# Funka feedback: Success Criterion 1.4.11 Non-text Contrast

Formulärets överkant

Even though we are generally happy with the new SC and hoping for more, we do see a problem with SC 1.4.11, especially when it comes to buttons. The use of color is important as it increases understanding, creates logical relationships between objects and enhances UX. With the new requirement, buttons will need to be very dark or with dark outlines. Dark can work in some situations, but the dark outlines don’t fit todays design language, at least not in northern Europe, and will pose real problems.

A simple example from our own website.

Until now, we have worked with our profile colors this way in buttons:



You get a feel for each color and at the same time a good contrast with the text.

Replacing the buttons to comply with SC 1.4.11 with black text on a colored button

causes decreased contrast to the background, because the color of the button must be darker according to the new requirements. As a result, yellow, pink and red will be difficult to use.



Meeting the SC the other way around, with white text on the dark button is also very difficult. Only a few colors can be used. Many colors are completely impossible, such as yellow, pink and orange.



If you put a black outline on the buttons, you can maintain the original bright color palette from the visual identity. However, this doesn’t feel modern and doesn’t become consistent with the overall design of the website. As a result, the design use of buttons will have to be re-thought to fit with the visual identity.



Please note that the Funka profile colors are chosen to meet accessibility demands. In reality, many organisations will experience even more trouble. In cases where the website has a tinted background, the SC will be even more difficult to meet.

## With this SC, we see a real risk that designers will not respect accessibility criteria

* Colors that have an important signal value for “correct”, “wrong”, “warning” etc, such as green, yellow and orange, become almost impossible to use, because it is difficult to get a nuance with a 3:1 contrast to white background.
* For many organizations, it is important to communicate the brand through the colors in the visual identity. If those colors become difficult to use for specific components in the interface, there is a risk that designers will avoid the problem by designing what should be a button as a link instead.
* Another work around is black buttons, which provides good contrast but not a very differentiated design. How users thrive in an interface is an important parameter for accessibility. Creating a web filled with black buttons seem to be counterproductive.
* Yet another solution is to place a black outline on all buttons. This may resemble a form field more than a button, or maybe a button with focus.

If it is considered to be impossible to comply with WCAG 2.1 from a contemporary design perspective, there is a real risk that the standard will be completely ignored.

Moreover, our extensive user testing has so far not showed contrast between buttons and backround to be a problem. This in combination with the SC being hard to realise in a way that is good for users, lead us to the conclusion that we recommend to exclude buttons from Success Criterion 1.4.11.

All illustrations grouped for comparision:Formulärets överkant

Formulärets nederkant

