# Transcript for Getting Started with Accessing Design Principles

Hi, my name is Karen Hawkins and I'm the Principal of Accessible Design at Level Access. I'm known for being passionate about digital accessible design, and I believe that accessibility shouldn't be something that we check for, in design. It really should be a fundamental part of how we approach design.

I've coached countless design teams over the years, and I've realized that our discipline is stuck. We are stuck in a reactive mode. We're stuck fixing accessibility issues instead of focusing on what we're meant to do as designers. We're meant to spend quality time designing useful, enjoyable, usable experiences, but for everyone, and from the outset.

So this is why I created a new guide by designers for designers. It's called the Accessible Design Principles and Heuristics Guide. I wanted to create a resource for designers and content creators to help them proactively embed accessibility considerations into the way that they approach design. So in this video, I want to show you how you can use my new guide to incorporate accessibility into a common design task.

The example component I'm going to use is a product card like one you might find on an ecommerce site. I've got a Figma file open here showing the basic product card. This one includes a product image, product title, price, and a more details button.

Some product cards are much more complex. As I navigate to a new product card, you'll note this card includes additional elements like color swatch options, size options, selected, option names, category labels, and a tag: "hot deal." And its main call to action is an add to cart button.

And of course, some product cards can be even more complex than this one. These elements may seem different, but I can group them into categories by content type. For example, the color swatch options, size options, and add to cart button, they're all just buttons. The selected option names, category labels, and prices are just text. And the product image and product title, well those are links.

When it comes to accessibility, each of these content types has their own set of considerations and that's where the principles and heuristics and my new guide can help you, in identifying those considerations.

Let's start with the links to see how the guide can help.

This is the heuristics document, which includes more than 170 heuristics organized into eight principles to support you as you design. Now of course, not all the heuristics are going to help with my link, but how could I narrow it down? Hm... There are a couple of options. All the heuristics are tagged and the text is searchable. So one way to find heuristics relating to links is to use the PDF search functionality for the word "link."

I'll open up the functionality and type in the word "link." You could also quickly scan the documents tags too. I end up with a couple of heuristics. For instance, there's one that says "each link’s text should be differentiated."

There's another that says "standalone text links should have good contrast with all backgrounds in all states like default, hover, focus, and inactive." What's great about this guide is that in addition to heuristics for specific components, there are also some that are more generalized, like, links are actionable elements, so next I do a search for the word "actionable." This search helps me find things like "every actionable element should have a designed focus state."

Now that I've collected a few heuristics, let's jump back into Figma to discuss how you might organize them.

Here in Figma, I've copied out the heuristics I've talked about and a few of the others I found in my search, all organized by links and actionable elements. It's not an exhaustive list for links though, it's really just here to demonstrate. Now, some of these you might be familiar with, and some might be totally new, and that's ok, and maybe that's even a good thing.

To help you wrap your head around them, you might want to organize your heuristics into two overarching accessibility responsibilities: design and documentation. With this sort of organization, you now have a clear view into things that you need to action in design, as well as guidance on the things that you need to document to set up your downstream teammates for success.

You'll also want to expand your analysis for the other content types, as well as higher order concepts like component or element. You can also search for things like "keyboard" or "pointer" to ensure you're considering a variety of user needs.

The biggest thing to remember is that these heuristics might look like a lot, but really once you start digging into them and you start to absorb some of the guiding principles, you realize that a lot of them apply to many of your components and potentially even a lot of your design system. So I'm sure you'll get the hang of it, and I'm sure that your users will thank you.

So the Accessible Design Principles and Heuristic Guide can be found on the Level Access website for free, it's [in the Resources section](https://www.levelaccess.com/earesources/accessible-design-principles-and-heuristics/). I'd like to thank you for joining me today, and happy designing!