

— A BRIEFING BY ROD MARTIN

Website Accessibility for Christmas Tree Farms

Making sure every customer, no matter their ability, can find and visit your farm online.

→ navigatetomorrow.com

Light

Dark



— WHY ME, AND WHY THIS TALK

Rod Martin



I build websites for people who didn't get into business to think about websites. Small businesses, county agencies, churches, nonprofits. Hundreds of them, over 30 years.

Every site we ship has accessibility built in. Not bolted on after a scary letter arrives, and not a widget in the corner that claims to fix it.

For the past 15 years I've also taught the people who build those sites: federal agencies, Princeton, MIT, the United Nations, and plenty of shops with two employees and a laptop.

Originally from Australia, grew up in Canada, now live about 10 miles from here. I play ice hockey twice a week and ride my Goldwing whenever the roads aren't snow covered.

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— START HERE

What is website accessibility?

It means making your website easy to use for everyone, including people with disabilities.

Think of it like a ramp at your farm stand. You wouldn't block someone in a wheelchair from coming in. Your website should work the same way.

If your site is hard to use, it may violate the Americans with Disabilities Act, even if you didn't intend it.

— THREE REASONS

Why accessibility matters.

01

Your digital front door

Your website is how customers find you. If it doesn't work for everyone, you're turning people away before they arrive.

02

The right thing to do

Everyone deserves equal access, online and in person. Accessibility is good business and good values.

03

Real legal risk

Small businesses are settling for real money over website issues they didn't know existed.

1/4

About 1 in 4 of your customers lives with a disability.

That's not a niche. On a busy Saturday at the farm, that's every fourth family walking your rows.

96%

**Almost every website
has these problems.
Probably yours too.**

This isn't a shaming exercise. It's the baseline. The question is what you do once you know.

CHAPTER 1

What's actually at stake for your business?

Before we talk about fixes, let's be clear about the exposure. This is a legal question, a sales question, and a reputation question all at once.

— THE SHORT VERSION

The law covers your website. Even a small farm.

The ADA applies to places of public accommodation, and courts have repeatedly extended that to the websites those businesses run. There's no headcount exemption that makes this someone else's problem.

5,000+

Website lawsuits are at an all-time high.

Over 5,100 federal ADA website lawsuits were filed in 2025, a 37% jump over the year before. That doesn't count state filings or demand letters that never reach a court.

Source: AdaScanPro, ADA Website Lawsuit Statistics 2025

— THE MONEY

Lawsuits are happening right now.

\$5K

Minimum settlement

The low end of what small businesses pay to resolve an accessibility complaint. Many pay considerably more.

\$15K+

Common settlement

Typical once legal fees and required fixes are added in. Published ranges run higher still.

\$1–\$3K

Estimated fix cost

Most accessibility improvements cost a fraction of what a settlement does.

Prevention is always cheaper than a settlement. Most businesses targeted had no idea their website was non-compliant.

— THE DEADLINE QUESTION

There's no deadline. That's the problem.

GOVERNMENT GETS A DATE

April 2027 and 2028

Cities and towns have a written rule, a technical standard, and a deadline. They were even granted an extra year in April 2026.

YOUR FARM GETS NOTHING

No rule. No date. No grace period.

Private businesses have no deadline to work toward and no safe harbor to hide behind. The courts are already deciding.

No deadline doesn't mean no obligation. It means there's nothing to wait for.

— WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS NEXT

It starts with an envelope.

Nobody calls first. The first you hear about it is a letter naming a specific barrier on a specific page, with a number attached and a deadline to respond.

Re: ADA Accessibility Violation

Re: ADA Accessibility Violation

Respond within 30 days

CHAPTER 2

Who's being left out right now?

Real people, on real devices, trying to find out whether you're open on Saturday and whether you have a seven-foot Fraser.

— FOUR GROUPS

Who benefits from an accessible website?

01

Blind or low vision

They use software that reads the screen aloud, but it only works if your site is built correctly.

02

Deaf or hard of hearing

They rely on captions and written text instead of audio or spoken words in videos.

03

Limited mobility

Some people can't use a mouse. They navigate entirely with a keyboard or other device.

04

Learning or cognitive

Clear language, simple layouts, and good contrast help them understand and use your site.

— THE FRAMEWORK

Every guideline rests on four principles.

You don't need to memorize the standard. You need to remember four words: POUR. These are the backbone of WCAG and ADA compliance.

P

Perceivable

They can see and hear it

O

Operable

They can use it

U

Understandable

They can understand it

R

Robust

It works with their tools

CHAPTER 3

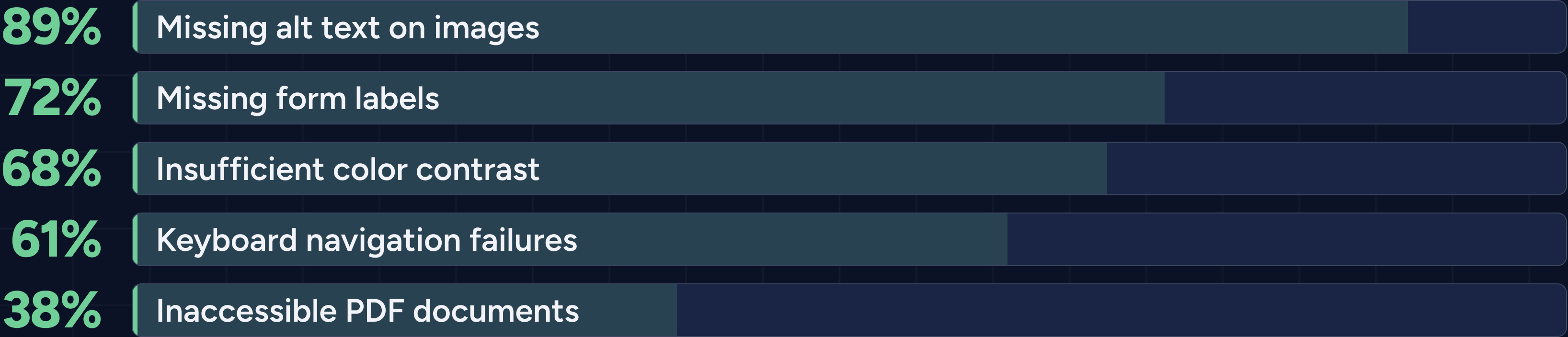
The handful of problems we see again and again.

The good news buried in that 96 percent: it's mostly the same few issues, over and over. Fix these and you've fixed most of it.

— WHAT PLAINTIFFS ACTUALLY CITE

The lawsuits name the same things.

How often each problem appears in ADA website complaints. The top three are exactly what we're about to cover.



Source: AdaScanPro, ADA Website Lawsuit Statistics 2025

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

The six most common problems.

01

Text that's too light

Grey on white looks elegant and reads like nothing.

02

Photos with no description

A screen reader announces "image" and moves on.

03

Forms with no labels

The box exists, but nobody can tell what goes in it.

04

Can't use a keyboard

Not everyone uses a mouse. Some people can't.

05

"Click here" links

Out of context, it tells the visitor nothing at all.

06

Headings used for looks

Bold text is not a heading. Screen readers use headings to navigate.

— PROBLEM 01

Is your text easy to read?

✗ FAILS

Fresh Frasers

Light grey on white. Roughly 1.8:1. Unreadable in sunlight, on a phone, or for anyone over forty.

✓ PASSES

Fresh Frasers

The same words, with real contrast. Aim for 4.5:1 on body text. Free checkers tell you in seconds.

— PROBLEM 02

Describe your trees in words.



✗ USELESS

alt="IMG_4417.jpg"

✓ USEFUL

alt="A family selecting a freshly cut Frazier fir for Christmas"

— PROBLEM 03

If they can't fill the form, they can't buy.

Your contact form, your wreath order, your wagon-ride booking. If it can't be completed, that's not an accessibility issue. That's a checkout that doesn't work.

✓ Clear labels

Not placeholder text that vanishes when someone starts typing.

✓ Descriptive help

"Error" helps nobody. Say what went wrong and how to fix it.

✓ Logical order

Fields should follow the order a person expects to fill them.

✓ Keyboard friendly

Every field reachable and completable without a mouse.

— PROBLEM 04

Your price lists and forms count too.

A PDF on your site is part of your site. Scan a paper price list, post the image, and you've published something a quarter of your customers can't read.

01

Scanned pictures of paper

To a screen reader it's a blank page. There's no text in there to read.

02

Forms you can't fill in

"Print it and bring it with you" isn't an option for everyone.

03

No headings or structure

No way to skim, jump, or navigate. Just a wall.

04

No descriptions on images

Same alt text problem, different file.

— PROBLEM 05

Headings are structure, not styling.

Blind visitors jump around a page by its headings, the way you'd skim a catalog by its section titles. Bold, bigger text isn't a heading. It just looks like one.

✗ FAILS

```
<h1> Our Farm </h1>
```

```
<h4> Hours </h4>
```

```
<b> Directions </b>
```

```
<h2> Wreaths </h2>
```

Jumps H1 to H4. "Directions" is just bold text, so it's invisible to navigation.

✓ PASSES

```
<h1> Our Farm </h1>
```

```
<h2> Hours </h2>
```

```
<h2> Directions </h2>
```

```
<h2> Wreaths </h2>
```

One H1 per page, then H2 to H6 in order. Never skip a level to get a size you like.

— THE GOOD NEWS

Some of this is a machine's job now.

Headings, alt text, form labels, link text. These are patterns, and AI built into your site is very good at patterns. Work that used to take a developer weeks now takes minutes.

AI DOES THIS WELL

- ✓ Fix heading order across every page
- ✓ Draft alt text for a whole photo library
- ✓ Label form fields and write error messages
- ✓ Rewrite "click here" into real link text

STILL NEEDS A HUMAN

- Knowing which photo actually matters
- Judging if a fix reads right to a customer
- Anything a scanner cannot see
- Deciding it is genuinely done

Building AI into small-business sites is what we do at [NavigateTomorrow](#). Come find me afterward.

ACTION PLAN

What you can do today.

You don't have to do it all at once. Pick the page that makes you money, fix the contrast, label the forms, describe the photos. Progress is a defense. Doing nothing isn't.

— STEP ONE

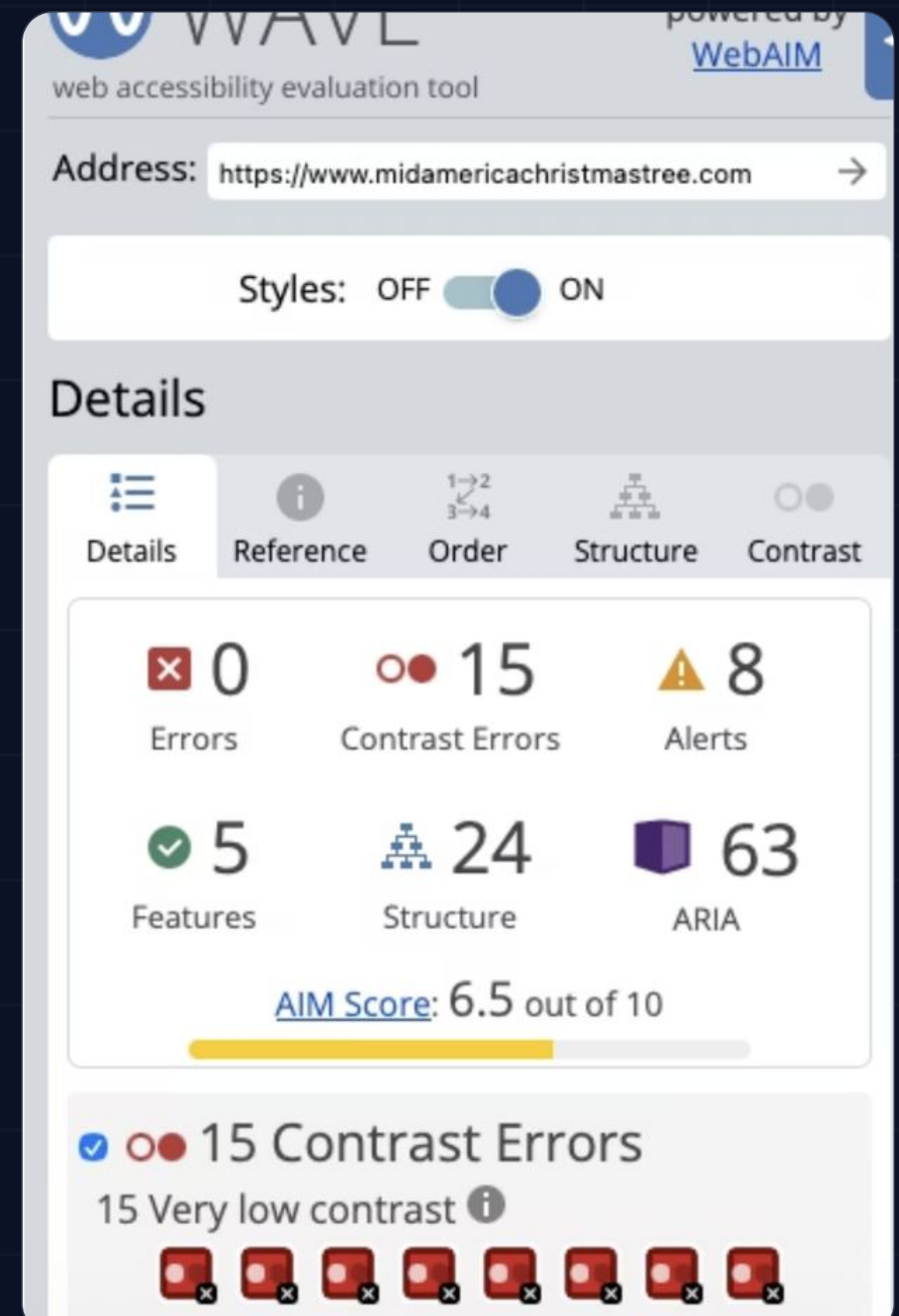
Test your website. It's free.

The WAVE tool

Paste your address into wave.webaim.org and get an instant report. There's a Chrome and Brave plugin too.

Real people

Ask a friend or family member with a disability to try your site. Their feedback is gold, and no tool replaces it.



— AN EXAMPLE OF IMPROVEMENT

The score went from 6.4 to 9.6 out of 10.

This is midamericachristmastree.com, rebuilt on my own time as a demonstration for today. Same content, a site that now works for everyone.

BEFORE

6.4



AFTER

9.6



— THE CHEAPEST THING ON THIS LIST

Put an accessibility statement on your site.

You aren't required to have one. That's the point. It costs a page, and it shows you're trying.

WHAT TO PUT ON IT

- ✓ A sentence saying you're committed to access
- ✓ What you're working on right now
- ✓ A name, phone number, and email
- ✓ An offer to help by phone if the site fails them

SKIP THESE (TOWNS ONLY)

- A council resolution
- An appointed ADA coordinator
- A formal grievance procedure
- A transition plan

A real one: osgoodindiana.org/ada-compliance. That's a town, so it goes further than you need to. Towns need the right column. Businesses don't.

— QUESTIONS & NEXT STEPS

Three things to do next.

01

Run a free test today

Visit wave.webaim.org, enter your farm's address, and see where you stand.

wave.webaim.org →

02

Talk to a developer who knows ADA

Share this deck. Ask them to run a WAVE scan and fix the top issues this month.

navigatetomorrow.com →

03

Know the rulebook

ADA.gov for your legal obligations. W3.org/WAI for the standard your developer should follow.

ada.gov →

Questions? Take the handout home. It lists every resource and step covered today.

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