Understanding Your Compliance Sheriff Report

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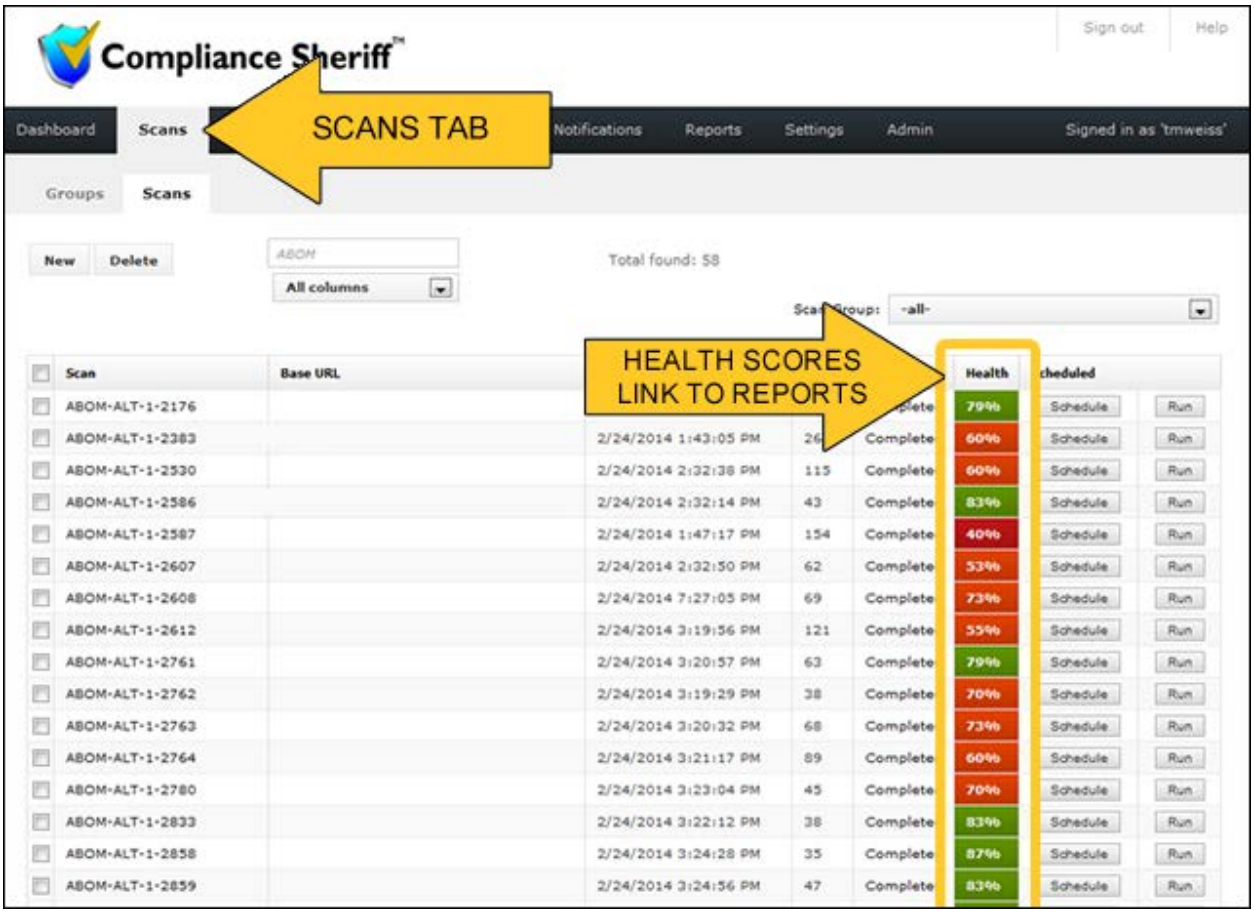
About Compliance Sheriff

Cryptzone's Compliance Sheriff is the University of Iowa's enterprise application for assessing the accessibility of University websites. Compliance Sheriff evaluates websites and content against a library of rules and techniques, called checkpoints.

As with any automated test, Compliance Sheriff reports do not represent the final word on a site's accessibility. Compliance Sheriff is just one means by which you should measure the accessibility of your website or application. Keyboard operability, color contrast, dynamic content, scalability and other factors also contribute to the accessibility of a website or application, and should also be part of your testing protocol.

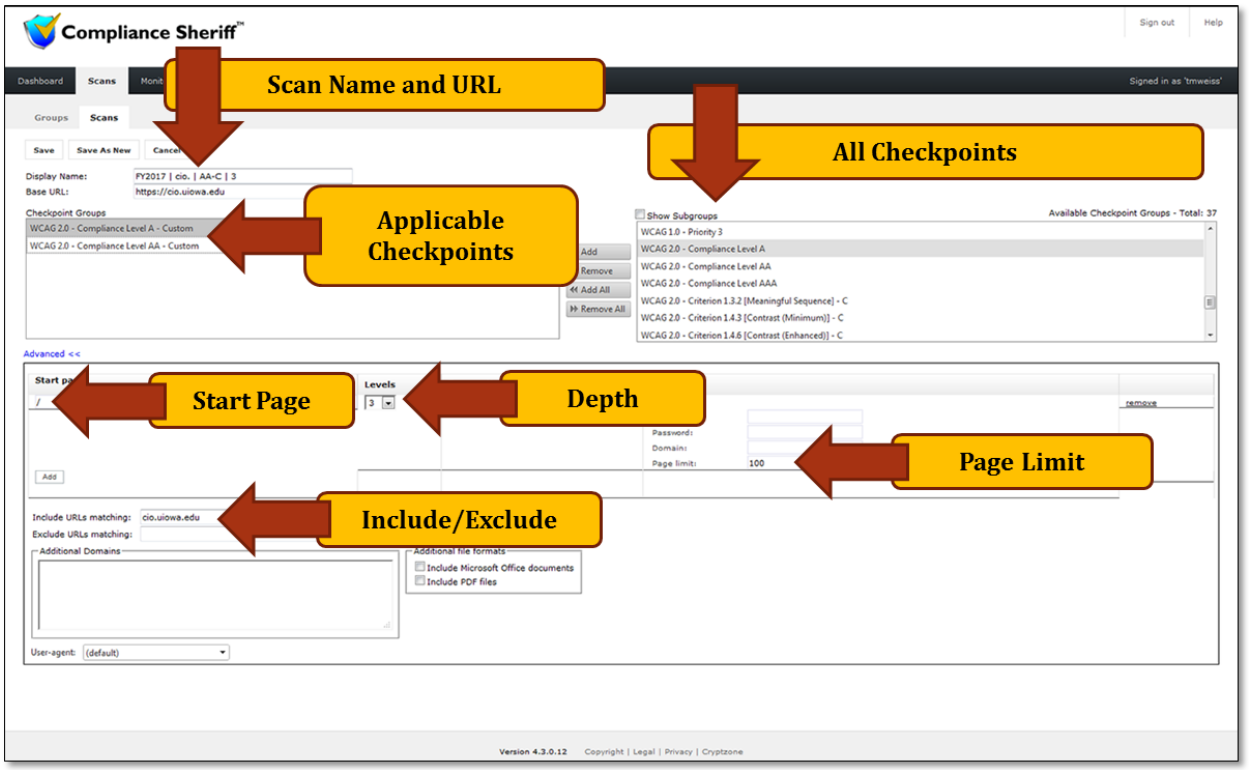


Scans

A Compliance Sheriff automated assessment is called a scan. The scans panel describes the target and scope of your scan. The options include:

- Display Name: a name given your scan to distinguish it from others
- Base URL: the root address of the content you want to scan
- Checkpoint Groups: the rules against which your site will be assessed
- Levels: how many navigational levels the scan will cover
- Pages: the maximum number of pages to be covered by the scan

The default scope for University Compliance Sheriff scans is three navigational levels, to a maximum of 100 pages. Custom scans are available as part of IT Accessibility consultation services.

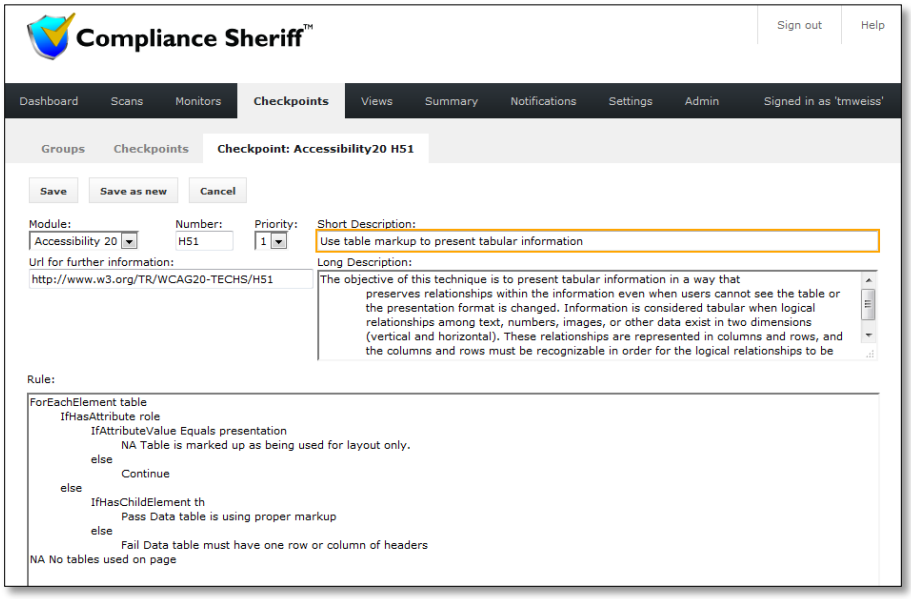


Checkpoints

As previously mentioned, Compliance Sheriff uses a library of checkpoints, and checks your website or application against these checkpoints. The checkpoints are scripts that describe specific accessibility practices, map these practices to WCAG 2.0, Level AA, and determine a level of conformance.

Each checkpoint one or more WCAG 2.0, Level AA rules, and the application determines whether a page or element conforms to an applicable checkpoint. Checkpoints vary by severity. The highest level of severity is a violation, which must be corrected, as it is likely to present a barrier to some users. Some checkpoints result in warnings, which are less severe than violations, but which still require attention. Some checkpoints call for manual checking, where a human user examines an element to determine conformance with an applicable standard.

The University of Iowa uses a modified version of the WCAG 2.0. Level AA checkpoints.



Examples

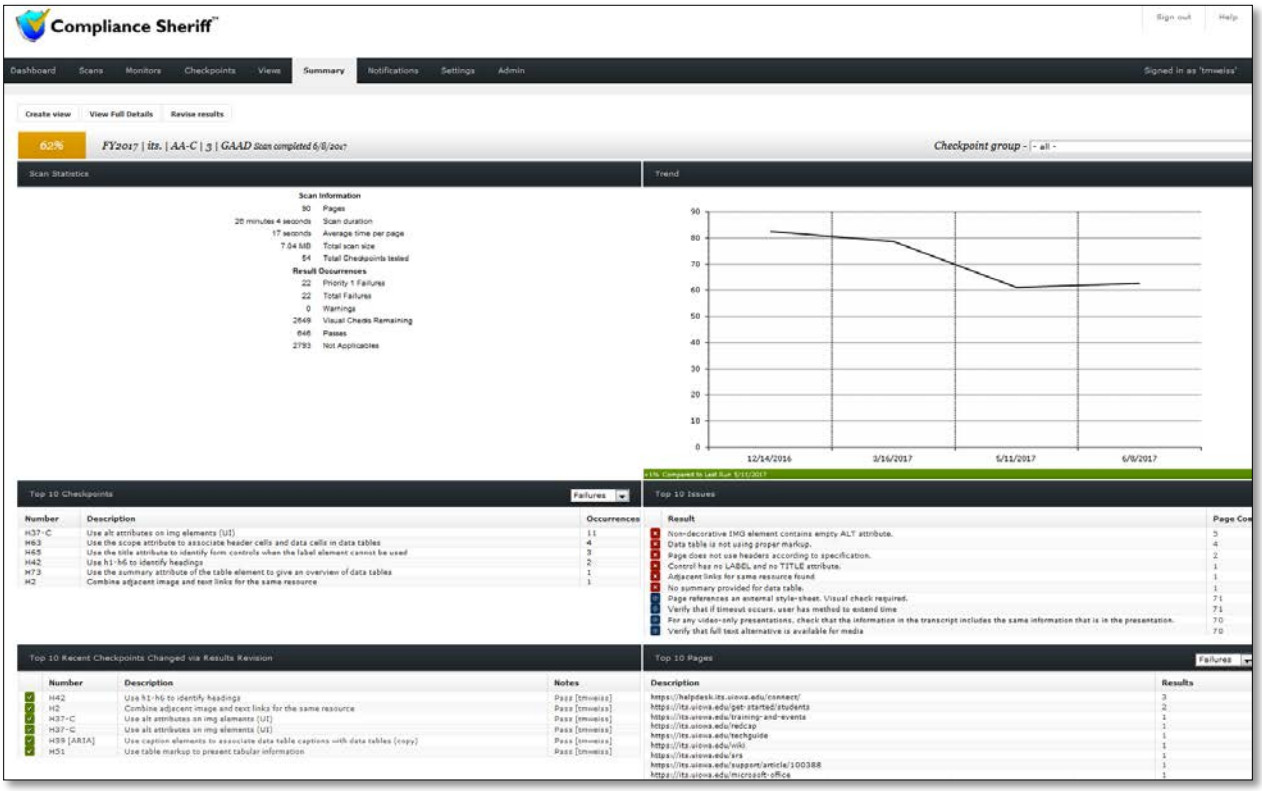
- If a webpage includes an image that lacks the ALT attribute, Compliance Sheriff registers a violation of the ALT text rule for that image.
- If a webpage uses headings (h1-h6) that are not properly nested, Compliance Sheriff registers a violation of the nested headings rule for each instance of incorrectly nested headings.
- If a webpage uses forms without submit buttons, Compliance Sheriff registers a warning of the submit buttons rule for each affected form in the page.
- If a webpage uses data tables without header cells, Compliance registers a violation of the table markup rule for that table.

Results Summary

After comparing your site's structure and content against the checkpoints, the application generates a report that you can use to guide your remediation efforts. The report includes a summary that you can access by following the health score link on your Scans tab. In the summary, you can find:

- information about the scan: number of pages, elapsed time, number of checkpoints, etc.
- the number of detected violations, warnings, manual checks, and passes
- the Top 10 checkpoints cited in the scan
- the Top 10 issues detected by the scan
- the 10 most affected pages
- any recent results you have revised
- a health score, calculated by Compliance Sheriff and rendered as a percentage value

You can also open the Revise Results wizard and Full Details views from this screen.



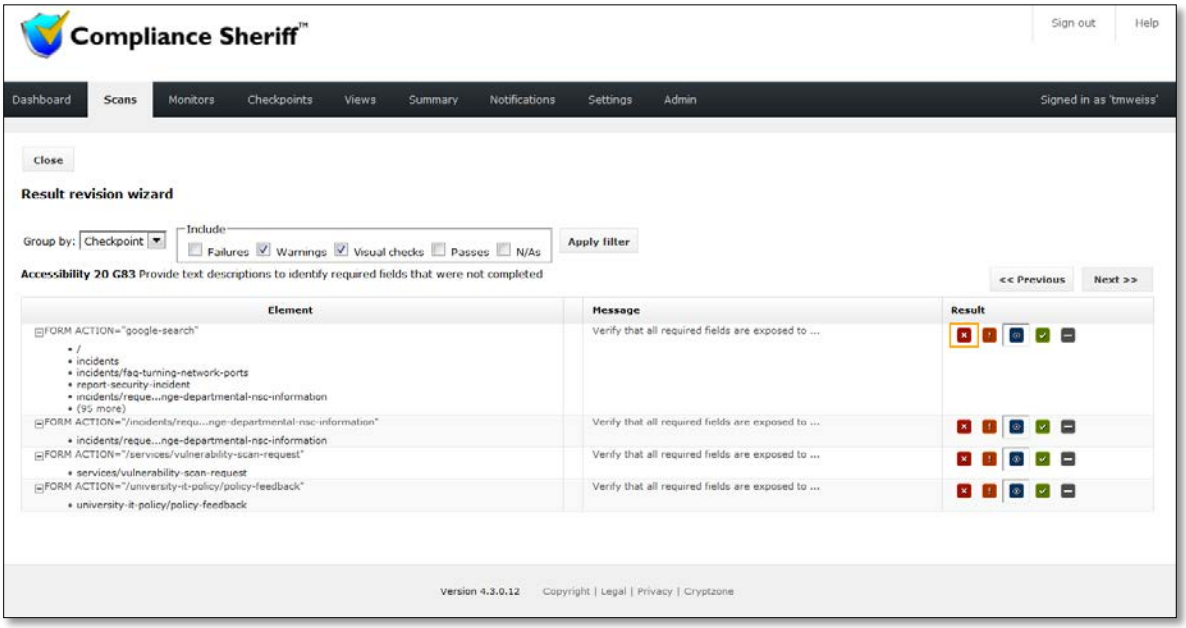
Although the Health Score is featured prominently, it is only an indicator. For best results, focus on the Priority 1 Failures first, then lower-level failures, and then warnings and visual checks.

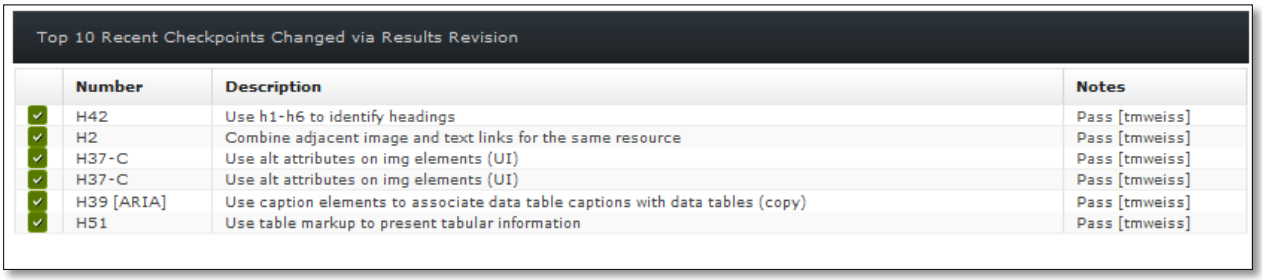
Revising Your Scan Results

From the Summary, you can use the “Revise Results” button to open the Results Revision Wizard. Items in the Top 10 Checkpoints table also link to the Result Revision Wizard.

The Result Revision Wizard lets you page through the results of your scan, and manually revise results that are incorrect, or do not apply to your site. For each page or checkpoint, you can manually assign a result value of Failure, Warning, Visual Check, Pass, or N/A. Typically, result revision is performed when a site, node, or element uses a technique that satisfies a WCAG guideline, but is not included in the Compliance Sheriff checkpoint library.

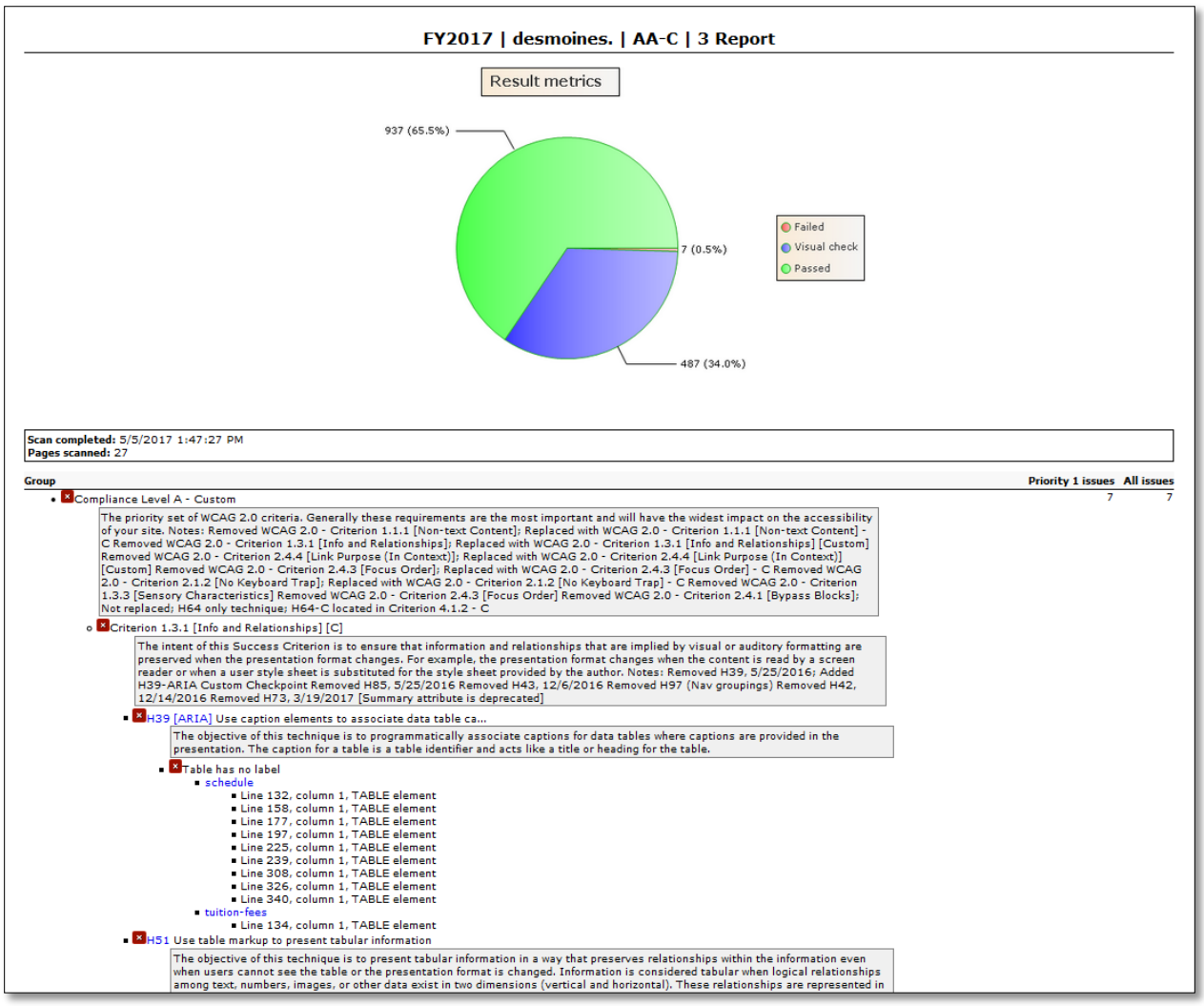
Note: when a user revises a scan result, Compliance Sheriff keeps a record of who revised the result, the former result, and the new result. Only users with a strong understanding of accessibility should use this tool. Revising results does not correct accessibility issues, and is not a way to provide accessible content.





Full Details

From the Summary view, you can also drill down to a much more detailed view of your scan. The Full Details view shows all of your scan's failures, warnings, and visual checks in a single report view. Issues are sorted by compliance level, criterion, checkpoint, and page for a comprehensive perspective of your scan results.



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Remediation Strategies

Each site's remediation process will depend on a variety of factors, including web platform, content provider's role and experience, priority of content, to name a few. Here are a few basic strategies to remediating your website:

Focus on issues, not score

Your Compliance Sheriff report lets you see each and every compliance failure discovered in your assessment. You can view the issues in the Summary view, and drill down via the "Top 10" tables and the "Full Details" view. Correct the issues you encounter, and your Health Score will take care of itself.

Prioritize your testing targets

Depending on the size of your site, your resources, timeline, or other factors, it may be necessary to prioritize the scope of your assessment. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't consider your entire site when testing for accessibility, but that you should be aware of your site's greatest vulnerabilities. Consider factors like the following:

- Severity—how much of a barrier a specific accessibility deficit might present to a user;
- Exposure—who uses the website or a specific feature, and how broadly it is available;
- Traffic—is this site in heavy rotation? Perhaps an accommodation strategy will work for now;
- Maturity—is this site due for a refresh? If so, would your accessibility resources be better applied to a new design?

Remember that an immediate need such as a request for accommodation is a civil rights issue, and always rises to the top of your remediation checklist.

Go for quick wins with big impact

Sometimes a little effort goes a long way. Look at templates, style sheets, code libraries, and other shared content for opportunities to remediate issues at a sitewide level. Even if an accessibility issue seems minor, you can minimize its impact even more by correcting it across your entire site with a few lines of code, or a simple fix.

Look for real-world benefit

There is now an abundance of standards, guidelines, rulesets, and checklists available for those who want to apply accessibility to their technology, but it's important to remember that accessibility is a real-world pursuit with real-world significance for users and other site stakeholders. Take a practical approach to accessibility: if you use testing personas, consider adding one or two personas with disabilities and specific tasks to accomplish. Better, bring users with disabilities into your testing process to get a sense of how your site or application works in a specific context. And don't forget the ancillary benefits of accessibility: usability by people in distracting environments, with low-language or technology skills, with temporary disabilities, and others who might benefit from optimized accessibility.

Other Tools

There are numerous tools and techniques you can adopt to help you meet your accessibility requirements.

Functional Accessibility Evaluator
The FAE is an open source tool from the University of Illinois. FAE uses a different set of checkpoints, which map to WCAG 2.0 guidelines. FAE provides summary and detailed information about your site's accessibility, and yields an implementation score for each rule in the ruleset.

Website: https://fae.illinois.edu

AInspector Sidebar
AInspector Sidebar is a browser add-on for Mozilla Firefox. AInspector assesses individual pages to help you zero in on individual accessibility failures.

Website: https://ainspector.github.io

Web Developer Tool bar
The Web Developer Toolbar is not an accessibility tool per se, but can yield important accessibility information about your website. Web Developer Toolbar lets you view a page's heading structure, text labels for images and forms, reading order, and more. Available for Firefox and Chrome.

Website: http://chrispederick.com/work/web-developer

WAVE Toolbar
The WAVE toolbar is a one click add-on for Firefox and Chrome that generates a page overlay to quickly point out errors, warnings, and other features of a single page view.

Website: http://wave.webaim.org

Conclusion

Your Compliance Sheriff results are only one aspect of your website's accessibility, and accessibility is only one measure of your site's overall quality. Take the time to communicate your site results with other stakeholders in your unit.

For more information, or to schedule an accessibility consultation, please contact the IT Accessibility Group at itaccessibility@uiowa.edu.