



eBook

# Document Accessibility

A Legal Mandate, and an Opportunity for Growth

# Understanding Document Accessibility

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This eBook is intended as a primer for FI leaders who want to improve document accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

Read it to understand the **needs** of this underserved population, the **opportunity** that working with the PWD market offers your organization, and the **legal ramifications** of not taking steps towards document accessibility today.

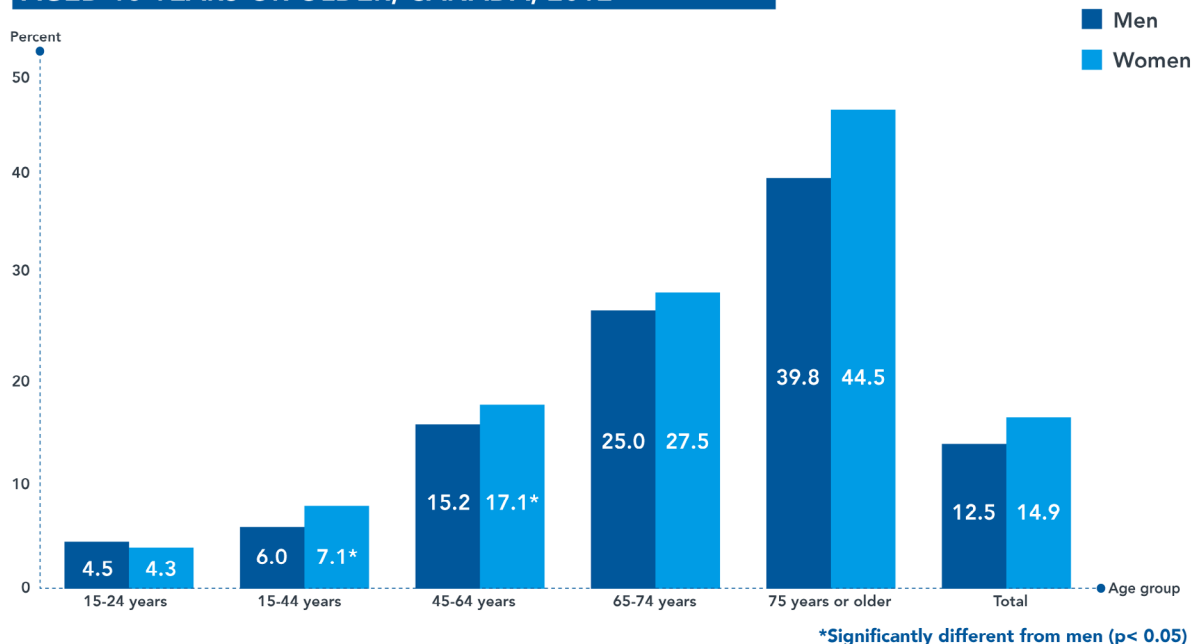
Financial Institutions (FIs) like yours pride themselves on serving the needs of their community. But have you truly considered the needs of the entire community? If your FI doesn't have a comprehensive plan in place to serve Persons with Disabilities (PWD), your valued customers may be experiencing barriers to accessing your products and services.

One common source of frustration for PWD is the inaccessibility of financial documentation, like monthly statements and reports. This eBook is intended to help you understand the barriers experienced by individuals with physical, cognitive, or vision disabilities when accessing financial documents. You'll learn how to assess the current state of your documents, and how to identify the right processes and technology to make your financial documents readily useable by all audiences.

Remember, barriers to accessibility aren't just a customer experience shortfall. They also create the risk of pricey legal action against your organization. And they prevent your FI from serving the lucrative and growing market of Persons with Disabilities in North America. So, moving towards accessible documents will not only help bring you into compliance with legislation like the **provincial and federal accessibility mandates**, it will also open up fresh new ways to serve an expanded customer base better.

# Market Opportunity: PWD In North America

PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY, BY AGE GROUP AND SEX,  
AGED 15 YEARS OR OLDER, CANADA, 2012



\*Significantly different from men ( $p < 0.05$ )  
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012

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According to the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, more than 6 million Canadians aged 15 and over (22% of the population) identify as having a disability. That's a huge and untapped market.

Older adults are significantly more likely to report having a disability than younger adults. Visual impairments, in particular, can complicate day to day life for many older adults.

Upcoming demographic shifts mean that FIs can expect an uptick in disability rates among their customers as the Baby Boomer population ages. Preparing for these changes by implementing accessible banking solutions now will ensure that long term and loyal customers can still bank effortlessly with your FI as they age.

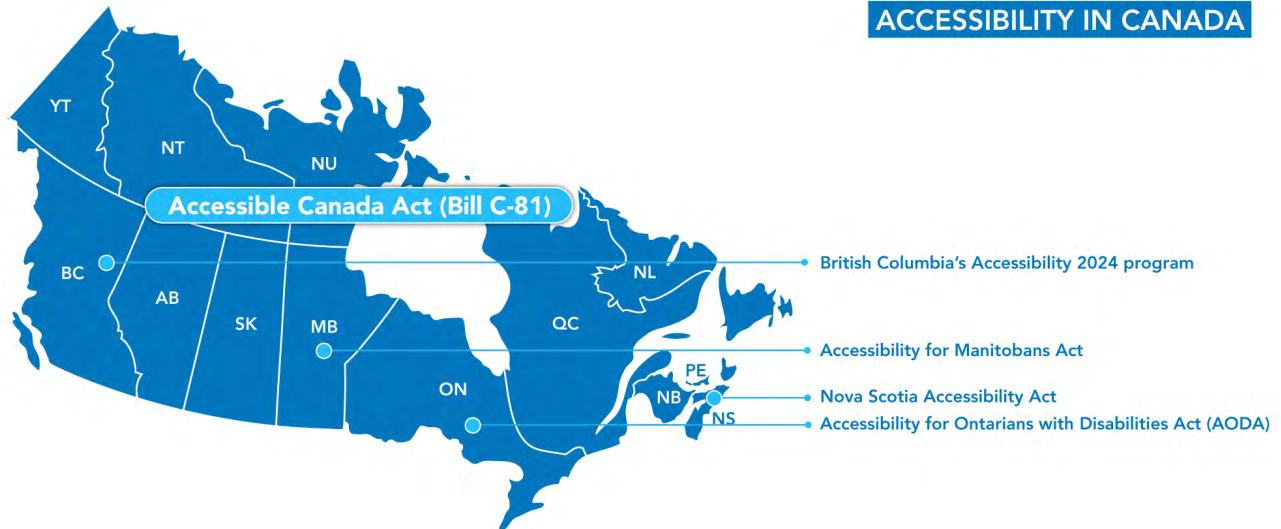
**Key takeaway:** The PWD market for financial services is large, under-served, and growing every day. Your investment in accessibility and inclusiveness will pay off now, and offer increasing dividends in the future as well.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities.html>



# Canadian Accessibility Guidelines And Your Financial Institution

## ACCESSIBILITY IN CANADA



Did you know? Provincial regulations like the The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) allow corporations to be fined for major offenses - up to \$100,000 per day.

**The reality check here is this:** your organization could proactively implement an accessible document solution quickly and cost-effectively to support all your PWD customers. Why wait for monetary penalties to make your decision?

Canadian human rights legislation has long banned discrimination and mentioned disability, both at the provincial and the federal level.

But more recently, provinces have begun enacting disability-specific laws, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, and the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, and British Columbia's Accessibility 2024 program.

These laws and regulations have associated monetary penalty schemes for organizations and corporations, as well as directors and officers of corporations with fiduciary responsibility. And the new Accessible Canada Act (Bill C-81) is expected to mandate at a federal level a complete set of accessibility guidelines for digital technology, and outline consequences for failure to comply.

It is clear from these recent shifts that Canada as a whole is headed in the direction of full and equitable accessibility for all Canadians, mandated by law. The time to get ahead of the curve on accessibility is now!

# The Accessible Document Challenge



Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A, AA and AAA also provide useful guidance across the globe to organizations working to provide inclusive digital experiences.

Addressing accessibility challenges across your FI's digital channels will help you meet current and upcoming provincial and federal compliance guidelines for the visually impaired. Although the accessibility guidelines for Bill C-81 are not yet available, it is widely anticipated that they will follow those outlined in WCAG 2.0.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A, AA and AAA also provide useful guidance across the globe to organizations working to provide inclusive digital experiences. These guidelines cover a wide range of recommendations to make digital content accessible to all users, and are based on the following four principles:

**Principle 1: Perceivable** - Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.

**Principle 2: Operable** - User interface components and navigation must be operable.

**Principle 3: Understandable** - Information and the operation of user interface must be understandable.

**Principle 4: Robust** - Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

By working with web designers and technology providers who are well versed in these regulations and guidelines, you can ensure your FI is fully compliant. Document accessibility is an essential part of the broader accessibility picture, because PWDs, like your other customers, rely on their monthly transactional documents to get an accurate picture of their finances.

# Disabilities And Document Usability



1 in 5 North American adults have a disability, and half of those disabilities are invisible. Your inclusive banking technology helps more people than you realize.

**Making content accessible** enables users to correctly navigate content, avoid “keyboard traps” and do everything users without a disability can do. This, in turn, enhances their customer experience, increasing loyalty and retention.

Here are some of the ways in which a disability can influence how people access documents at your FI. Remember, a Person with Disabilities may experience challenges across several of these categories:

## PHYSICAL

### **Challenge:**

May use assistive technology to help read through, click, or scroll through websites.

May require extra time to make selections - watch for “time-outs.”

Requiring customers with physical disabilities to go to the branch or sign hard copies can cause difficulty.

### **Accommodation:**

Avoiding “keyboard traps” (circumstances in which a mouse **MUST** be used to access the website) is also crucial for customers who use alternate means of accessing their documents.

## VISUAL

### **Challenge:**

Vision disabilities range from mild impairment to complete loss of sight.

They can include color blindness, or the inability to read certain colours of text against screen backgrounds.

Likelihood of visual impairment increases with age.

### **Accommodation:**

Documents must be tagged and formatted to be consumable by people who use assistive devices such as screen readers.

Being able to enlarge text helps readers with low vision access statement information as well, as does a selection of serif-free, simple font, and careful selection of color and contrast.

## COGNITIVE

### **Challenge:**

May struggle with long paragraphs or multiple pages of dense financial information.

Extra time to review selections, and ready access to online or phone help will make banking easier for customers with cognitive disabilities.

### **Accommodation:**

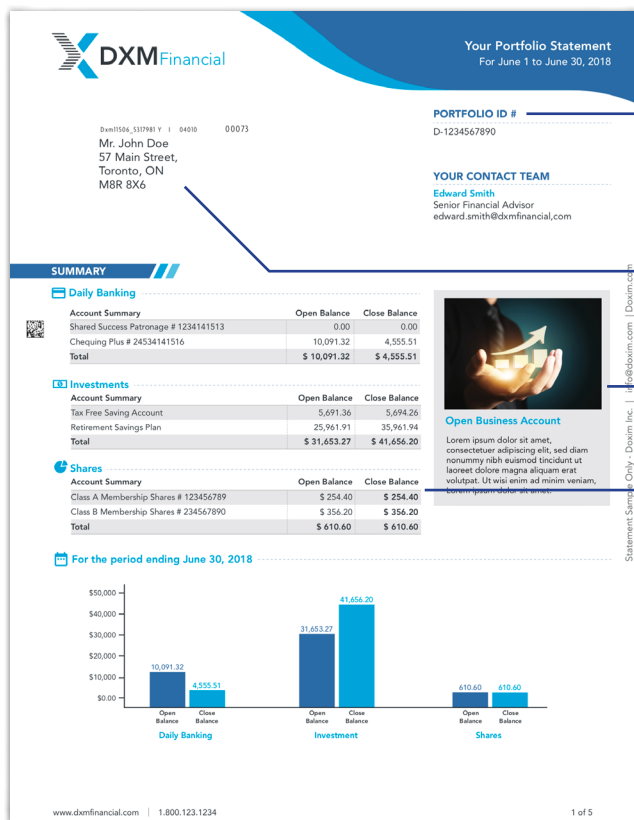
Will benefit from your efforts to reduce jargon and simplify language

Will benefit from call center assistance from representative trained in assisting persons with a variety of needs.

# What Does An Accessible Document Look Like?



An accessible document, like this eStatement, looks exactly the same as the eStatements you are providing today. But behind the scenes, it contains extra attributes that allow it to be reviewed by customers using screen readers, voice assistants, or other adaptive technology. Here are a few examples:



Use **headings** to allow accessible tech users to navigate through the document in a logical fashion.

Ensure **fonts** and **layout** can accommodate zooming for readers with low vision.

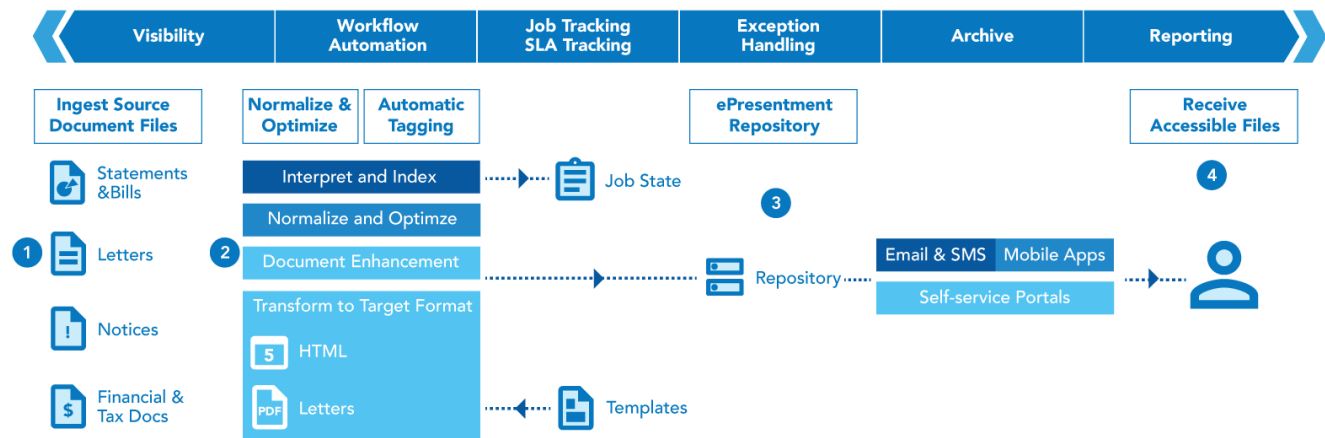
Make **URLs** accessible to customer who aren't using a mouse.

Make information in **tables** readily available, in the right order for comprehension.

## EXPERT TIP:

Include **alternate attributes**, like text explaining what's happening in an image, so visually impaired customers get the whole picture.

# How Does An Accessible Content Solution Work?



Preparing for changing requirements from your customers by implementing accessible banking solutions now will ensure that long term and loyal customers can still bank effortlessly with your FI as they age.

Source files (statements, bills, letters, etc) are ingested from your document provider.

Files are matched to a template, created in an accessibility designer, that adds the additional attributes required for accessibility. After the optimization and tagging process is completed, documents are available in accessible PDF or HTML format.

Accessible documents are pushed to a secure ePresentment Repository, from which they can be accessed via multiple channels like self-serve portals and mobile apps.

PWD access their documents and review using their preferred technologies.



# Getting Started With Accessible Documents



Accessible banking isn't just the law. It's also a way to reach an underserved, and growing, population of customers. As you work towards enhancing your digital customer experience by leveraging many touch points to connect with your customers, it's essential these individuals don't get left behind.

By implementing an accessible document solution, your FI will take an essential step towards compliance with provincial and federal accessibility legislation and human rights legislation, reducing the risk of a lawsuit. You'll also eliminate barriers between disabled customers and their financial information, enhancing their experience with your organization. Your customers already expect that your FI is accessible, and they won't be shy about going elsewhere if you can't meet their needs.

Plus, you'll attract to a broad, and growing, segment of the Canadian population. And best of all, accessible documents aren't expensive to implement compared to the cost of litigation.

## Ready To Get Started?

To Learn More About Doxim's Accessible Document Solution.



**Book a conversation with a Doxim expert now**

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