Digital Support for People with Disabilities: Actionable Steps

TRELLIS® COMPANY

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Introductions

Presenters

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Training Overview

- C - Initial impact of COVID on SWD
- C - Overview of College Students' Rights
- C - COVID Impact on Student Transitions
- Z - Defining web accessibility, W3C, and Sections 504 & 508
- Z - Publishing web accessible websites
- Z - Examples of ADA noncompliance and web inaccessibility
- H - Resources for ADA remediation
- Questions and free resources

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In the News

COVID-19 pandemic puts children with disabilities at significant risk

By Ellen Goldbaum

Low-income and students with learning disabilities disproportionately affected by COVID-19 learning loss, Peabody College experts say

by Evan Curran Feb. 18, 2021, 2:28 PM

People With Disabilities Bear Brunt Of Challenges Posed By COVID-19

By PAUL FLAHIVE • MAR 24, 2020

Is online school illegal? With schools closing from coronavirus, special education concerns give districts pause

Erin Richards USA TODAY

Published 5:00 a.m. ET Mar. 19, 2020 | Updated 1:00 p.m. ET Mar. 19, 2020

The coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak leaves people with disabilities among the most at risk

By Nicolas Perpitch

Updated 19 Mar 2020, 6:12pm

NEWS RELEASE 18-MAR-2021

For college students with disabilities, communication is key in online learning

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

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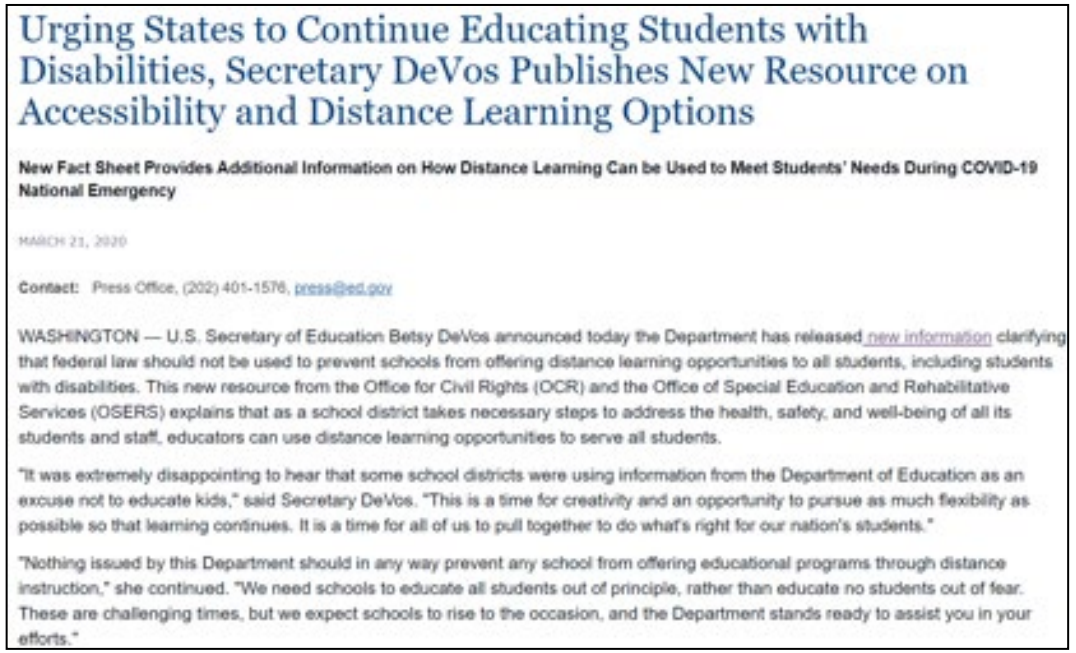
Education During COVID-19

You can click on the picture below for the full story.

- States must provide free, appropriate public K-12 education (FAPE), even during crisis times.
- The Department of Education did not address higher education in its COVID-19 FAQs Document here:
- Higher education?



Urging States to Continue Educating Students with Disabilities, Secretary DeVos Publishes New Resource on Accessibility and Distance Learning Options

New Fact Sheet Provides Additional Information on How Distance Learning Can be Used to Meet Students' Needs During COVID-19 National Emergency

MARCH 21, 2020

Contact: Press Office, (202) 401-1576, press@ed.gov

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced today the Department has released new information clarifying that federal law should not be used to prevent schools from offering distance learning opportunities to all students, including students with disabilities. This new resource from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) explains that as a school district takes necessary steps to address the health, safety, and well-being of all its students and staff, educators can use distance learning opportunities to serve all students.

"It was extremely disappointing to hear that some school districts were using information from the Department of Education as an excuse not to educate kids," said Secretary DeVos. "This is a time for creativity and an opportunity to pursue as much flexibility as possible so that learning continues. It is a time for all of us to pull together to do what's right for our nation's students."

"Nothing issued by this Department should in any way prevent any school from offering educational programs through distance instruction," she continued. "We need schools to educate all students out of principle, rather than educate no students out of fear. These are challenging times, but we expect schools to rise to the occasion, and the Department stands ready to assist you in your efforts."

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Singh (2019)

"Educational Rights of College Students with Disabilities"

- IDEA does not apply to higher education = faculty are not required to provide a 'least restrictive environment.'
- No provision of wheelchairs/modified physical learning environment, hearing aids, learning tools, etc.
- No provision of specialized academic programs.
- College student rights:
  - Disclosing their disability = students are 'self-deterministic.'
  - Cannot be denied admission or excluded from a program of study strictly due to their disability.
  - Accommodations if they do not change the nature of the program or pose an undue financial burden.
  - Universal access to institutional infrastructure, including physical structures and digital content.

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AHEAD Report (2020)

- "COVID-19 Transitions: Higher Education Professionals' Perspectives on Access Barriers, Services, and Solutions for Students with Disabilities"
- SWD faced difficulty transitioning to remote environment, more so than general student population.
  - Access to Internet/course materials/exams, faculty contact
- Documentation of disability and provision of testing accommodations has become more difficult.
- Community college students experienced the most difficult accessing remote education and services.
  - Poor test accommodations, no access to assistive technologies
- **Greatest reported difficulty = receiving technology support and communicating with faculty about inclusive course design.**

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What is Web Accessibility?

- Websites and web tools properly designed and coded to be used by people with disabilities (future/current students/staff)
- Making the web "accessible."
  - Source: W3C – Web Accessibility Initiative
- WCAG 2.0: **W**eb **C**ontent **A**ccessibility **G**uidelines
  - published by the Web Accessibility Initiative (source)
- A wide range of recommendations to make websites more accessible for people with disabilities.
- Adopted as standard of web accessibility by U.S. Congress.
- All Title IV institutions held to WCAG 2.0 standards.

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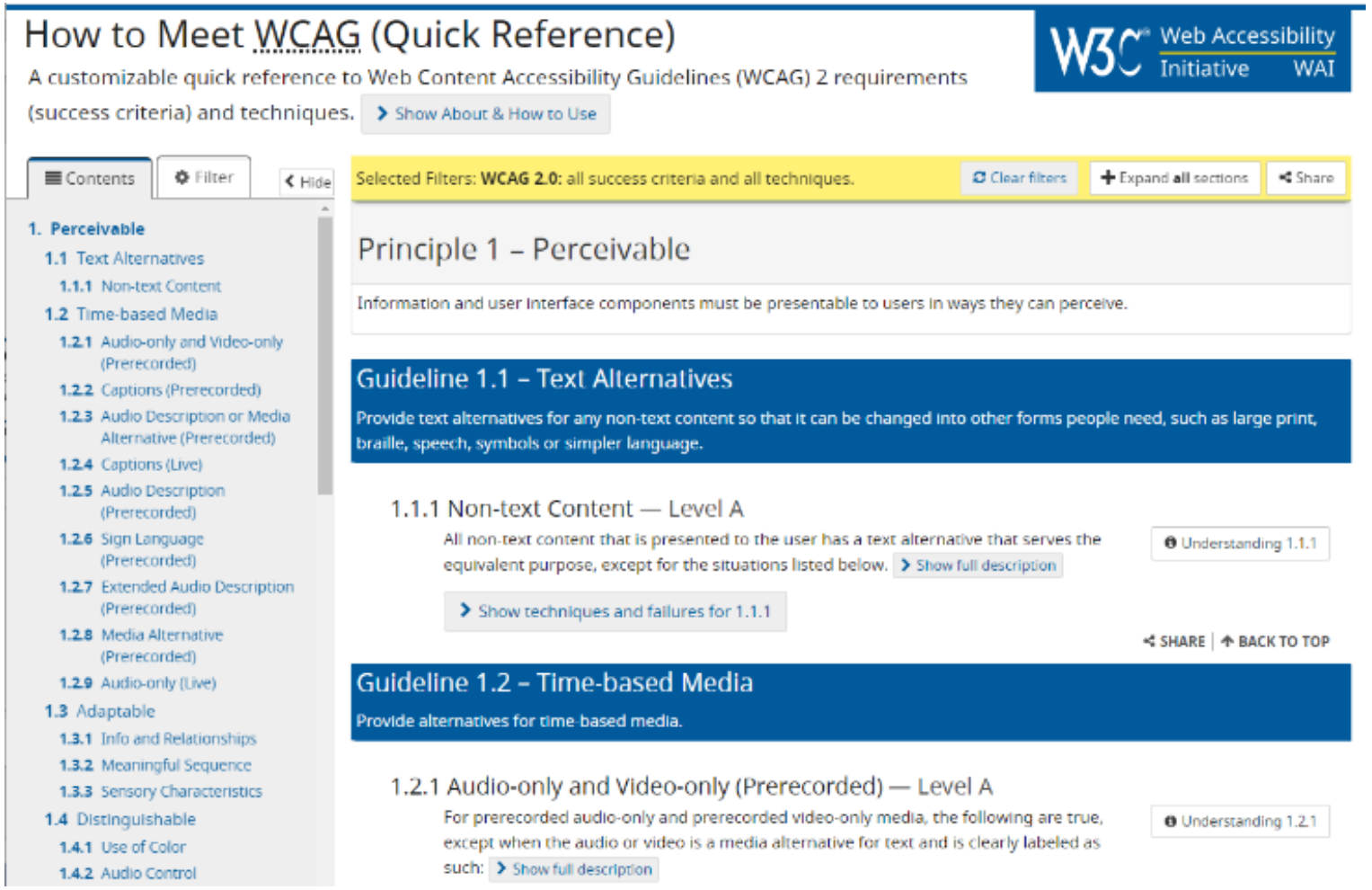
W3C.org and WCAG Standards



How to Meet WCAG (Quick Reference)

A customizable quick reference to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2 requirements (success criteria) and techniques. Show About & How to Use

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative WAI

Contents | Filter | Hide

1. Perceivable
   - 1.1 Text Alternatives
     - 1.1.1 Non-text Content
   - 1.2 Time-based Media
     - 1.2.1 Audio-only and Video-only (Prerecorded)
     - 1.2.2 Captions (Prerecorded)
     - 1.2.3 Audio Description or Media Alternative (Prerecorded)
     - 1.2.4 Captions (Live)
     - 1.2.5 Audio Description (Prerecorded)
     - 1.2.6 Sign Language (Prerecorded)
     - 1.2.7 Extended Audio Description (Prerecorded)
     - 1.2.8 Media Alternative (Prerecorded)
     - 1.2.9 Audio-only (Live)
   - 1.3 Adaptable
     - 1.3.1 Info and Relationships
     - 1.3.2 Meaningful Sequence
     - 1.3.3 Sensory Characteristics
   - 1.4 Distinguishable
     - 1.4.1 Use of Color
     - 1.4.2 Audio Control

Selected Filters: **WCAG 2.0:** all success criteria and all techniques. | Clear filters | Expand all sections | Share

Principle 1 – Perceivable

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

Guideline 1.1 – Text Alternatives

Provide text alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed into other forms people need, such as large print, braille, speech, symbols or simpler language.

1.1.1 Non-text Content — Level A

All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose, except for the situations listed below. Show full description

Understanding 1.1.1

Show techniques and failures for 1.1.1

SHARE | BACK TO TOP

Guideline 1.2 – Time-based Media

Provide alternatives for time-based media.

1.2.1 Audio-only and Video-only (Prerecorded) — Level A

For prerecorded audio-only and prerecorded video-only media, the following are true, except when the audio or video is a media alternative for text and is clearly labeled as such: Show full description

Understanding 1.2.1

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Renewed Emphasis on ADA

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: prohibits educational discrimination against people with disabilities.
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:
  - **Amended on January 18th, 2018**
  - Requires all Title IV higher education institutions to publish level-AA WCAG 2.0 compliant websites, technology, and training resources (source).
  - Websites and digital communication must be web accessible for people with disabilities.

- Why now?

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The Ethical and Legal Cost of ADA Noncompliance

College Websites Must Accommodate Disabled Students, Lawsuits Say

Hofstra University on Long Island is one of eight New York colleges named in lawsuits because, the suits say, their websites are inaccessible to the plaintiff, who is blind, and therefore in violation of the Americans With Disabilities Act. George Etheredge for The New York Times

50 Colleges Hit With ADA Lawsuits

A blind man is taking 50 colleges to court, alleging their websites are inaccessible to people with disabilities.

By Lindsay McKenzie // December 10, 2018 22 COMMENTS

Harvard Accessibility Lawsuit Moves Forward

By Carl Straumsheim // February 23, 2016 7 COMMENTS

A judge in a federal district court in Massachusetts has allowed an accessibility lawsuit against Harvard University to proceed. The National Association of the Deaf last year sued Harvard over online content rendered inaccessible for learners with disabilities due to a lack of closed captions. Harvard had sought to dismiss or stay the lawsuit until the U.S. Department of Justice issued new rules on how the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 applies to websites, but the court dismissed that motion, saying that such a decision could keep the plaintiffs waiting for years.

ON CAMPUS

Provost: Syracuse University to remediate 'significant portion' of web presence to improve accessibility

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Accessible Websites for People with Disabilities: Before You Click "Publish" or "Send"

- Big Issues:
  - Talk to your institution's website developer about web accessibility—are they aware? Professional development?
    - For example: is your institution's color scheme compliant?
  - Know who can edit your website—how many chefs are in the kitchen? How many are aware of web accessibility?
    - For example: One institution had over 1,000 accounts w/ access.
  - Trim the fat: are there old, dated webpages that could be removed from your website? How do you know?
    - For example: One institution's financial aid website had over 100 pages dating back between 2012-2015 (just the FA website).

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Accessible Websites for People with Disabilities: Before You Click “Publish” or “Send”

- The Day-to-Day (Immediately Actionable):
  - Be sure to define the website’s language (ex: en=English)
  - Use a simple, readable, common font (Verdana is most web accessible.)
  - Use strong color contrast—light on dark, dark on light.
  - Add alt text to pictures and closed-captions to videos.
  - Give hyperlinks informative titles (link text)—folks should know what happens when you ”click” anywhere on your website.
  - Understand heading sizes and don’t skip heading sizes—all pages should have 1 heading at level 1—next heading = level 2.

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Examples: Fonts

- The font used in this presentation is Cambria.
- Verdana is a highly web accessible font and widely used (compatible with many different software programs).
- Verdana features serifs (feet) which makes the font very readable.
- For example, all size-28 font:

  — Illegal activity is frowned upon. (Verdana)

  — Illegal activity is frowned upon. (Cambria)

  — Illegal activity is frowned upon. (Arial)

  — **Illegal activity is frowned upon. (Haettenschweiler)**

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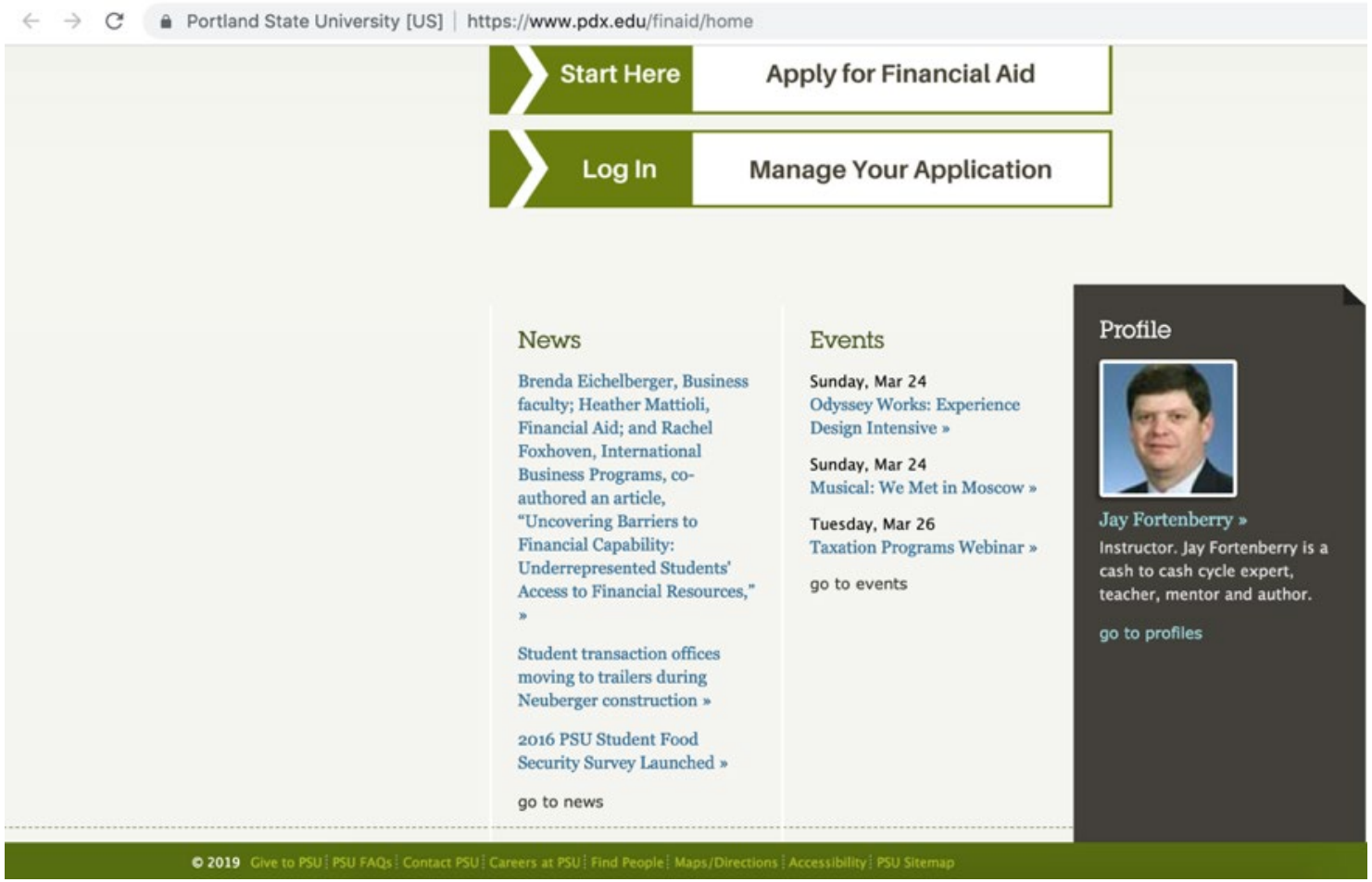
Examples: Font Size and Color Contrast



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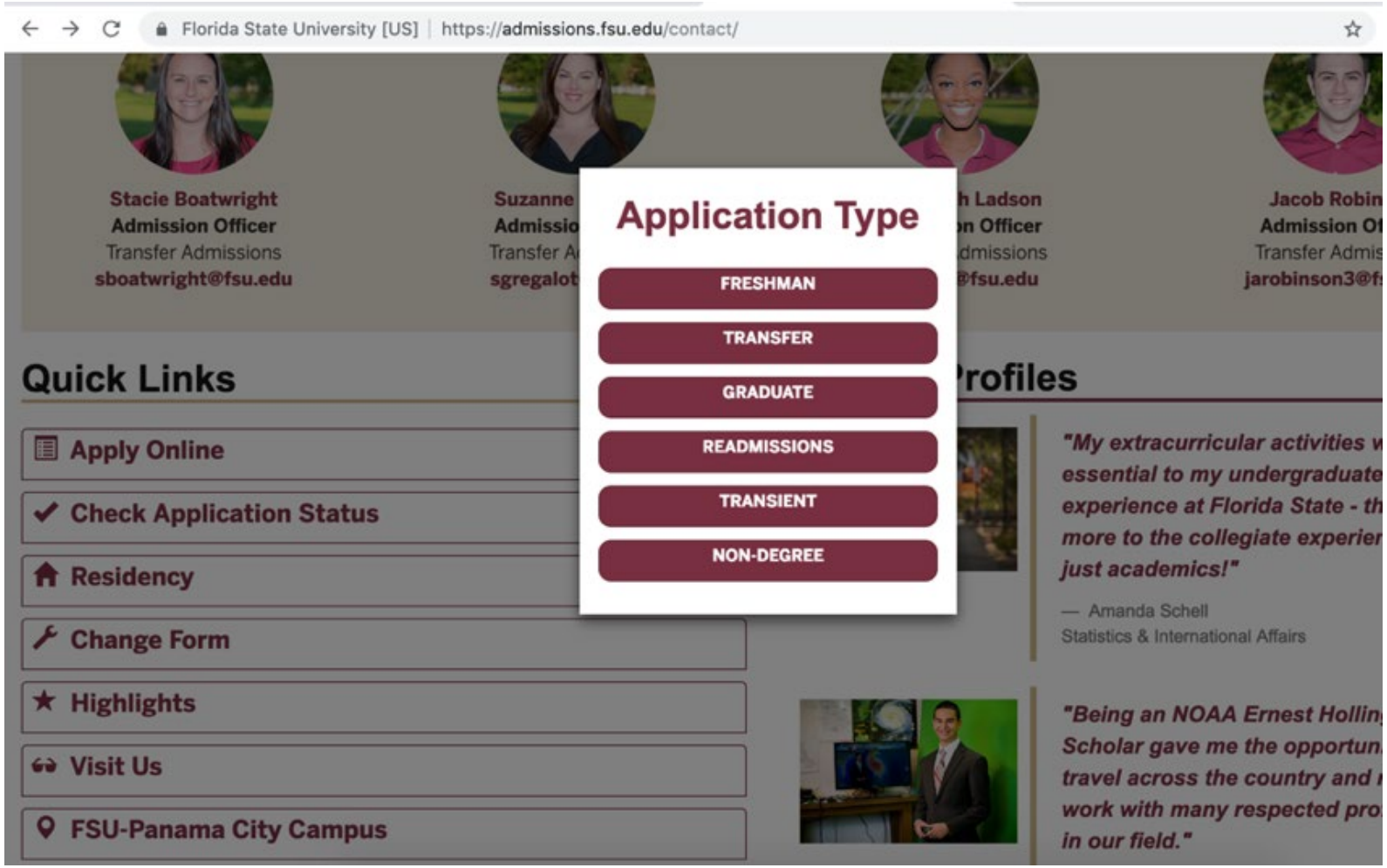
Examples: Fillable Forms and Interactive Elements



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Writing ADA Compliant Emails

- When writing emails:
  - Begin email in Word—then copy/paste into email field and send.
  - Prioritize text—screen readers/text recognition technologies work across many devices (phones, tablets, computers).
  - Use a simple, readable, common font.
  - Use strong color contrast.
  - Add alt text to pictures ➔
    - "A picture of two college students walking on campus. They are wearing backpacks and talking to each other."
  - Add informative alt text to hyperlinks and format as informative titles.
    - Trellis Company Research Website
    - Hyperlink leads to https://www.trelliscompany.org/research/
    - The informative title tells the user what the link is.

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Writing ADA Compliant Powerpoints, Word Docs, PDFs

- When creating files:
  - Use the web accessibility features built into Powerpoint, Word, and Adobe software
    - Microsoft Powerpoint
    - Word
    - Adobe Software
  - PAC3 also a simple, powerful, and FREE software for auditing PDFs
  - Use a simple, readable, common font.
  - Use strong color contrast.
  - Add alt text to pictures and format hyperlinks with informative titles.
  - A lot of learning materials are shared (e.g., PDFs, listserv materials)—who made the materials and are they web accessible?
    - Think syllabi, class handouts, campus flyers, etc.
    - Connect with faculty to ensure ADA awareness.
  - A lot of shared resources may be linked to other websites—are these websites accessible?

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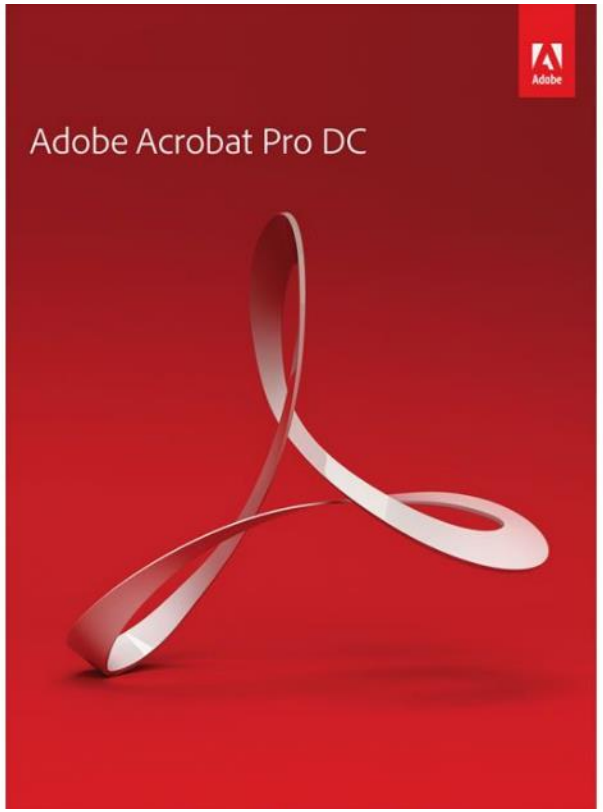
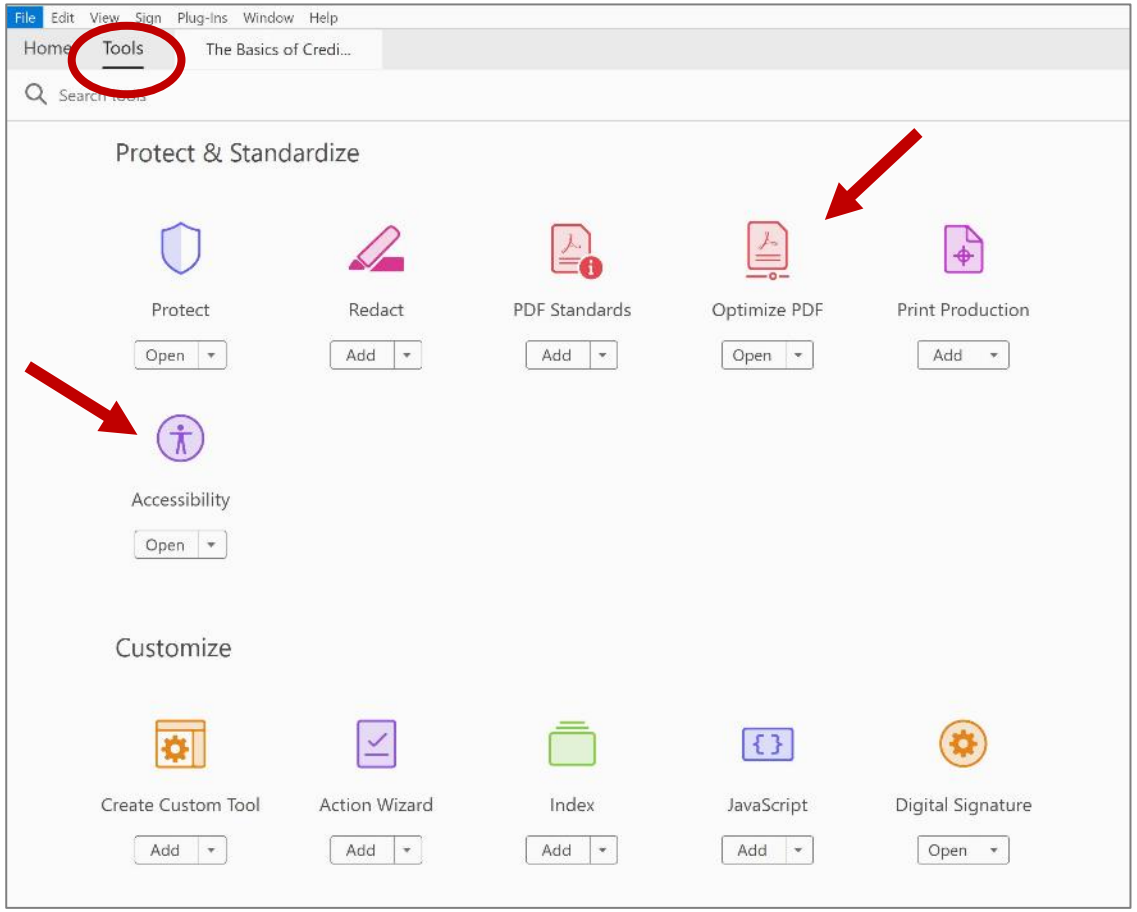
Adobe Acrobat Pro DC

Tools for ADA Remediation





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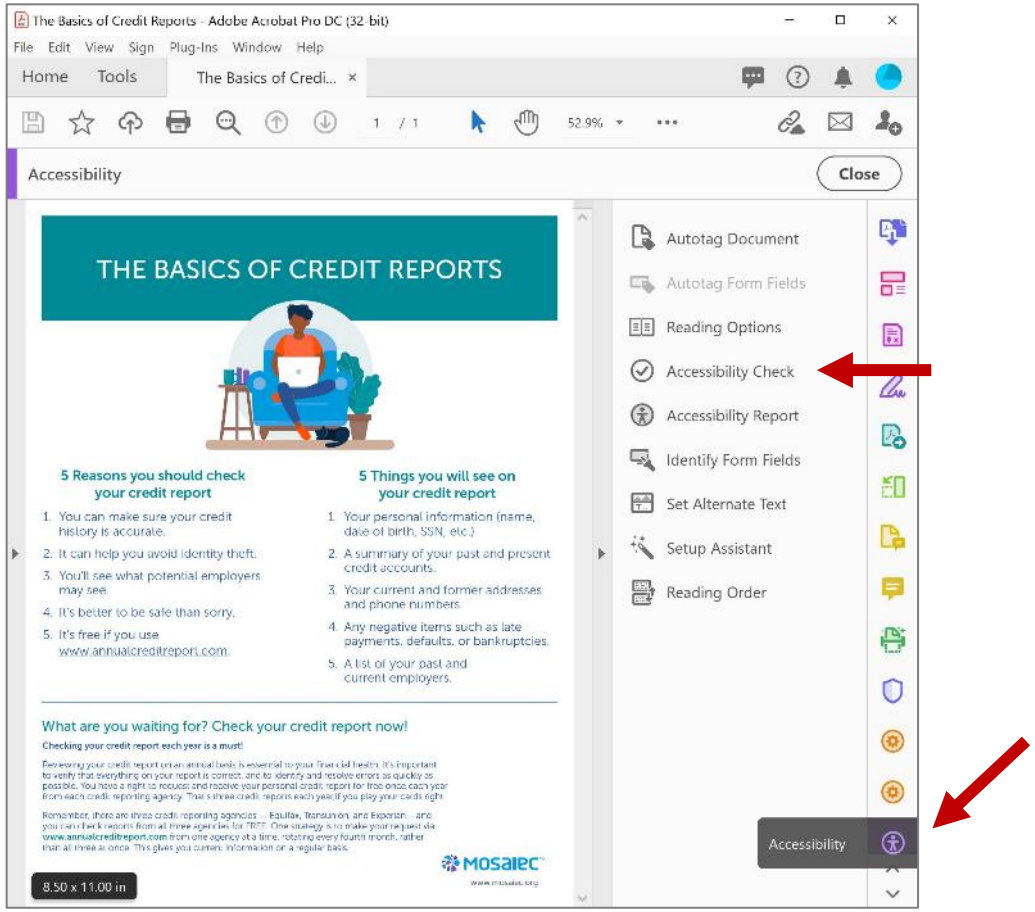
Adobe Acrobat Pro – Accessibility Tool

Accessibility Check



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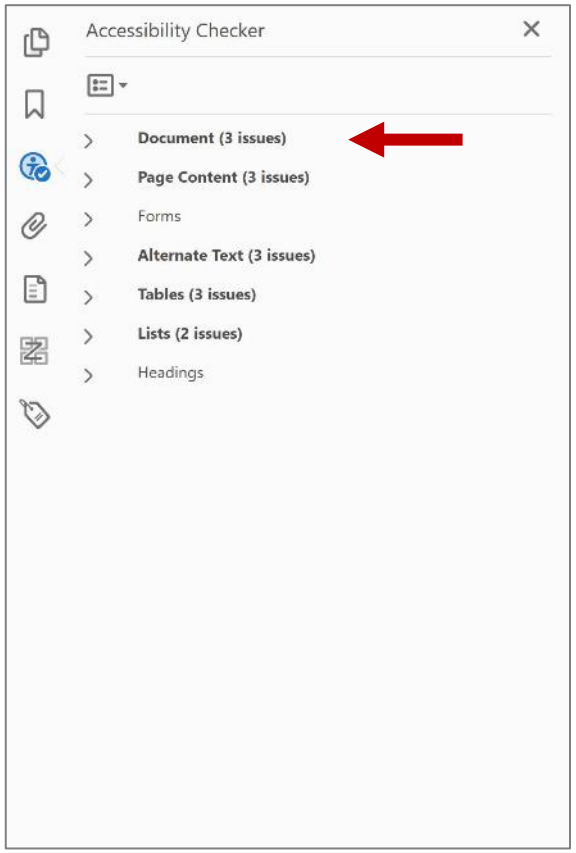
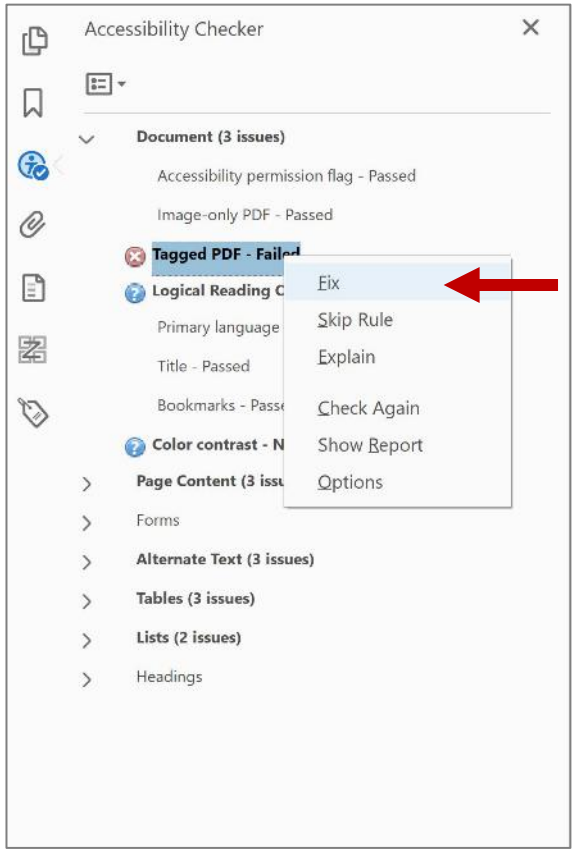
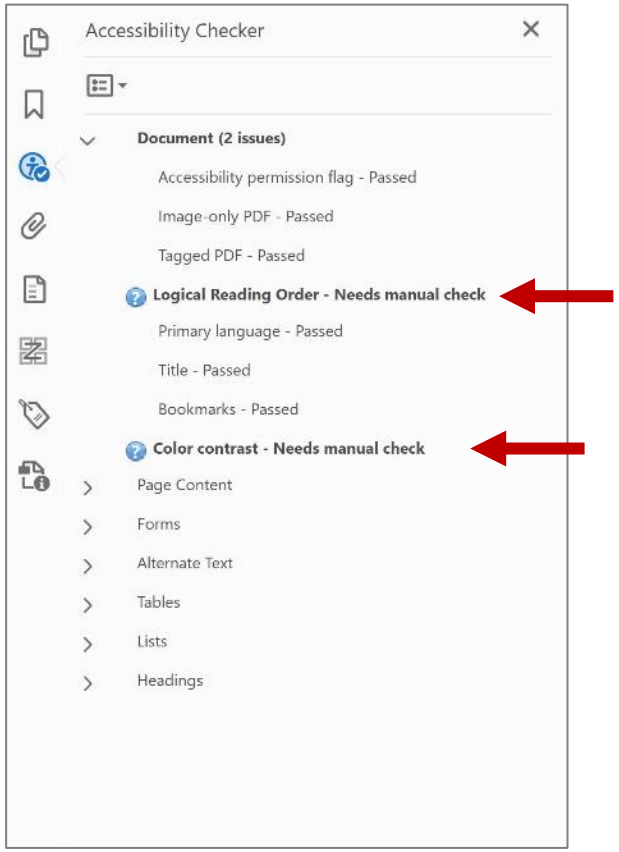
Adobe Acrobat Pro – Accessibility Checker

Accessibility Checker - Issues







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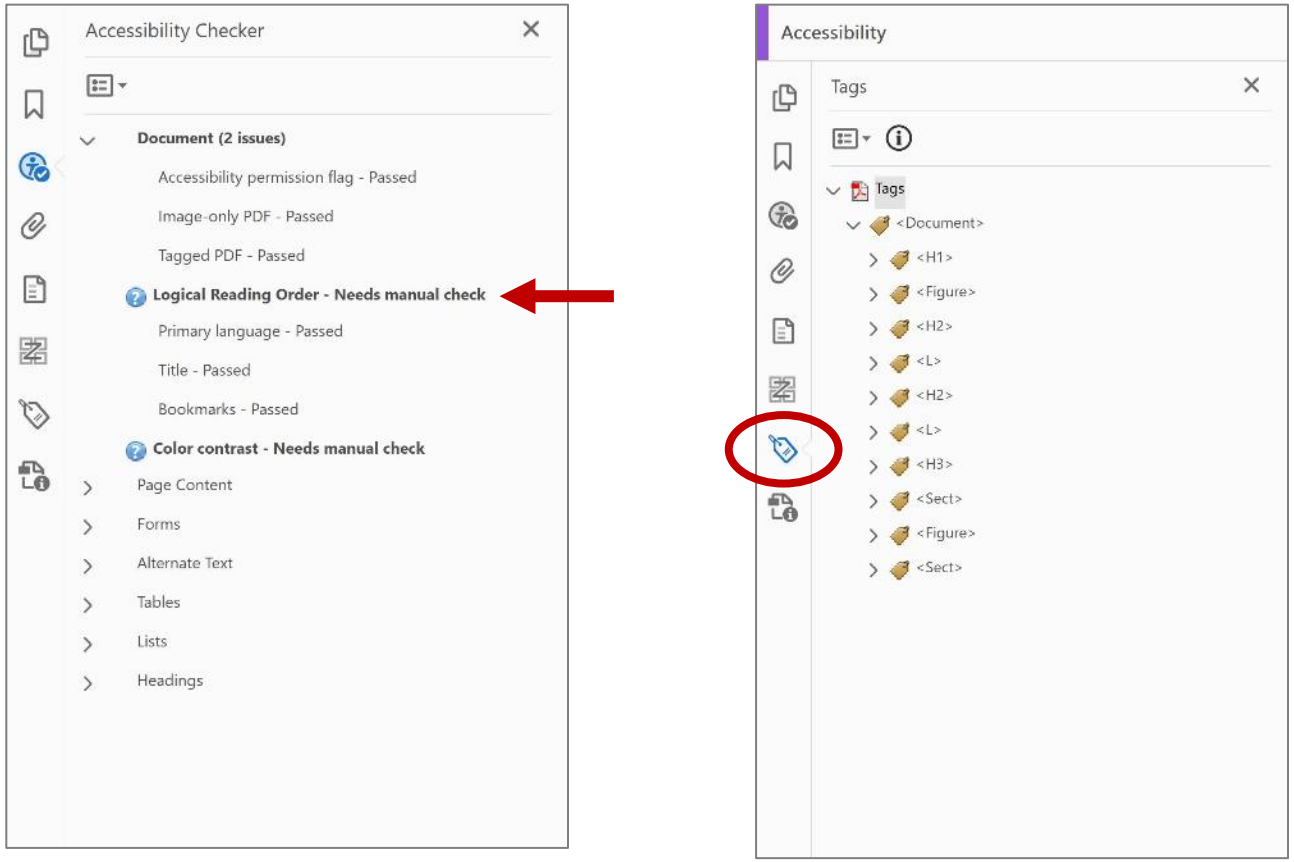
Adobe Acrobat Pro – Manual Check Reading Order

Accessibility Checker – Tags



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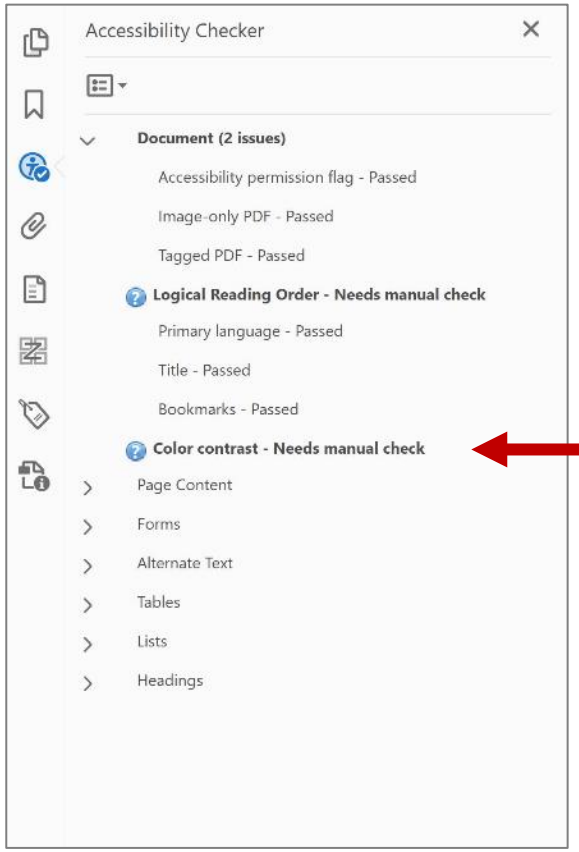
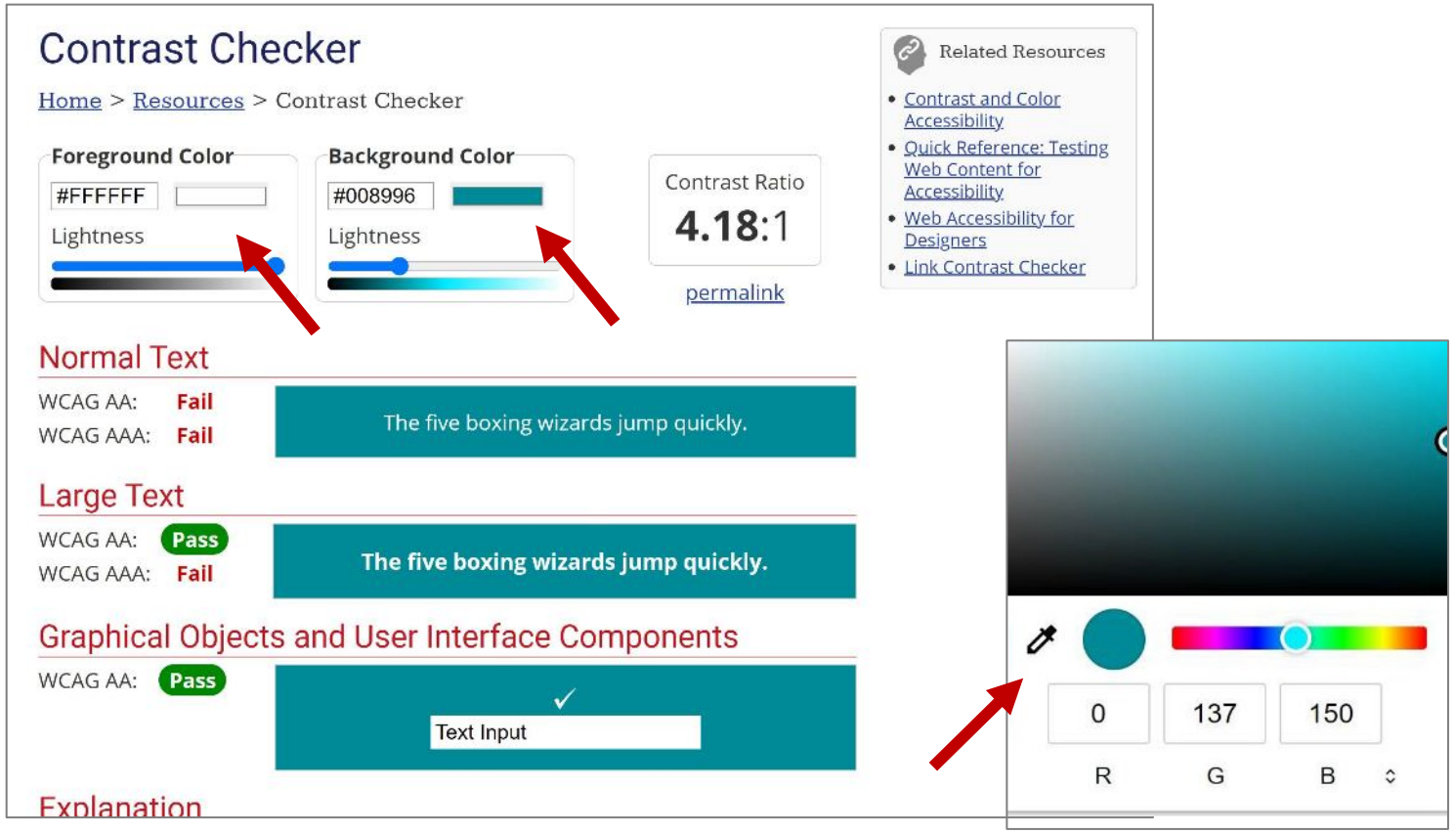
Adobe Acrobat Pro – Manual Check Color Contrast

Free tool at [WebAIM](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/) (https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/)





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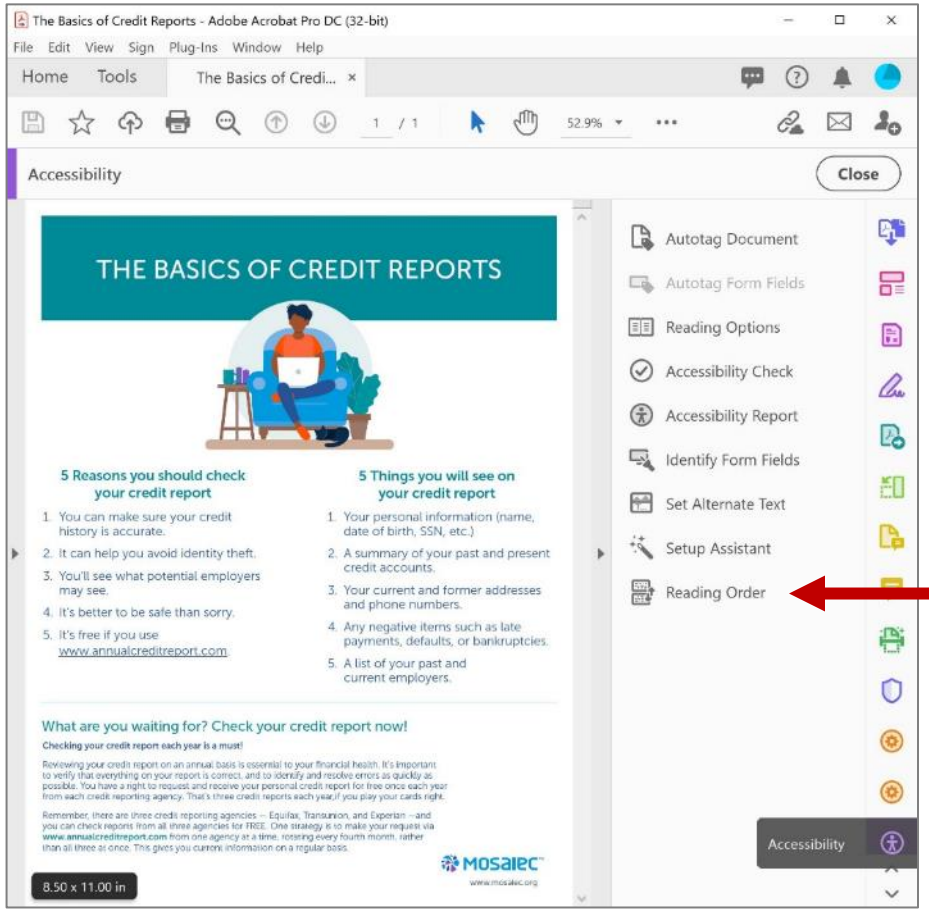
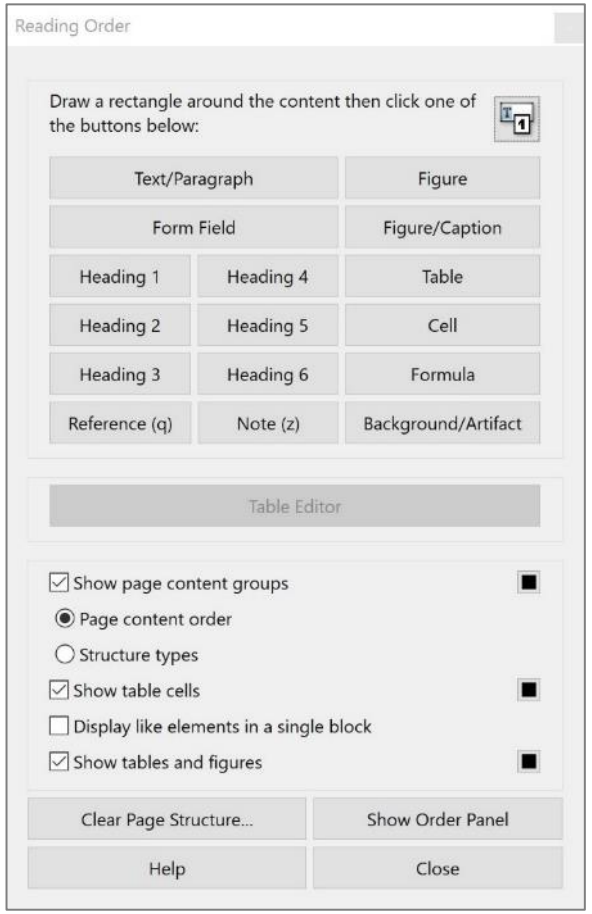
Adobe Acrobat Pro – Reading Order

Accessibility Checker – Correct Issues





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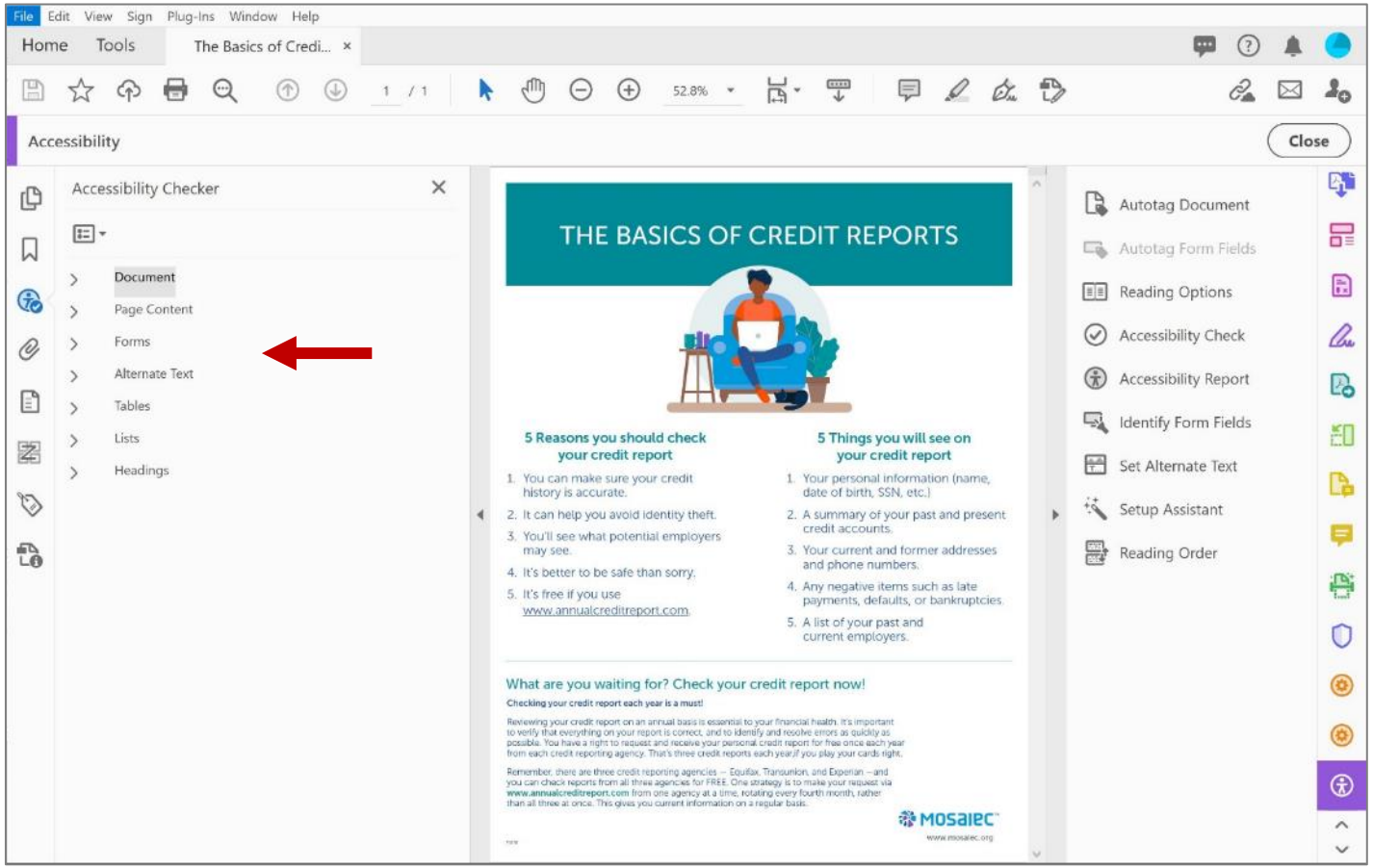
Adobe Acrobat Pro – Remediation Complete

Accessibility Checker – No Issues



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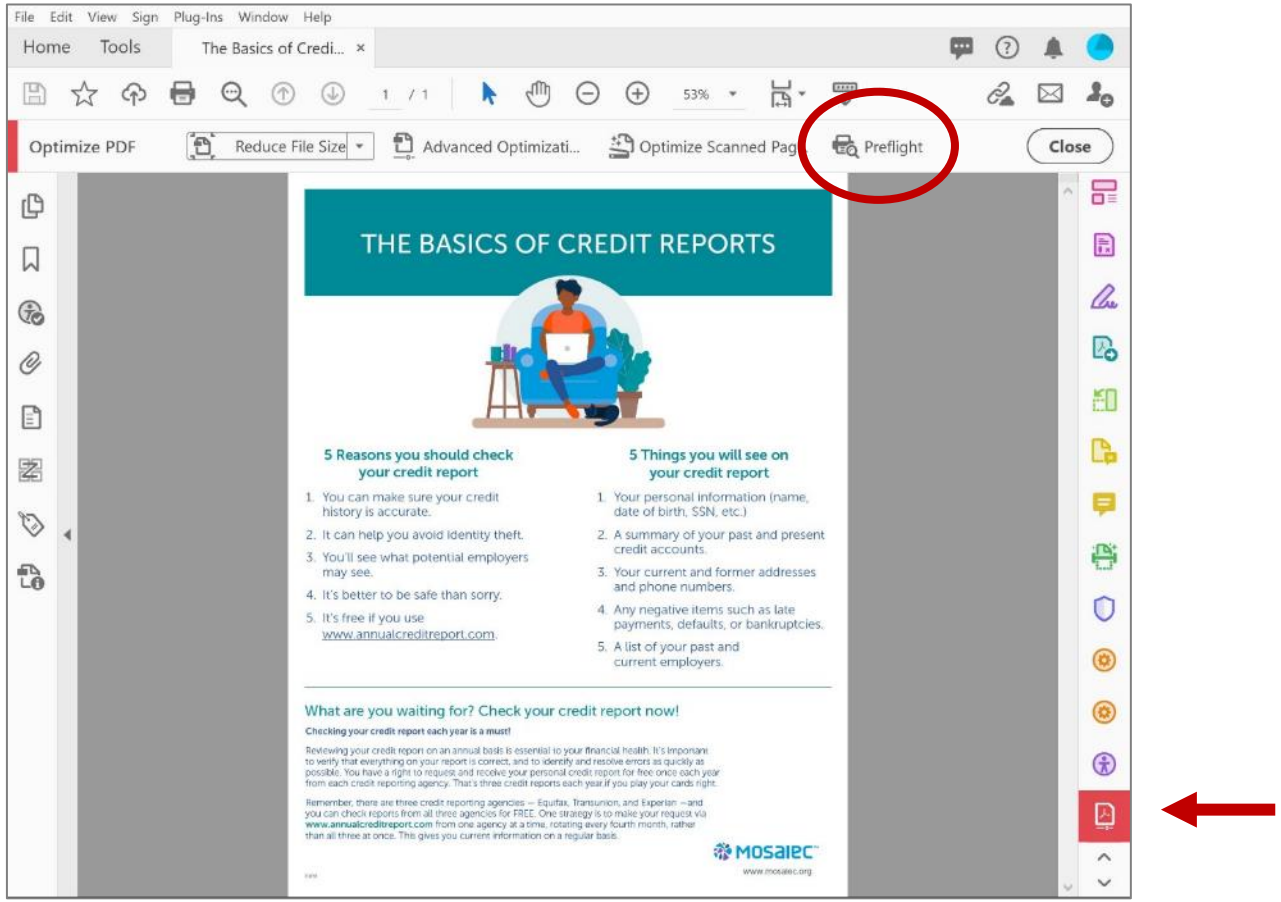
Adobe Acrobat Pro – Optimize Tool

Preflight



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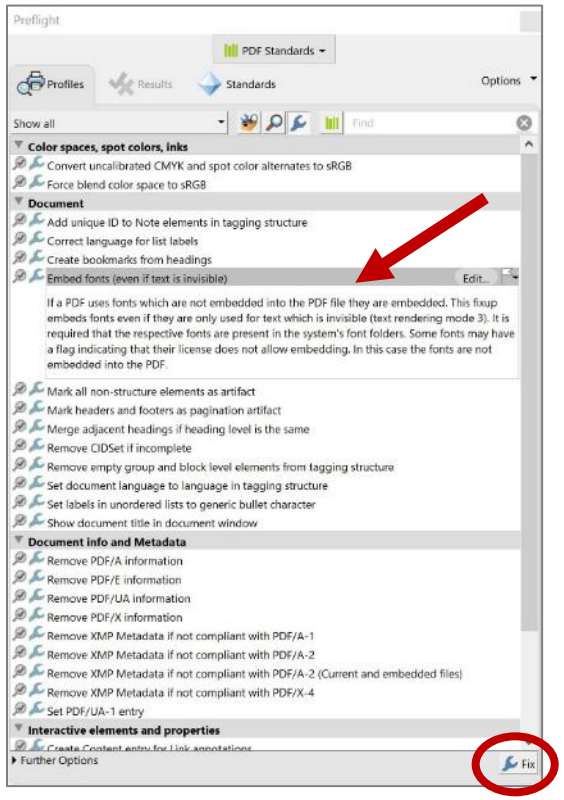
Adobe Acrobat Pro – Preflight Options

Preflight



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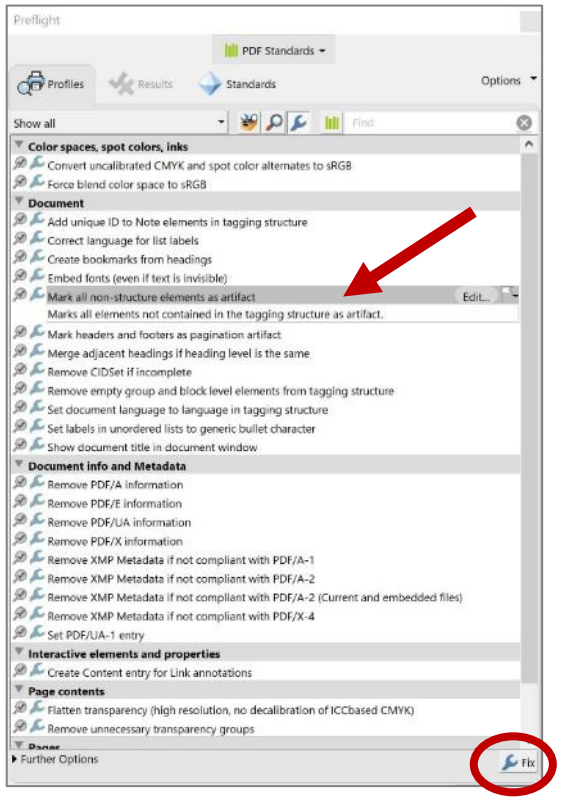

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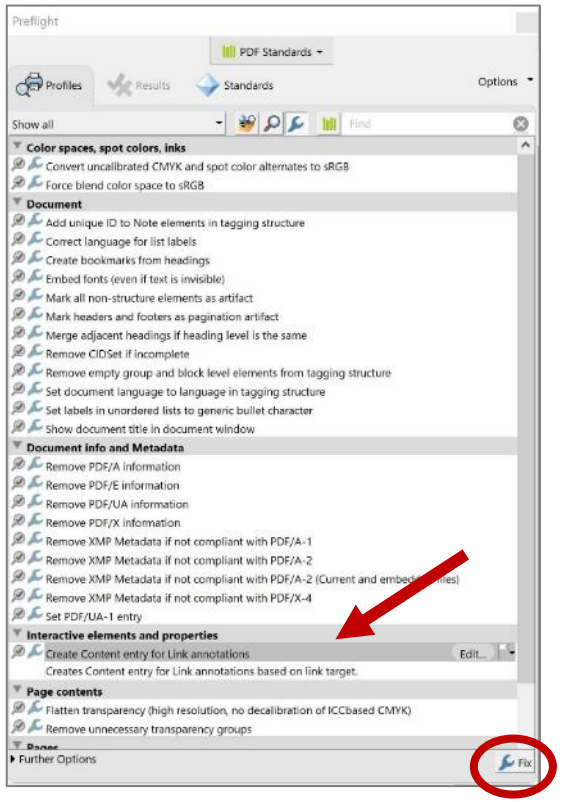
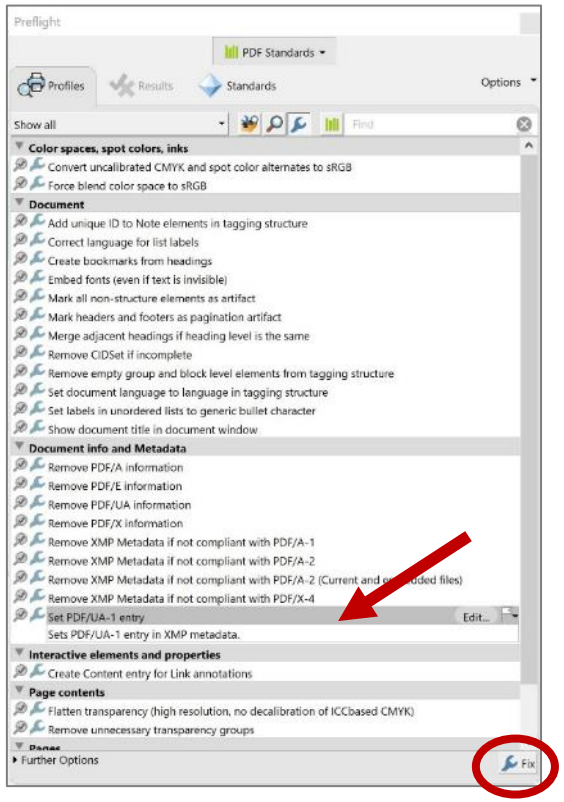


Create Content/Link



Set PDF/UA

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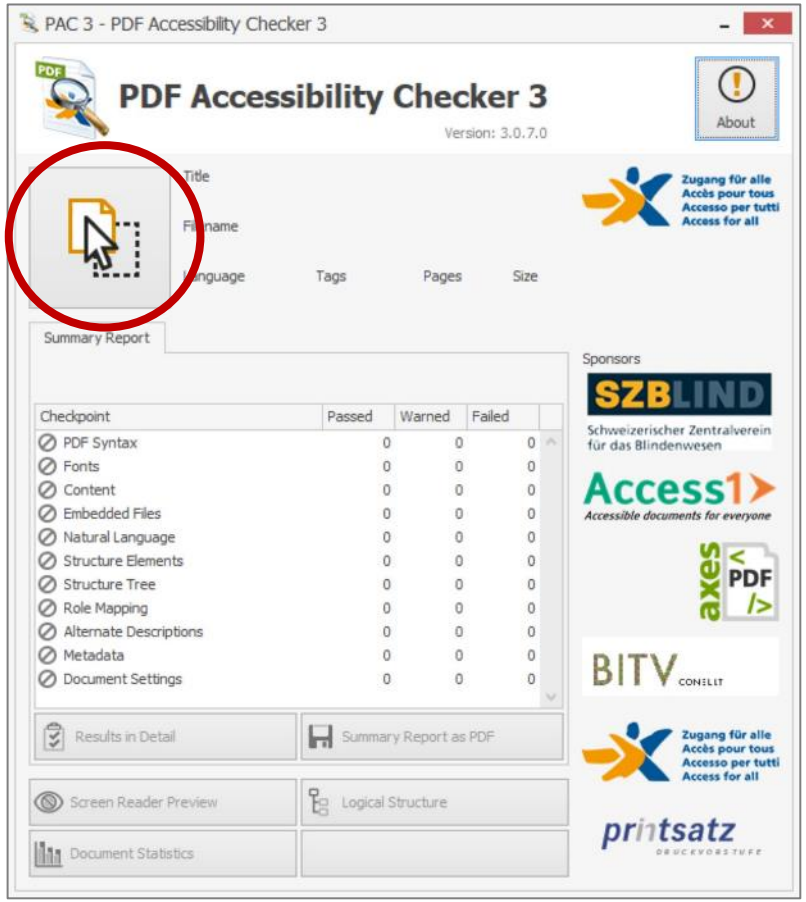
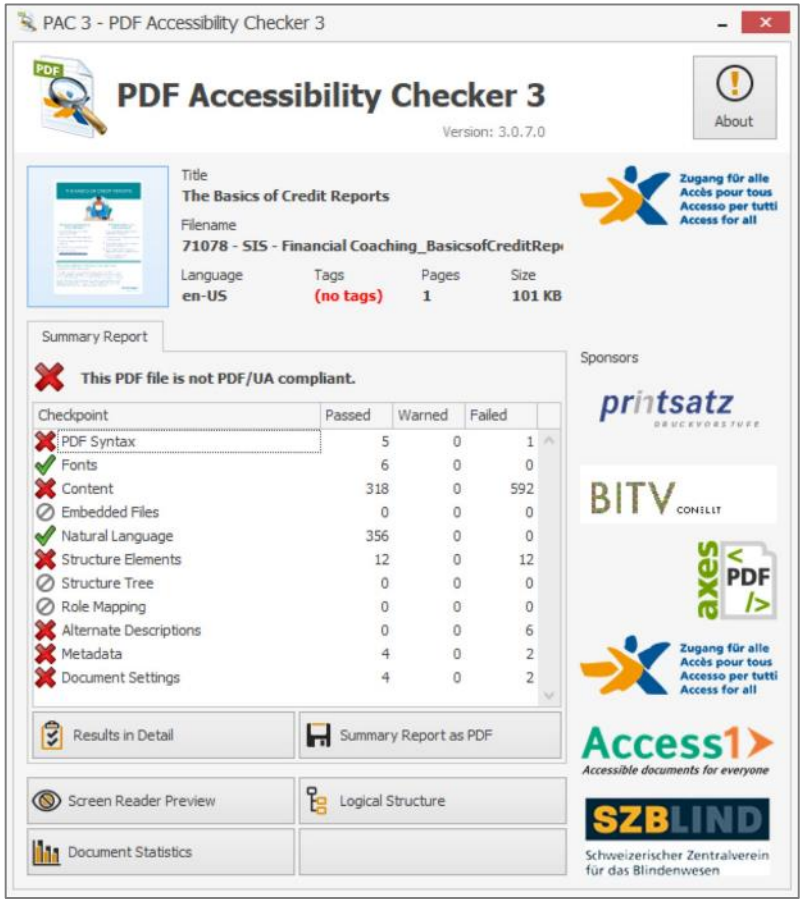
PAC3 – Free Remediation Tool

https://www.access-for-all.ch/en/pdf-accessibility-checker.html





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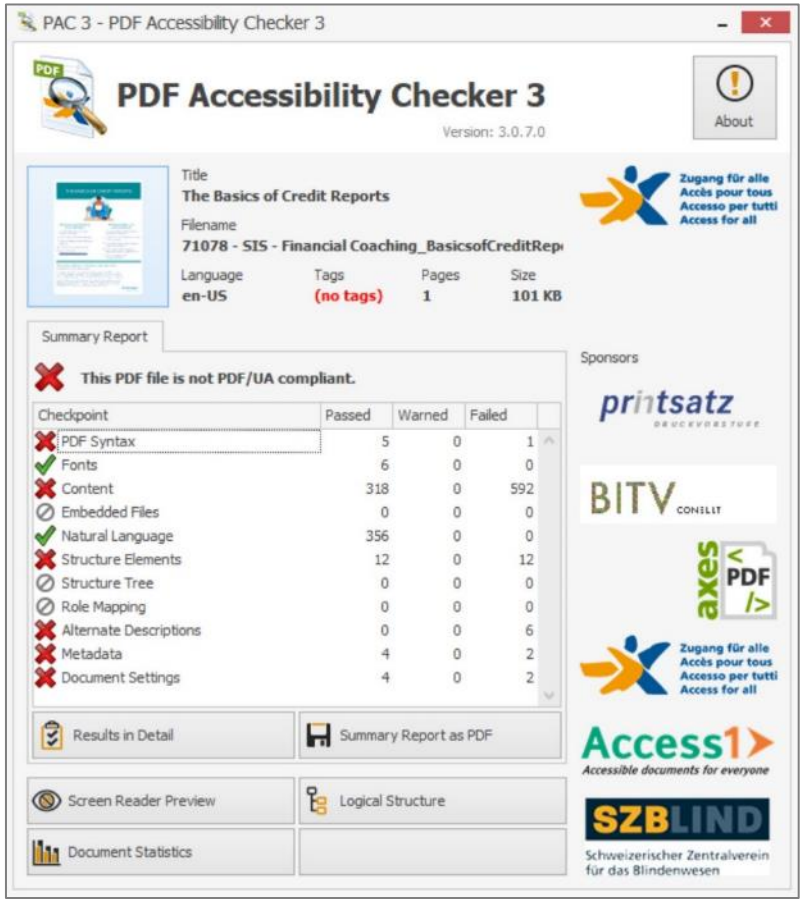
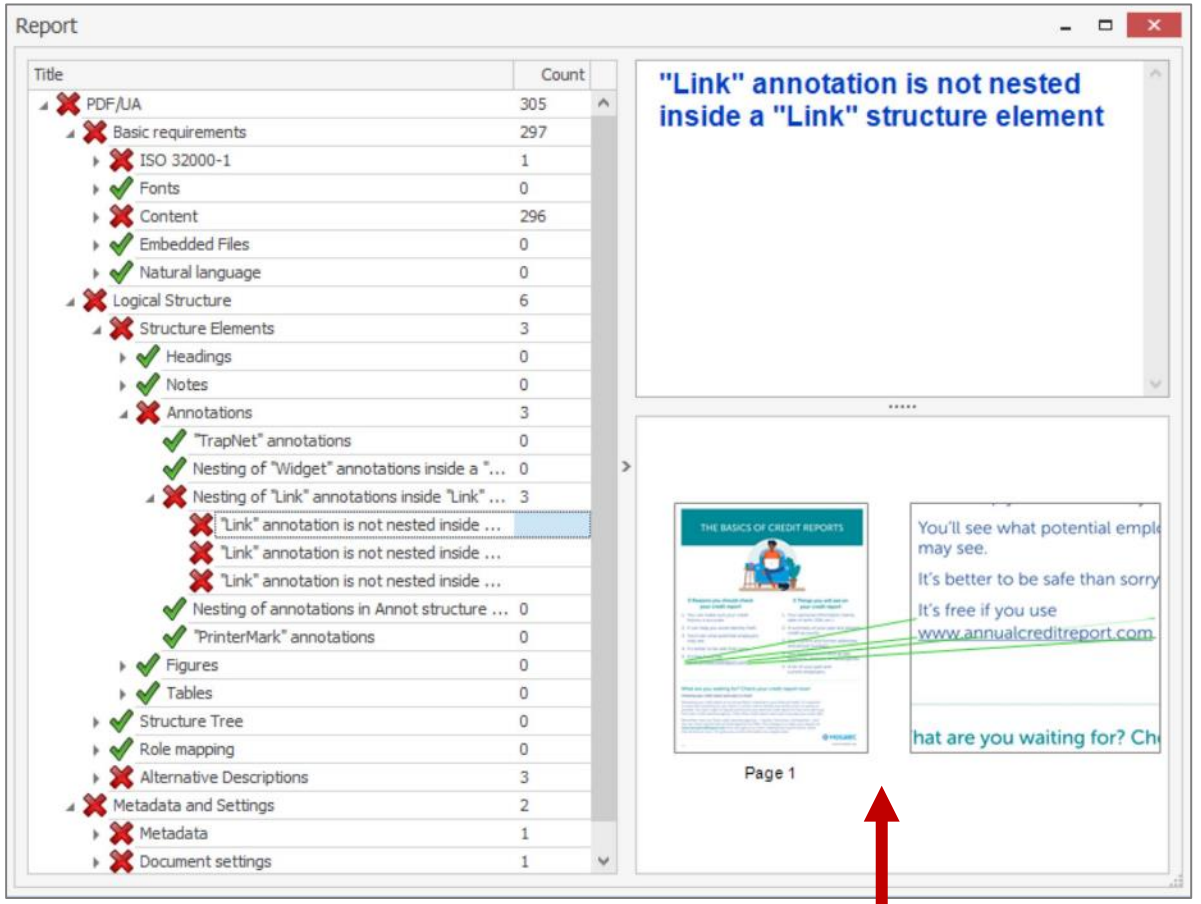
PAC3 – Results in Detail

Identifies exactly where issues are in the document





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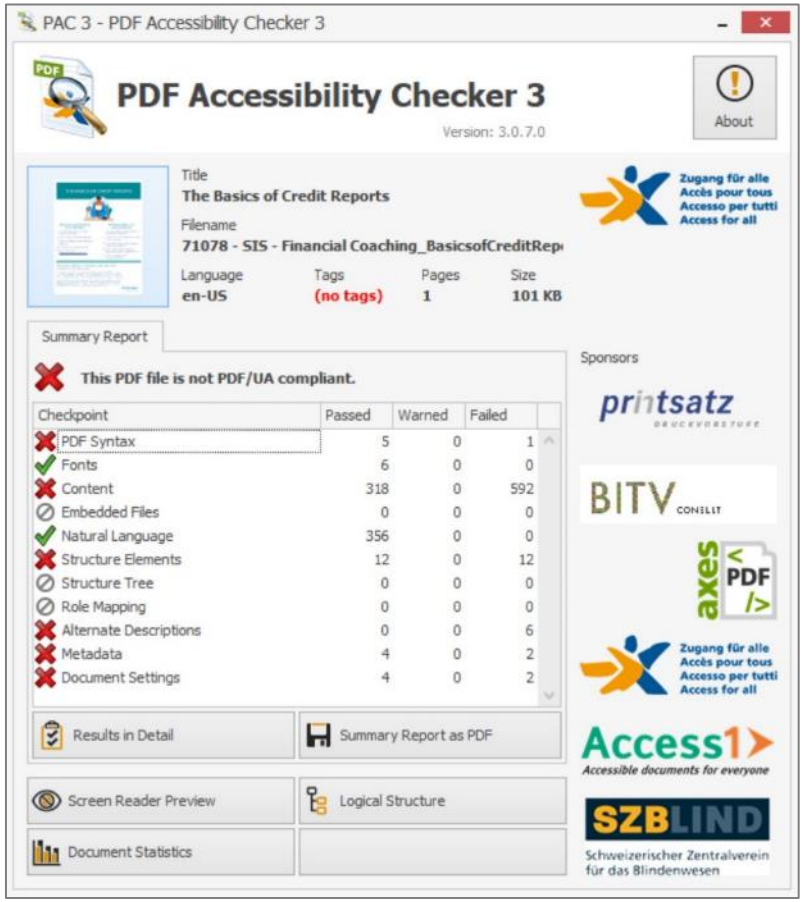
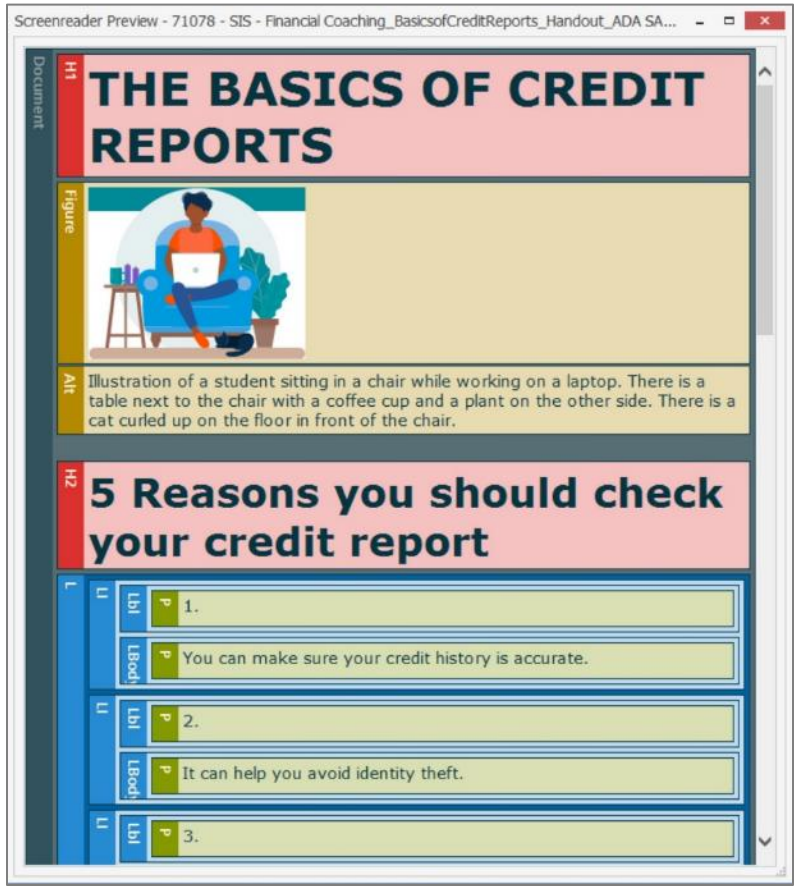
PAC3 – Screen Reader Preview

Provides a preview of your document





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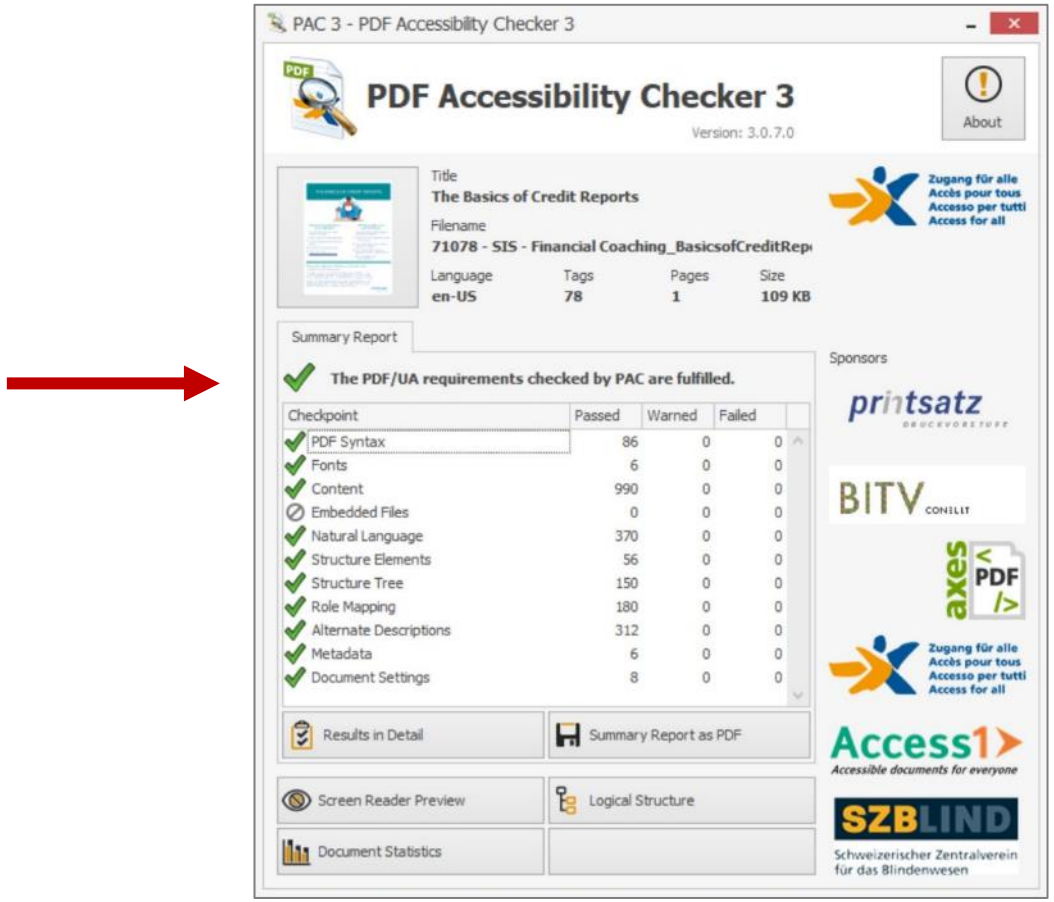
PAC3 – PDF/UA

Goal is to meet PDF/UA requirements.



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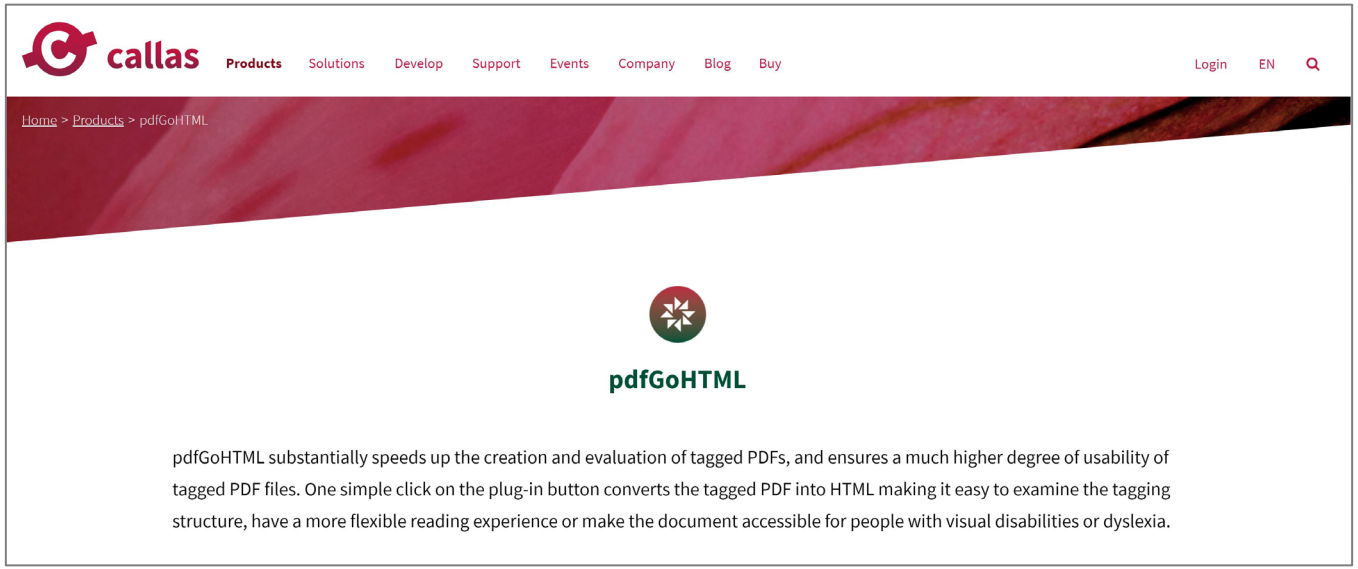
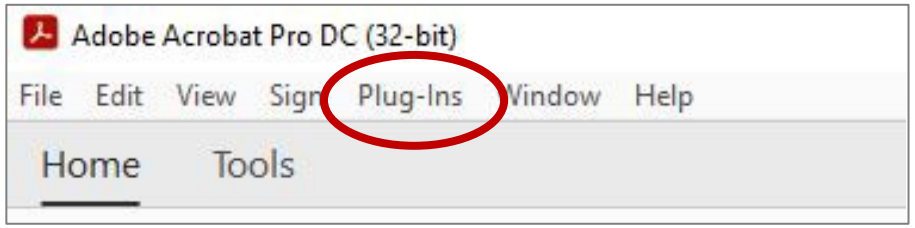
Adobe Acrobat Pro – Free Plug-in

Callas pdfGoHTML (https://www.callassoftware.com/en/products/pdfgohtml0





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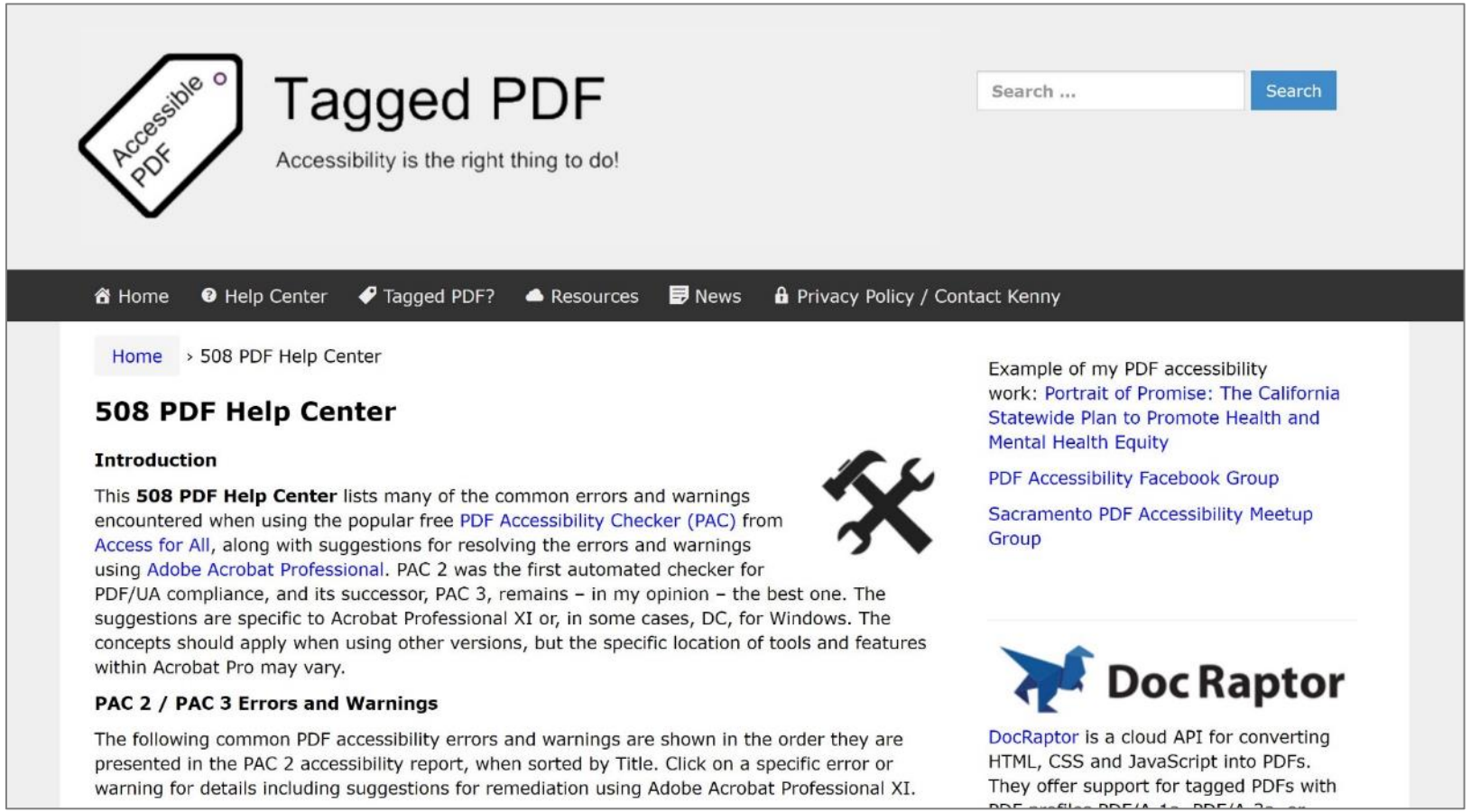
Free Online Resource – Tagged PDF

https://taggedpdf.com/508-pdf-help-center/



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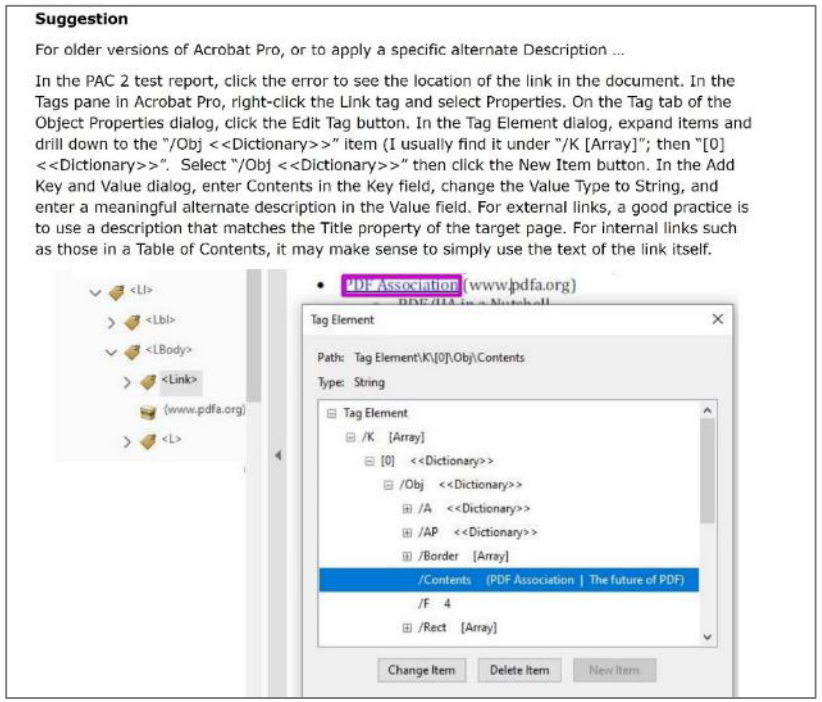
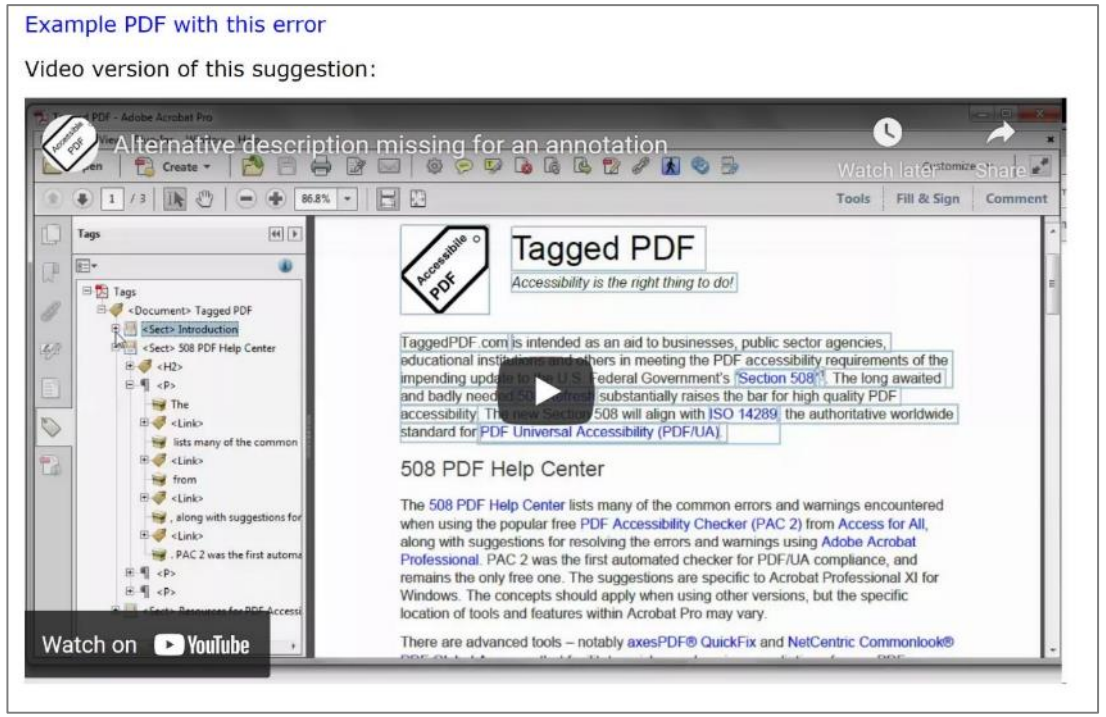
Tagged PDF – Written and Visual Help

https://taggedpdf.com/508-pdf-help-center/





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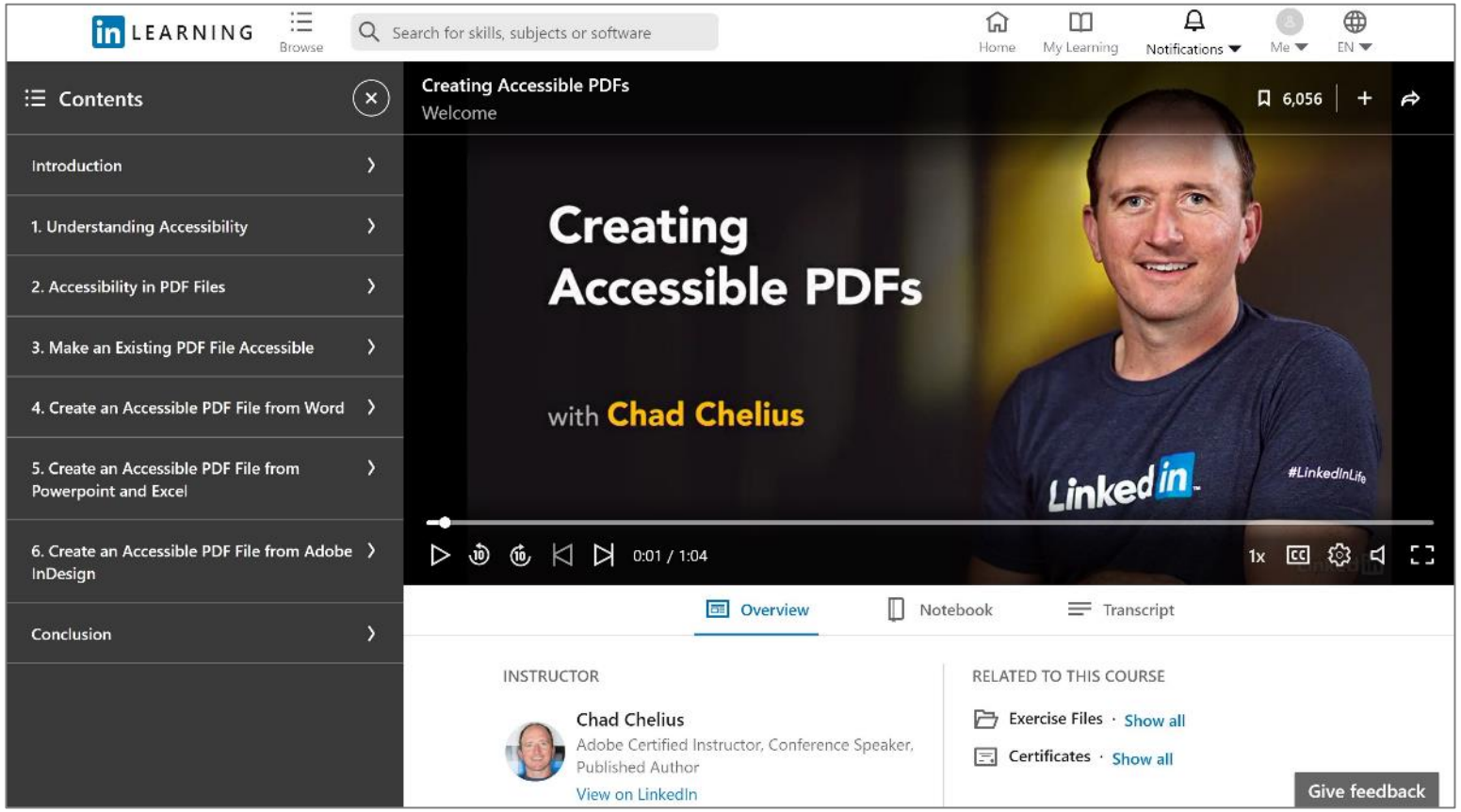
Accessibility Courses – LinkedIn Learning

https://www.linkedin.com/learning/



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Web Accessibility Resources

- Mac users = hold COMMAND+F5 = runs Apple's Voiceover accessibility software
- Windows users = hold WINDOWS+CTRL+ENTER = runs Microsoft's Narrator accessibility software
- Department of Education guidance on Section 504 Compliance
- WCAG Quick Reference Guide
- Microsoft Windows accessibility resources
- Resources = Tenon.io Accessibility Software (Trial), AChecker Software (Free but Less Intuitive)
- How to Define Your Website's Language
- Adobe Accessibility Training Resources, EdX Free Course on Introduction to Web Accessibility
- WebAIM Font Guide for Accessibility
- Penn State University Guide for Color Contrast

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