

# Three Simple Steps to Remediate Content



Remediation can be a daunting task, but the process does not need to be overly complicated. Reframing the task from "remediation" to "improving existing content" helps put this process into a less overwhelming and more manageable set of tasks. Here are three simple ways to begin the process.

## 1 Set Aside Time

## 2 Triage Content

## 3 Update Content



### Step One: Set Aside Time

**Incorporate remediation into your work tasks. Start with small, manageable amounts of time. If you are faced with remediating hundreds of webpages or documents, it can seem overwhelming. It's unlikely that all of that content was created in a few days, so it's unlikely you'll be able to complete remediation in a few days. How much time can you dedicate? One hour a week? Two hours a month? Or have you been given a timeframe to complete remediation? If so, do a calculation of how much time you or your team need to commit to each week to accomplish the task.**

1. Create a schedule. Take into consideration the total timeframe and the volume of content needing remediation. Strictly focus on the amount of time and page volume during this step.
2. Add the dates and times to your and your team's work calendar. Include a set time and a set number of pages or documents to review.
3. Hold yourself and your team accountable. Include dates to regroup, discuss wins, address pain points and adjust the schedule (as necessary).



### Step Two: Triage Content

**Conduct a site audit. Identify all content, and catalog it in a document. Microsoft Word® or Google Docs® may work for smaller sites, but larger sites may need a spreadsheet.**

1. **Create a "quick start" list. Prioritizing content based on strategic value can gain you early, quality wins. A quick start list may include:**
  - a. User complaints. If users have reported issues with any webpages or documents, these should be fixed first. This is content with real pain points affecting actual website visitors.
  - b. Frequently visited pages. Look at web traffic, and determine which pages average the highest volume of visits. Start with the top five to ten pages.
2. **Work through the remaining content.**
  - a. Mission-critical information. You may have pages or documents that are not the most frequently visited but have high value due to underlying business goals or legal requirements (e.g., registration, admissions, public notices, legal statements). Again, start with the top five to ten pages or documents.
  - b. If your site is managed in subdirectories, consider working through the list directory by directory.

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## Step Three: Update Content

If you are new to managing content that adheres to digital accessibility requirements, it may feel like a special skillset is required. If you are already creating and managing content, you already have the skills you need. Setting aside time and looking at your content with a new perspective is all it takes to begin.

### 1. Optimize the page title and meta description.

- a. The page title should be concise and meaningful.
- b. The meta description should summarize the page content.

### 2. Review semantic headings.

- a. Use only one heading 1. It should be the main topic of the page. It can be the same as the page title, but consider adjusting if possible.
- b. Use semantic headings as subheadings. Avoid using bold or italics as section heads. Using semantic headings helps users understand the overall structure of the page.
- c. Do not skip heading levels.
  - Correct: H1 > H2 > H3 > H2 > H3 > H4 > H2 (visual)
  - Incorrect: H1 > H4 > H2 > H1 > H3 > H6 (visual)

### 3. Review link text.

- a. Use descriptive link text. Link text should be concise and meaningful when read with no other context. Avoid vague and generic text like "Click Here" or "Read More." Describe the action you would like the user to take.
- b. Avoid using URLs as the link text. Link text is read to screen reader users, so it can be confusing to hear the URL instead of being told what the link points to. Use the title of the resource or name of the website as the link text.
- c. Click all links to be sure they still work. If you are taken to any 404 error pages or pages indicating that a page no longer exists, you should:
  - Locate the new content, and update the link.
  - Remove the link reference.

### 4. Add or improve image alt text.

- a. Write meaningful alt text that conveys the image's purpose on the page.
- b. Avoid using images containing text. If these images are present and must remain, restate the image text or summarize the information being presented in the image.
- c. If complex images are being used, summarize the information in the image. The summary should provide the user with the same understanding that someone who can see the image would gain.
- d. Keep alt text concise. Best practice is to limit alt text to 140 characters.
- e. If the only purpose of the image is decorative, collapse the alt text field. In HTML code, it will look like alt="".

### 5. Use clear, plain language and writing style.

- a. Simplify or explain jargon and complex language.
- b. Provide the full name of an acronym upon first use.
- c. Find ways to reduce long paragraphs into lists or charts.
- d. Run spell check and grammar check to identify errors.

### 6. Document any issues that need to be addressed by a website developer, designer or administrator. Here are some common types of issues:

- a. Color contrast errors in links, heading styles, buttons, etc.
- b. Links not being easily distinguished between body copy or when selected.
- c. No visible/clickable "pause" button on any auto-scrolling carousel or auto-playing embedded video or embedded audio file.
- d. Forms that do not have clearly discernible error messages when the form cannot be submitted as completed.

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