



## Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2 (WCAG 2)

### Defining the principles: translating from WCAG Speak to Jim Speak

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This short article will set out the basic ideas underlying the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2 (WCAG 2).

#### The shortest possible summary of the guidelines:

The WCAG 2 guidelines are based on four principles: **all content must be Perceivable, Operable, Understandable and Robust.**

- For each principle there are guidelines.
- For each guideline there are testable 'success criteria'.
- For each guideline and success criteria there are related techniques.

Ok, if you are anything like me, that's about as clear as mud. So to understand it, let's start by defining what some of these words/principles mean; which we can do by translating them from WCAG speak to the much simpler, Jim speak.

## **Part 1: Defining the principles**

### **Perceivable**

*WCAG speak:* Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.

*Jim speak:* the site visitor must be able to recognise that the content exists. For example by being able to see it, hear it or touch it (e.g. being presented as raised dots for a braille user).

### **Operable**

*WCAG speak:* User interface components and navigation must be operable.

*Jim speak:* The site visitor must be able to navigate around the site and use the features and functions presented.

### **Understandable**

*WCAG speak:* Information and the operation of user interface must be understandable.

*Jim speak:* Not only should visitors be able to recognise the existence of the content and be able to interact with it, they must also be able to understand it.

### **Robust**

*WCAG speak:* Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

*Jim speak:* It must be possible to access the content using everything from a text-only web browser to the latest Firefox browser. And everything in between, including screen readers and all the different brands and versions of browsers now available

## **Success criteria - what does that mean?**

'Success criteria', it may not be a phrase that most people will be familiar with; however it is an idea at the heart of WCAG 2 - so we need to figure out what it means.

*WCAG speak:* For each principle there are guidelines. For each guideline there are testable 'success criteria'.

*Jim speak:* There are things you will need to check to assess whether your website is accessible or not.