

SurveyMonkey Section 508 Certification And Accessibility

Making Your SurveyMonkey Surveys Accessible and 508 Compliant

SurveyMonkey is now the ***only online survey application that is Section 508 Certified***. We ensure that by using our standard survey designs, your survey will meet all current US Federal Section 508 certification guidelines.

Section 508 is a Federal law that outlines the requirements to make online information and services accessible to users with disabilities. You can access the government web site that outlines the requirements and helpful links regarding section 508 [here](#). All Federal agencies are required to use 508 certified software and technologies when available.

The **Voluntary Product Accessibility Template**, or VPAT's purpose, is to assist Federal contracting officials and other buyers in making preliminary assessments regarding the availability of commercial "Electronic and Information Technology" products and services with features that support accessibility. The VPAT was developed by the Information Technology Industry Council (ITI) in partnership with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).

To view SurveyMonkey's VPAT, please click the following link:

http://s3.amazonaws.com/SurveyMonkeyFiles/VPAT_SurveyMonkey.pdf

We believe that it is important for our customers to be able to reach the broadest range of potential respondents possible to provide you with the most accurate results. It is estimated that there are 54 million people in America living with a disability. Being able to access feedback from this demographic will allow you to more effectively address the concerns and views of a more representative population.

Our developers have updated our SurveyMonkey survey design system across the board, so all standard survey designs are accessible and 508 certified and compliant for respondents with disabilities. This has been accomplished without changing the appealing look or function of your survey.

RampWEB Web Accessibility Consulting:

To achieve compliancy we worked closely with the [RampWEB Web Accessibility Consulting](#) (<http://www.RampWEB.com>) group who **certified us as Section 508 compliant on June 5, 2008**. RampWEB is the industry leader in web accessibility and is one of the most trusted names in accessibility certification. For more information on **RampWEB Web Accessibility Consulting**, please click [here](#).

We were fortunate enough to be able to collaborate with one of RampWEB's top accessibility consultants, **Jim Thatcher** (<http://www.jimthatcher.com/index.htm>), a pioneer in accessibility whose efforts have helped create many of the 508 standards in use today. You can get more information about Jim Thatcher by clicking [here](#) (<http://www.jimthatcher.com/index.htm>). With their help in design, consultation and

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implementation of the latest web accessibility standards, we have created user-friendly survey formats accessible with a broad range of disability software.

Creating Screen Reader – friendly surveys:

While all of our standard survey designs are 508 accessible, there are steps you can take as a Survey Designer to make your surveys user-friendly with screen readers and other visual technologies. These tips are especially important if this demographic is your primary response group.

- Screen readers are applications that work by ‘reading’ the behind-the –scenes coding on a web page. Surveys created by SurveyMonkey include the necessary labeling for screen readers to easily relay page content to users.

- The screen reader will read through each question by first reading the question text, and then listing off the possible answer options. Remember that all of this text is being converted to audio by the program.

- You can test your survey design by reading each question and the corresponding answer options out loud. Questions that can be easily understood when verbalized will be the most comprehensible by screen readers.

Web Accessibility Survey Design tips:

1.) Make Questions as concise as possible.

- Excessively long questions with unnecessary information in them can become tedious to listen to. The respondent might even forget the question or previous answer options as they reach the end of the list of possible answers. So keep questions to the point.

2.) Limit the use of Matrix question types and other complex question types.

- The more complex the question structure, the longer the screen-reader will take to move through the question. This also makes it harder for respondents to navigate backward within the question and remember what it is they are being asked. In this case, it is preferable to create longer surveys with a lot of simple questions rather than creating shorter surveys with a few complex questions.

3.) Clearly outline instructions in your Question text field for questions that have specific response requirements.

- Clearly state how many answer choices the respondent will need to select when creating multiple answer question types. For example, *“Please select all options that apply to you”* or *“Please select no more than 3 options”*. This helps clarify what

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respondents should do while they listen to the list of answer options. It is also helpful to note if the question is required.

4.) Do not add additional HTML in your survey design.

- If your account is HTML enabled, we **do not** recommend that you use HTML coding in the design of your survey. While screen readers are set up to ignore certain types of basic HTML coding, it is not uncommon for a program to interpret pieces of code as part of the label. Adding HTML coding may cause the users software to read aloud the HTML codes that you are entering into your survey.

For example, “ `Welcome` “ might be read as “Less than b greater than welcome less than backslash b greater than” in the screen reader.

While this will not necessarily happen with all HTML coding added to your survey design, we recommend that you **do not** add HTML unless you have experience coding with screen readers.

5.) Do not change the colors in the default themes.

- Being 508 compliant includes being accessible to users with visual impairments, such as colorblindness. To make the survey design easily visible to all users, a proper amount of color contrast and brightness has been included within all default themes. If you would like to change the color scheme but still maintain 508 compliancy, you can access the following site so that you can test your new colors to make sure that they are 508 compatible.

<http://juicystudio.com/services/colourcontrast.php#result>