

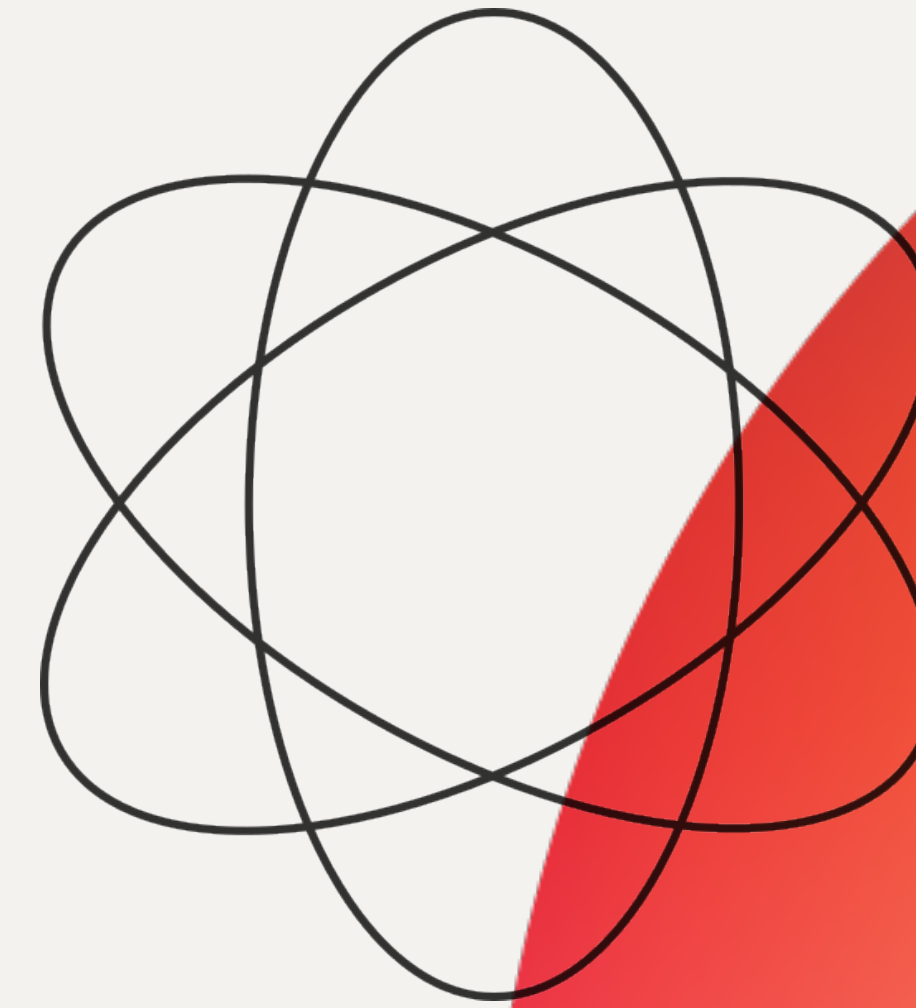
Top 10 Performance and Accessibility Checkpoints

To Create an Inclusive User Experience



Whether your team uses in-medium design or develops projects in static comps, you can avoid pre-launch headaches by setting accessibility and performance compliance goals for your project from the start. By following this checklist developed with the insights from the accessibility project [A11y](#), you can recognize potential issues early. In the process, you also gain greater control over your project's health as it enters development.

Baking accessibility and performance into your design process protects the health of your design concepts. When your projects don't need late adjustments by your developers, you're that much closer to satisfying the original vision of your designers—and your clients as well.



1

Color Usage

As you establish a color palette for your design, you need to check all the possible combinations and their associated contrast compliance. A lack of color contrast introduces an obstacle among those who experience difficulty distinguishing color, **which affects 8% of men and 0.5% of women** around the world. In each design, you should check your body text color against its background (and vice versa).

Figma offers **a plugin developed with the assistance of A11y**, and the in-medium design platform **Webflow offers real-time color contrast checks**. By also factoring in font properties as well as foreground and background colors, Webflow's tool allows your designers to generate on-brand and accessible color palettes quickly and easily.

2

Impact of Media on Performance

As media such as images, graphics, and video are added to designs, you should think about how each will be rendered and how variations in these assets will affect page weight.

Each video on your site should be optimized to the proper size and format to protect site performance. An image's orientation, tint, resolution, or aspect ratio may vary from its original state. Considering the ways your design's images are used offers a chance to evaluate their value to the design.



Accommodate Screen Readers

Including alt-tags in every image is critical for accessibility. But images that provide important context for text may point to a need to reevaluate the page's content. Every component on the page should be approached in a way that doesn't limit the experience to certain users.



Gradients and Blend Modes

Image gradings, textures, and other treatments create unique visual effects, but they also impact performance. Pare down your design's usage of these treatments and resolve potential issues before they need to be resolved by your developers.

5

Image Compression

Image-rich designs created in static platforms never have to consider file sizes or connection speeds.

Webflow includes a responsive image feature that automatically optimizes graphics for multiple device sizes and resolutions to decrease page load times. This allows clients and designers to see real world image compression/optimization in the product during the design process, not after launch.



JavaScript

Components that require a lot of JavaScript code can negatively impact performance. Where possible, **you should adjust your strategy** to ensure elements of your design don't require a disproportionate level of resources. Designers don't often know when JavaScript is required. In-medium helps illuminate its usage, benefits, or disadvantages (when not balanced properly).



Use of Motion Design

Users have varying sensitivities to motion graphics and animations. To ensure design features that enhance the experience for some users don't negatively impact usability for others, you should provide the option for users to turn off motion and control their experience. Designing for both allows the designer to provide these decisions, not the developer.



Limit Use of Small Text

WCAG 2.1 standards state that bold, 14pt (converts to 18.662 pixels) type conforms with accessibility guidelines – but this is the absolute minimum. We suggest that your design should strive to keep 16-pixels as the smallest font size to accommodate visually impaired readers. Smaller text sizes should be limited to less critical content such as image captions, footnotes, or legal information.



Prune Font Families

The full font family used in your design includes multiple style variations and associated symbols. Balance aesthetic design decisions with performance to ensure that whatever fonts are loading for your digital experience will all be used. With in-medium designs, you can test your load times over slower internet connections or older devices to strike a balance that creates a satisfying experience for every user.



Encourage Accessibility Awareness at All Levels

Increase awareness of accessibility standards among a project's designers, developers, and stakeholders by incorporating WCAG 2.1 accessibility standards in design deliverables.

Both static and in-medium design platforms offer assistance in monitoring details that are important to creating inclusive experiences. However, in-medium methodology gives projects a leg up in maintaining accessibility. Webflow provides **real-time accessibility checks and a customizable checklist**.

Key takeaways for a successful design system implementation

Clarify the Benefits of a Design System While Dispelling Negative Associations

Defining the capabilities of the design system while addressing misconceptions will build support for its use. Make sure the team is aligned on the “why” for this solution and how the system will benefit them and the organization’s goals over time.

Apply an Iterative Approach to Build Support for the Design System

First deploy the design system to resolve your client’s greatest pain points, then move on to address subsequent areas of need. Ongoing improvements will build internal support for the design system while also being less impactful to your client’s budget.

Maintain Alignment Between Content, Design, and Engineering Teams

The departments that will benefit most from a design system form an aligned trinity to set and maintain the priorities of your client’s design system.

Establish Plans for Ongoing Governance and Support

A successful design system requires ongoing investment from your client’s stakeholder teams. Setting up a Product Owner, a maintenance team, and plans for communication, maintenance, and support allows the design system to function as a shared responsibility across the entire organization.

A Design System Should Never Be Considered “Complete”

The digital landscape is always in motion, and the context and content of your client’s components may evolve beyond their initial requirements. With continuous maintenance, a design system remains relevant and valuable, continuing to build adoption and buy-in.

The **right web development partner** considers accessibility and performance compliance goals throughout the design process, helping you create an inclusive experience and minimize the need for a costly remediation effort further down the road.

If you're interested in learning more about how we design accessible, performant websites **let's chat.**

Thank you



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