Section 508 Checklist for HTML

As of January 2018, the technical requirements of Section 508 have changed to incorporate WCAG 2.0 A and AA success criteria. **The checklist below is out-of-date and should not be used**. You can instead refer to WebAIM's WCAG 2 checklist (webaim.org/standards/wcag/checklist).

Note: The pass/fail criteria in this document represent an interpretation of Section 508 web standards. This checklist is **NOT** official Section 508 documentation.

508 STANDARD	PASS	FAIL
(a) A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content).	Every image, applet, embedded media, plug-in, etc. that conveys content has equivalent alternative text (`alt`, `longdesc`, or in the element context).	A non-text element has no `alt` or text description or the description is not equivalent, or is not described in the adjacent text.
	The `alt` text succinctly describes the *content* conveyed by the element, without being too verbose (for simple objects) or too vague (for complex objects).	`Alt` texts are verbose ("picture of...", "image of...", etc.), vague, misleading, inaccurate, or redundant to the context (the `alt` text is the same as adjacent text).
	Complex graphics (graphs, charts, etc.) are accompanied by equivalent text, either through a description in the body of the page, a link to a description on a separate page, and/or the `longdesc` attribute [See Note 1]	Complex graphics have no alternative text or the alternative does not fully convey the content of the graphic.
	Images that have a function (images within links, image buttons, and image map areas) have alternative text which describes the associated function.	Alternative texts for linked images, image buttons, or hot spots are not descriptive of the function.
	Decorative graphics are CSS background images or have null/empty `alt` values (`alt=""`). Images with text alternatives in element content are given empty alt text to avoid redundancy.	Decorative graphics have alternative text of "spacer", "decorative graphic," or other extraneous text. Graphics have `alt` text that is redundant with adjacent text.
	Transcripts are provided for audio content.	Audio does not have transcripts.

(b) Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.	Video files and live audio broadcasts have *synchronized* captions.	Video files or live audio broadcasts do not have captions or captions are not synchronized.
	Content presented through video, but not through audio is provided via audio descriptions.	Audio descriptions are not provided for visual-only content in multimedia.
(c) Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.	Color is not used solely to convey important content.	Color is the sole means of conveying content.
	Sufficient contrast is provided.	Contrast is poor.
(d) Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.	Style sheets may be used for layout, but the document is still readable and understandable (even if less visually appealing) when the style sheet is turned off.	The document is confusing or information is missing when the style sheet is turned off.
(e) Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.	Client-side image maps are used instead of server-side image maps. Appropriate alternative text is provided for the image as well as each hot spot area.	Server side image maps or inaccessible client-side image maps are present.
(f) Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.		
(g) Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.	Data tables have column and/or row headers appropriately identified (using the `<th>` element).	Data tables have no header rows or columns.
	Tables used strictly for *layout purposes* do NOT use the `<th>` element.	Tables used for layout have headers identified when there are no true headers.
(h) Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.	Data table cells are associated with the appropriate headers using the `scope` or `id/headers` attributes.	Data table cells are not associated with column and/or row headers or they are associated incorrectly.
(i) Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.	Each frame is given a `title` that describes the frame's purpose or content.	Frames have no `title` or a `title` that is not descriptive of the frame's purpose or content.
(j) Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.	No element on the page flashes at a rate of 2 to 55 cycles per second, thus reducing the risk of optically-induced seizures.	One or more elements on the page flash at a rate of 2 to 55 cycles per second, increasing the risk of optically-induced seizures.

(k) A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.	A text-only version is created *only* when there is no other way to make the content accessible or when it offers significant advantages over the "main" version for certain disability types.	A text-only version is provided when the main version is not accessible, but could be made fully accessible.
	The text-only version provides equivalent content and is up-to-date with the main version.	The text-only version is not equivalent to or up-to-date with the main version.
(l) When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.	Content and functionality provided by scripting is directly accessible to assistive technologies and the keyboard. `<noscript>` content does not constitute a suitable alternative to inaccessible scripting.	Content and functionality provided by scripts only work with a mouse or cannot be accessed by assistive technologies.
(m) When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with §1194.21(a) through (l). [See Note 2] [See Note 3]	A link is provided to a page where the plug-in can be downloaded.	No link is provided to a page where the plug-in can be downloaded.
	All applets, scripts and plug-ins (including PDF and PowerPoint files, etc.) and the content within them are accessible to assistive technologies, or else an alternative means of accessing equivalent content is provided.	Inaccessible plug-ins, scripts, and other applications are used without providing an accessible alternative.
(n) When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.	`<input>`, `<textarea>`, and `<select>` elements have `label` elements associated with them in the markup or are given a descriptive `title` attribute.	There is no association between the form element and its label.
	Scripting of form elements does not interfere with assistive technologies or keyboard.	Scripting makes parts of the form unavailable to assistive technologies or keyboard users.
(o) A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.	A link is provided to skip over navigational menus or other lengthy lists of links. A good heading structure also facilitates navigation.	There is no way to skip over repetitive lists of links.
(p) When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.	The user has control over the timing of content changes.	The user is required to react within limited time constraints.

- **Note 1:** Until the `longdesc` attribute is better supported, it is best to use it in conjunction with a standard link to a longer description.
- **Note 2:** Standalone media players are usually more accessible than embedded media players.
- **Note 3:** A PDF file can be made accessible to screen reader users, but it may be best to include an accessible HTML version of a document instead of, or in addition to, PDF. Accessible alternatives must be provided for PowerPoint files.

Part 2: Scripts, Plug-ins, Java, etc.

The following standards are excerpted from Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, §1194.21.

508 STANDARD
(a) When software is designed to run on a system that has a keyboard, product functions shall be executable from a keyboard where the function itself or the result of performing a function can be discerned textually.
(b) Applications shall not disrupt or disable activated features of other products that are identified as accessibility features, where those features are developed and documented according to industry standards. Applications also shall not disrupt or disable activated features of any operating system that are identified as accessibility features where the application programming interface for those accessibility features has been documented by the manufacturer of the operating system and is available to the product developer.
(c) A well-defined on-screen indication of the current focus shall be provided that moves among interactive interface elements as the input focus changes. The focus shall be programmatically exposed so that assistive technology can track focus and focus changes.
(d) Sufficient information about a user interface element including the identity, operation and state of the element shall be available to assistive technology. When an image represents a program element, the information conveyed by the image must also be available in text.
(e) When bitmap images are used to identify controls, status indicators, or other programmatic elements, the meaning assigned to those images shall be consistent throughout an application's performance.
(f) Textual information shall be provided through operating system functions for displaying text. The minimum information that shall be made available is text content, text input caret location, and text attributes.
(g) Applications shall not override user selected contrast and color selections and other individual display attributes.
(h) When animation is displayed, the information shall be displayable in at least one non-animated presentation mode at the option of the user.
(i) Color coding shall not be used as the only means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element.
(j) When a product permits a user to adjust color and contrast settings, a variety of color selections capable of producing a range of contrast levels shall be provided.
(k) Software shall not use flashing or blinking text, objects, or other elements having a flash or blink frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.
(l) When electronic forms are used, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.