Engineer

Named all 17 icons for screen readers

Named every icon-only control in the interface for screen readers after finding the send button announced as "arrow up circle, button", and wrote the linter that requires the label within eight lines of the icon.

September 2026

every icon-only control named for a screen reader

Situation. The interface used system symbols for its controls, and a symbol with no accessibility label is read out by the screen reader as its own internal name. The send button announced as “arrow up circle, button”. So did every other icon-only control in the application, in its own way — seventeen of them describing their own artwork instead of their function.

Task. Every icon-only control needed a label describing what it does, and the fix had to come with a check, because the next icon added would otherwise reintroduce the defect immediately.

Action. Each of the seventeen was given a label naming the action rather than the shape, and where the control’s meaning depends on state the label follows the state instead of being fixed. The check is the part worth describing, because a general “is this accessible” rule does not exist for this. The linter looks for the construction that creates an icon-only control and then requires an accessibility label within eight lines of it. Eight lines is a deliberately crude heuristic and it was chosen by measurement: it is long enough to span every legitimate way the codebase writes one of these controls with its modifiers, and short enough that a label attached to a different view further down does not accidentally satisfy it. A precise rule here would need to understand SwiftUI’s modifier chains as a tree, and the cheap proximity rule catches the actual mistake — which is not a mislabelled control, it is an unlabelled one.

Result. All seventeen controls announce their function, and an eighteenth cannot be added without one. The rule's imprecision is real and stated where it is defined: it can be satisfied by a label on a neighbouring view, so it proves a label exists nearby rather than proving the label is correct, and correctness still needs someone to listen to it.

Bring this experience to your project

Use "Named all 17 icons for screen readers" as a starting point for a similar challenge in your organisation. The services behind this work are available for your project. Interfaces that load quickly, work on a phone and behave the same in every browser your customers happen to use.

Explore our services Get in touch →

Look behind the result

Read the situation, decisions and result in this example. We can discuss which parts transfer to your constraints and which need another approach. Named all 17 icons for screen readers — every icon-only control named for a screen reader

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Can a screen reader name every button you drew?

Talk through your project with the engineer responsible for delivery. We agree the scope, price basis and handover in writing before work begins.

Role context: Accessibility Specialist. It draws on Frontend Engineering, Automation & CI/CD, Testing & QA, Design Systems & UI, UX / UI Design and Documentation. And while you are here, we are rather good at Frontend Development and UI/UX Design & Design Systems.

Get in touch Explore our services

One piece of **a longer record** — and it is all on this site.

Every entry is written the same way: the situation, the task, what we did and what changed.

See the whole record

Define the improvement you need

Describe the workflow, the existing interfaces and the users who need the change. We can define a testable delivery and a handover that lets your team maintain it.

See what it costs Get in touch →

Can a screen reader name every button you drew?

Ask about the decisions behind “Named all 17 icons for screen readers”. You will speak with the people who can explain the work and assess your own project.

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