Before: "To learn more, click here"

After: "Read the WCAG 2.2 guidelines"

Select the link text → retype it → Update → Rescan

Keyboard Navigation Test

Tab

Move forward through interactive elements

Shift+Tab

Move backward

Enter

Activate a focused link or button

Space

Activate buttons (e.g., menu toggle) / checkboxes

Click View Post → set mouse aside → navigate the page with keyboard only

Stretch Goal -- Test at 200% and 400% Zoom

+5 minutes if time allows

1. Zoom to 200%: Ctrl / Cmd + (press three times from 100%)
2. Zoom to 400%: Ctrl / Cmd + (press six times from 100%)
3. At each level: confirm content reflows without horizontal scrolling and nothing is cut off
4. Zoom until the mobile menu appears -- try to activate the toggle with Space (not just Enter)
5. Reset: Ctrl / Cmd + 0

Debrief -- 5 Minutes

- 1 Which of the three fixes (alt text, headings, link text) do you think is most common on sites you have seen?
- 2 Which would you fix first on your own site -- and why?
- 3 The scanner caught about 30% of issues. What kinds of problems can only a human catch?

Sources and Further Reading

Tools for Testing Theme Accessibility -- Learn WordPress	https://learn.wordpress.org/lesson/tools-for-testing-theme-accessibility/
Make WordPress Accessible -- team hub and handbook	https://make.wordpress.org/accessibility/
Introduction to Web Accessibility -- W3C WAI	https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-intro/
Accessibility Checker plugin (free) -- Equalize Digital	https://wordpress.org/plugins/accessibility-checker/
Sa11y -- accessibility checker by Toronto Metropolitan University	https://wordpress.org/plugins/sa11y/
Editoria11y -- in-editor accessibility checker	https://wordpress.org/plugins/editoria11y-accessibility-checker/



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