GETTING STARTED

- Determine whether legislation applies to the press
- Complete a VPAT
- Publish an accessibility statement

Determine whether legislation applies to the press

In the EU, microenterprises with less than 10 employees and an annual turnover less than EUR 2 million or an annual balance sheet totalling less than EUR 2 million are exempt from the EAA accessibility requirements.

Most other parts of the world require an analysis to be completed that shows the size and cost of remediation work relative to the organisational finances and capacity. Only after this analysis is completed can a claim of exemption due to disproportionate burden be applied. This type of exemption is called something different in the different legislative acts: it is also known as undue burden or unjustifiable hardship. See our Learn section for all the details.

There are some exemptions for books that have been published before certain dates, see our Learn section for the details. Otherwise, legislation applies. Most country's legislation requires some version of WCAG AA to be achieved, alongside the publication of an accessibility statement, but this can vary and achieving WCAG compliance is a job for the long term. For now, just focus on determining exemption or not.

View this information as a video.

Complete a VPAT

A Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) is a free template where you record the accessibility of your ebooks on a table. They are not a legal requirement and do not need to be published openly, but they help to communicate with libraries about the accessibility of your ebooks. It is completed at the whole publisher level rather than on the individual book level. This is the sole use case for a VPAT - to communicate accessibility to readers you would use book level information which is captured by metadata and DAISY reports. For more information on that see:

There is one row for each WCAG requirement, ordered by how strict they are A, AA and AAA. For each requirement, you give yourself a rating on this scale:

- Supports = the ebooks meet this requirement
- Partially Supports = the ebooks meet this requirement some of the time
- Does Not Support = the ebooks don't meet this requirement most of the time
- Not Applicable = this requirement is not relevant to the ebooks
- Not Evaluated = used on AAA requirements when you are only describing up to AA

There is also space to add more details of why you have given this rating, if you feel this is needed.

Our recommendations:

- Complete the WCAG VPAT template (other templates are available)
- Complete one VPAT for your whole press
- Only complete the VPAT for your ebooks, not the website, which is called Electronic Docs on the VPAT. If appropriate, you could split your notes into 'PDFs' and 'EPUBs' or some other meaningful way of dividing the service up, if there are very different accessibility issues.
- The VPAT does say 'Electronic Docs' where it would apply to static files, but still even more of them might not apply to your particular ebooks e.g. audio visual material
- Only complete the VPAT up to level AA, and mark the AAA requirements as not evaluated
- Use your own knowledge of your workflows to complete the initial VPAT, rather than doing full testing
- Update the VPAT annually as you complete testing and progress through your accessibility improvements

Example of a completed VPAT from Open Book Publishers

We have produced this document that describes each WCAG success criteria in plain language that is relevant to small presses. VPATs in plain language

We also produced more detailed guidance and collated training about VPATs in the long term.

View this information as a video.

Publish an accessibility statement

An accessibility statement is a publicly available statement that describes your organisational commitment to accessibility, the current accessibility of your ebooks, and your future plans for improving this. An accessibility statement is a legal requirement in many countries, with templates provided and minimum legal wording. You can find out more about this in our Learn section.

In general, this is what you need to include in an accessibility statement:

- A statement of organisational commitment to accessibility
- Initially, we suggest that the statement applies only to your ebook files as a whole, with plans to include your full website at a later time
- The date the statement was written
- Contact details for where accessibility enquiries can be sent to at the press. This is an important mechanism and you may also want to devise a system for managing these enquiries

And **either**:

Using your completed VPAT, describe:

- Overall whether you are compliant with legal minimum standards: fully, partially, or most of the time not compliant
- A list of the known aspects that are not compliant (e.g. some books do not have ALT text)
- Broadly how and when you will address these non-compliant aspects

Or:

- A statement that accessibility is a disproportionate burden (if you write this, you must provide an analysis evidencing this that can be produced on request)

We recommend publishing this statement on your website, and reviewing it every year.

For more detailed information and examples, see our page Accessibility Statements.

View this information as a video.