Engineer Software

Made the reduced-motion setting honest

Made reduced-motion honest after finding eleven selectors still animating under the preference, because a universal transition-none rule loses on specificity to any rule carrying a class.

August 2026

eleven selectors still moving under reduced motion

Situation. The site honoured the reduce-motion preference with a single rule turning off every transition. It read as complete, it lints clean, and under an emulated reduce-motion preference eleven selectors were still animating.

Task. The preference had to be honoured in fact, and the reason the obvious rule failed had to become something the next person cannot repeat.

Action. The cause is specificity. A universal rule scores at the bottom of the cascade and loses to any rule carrying a class, so a blanket transition-none is beaten by every considered animation on the page — which is every animation worth turning off. The fix was structural rather than a patch: anything that moves now lives in one late stylesheet part, and a linter fails a transitioned transform anywhere else. The distinction the rule draws is deliberate and narrower than the obvious one: reduce motion, not colour. A colour fade is not motion and turning it off makes interfaces feel broken to people who did not ask for that, so a transition listing colour properties passes and a transition on movement does not. Motion is also required to be expressed as a transition rather than a keyframe animation, because the former is trivially cancellable and the latter is not. Two related traps came out of the same work and are recorded with measurements: a menu ornament was thirty-one degrees through a sixty-degree turn before it was half visible, and because the shape is periodic a half-turn looks identical for a third of the cost; and five different properties each make an element the containing block for anything positioned relative to the viewport, which had silently shrunk a dismiss layer to a fraction of the screen.

Result. The preference is honoured in fact rather than in intent, and eleven live animations that a blanket rule appeared to have covered are actually covered. The general lesson is the one written at the top of that document: a rule that loses on specificity fails silently, and every report calls it something else.

Bring this experience to your project

Use “Made the reduced-motion setting honest” 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.

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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. Made the reduced-motion setting honest — eleven selectors still moving under reduced motion

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Does your site still move for people who asked it not to?

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: Design Systems Engineer. It draws on Frontend Engineering, Web Development, Testing & QA, Design Systems & UI and UX / UI Design. And while you are here, we are rather good at Frontend Development, Website Development & CMS 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 →

Does your site still move for people who asked it not to?

Ask about the decisions behind “Made the reduced-motion setting honest”. You will speak with the people who can explain the work and assess your own project.

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Contact card

Carefully Crafted With Love by D.

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