

# 10 Design Principles for Better UX and Accessibility

Janna Fiester, VP of UX and Creative  
Alma Meshes, Sr UX Architect

# Hello, we're Sandstorm,



**Janna Fiester**  
VP of UX and Creative  
she/her/hers



**Alma Meshes**  
Sr UX Architect  
she/her/hers



# About Sandstorm

- + Digital creative agency with 20+ years
- + Purpose driven organizations achieve their mission through tech and UX
- + Drupal Acquia and Kentico certified
- + 4,400 hours of UX research

## FUN FACT

You only need 5-6 users  
to identify 80% of the  
usability issues

# Why conduct UX audits & usability testing?

- ✓ Uncover user tasks and goals
- ✓ Identify opportunities for improved accessibility
- ✓ Reduce site abandonment
- ✓ Decrease development costs
- ✓ Improve user engagement
- ✓ Reduce subjectivity

## ACCESSIBILITY

61 million US adults, or  
**26% of the US population,**  
have a disability.

## ACCESSIBILITY

**Only 2% of all websites**  
meet accessibility standards.

<https://www.adweek.com/media/only-2-of-sites-meet-accessibility-standards-lets-change-that/#:~:text=Today's%20websites%20fail%20to%20meet,This%20affects%20millions%20of%20people.>

sandstorm®

**GOOD USABILITY IS GOOD ACCESSIBILITY**

10 Design Principles from  
4,400 hours of UX research





## PRINCIPLE 1

Users want everything  
instantly

## THE DATA

As of 2022, almost 53% of users hit refresh when a page takes more than 3 seconds to load



As page load time goes from:

**1s to 3s** the probability of bounce **increases 32%**



**1s to 5s** the probability of bounce **increases 90%**



**1s to 6s** the probability of bounce **increases 106%**

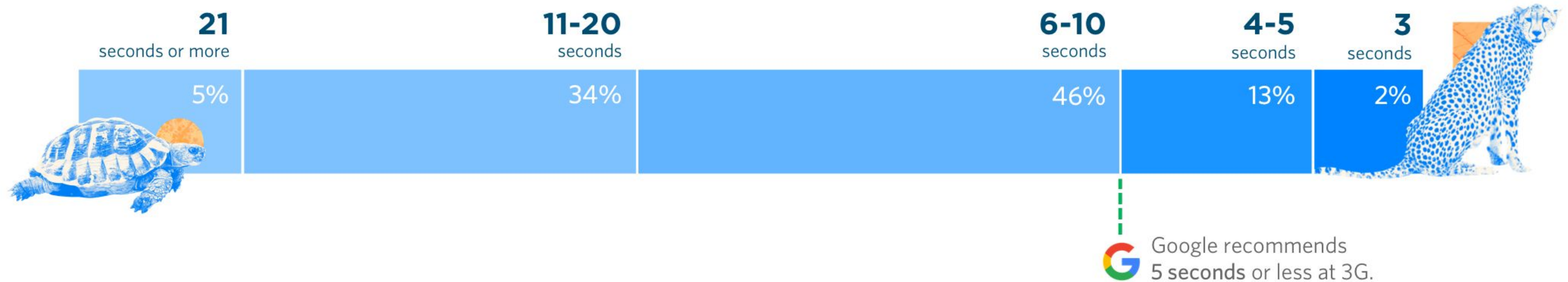


**1s to 10s** the probability of bounce **increases 123%**

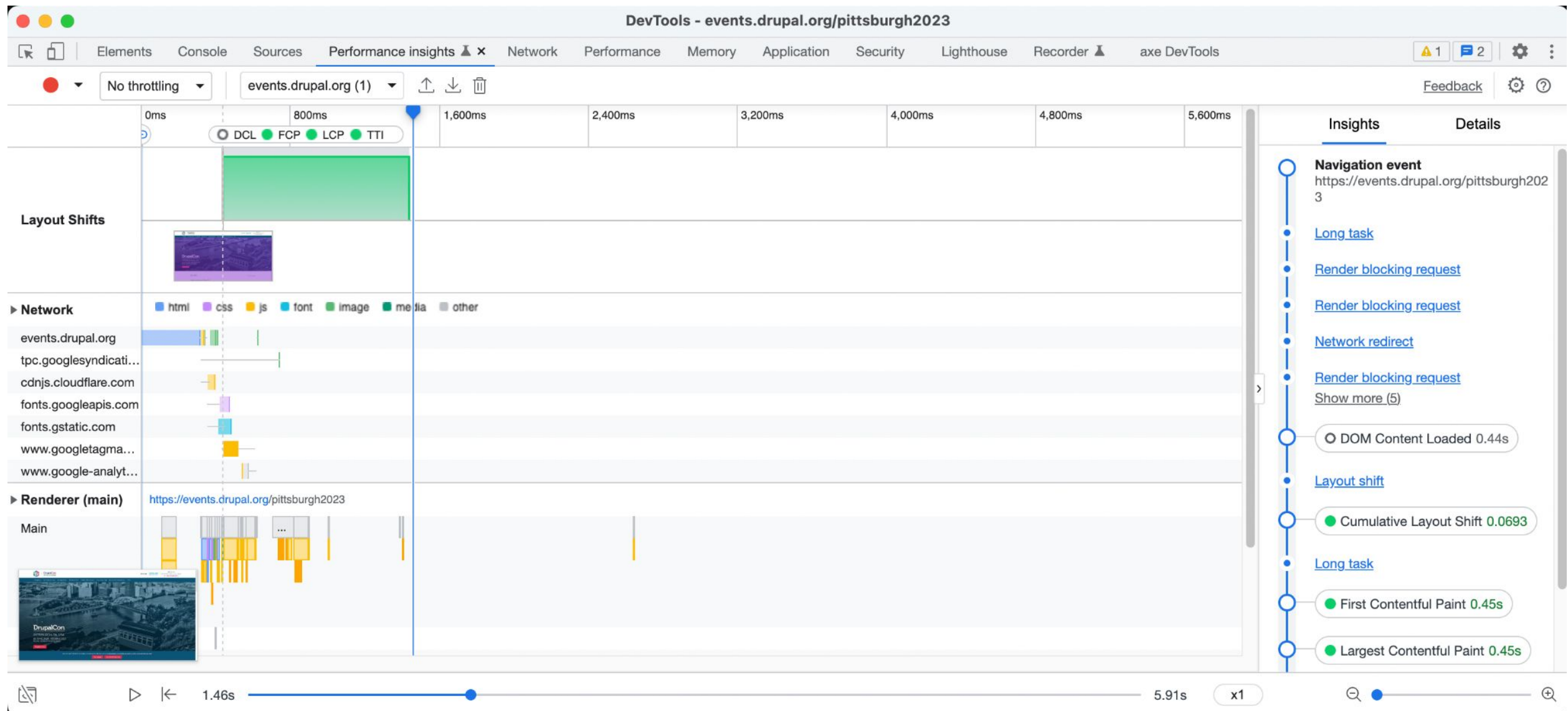


And on mobile, the probability of users bouncing increases to 90% after 3 seconds.

# Good news! Only 15% of websites are fast enough



<https://www.bluecorona.com/blog/how-fast-should-website-be>



**FREE TOOLS** <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>

<https://gtmetrix.com/>

## TAKEAWAY



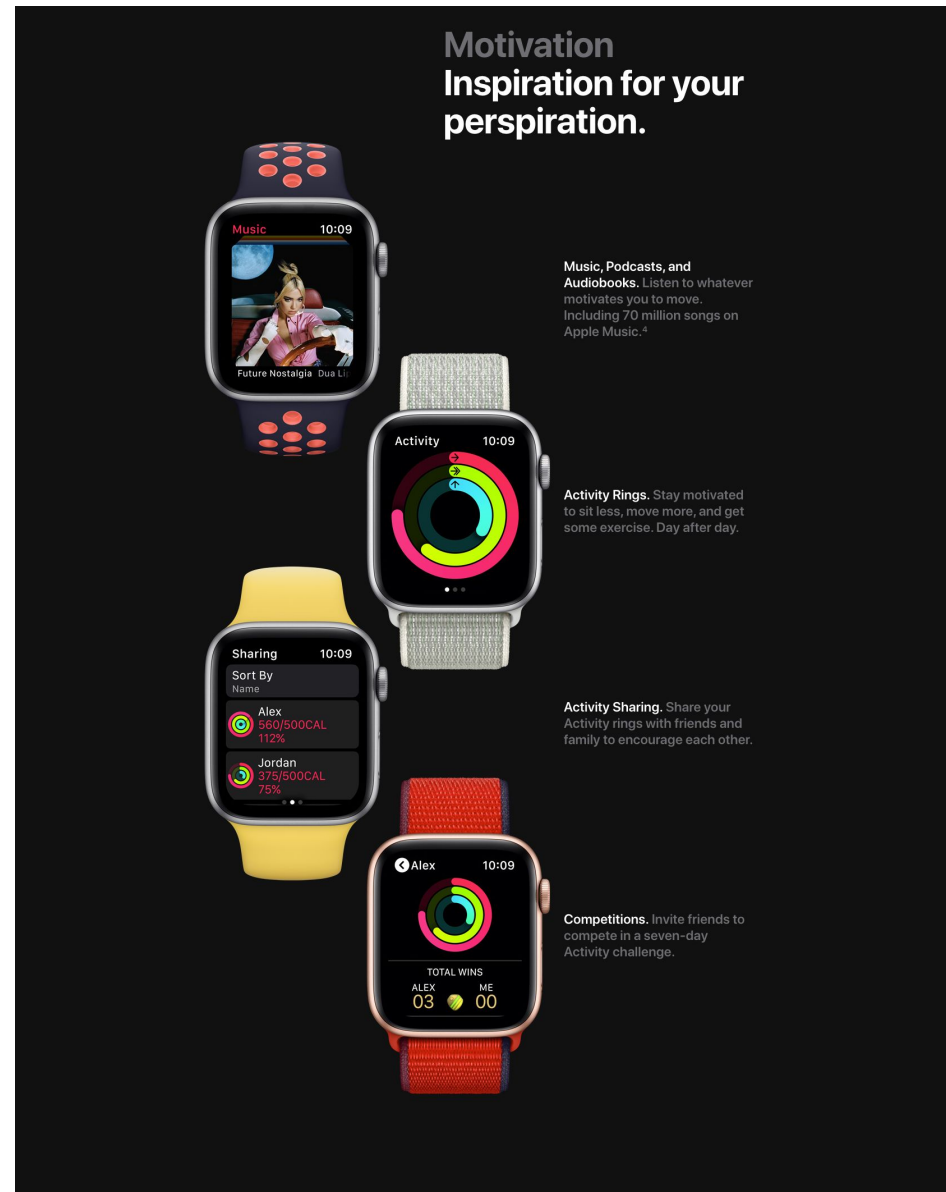
Improving the speed of your site improves your UX – instant gratification



## PRINCIPLE 2

Users don't read –  
they scan blocks of content

Relevant photos



Motivation  
Inspiration for your  
perspiration.

**Music, Podcasts, and Audiobooks.** Listen to whatever motivates you to move. Including 70 million songs on Apple Music.\*

**Activity Rings.** Stay motivated to sit less, move more, and get some exercise. Day after day.

**Activity Sharing.** Share your Activity rings with friends and family to encourage each other.

**Competitions.** Invite friends to compete in a seven-day Activity challenge.

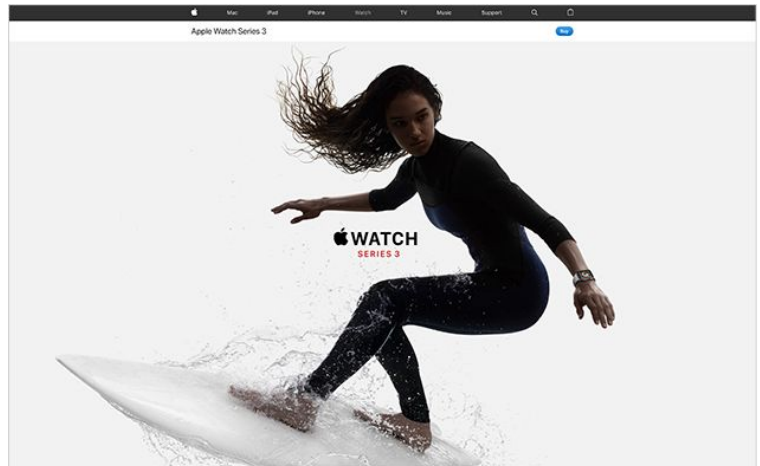
Catchy headline



Scannable subheads







**Stay active. Stay healthy.  
Stay connected.**

Monitor your health. Track your workouts. Get the motivation you need to achieve your fitness goals. And stay connected to the people and information you care about. With Apple Watch Series 3, you can do it all—right from your wrist.

Now starting at \$279

**Three rings. One goal.**

Stand, Move, and Exercise rings visualize the ways you move each day. See if you're sitting too much. Measure calories burned. And track how many minutes of exercise you've done. You can even share your rings with friends. Try new Activity competitions, and let smart coaching give you a nudge when you need it.

See how to close your Activity rings on Apple Watch.

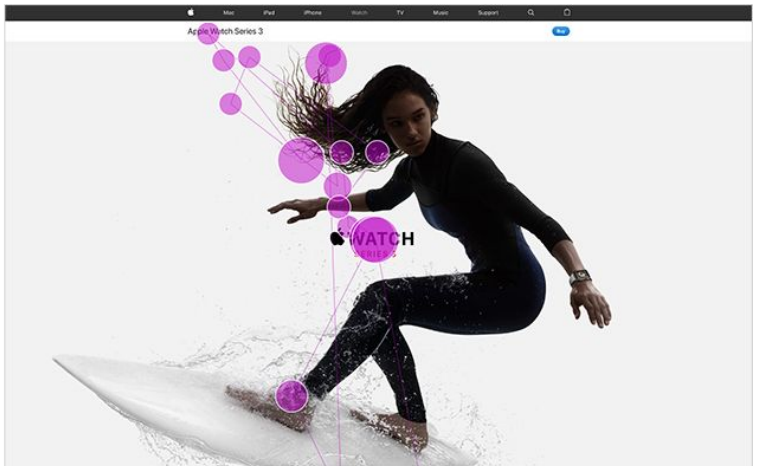


**Take your workouts further.**

Track popular workouts like yoga, cycling, swimming, and high-intensity interval training. Track your runs with advanced features for runners like cadence and pace alerts. Pair wirelessly with compatible gym equipment. And stay motivated by streaming Apple Music and Apple Podcasts.

**Keep your health top of mind.**

Monitor your heart rate and get warnings when an unusually high or low heart rate is detected. Apple Watch can also screen for irregular heart rhythm that is suggestive of atrial fibrillation.\* Emergency SOS lets you initiate an immediate call for help. The Breathe app can help you better manage everyday stress. And you can choose from a host of



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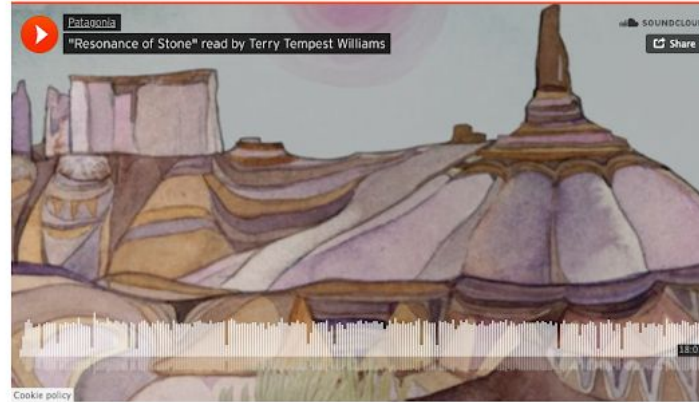
Pull quote



“In the process of being broken open, worn down, and reshaped, an uncommon tranquility can follow. Our undoing is also our becoming.”

*Listen to Terry Tempest Williams read “The Resonance of Stone” from her home in Castle Valley.*

Audio content



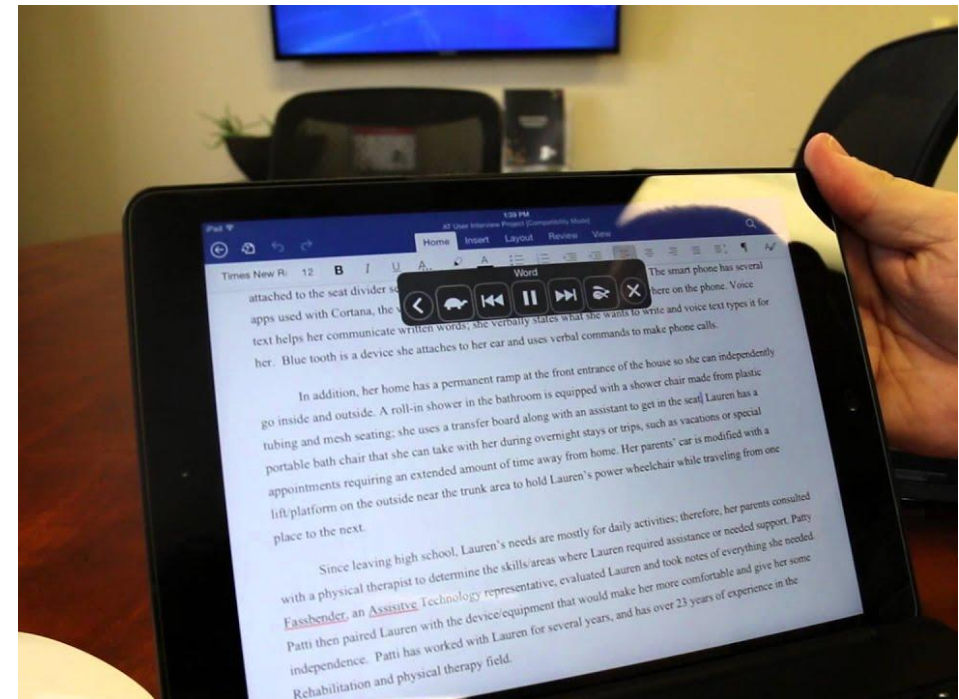
*This essay, written especially for Patagonia, will appear in the new paperback version of Erosion: Essays of Undoing, by Terry Tempest Williams, published this fall by Picador.*



Social sharing



Screen readers render text and image content as speech or braille.





[Home](#) > [Extensions](#) > Screen Reader



# Screen Reader

 [chrome.google.com](https://chrome.google.com)

★★★★★ 982 ⓘ | [Developer Tools](#) | 200,000+ users

 By Google

Remove from Chrome

Overview

Privacy practices

Reviews

Related

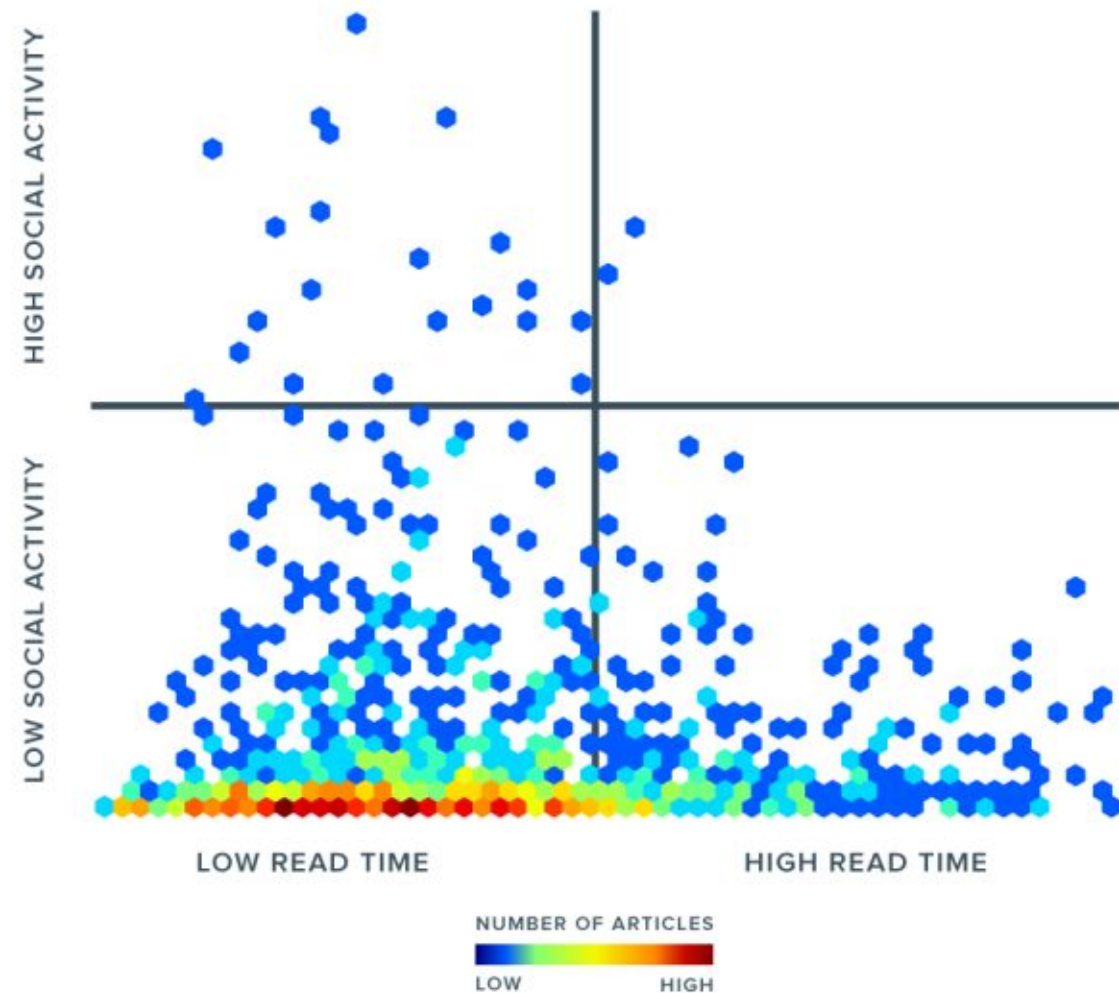


## TAKEAWAY

Break up copy with scannable headlines, subheads, bullets, and other visual assets

## PRINCIPLE 3

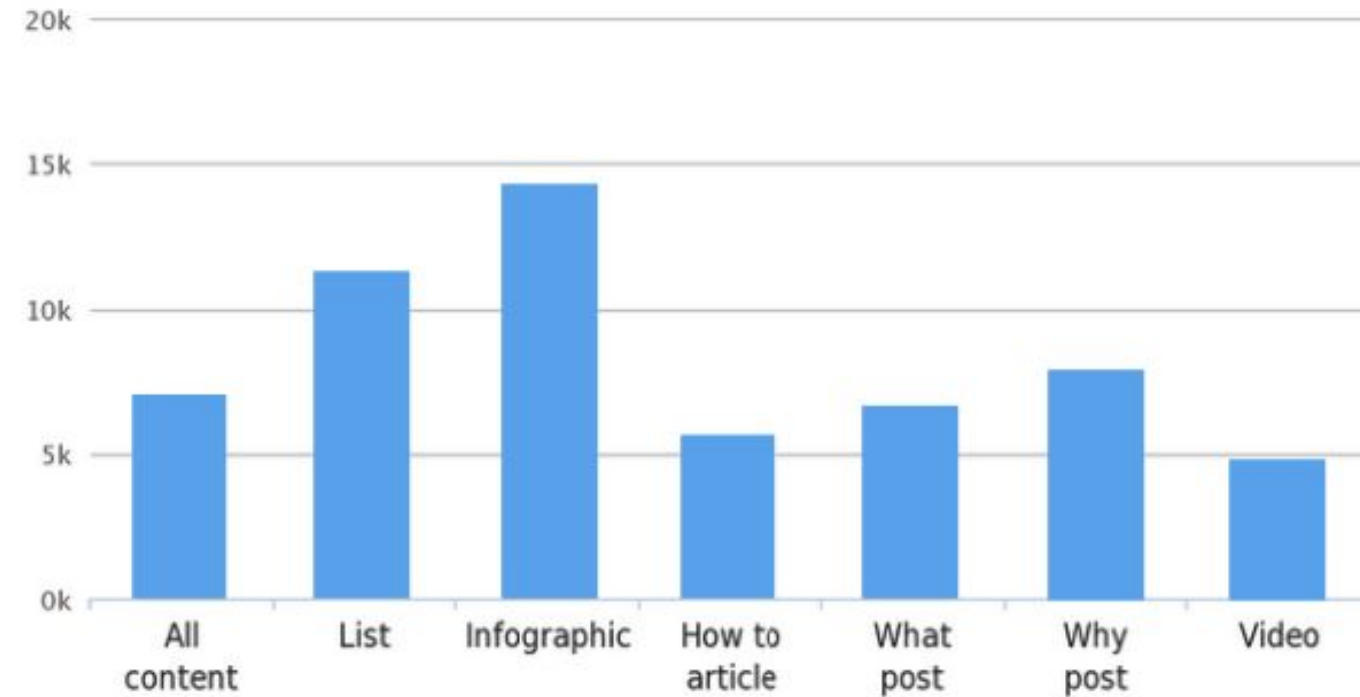
Users like to share content –  
even when they don't read it



The less time users spend reading – the more likely they are to share it

Infographics  
and lists  
are the most  
shared content

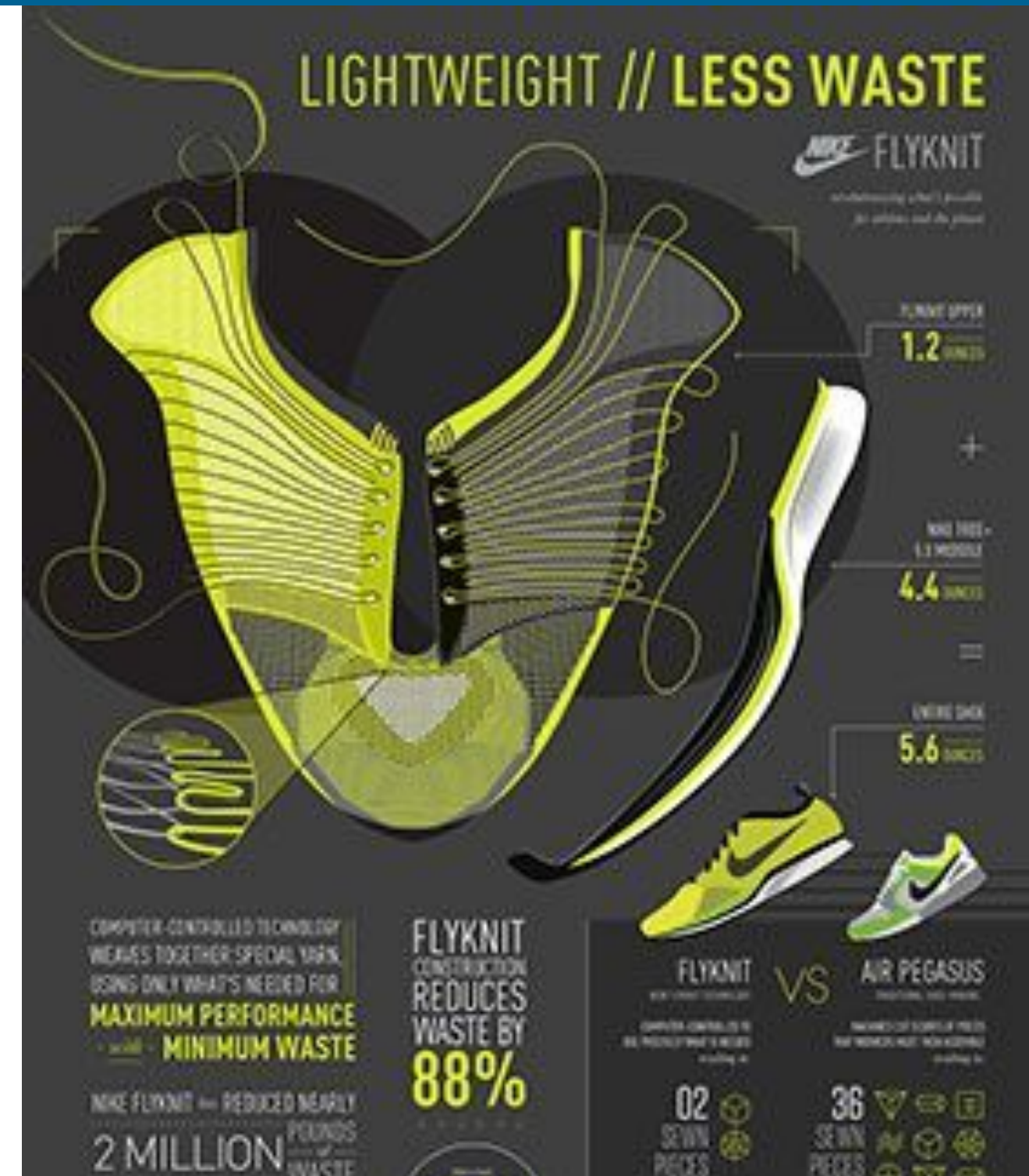
Average Shares by Content Type





However, infographics are not accessible.  
A transcript can help.

A transcript is simply a full-text version of the infographic that screen readers can read.



## TAKEAWAY



Include social sharing close  
to your article headlines

(and have transcripts for infographics)

## PRINCIPLE 4

Buttons need more  
than color to be clickable

Key

---

 Incorrect

 Correct

**Inaccessible**

color is the only indicator of correct vs. incorrect

Key

---

 Incorrect

 Correct

**Accessible**

both color and shape indicate correct vs. incorrect

When using color to convey information, you must provide visual cues to support color and content differences

## Schedule

Wednesday 9:00 am - 9:50 am EST Type: Keynote

### The Future of Accessibility

- Vint Cerf

Wednesday 10:00 am - 10:50 am EST Type: Keynote

### The State of Accessibility and axe Updates

- Preety Kumar
- Dylan Barrell

Wednesday 11:00 am - 11:50 am EST Type: Breakout

### Unblocking Backlog Jams with Multi-Dimensional Accessibility Audits

- Dave Rupert

Wednesday 11:00 am - 11:50 am EST Type: Breakout

### Approach Accessibility As A Customer Experience Imperative: It Starts With Design

- Gina Bhawalkar



Visual indicators like a change in button shape or adding an underline on hover/click can support color cues

VIRTUAL ZOOM WEBINAR

### Diabetic Limb Salvage

April 7-10, 2021  
Bangkok, Thailand

[See details](#)

VIRTUAL ZOOM WEBINAR

### Diabetic Limb Salvage (DLS) Conference

April 7-10, 2021

[See details](#)

Visuals cues can provide an opportunity for more branding in the UI

**SVS needs your help!** Complete the annual physicians member census by December 14. Your responses will help us meet our diversity, equity and inclusion goals

[Access the Survey](#)

**SVS needs your help!** Complete the annual physicians member census by December 14. Your responses will help us meet our diversity, equity and inclusion goals

[ACCESS THE SURVEY](#)

## TAKEAWAY



Use visuals along with color to help users understand and interact with your content



## PRINCIPLE 5

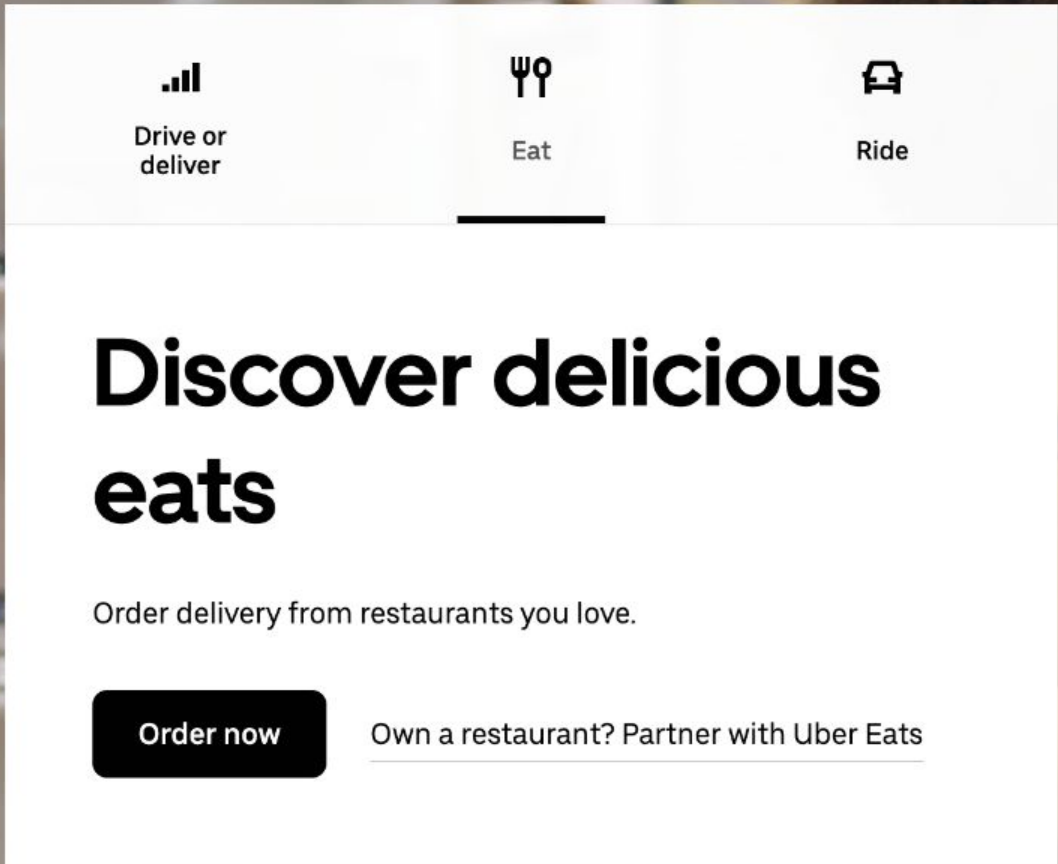
Users will scroll on desktop  
when you give them a reason








# ALL LIVES HAVE EQUAL VALUE

*we are impatient optimists working to reduce inequity*



 Drive or deliver

 Eat

 Ride

# Discover delicious eats

Order delivery from restaurants you love.

[Order now](#) [Own a restaurant? Partner with Uber Eats](#)

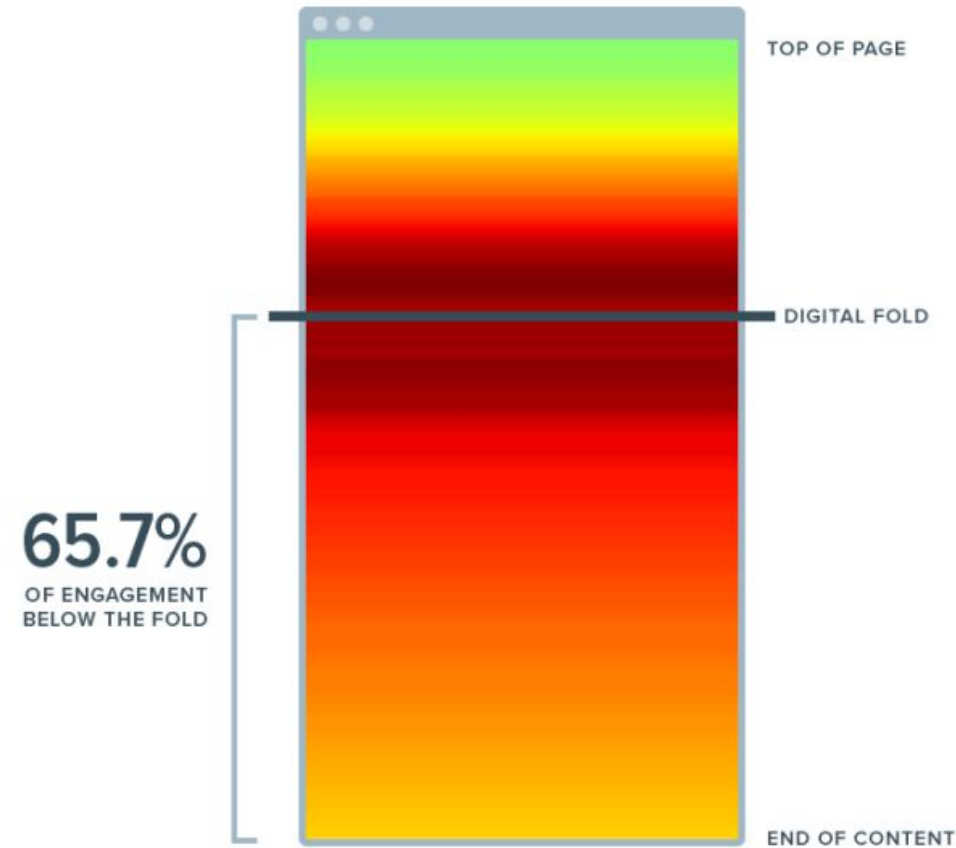


## Uber for Business

Transform the way your company moves and feeds its people.



# WHERE WE SPEND TIME READING



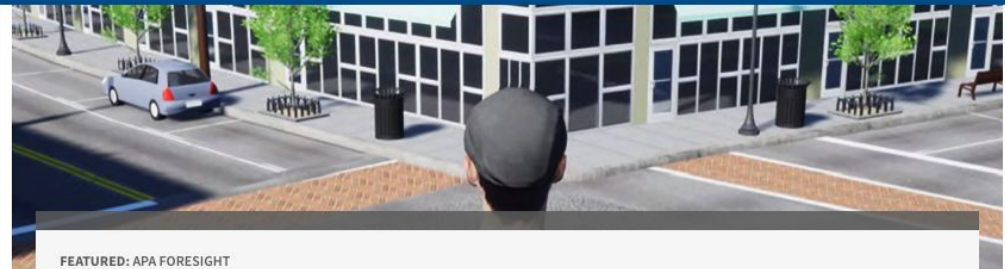
ENGAGEMENT  
LOW HIGH

Data from 1 million visitors on 10 publishers over a 24 hour period

The “fold” is your sweet spot for engaging content

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**FEATURED: APA FORESIGHT**  

## AI in Planning: Opportunities and Challenges and How to Prepare

One of the biggest expected disruptors of the 21st century is artificial intelligence (AI). Its impact will be felt in the economy, built environment, throughout society, and across all professions — including the planning profession. Learn how to be proactive and contribute to the development of AI-based tools and their shortcomings in this new *AI and Planning* whitepaper from APA's foresight practice.

[Learn More](#)



**EV Charging Infrastructure**  
 With \$5 billion in federal funding committed for states to expand their EV infrastructure, planners need to understand the evolving state of EV charging stations. Learn about the types of stations, placement, and potential for disruption in this *PAS QuickNotes*.

[Learn More](#)



**Start Your Path to AICP Certification**  
 AICP Certification helps you make an impact — in your career, your projects, and your community. The new streamlined One Path to AICP Certification helps you achieve your planning goals. Registration is now open for the November AICP exam through **October 28**.

[Learn More](#)



**Heritage, Housing, and Health**  
 After years of advocating, residents of San Diego's Barrio Logan secured a neighborhood plan that tackles environmental justice and affordable housing — all while celebrating the community's vibrant history of Indigenous and Hispanic tradition and culture. As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, read how planning helped to center community voices in this long-awaited plan for one of San Diego's prominent Mexican-American communities.

[Learn More](#)


**See yourself** in an APA Division 

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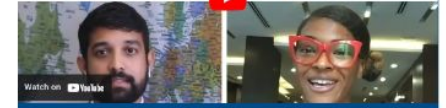
[Learn More](#)



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[Learn More](#)

**Featured Video**



**Make Your Voice Heard at Planners' Day on Capitol Hill**  
 Hear from five passionate planners — Rajiv Kumar Myrna of Alabama, Christie Holland of Washington, DC, Chris Haysman, AICP, of Oregon, Shashi Pandey of New York, and Josh Ciscomani, AICP, of Wisconsin — about why Planners' Day on Capitol Hill is an opportunity for advocacy, action, and change.

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[Most Popular](#) [Most Shared](#)
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**See yourself** in an APA Division 



## TAKEAWAY



Beware of ‘false bottoms’

## PRINCIPLE 6

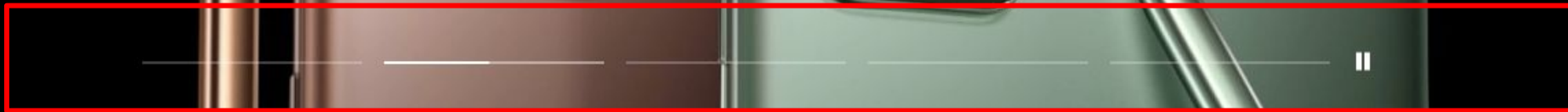
Users think your rotating  
homepage image is an ad

# Galaxy Note20 5G

Power your work and play like never before. Starting from \$9.73/mo for 36 mos<sup>®</sup> or \$349.99 with eligible trade-in.<sup>®</sup>

[Learn more](#)

Buy now



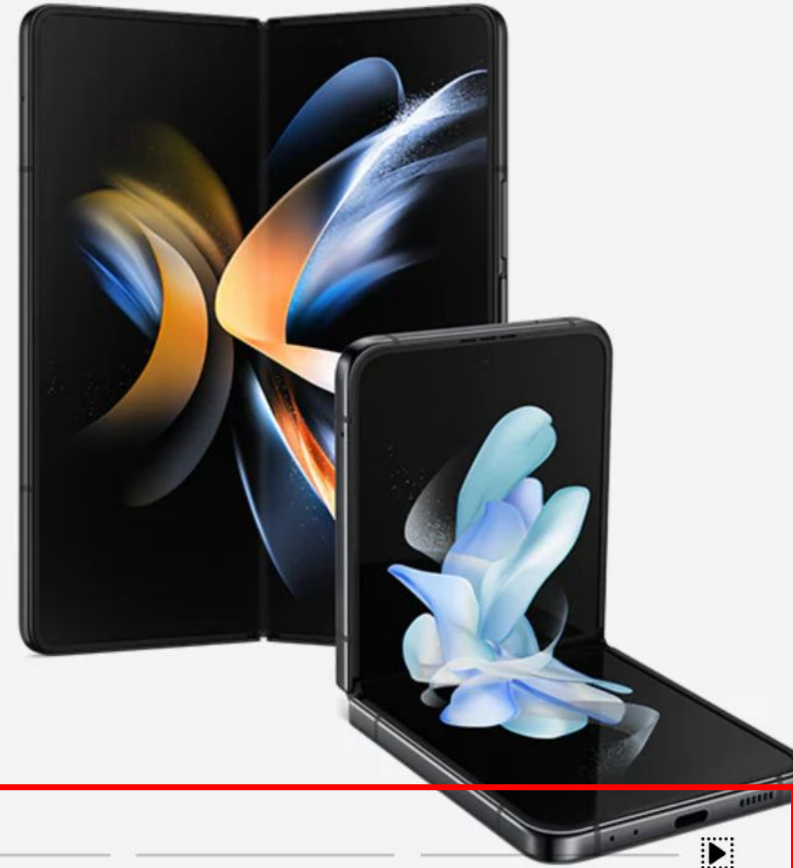
Offer ends Oct. 23

# Your Galaxy. Your way.

Get \$200 off select Galaxy Z Fold4 or \$100 off select Galaxy Z Flip4. Plus, save even more with enhanced trade-in values.<sup>0</sup>

[Buy Z Flip4](#)

[Buy Z Fold4](#)



[Galaxy Z Fold4 | Z Flip4](#)

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Limited time offer

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Best offer of the year yet



# Save 25% Off Every Essential Oil

Shop NOW



SHOP BY CATEGORY



**WHAT MAKES  
US BETTER,  
MAKES YOU  
BETTER.®**



Request Appointment



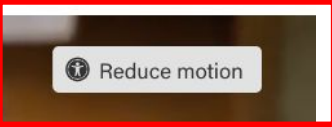
Find Doctors



Find Locations



feedback



Reduce motion

Weaving a New Tapestry: Schools, Families and  
Communities Together

# Social and Emotional Learning Exchange

[Register for the Virtual Summit](#)

## TAKEAWAY



Do not use auto carousels.  
It causes banner blindness.  
Prioritize or personalize and  
give users control.



## PRINCIPLE 7

PDFs were created  
for print not digital



## What's wrong with PDFs?

- ✓ don't respond
- ✓ hard to read on the web
- ✓ hard to track
- ✓ usually not accessible
- ✓ cause difficulties for navigation and orientation

[SEE ALL CORONAVIRUS COVERAGE >](#)

APRIL 30, 2020



# 53% of Americans Say the Internet Has Been Essential During the COVID-19 Outbreak

*Americans with lower incomes are particularly likely to have concerns related to the digital divide and the digital "homework gap"*

BY EMILY A. VOGELS, ANDREW PERRIN, LEE RAINIE AND MONICA ANDERSON



## REPORT MATERIALS

[Complete Report PDF](#)[Topline](#)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**53% of Americans Say the Internet Has Been Essential During the COVID-19 Outbreak**

[Acknowledgments](#)[Methodology](#)[Appendix](#)

## TOPICS

[Internet Activities](#)

## TAKEAWAY



Create PDF gateway pages for a better and more accessible user experience and better SEO





## PRINCIPLE 8

Many users struggle  
with contrast



# Claims Paid in Just a Day

When you use Aflac SmartClaim<sup>®</sup> to submit accident, cancer, hospitalization or illness claims online (by 3 p.m. ET Monday–Friday) you'll get paid in just a day.

[LOG IN TO YOUR ACCOUNT >](#)



Live Chat



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[Products](#)

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[Request a Quote](#)



File a Claim

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[LOG IN TO YOUR ACCOUNT](#) >





Live Chat





SHARE PAGE

# Contrast Checker

[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > Contrast Checker

**Foreground Color**  
#0000FF   
Lightness 

**Background Color**  
#FFFFFF   
Lightness 

↔

**Contrast Ratio**  
**8.59:1**  
[permalink](#)

**Normal Text**

WCAG AA: **Pass**  
WCAG AAA: **Pass**

**Large Text**

WCAG AA: **Pass**  
WCAG AAA: **Pass**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

Enter the Hex code of the foreground color here  
(i.e, the color of your text)

Enter the Hex code of the background color here

**FREE TOOL** <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

**Contrast Checker**  
[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > Contrast Checker

**Foreground Color**  
 #0000FF [Color swatch]  
 Lightness [Slider]

**Background Color**  
 #FFFFFF [Color swatch]  
 Lightness [Slider]

**Contrast Ratio**  
**8.59:1**  
[permalink](#)

**Normal Text**  
 WCAG AA: **Pass**  
 WCAG AAA: **Pass**  
 The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

**Large Text**  
 WCAG AA: **Pass**  
 WCAG AAA: **Pass**  
 The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

**Callout 1 (Left):** Enter the Hex code of the foreground color here (i.e, the color of your text)

**Callout 2 (Top Right):** Enter the Hex code of the background color here

**Callout 3 (Middle Right):** This is your contrast ratio. Ensure that you minimally pass WCAG AA.


**FREE TOOL** <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

Adjust the lightness to find the right contrast

# Contrast Checker

[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > Contrast Checker

**Foreground Color**  
#8A8AFF   
Lightness 

**Background Color**  
#FFFFFF   
Lightness 

↔

Contrast Ratio  
**2.93:1**  
[permalink](#)

---

**Normal Text**

WCAG AA: **Fail**  
WCAG AAA: **Fail**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

---

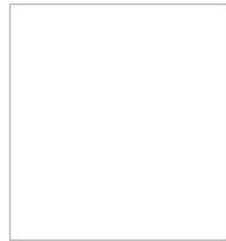
**Large Text**

WCAG AA: **Fail**  
WCAG AAA: **Fail**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

**FREE TOOL** <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

## Accessible color palette builder



**White**  
#FFFFFF



**Light**  
#B3EFFF



**Bright**  
#00CFFF



**Medium**  
#046B99



**Dark**  
#1C304A













































**Black**  
#000000

Edit palette

**FREE TOOL** <https://toolness.github.io/accessible-color-matrix/>

## Accessible color combinations

Please don't use these color combinations; they do not meet a color contrast ratio of 4.5:1, so they do not conform with the standards of Section 508 for body text. This means that some people would have difficulty reading the text. Employing accessibility best practices improves the user experience for all users.

	White text #FFFFFF Aa	Light text #B3EFFF Aa	Bright text #00CFFF Aa	Medium text #046B99 Aa	Dark text #1C304A Aa	Black text #000000 Aa
 Black background #000000						
 Dark background #1C304A						
 Medium background #046B99						
 Bright background #00CFFF						
 Light background #B3EFFF						
 White background #FFFFFF						

**FREE TOOL** <https://toolness.github.io/accessible-color-matrix/>



**FREE TOOL:**  
<https://contrast-grid.eightshapes.com/>

**Contrast Grid**

Test many foreground and background color combos for compliance with [WCAG 2.0 minimum contrast](#).

Include one color per line, with an optional comma-separated label.

**Rows & Columns**

#FFFFFF, White  
 #000, Black  
 #333, Text  
 #01509b, dark blue  
 #00A7E1, light blue  
 #87cbac, green  
 #f44708, dark orange  
 #faa613, light orange  
 #E9E8CF, JOT beige

Use distinct rows & columns values

**Tile Size**

S (80x80)    M (100x100)    L (150x150)

**Show**

AAA    AA    AA18    DNP

Copy Grid HTML & CSS

Tweet My Grid

By Eightshapes • On Github

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Background \ Text	#FFFFFF	#000	#333	#01509B	#00A7E1	#87CBAC	#F44708	#FAA613	#E9E8CF
<b>White</b> #FFFFFF		Text AAA 21	Text AAA 12.6	Text AAA 8			Text AA18 3.6		
<b>Black</b> #000	Text AAA 21				Text AAA 7.6	Text AAA 11.1	Text AA 5.7	Text AAA 10	Text AAA 16.9
<b>Text</b> #333	Text AAA 12.6				Text AA 4.5	Text AA 6.7	Text AA18 3.4	Text AA 6.3	Text AAA 10
<b>dark blue</b> #01509B	Text AAA 8					Text AA18 4.2		Text AA18 4	Text AA 6.4
<b>light blue</b> #00A7E1		Text AAA 7.6	Text AA 4.5						
<b>green</b> #87CBAC		Text AAA 11.1	Text AA 6.7	Text AA18 4.2					
<b>dark orange</b> #F44708	Text AA18 3.6	Text AA 5.7	Text AA18 3.4						
<b>light orange</b> #FAA613		Text AAA 10	Text AA 6.3	Text AA18 4					
<b>JOT beige</b> #E9E8CF		Text AAA 16.9	Text AAA 10	Text AA 6.4					

AAA Pass, AAA (7+)    AA18 Pass, Large Text Only (3+)  
 AA Pass, AA (4.5+)    DNP Does Not Pass

[About WCAG 2.0 contrast](#)


## TAKEAWAY



Define your WCAG contrast standards and test all colors

## PRINCIPLE 9

Text links can create a  
sticky user experience

A classical painting depicting a man with long, curly hair, wearing a red robe and a white loincloth, sitting on a rock in a dark, cavernous setting. He is surrounded by several lions of various colors (brown, golden, and reddish). The man has a look of distress or pleading, with his hands clasped together. The scene is dramatically lit, with strong highlights on the man's face and the lions' manes, and deep shadows in the surrounding rocks.

Fill in this [form](#) by the end of the day.

More information [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Check the security policy by this [link](#).

A user in the den of bad links

# Good text links are good UX and good accessibility

- Use unique text link language
  - **AVOID** click here and read more
- Buttonize special links
- Group links together
- Download links need inform about the file format and size


# Good text links are good UX and good accessibility

As for Assistive technology:

- Screen readers can be programmed to only read links
- Speech recognition tools can be programmed to open a link after a specific voice command

 1 Visit <http://www.kent.edu/webteam/drupal-training-manual> for more information.

 1 Visit the [Web and Social Media Services website](#) for more information.

 2 To learn about accessibility guidelines and web standards, [click here](#).

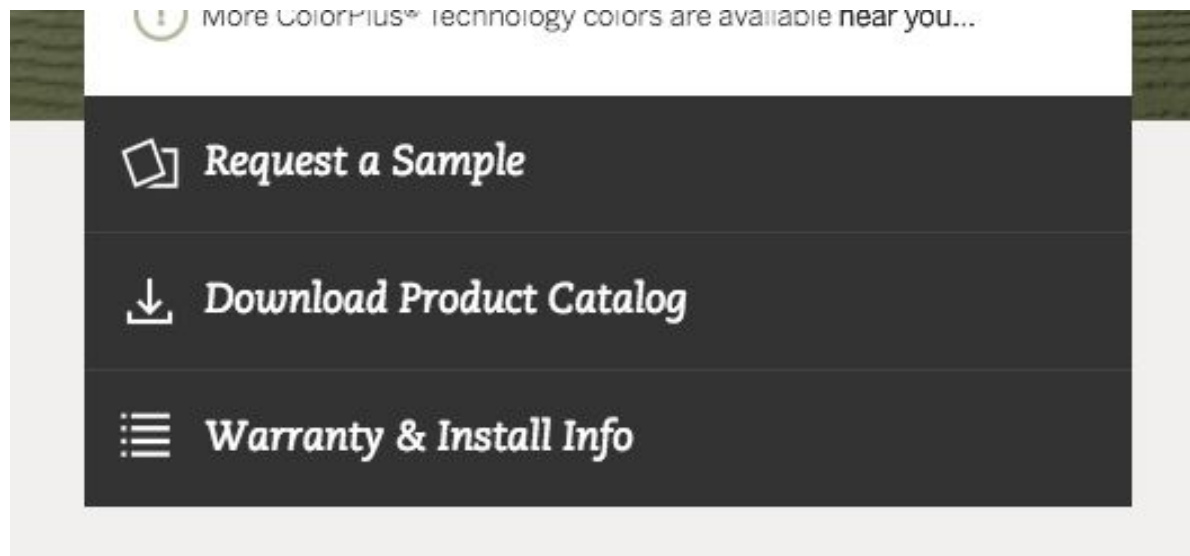
 2 Learn more about [accessibility guidelines and web standards](#).

 3 Information for Current [Students](#). Information for New [Students](#).

 3 Information for [Current Students](#). Information for [New Students](#).

<https://www.kent.edu/web-standards/accessibility-examples-correct-and-incorrect-use>

# Give a priority to links to help users engage



Request a Sample

Warranty



## TAKEAWAY



Descriptive text links  
help guide users journey and  
empower their choice



**PRINCIPLE 10**

Navigation should not  
rely on only hover



# NYC FAN SHOP

REP THE CONCRETE JUNGLE

SHOP NOW



FEEDBACK

## FUEL YOUR FIRE

EXPLORE WHAT'S NEW IN SPORTS



New Arrivals

**Women**

Men

Kids

Collaborations

Sport

Sale

Q SEARCH



### New Arrivals

Best Sellers

NYC Fan Shop

PUMA x OLIVIA AMATO

Festival Fits

Dresses & Skirts

Get Outside

PUMA x MODIBODI

PUMA Pride Collections

**SALE**

### Shoes

Classics

Suede

Cali

RS Collection

Rider Pack

Mayze

Lifestyle

Training + Gym

Running

Basketball

Motorsport

Slides + Sandals

Boots & Mids

### Clothing

Classics

Hoodies + Sweatshirts

T-Shirts + Tops

Leggings

Dresses + Skirts

Shorts

Bras

Tracksuits

Jackets + Outerwear

Pants

Loungewear

Matching Sets

Plus Size

Maternity

Swimwear

### Accessories

Bags + Backpacks

Hats

Socks

Face Masks + Gaiters

Watches

Sunglasses

Sports Equipment

Soccer Balls

### Sports

Running

Training + Gym

Basketball

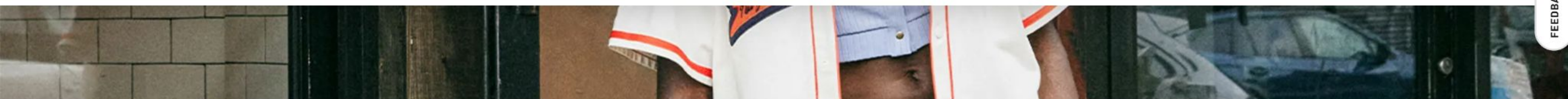
Motorsport

Yoga

Soccer

Racquet Sports

Swim



## FUEL YOUR FIRE

EXPLORE WHAT'S NEW IN SPORTS

FEEDBACK

# The New York Times

## U.S. Officials See Signs of a Counteroffensive in Ukraine

As Ukrainian attacks surge, the country's deputy minister of defense says Kyiv's forces are "moving to offensive actions."

See more headlines **7+**

## Nazi Symbols on Ukraine's Front Lines Highlight Thorny Issues of History

Troops' use of patches bearing Nazi emblems risks fueling Russian propaganda and spreading imagery that the West has spent a half-century trying to eliminate.

6 MIN READ

## President Biden discussed providing support to Kyiv with the prime minister of Denmark at the White House.

3 MIN READ



Tyler Hicks/The New York Times



Dustin Chambers

## The Lifelong Gift of Sibling Friendship

Whether you've always been close, or wish you got along better, here's how to bolster your connection.

6 MIN READ



# Save 25% Off Every Essential Oil

Shop NOW



SHOP BY CATEGORY

## **TAKEAWAY**



Make it clear the navigation includes dropdown menus and does not rely on hover only

## 10 Takeaways

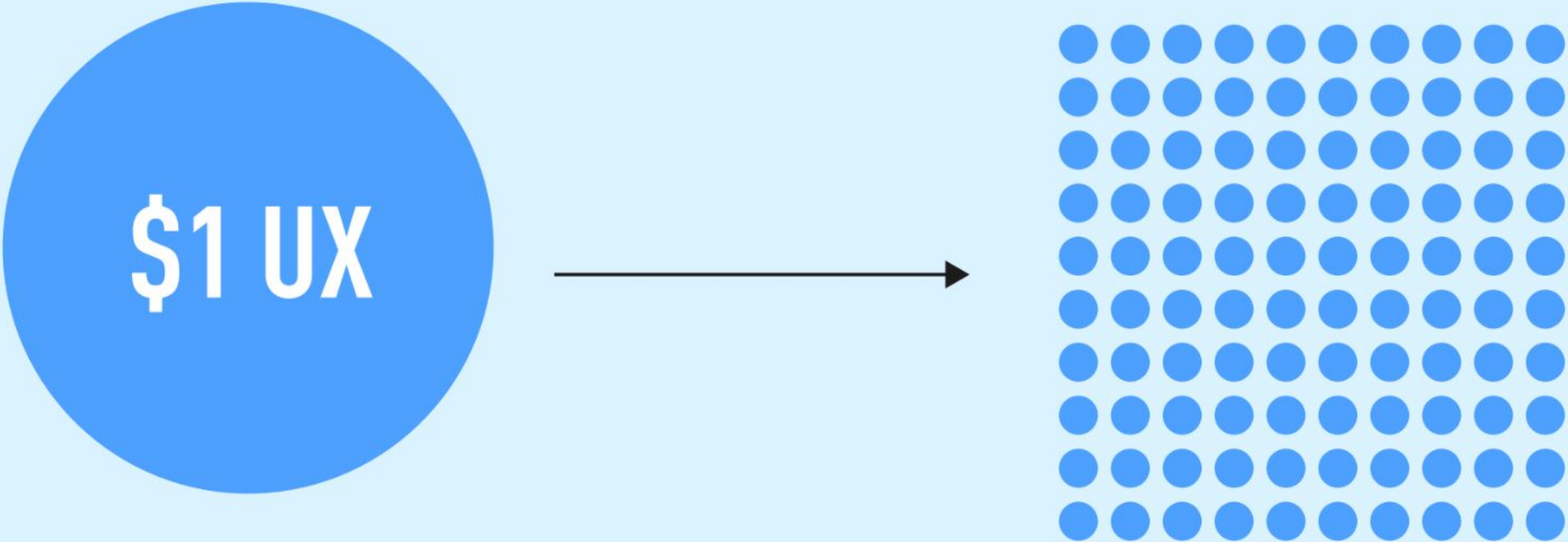


1. Improve the speed of your site
2. Make copy more scannable, add visuals and use screen reader plugin
3. Include social sharing close to article headlines
4. Don't rely on only color for your buttons
5. Beware of 'false bottoms'
6. Add reduce motion and remove auto carousels
7. Create PDFs gateway pages
8. Test all colors for contrast and aim for WCAG AA
9. Write descriptive text links
10. Include arrows in mega menus and don't rely only on hover



# Return of Investment

The return of investment in UX design is \$100 dollars for every \$1 invested.



## REMEMBER

Good usability  
is good accessibility.

Want to become  
a Sandstorm?  
We are hiring.

**Full Stack Developer**  
(Vue.js and Drupal)

**.Vue.js Developer**  
(contractor)

# Let's connect.



**Janna Fiester**  
VP of UX and Creative  
she/her/hers



**Alma Meshes**  
Sr UX Architect  
she/her/hers

Visit us online

