Understand common AI access methods

Last modified on 11/25/2026 2:23 pm EST

Making knowledge base content work for AI mostly means making it clearer, more structured and more accessible, so human readers benefit too, especially those using screen readers. AI tools read your content in two main ways: Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG) and live web browsing which often depends on accessibility trees.

Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG)

In a Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG) access pattern, an AI tool splits splits pages into chunks, stores them in a database, and searches and evaluates each chunk on its own. KnowledgeOwl's AI chatbot uses a form of RAG.

Most often, the tool splits chunks based on heading level. If you don't have headings, the tool may split chunks based on character counts, losing important context, and different tools may chunk in different ways.

To write well for RAG, set chunk boundaries by using hierarchical headings and make sure each section makes sense on its own.

Live web browsing/accessibility trees

When AI browser agents and MCPs "browse" your knowledge base, they read a snapshot of the page's accessibility tree, a screenshot of the page, or a combination of the two.

Accessibility trees are automatically generated based on the Document Object Model (DOM) of a webpage's full HTML. They're a stripped-down structural model of the page. They've been used for a long time for screen readers and other assistive devices, and now many AI tools use them.

Accessibility trees include headings, links, button, form fields, landmarks, and images (captured using their caption and/or alternative text rather than the image).

To learn more about the accessibility tree, including how to view it for any given webpage, refer to AccessibilityChecker.org's The Accessibility Tree Explained: How to Read, Test, and Fix Yours and the Search Engine Journal's How AI Agents See Your Website (And How to Build for Them).

To write well for AI browsing, follow web accessibility best practices to make sure your page generates a solid, well-constructed accessibility tree.

Why these patterns matter

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Keep these patterns in mind as you edit your content and review the rest of the recommendations on this page. Think about each heading as a standalone section and make sure it has links and context as appropriate. Embrace an accessibility-forward approach to your content and your accessibility tree--and the tools which access it--will benefit.

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