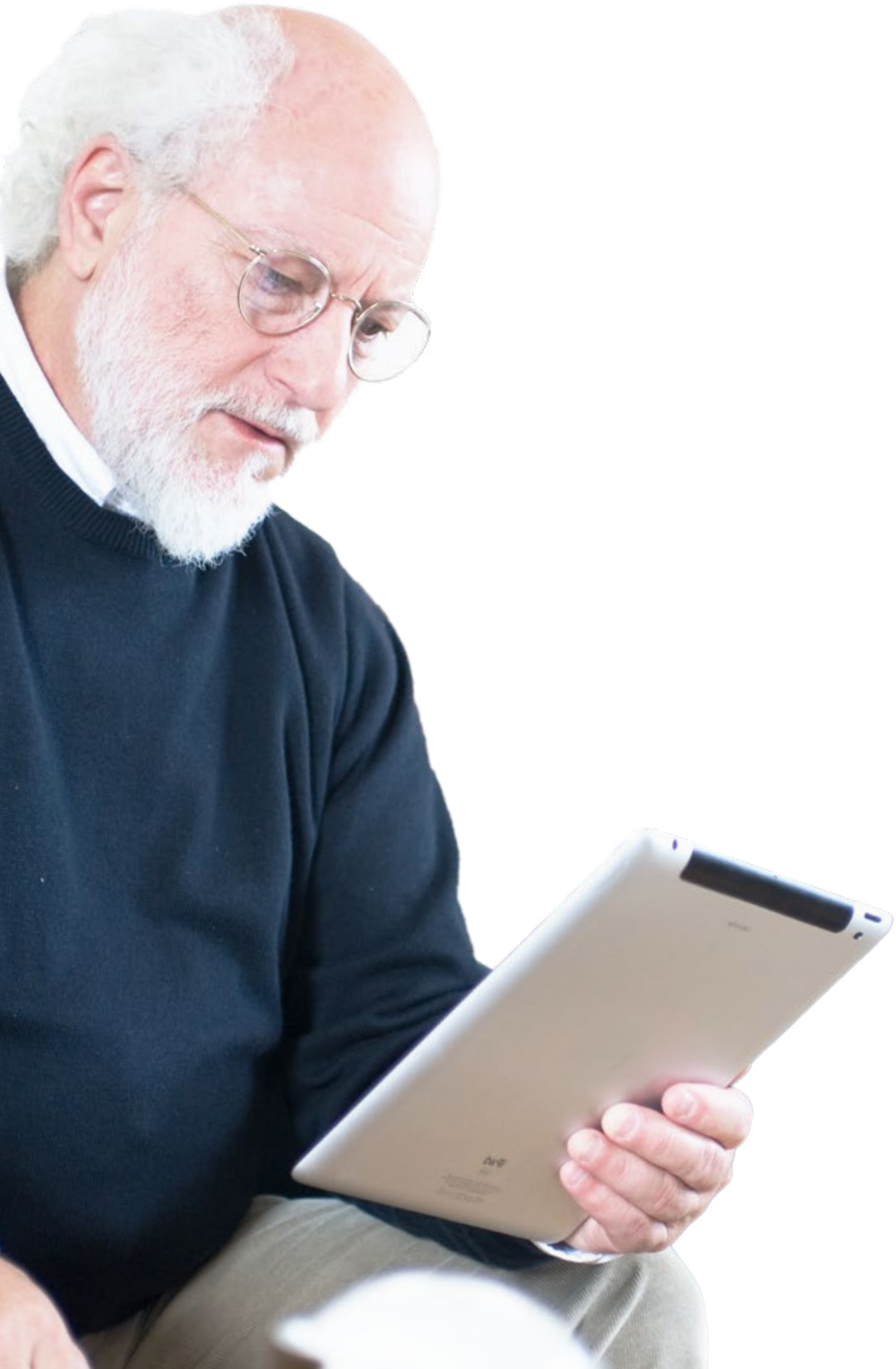




**a quick, practical guide to digital inclusion  
and accessible information for websites**





# Digital technologies and online services are revolutionising the way we live, and **we're expected to do more online** than ever before.

As more services move online and offer users the essential information they need digitally, there is an enormous **risk of leaving some of the population behind** - including the older population and those with literacy, language, and cognitive challenges.

Knowing how to **present and offer digital information clearly** empowers users and customers to navigate the online services that are increasingly becoming the norm.

In this short guide, we offer some **easy-to-implement guidance** for organisations to streamline their digital content into accessible, inclusive formats to benefit every online visitor.





**It's important to consider that people with disabilities, impairments and challenges **can find it difficult to access digital services and information** - for example those with:**

- ✓ Neurodiverse conditions - dyslexia, and other learning disabilities
- ✓ Cognitive disabilities - attention deficit disorder or autism
- ✓ Cognitive decline - dementia and conditions affecting memory
- ✓ Sensory impairments - vision decline, visual stress, eye fatigue
- ✓ Low literacy
- ✓ Poor digital skills
- ✓ English language challenges

And so this short guide will take into consideration **key solutions for presenting and transforming online information** to benefit all.



## Accessible language & content

It's vitally important for organisations to ensure their content can be understood by as wide an audience as possible, including those with disabilities. It can be a huge help to:

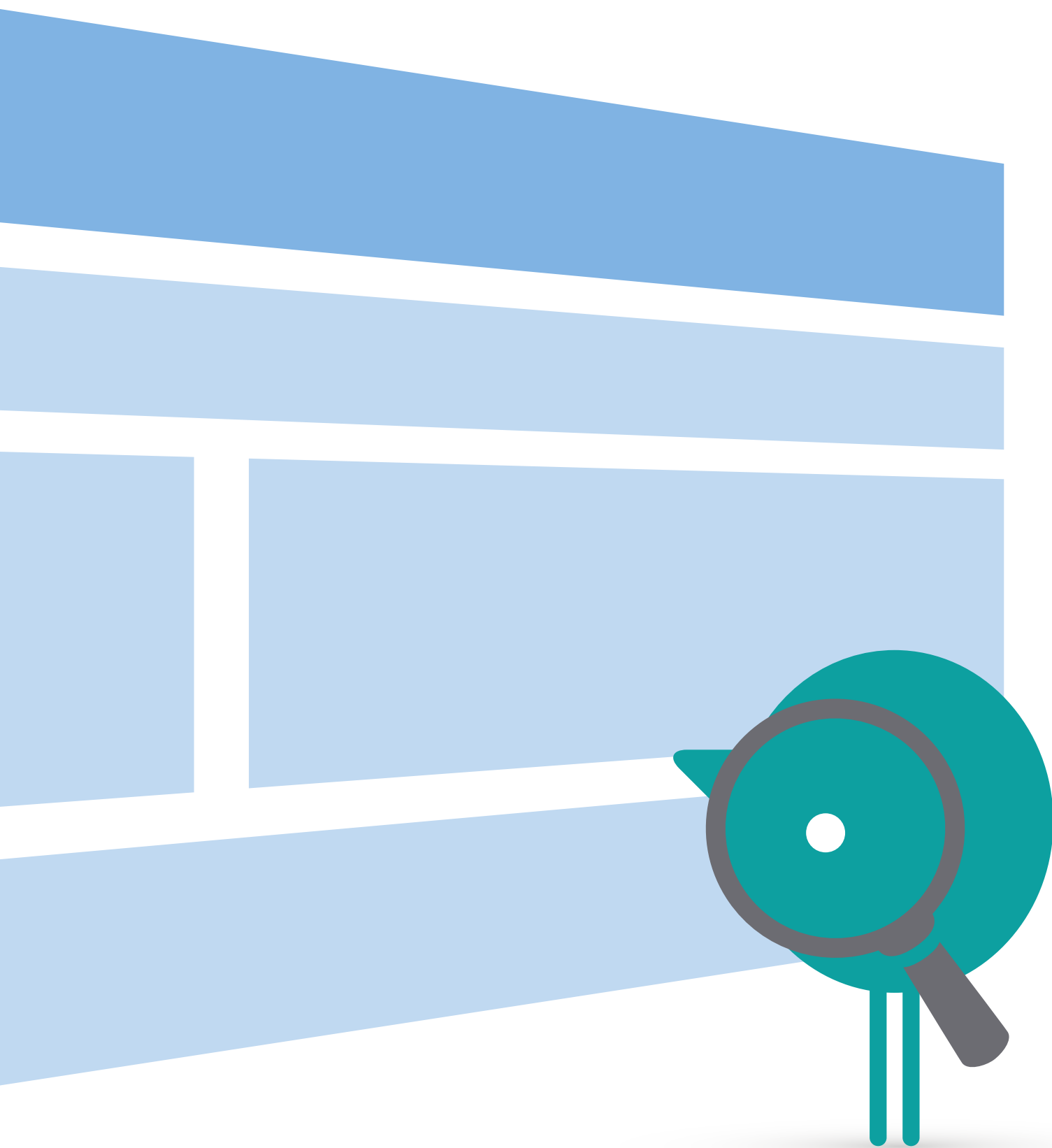
- ✓ **Write information as clearly and succinctly** as possible, as well as avoid lengthy paragraphs.
- ✓ **Stay clear of abbreviations and acronyms** as they can be difficult to understand.
- ✓ **Stay on track!** Messaging should reflect content and not stray from the point of the information you're providing.
- ✓ **Use different methods of presenting that content.** Use images to support what's being said and use text to explain what's in an image, for example.

# Layout & Headings

Much like the previous section that dealt with the actual content visitors engage with and process, clear presentation of the information itself can make for an accessible user experience. Some best practices to consider include:

- ✓ Using the standard of **left-aligned text** for easier consumption of information as well as better integration with screen readers.
- ✓ **Avoiding large areas of text** that might make it difficult for a user to follow and digest complex information.
- ✓ Using your **CMS paragraph formatting** instead of the 'return' key to begin new sections of text, as this is more accessible and won't confuse any assistive technology that translates or represents the on-screen content.
- ✓ Employing **'styles' instead of bold or underlined text** when writing your online content, which helps provide clear structure and emphasis. You should form a hierarchy of content for visitors by using headings in the right order when structuring written text - for example,

Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3





## Hyperlinks

Linking to further contextual information alleviates the need for walls of text that can be off-putting and confusing for visitors, depending on how they process information. But hyperlinks need to be accessible too.

- ✓ **Always embed links** within the written text of the information you're presenting or referencing, instead of writing out the entire link within the text (this applies for emails too).
- ✓ Ensure that when you add a link into text, that the actual **text accurately describes the end destination** but makes sense as a phrase on its own.
- ✓ Try to be concise to **keep your link as clear and accessible** as all of the work you've done so far following our short guide.
- ✓ A good example of hyperlink best practice is ["Follow Texthelp on Twitter"](#) rather than "Click here to follow Texthelp on Twitter for their latest updates".





## Images

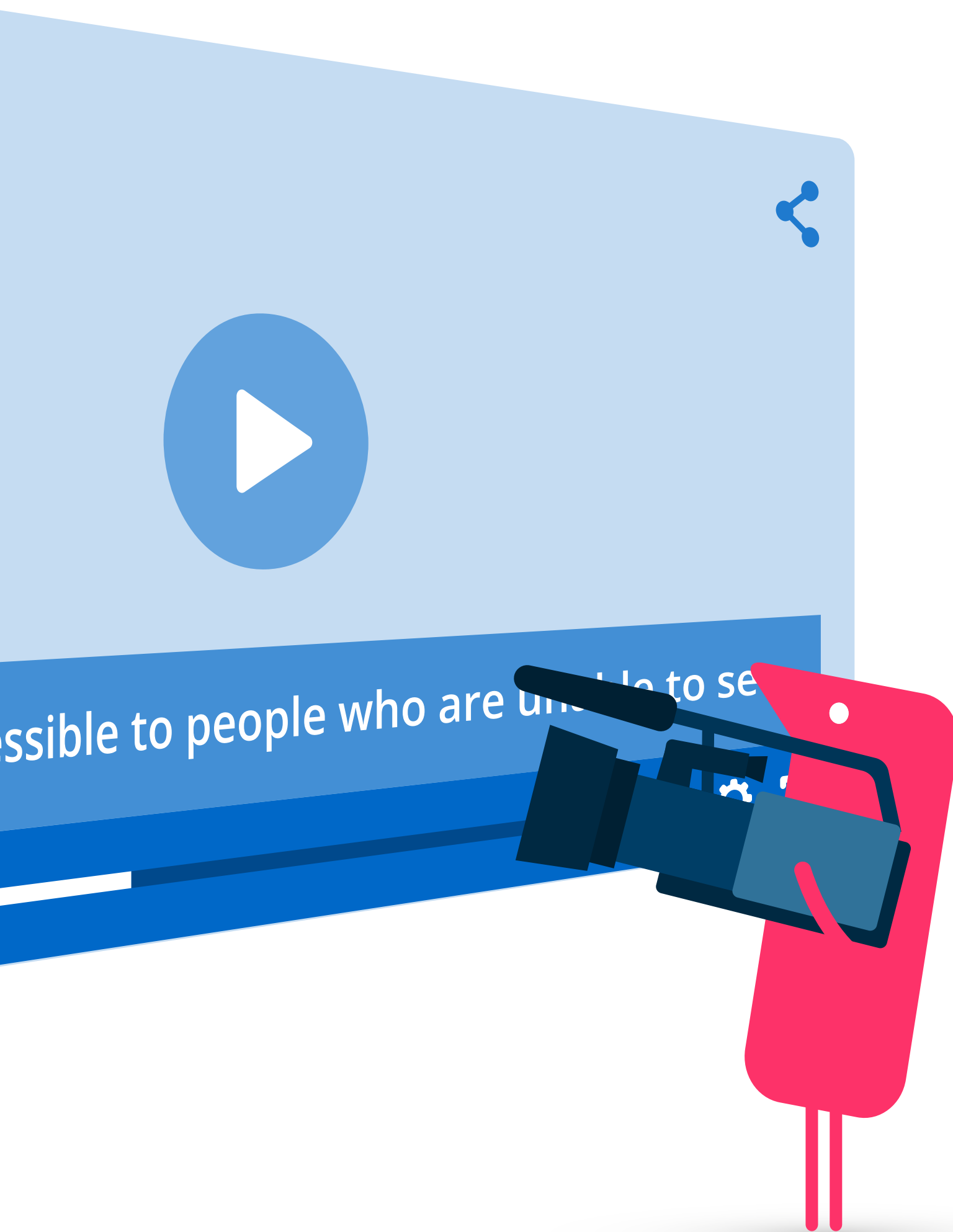
A picture says a thousand words, except when it's not accessible for visitors. That's why it's important to take just as much care in creating and formatting online imagery as it is your written content.

- ✓ **Provide alternative text** (or alt-text) that describes what the image portrays, helping the visually impaired understand your content better. Your CMS should have an option to format the image before publishing.
- ✓ If your content contains an image of a graph or complex visual data, this information is **best provided in a written format as well**.
- ✓ If you're using a photograph or other image to demonstrate or reinforce a point, then **make sure to use a fitting caption** that also describes the contents of the image.

# Videos & Captions

Videos are increasingly the go-to method of engaging and evoking a connection with online visitors, but the format itself can be troublesome when accessibility isn't taken into consideration. Here are some ways to ensure your video content is inclusive for all.

- ✓ It may seem obvious, but when producing a video for online consumption, **Closed Captions** are essential to aide everyone's understanding of the content.
- ✓ If your chosen video platform is, for example, YouTube or Dailymotion, be vigilant when using platform tools like auto-subtitles. **You may need to adjust or upload accurate captions** rather than rely on a platform's internal service.
- ✓ **Provide a downloadable transcript** of your video that includes dialogue, descriptions of visual information, as well as on-screen text. This is a simple and effective method of providing accessible video content for all.
- ✓ Alongside subtitles and transcripts, **an audio description track** communicates important visual content, making it accessible to people who are unable to see on-screen text and / or important visual information.







## Beginning your accessible information journey to **support every user**

We hope you find this guide an easy-to-implement and practical jumpstart to your accessible information journey, and that you're inspired to begin thinking inclusively when it comes to providing digital information for users and customers.

There are, of course, more resources available out there, such as the [POUR principles](#) and [WCAG standards](#).

# The tool that helps deliver **accessible information**

ReachDeck can help you to improve the accessibility, readability and reach of your content. Its features include:



## The ReachDeck Auditor

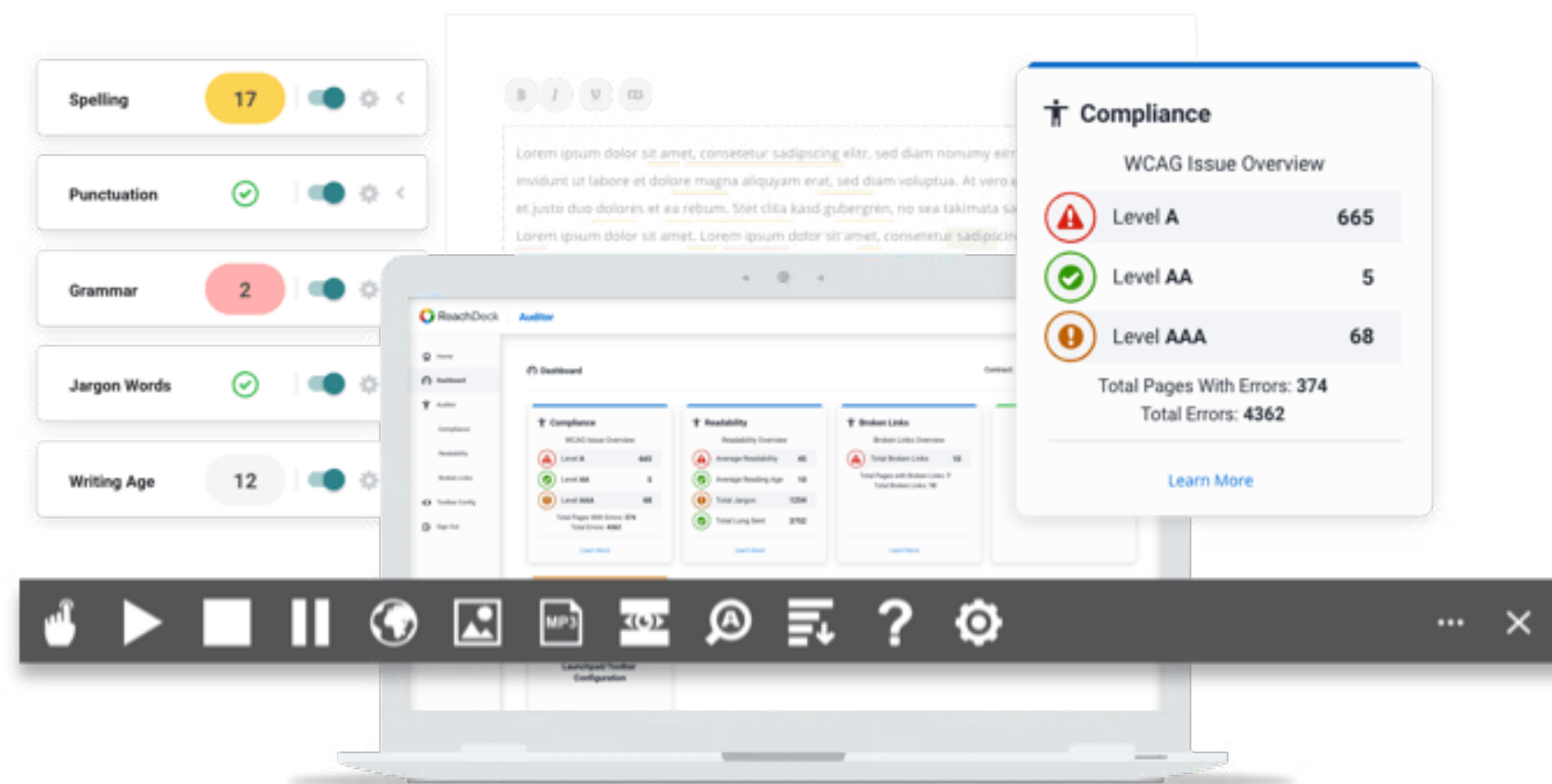
Helps you to comply with the international standards of web accessibility - WCAG. It identifies compliance errors across your website quickly and at scale.

## The ReachDeck Editor

Helps your employees to edit content in line with best practice. It highlights spelling, grammar and readability errors as they type. And provides a reading age, so you can create content that everyone can understand.

## The ReachDeck Toolbar

Supports your web visitors to engage with your online content in a way that suits their needs. Features include text-to-speech, reading and translation support.



# Notice Ability

**“ The ReachDeck Toolbar gives you a seamless tool for making the text content of your online materials accessible. It’s indispensable for companies who care and ‘get it’. We recommend it at every opportunity.**

Christian Henry, **Chief Program Officer**





**Assistive technology ensures everyone  
has equal access to the digital world.**

**Find out more. Or try it for free:**

**[text.help/accessible-info](https://text.help/accessible-info)**