Initiatives and Research

Google’s support of accessibility extends beyond products to include research, education, and design efforts.

Our Approach to Accessibility

We are committed to making accessibility a core consideration from the earliest stages of product design through release. We have formed a central accessibility team with a mandate to monitor the state of accessibility of Google products and coordinate accessibility training, testing, and consulting. Product teams will be offered training to help incorporate accessibility principles into the design and release of products. We also strive to cultivate relationships with a variety of users and advocacy groups to solicit feedback.

Accessible Web Initiatives

Google actively promotes an accessible web by serving on standards and advisory committees. We're currently involved with the organizations below, and we'll continue to update this site as we make progress in our offerings.

FCC Video Programming Accessibility Advisory Committee (VPAAC)

Created by the FCC to develop recommendations for increasing accessibility to video content in various forms, the VPAAC included an appointee from Google, which Naomi Black and Ken Harrenstien shared over a two-year term. Read more about the VPAAC >

FCC Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC)

The purpose of the CAC is to make recommendations to the FCC regarding consumer issues, including accessibility. Eve Andersson is serving as a member of the CAC for a two-year term, from 2015-17. Read more about the CAC >

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

The WCAG is one of the most widely-accepted international standards for accessibility. Two Google employees are involved in the WCAG. Loretta Guarino Reid, a senior software engineer, is one of the editors of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. Louis Cheng, a Technical Program Manager, serves as a member of the WCAG Working Group.

Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT)

To make it easier for companies, educational institutions, and government agencies to comply with accessibility standards, we provide transparent information about how our products currently work

for people with disabilities. We offer the following Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPAT). We'll continue to update this site as additional VPAT documentation is available.

- Gmail VPAT
- Google Drive VPAT
- Google Docs VPAT
- Google Sheets VPAT
- Google Slides VPAT
- Google Forms VPAT
- Google Sites VPAT

Google Impact Challenge: Disabilities

To further our commitment to accessibility, we have launched a global initiative called Google Impact Challenge: Disabilities. The program advances ideas and emerging technologies that increase independence and opportunity for people with disabilities. Learn more about the Google Impact Challenge for Disabilities >

Tech Transformation

Length of video: **1 minute 11 seconds**

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User Experience

One of Google's core principles is "Focus on the user and all else will follow." The Google User Experience (UX) team believes that usability and accessibility go together. We integrate accessible design thinking throughout the entire product development cycle.

Our UX Researchers work with people from all backgrounds and with a variety of abilities in order to understand what matters to our users in their daily lives. Based on these insights, we aim to design products that are inclusive and consider the needs of all users. People who are interested can sign up to participate in user studies and get rewarded for their time.

A Day with Jeff—

Technology and Essential Tremor

Length of video: **12 minutes 50 seconds**

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Hear audio described version

A Day with Danny—

Technology and Cerebral Palsy

Length of video: **11 minutes 32 seconds**

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Hear audio described version

Accessibility Forums

Join the conversation and connect with others about accessibility-related topics

Join Accessibility forum

Join Eyes-free forum

Research and Education

Faculty Research Awards Program

Through our Faculty Research Awards program, we support academic research that has the potential to directly impact the lives of people with disabilities globally. Since the program began in 2005, we've provided funding to dozens of accessibility-related research projects in topic areas including Speech, Human-Computer Interaction, Mobile, and Education Innovation. The full list of Research Awards recipients can be found on the Google Research Blog.

Education Initiatives

In order to raise awareness about accessibility and promote accessible development, we're involved in the following initiatives:

- In the Teaching Accessibility working group, we work with industry partners to integrate accessibility into the Computer Science curriculums at universities.
- We provide free, open-source Web and Android accessibility testing tools to developers (Chrome Accessibility Developer Tools and Android Accessibility Testing Framework).
- We provide a free online course, Introduction to Web Accessibility, open to anyone in the world.
- We publish papers such as "Enhancing Android Accessibility for Users with Hand Tremor by Reducing Fine Pointing and Steady Tapping" by Yu Zhong, Astrid Weber, Casey Burkhardt, Phil Weaver, and Jeffrey P. Bigham in order to share learnings with others who develop accessibility solutions.

Projects supported by Google

- ASL-STEM ProjectRichard Ladner, University of Washington
- MobileASL via AndroidEve Riskin, University of Washington
- NavPal: Mobile Navigation Aid for the Visually ImpairedM. Bernardine Dias, Carnegie Mellon University

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