

ADA Requirements for Digital Content

Overview of the 2024 DOJ rule updating Title II regulations formally adopting WCAG 2.1 Level AA as the federal legal standard

What's Changed?

ADA Title II required **state and local governments** to provide equal access and effective communication. But it did not define a specific digital accessibility standard, deadline or enforcement framework.

Before	Now
WCAG standards provided general guidance	WCAG 2.1 Level AA is the legal technical standard
Enforcement was internal or complaint-driven	Clear regulatory consequences are tied to standard
No nationwide deadlines	Nationwide compliance deadline (April 24, 2026)

What is WCAG 2.1?

WCAG 2.1 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, Version 2.1) are the rules that make digital content usable by people with disabilities. That includes:

Websites & Apps 	PDFs & Docs 	Videos w/ Captions 	Social Media 
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What is Level AA?

Level AA is the standard that public universities are required to meet.

Example: A Course Video

- **Level A:** Video plays but has no captions; basic access, real barriers remain.
- **Level AA:** Video has accurate captions; usable by students with disabilities (**required**).
- **Level AAA:** Adds transcripts, sign interpreting & audio description; best experience, not required.

See more examples: [WCAG Simplified Checklist \(With Examples\)](#)

Who Does This Apply To?

All SDSU faculty and staff. If you create or share content for your work, it must be accessible to anyone who needs to use it, including faculty, staff, students, and the broader community.

What Content Creators Need to Do

Digital content must be accessible to people with disabilities by meeting WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards.

Key Requirements



Text and Structure

- Use real headings, lists and tables
- Write clear, descriptive link text like “Download syllabus,” not “click here”



Images and Visuals

- Add alternative text descriptions for meaningful images
- Do not rely on color alone to convey meaning



Color and Readability

- Ensure sufficient color contrast between text and background
- Do not rely on color alone to convey meaning



Documents (PDFs, Word, PowerPoint)

- Use built-in styles for headings and lists
- Ensure text is selectable, not scanned images
- Email: If sending documents to a group, they should be accessible



Video and Audio

- Provide accurate captions for videos (including turning on captions for Zoom meetings)
- Provide transcripts for audio-only content



Forms and Interactive Content

- Label all fields clearly
- Instructions must be visible and understandable



Keyboard and Navigation

- Content must work without a mouse
- Navigation and focus order must be logical

For more details, visit [Accessible Digital Materials](#).

Guidance is Coming From SDSU

The **State Up to Date Newsletter** will have dedicated guidance on the following topics:

- Topic 1: [Making Your Canvas Courses Accessible](#) (Dec. 8, 2025 Issue)
- Topic 2: [Accessible Documents and Presentations](#) (Jan. 20, 2026 Issue)
- Topic 3: Web and Social Media Accessibility Feb. 16, 2026 Issue)
- Topic 4: Publisher Content and Third-Party Tools (Mar. 23, 2026 Issue)
- Topic 5: Accessibility Resources Roundup (Apr. 6, 2026 Issue)

More resources coming soon. For support, use [ServiceNow](#). Also see: [CSU Accessible Document Training](#)