Accessibility

For CMS developers, building accessible sites on Exponential. It covers where the product stands against WCAG 2.2 AA, what the content model contributes (alternative text, headings, structured rich text), templates and...

Source file: `doc/eng-us/help/cms-developers/accessibility.md` Last changed 2026-11-04
https://doc.exponential.earth/exphelp/viewer/help/cms-developers/accessibility.md

This page is for developers responsible for making a site usable by everyone, including people who use a screen reader, a keyboard, high zoom or high contrast. On an Exponential site, accessibility depends mostly on your design and templates, and partly on the content model, which can make good practice the default for editors.

Contents

1. Where the product stands
2. What the content model can do
3. Templates and designs
4. Forms
5. Testing
6. Editors
7. Checklist

Where the product stands

The project's own assessment is in Accessibility standards: against WCAG 2.2 level AA and WAI-ARIA 1.2 the product **partly complies**: the admin4 administration was built and tested against AA criteria, the classic administration partly fixed, and the public designs and the online editor are not audited. EN 301 549 and Section 508 are unverified. For a public site, that means **your design is what an audit judges**: plan for it in your own templates and test it yourself.

What the content model can do

Decision	Effect
Image attributes with **Alternative text is required**	editors cannot store an image without a text (Images and image aliases)
Image objects related or embedded instead of images in many fields	one alternative text, kept up to date in one place
Rich text instead of many small fields	real headings, lists and tables, not visual imitations (Rich text)
A small set of custom tags with accessible templates	fact boxes, quotes and calls to action with correct markup everywhere
A `title` attribute used for the page's <h1>	one heading per page from content

Decision	Effect
A language per translation	the pagelayout can set the page's `lang` attribute from the content language (Translations and languages)

Templates and designs

The designers' help covers each topic with examples:

Topic	Page
The basics for a theme	Accessibility basics for themes
Landmarks and headings	Landmarks and headings
Skip links	Skip links
Keyboard and focus	Keyboard and focus
Color contrast	Color contrast
Reduced motion	Reduced motion
Right-to-left languages	Right-to-left designs

Rules that hold on every Exponential design: CSS in stylesheets with tokens and a dark value for each color token, no inline CSS, no inline JavaScript (No inline CSS). Layouts blocks are templates too: check their markup like any other (Styling layout blocks).

Forms

The shipped collect and user templates print inputs without ids; give your copies ids so labels work, show validation messages next to the field and in text, and use `autocomplete` on sign-in and registration forms (Accessible forms, User and login templates, Forms and information collection).

Testing

- **Keyboard only**: every link, menu, form and dialog reachable and usable, focus always visible.
- **Zoom**: at 200% and at a narrow width nothing overlaps or scrolls sideways (Testing at zoom levels).
- **Contrast**: text at least 4.5:1, in light and in dark mode.
- **A screen reader** on the main templates: front page, a list, a full view, a form, search.
- **Automated checks** help find missing labels and alternative texts; they do not replace the manual tests.
- Your own design checks: Checklist: accessibility.

Editors

Accessible templates can still get inaccessible content. Brief editors on alternative texts, meaningful link texts, heading order in rich text and captions for video. The editors' course has

the material (Editors 101); trainers who teach accessibility find it in Train the trainer, module 5.

Checklist

- ☐ Image attributes require alternative text; decorative images have an empty `alt` in the template.
- ☐ One `<h1>` per page, headings in order, landmarks present, a skip link first.
- ☐ Every form field has a label; errors are announced in text.
- ☐ Keyboard, zoom and contrast tested in light and dark mode on the main templates.
- ☐ The `lang` of each page matches its content language.
- ☐ Editors briefed.

Related pages

- Accessibility standards
- Project launch checklist
- Designers: start here
- Free documentation: this page is free to copy, translate and improve under the GNU FDL 1.3.

> **Become an Exponential Partner**
>
> Partners share their information, provide funding, contribute back and develop the products with us, and that is how Exponential grows. A partner website and dashboard are planned for mid-2027: please become a partner today to speed up our growth rate and land new features faster.
>
> Partners: start here | How to apply

Exponential Copyright © 1998-2026 Exponential Foundation and 7x
Permission is granted to copy, distribute and/or modify this document under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License, Version 1.3 or any later version published by the Free Software Foundation; with no Invariant Sections, no Front-Cover Texts, and no Back-Cover Texts. A copy of the license is included in the section entitled "GNU Free Documentation License".
This documentation is free documentation, licensed under the GNU Free Documentation License 1.3 or later:
https://www.gnu.org/licenses/fdl-1.3.html.