

Creating Accessible Content

Maine CITE Webinar Handout - September 2024

Digital accessibility is important for more than users with visual impairments, it impacts people from all walks of life. People with physical limitations, learning disabilities and even people without disabilities benefit from digital accessibility.

Visual Presentation

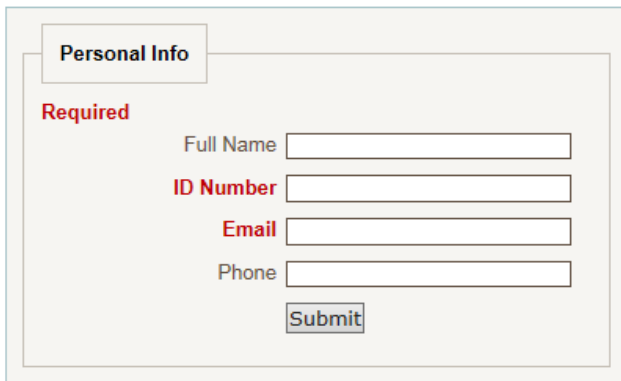
Color Contrast

Make it pop to make sure people can read your information.

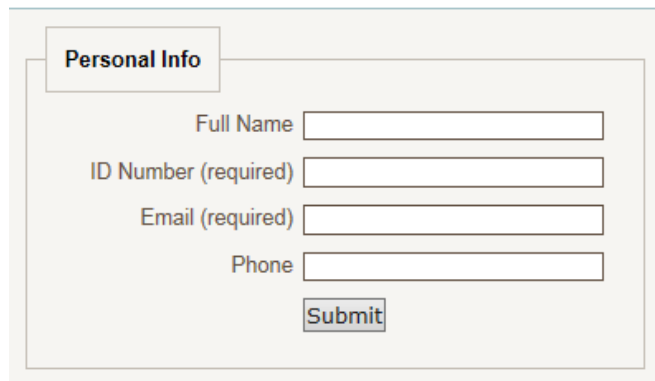
- [WebAIM Contrast Checker](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/) (https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/)
- [Accessible Web WCAG Color Contrast Checker](https://accessibleweb.com/color-contrast-checker/) (https://accessibleweb.com/color-contrast-checker/)

Color Conveying Meaning

Do not use only color to convey meaning. This impacts those with visual impairments including colorblindness.



A form titled "Personal Info" with a "Required" label in red. The form contains four input fields: "Full Name", "ID Number", "Email", and "Phone". The labels "ID Number", "Email", and "Phone" are in red, indicating they are required. A "Submit" button is at the bottom.



A form titled "Personal Info" with four input fields: "Full Name", "ID Number (required)", "Email (required)", and "Phone". The text "(required)" is used to indicate which fields are required. A "Submit" button is at the bottom.

Font Size

- For printed documents, do not go below a 10pt font. It is preferable to use a 12pt font. For large print, use 18pt or larger.
- For slides or presentations, consider how the audience will be viewing the content. If in person, can the person at the back of the room read the content? Try to avoid going below a 28pt font.

Font Style

Keep it simple and stick with accessible fonts such as Arial, Veranda, Tahoma or San Serif fonts.

Headings

Headings help us navigate documents. A common mistake is to indicate a heading by making it bold. Changing the font style creates a visual structure but does not provide navigation structure for assistive technology users.

Structure your content with headings:

- Heading 1 – Page title or main content heading.
- Heading 2 – Major section heading.
- Heading 3 – Sub-section of Heading 2
- Heading 4 – Sub-section of Heading 3, and so on, ending with Heading 6.

Important: Do not skip heading levels!

Headings are found under the 'Styles' section of your "Home" toolbar. Highlight the text you wish to make a heading and select the style from the toolbar.

To modify the heading style (change its color, size, font, etc.), right click on the style in the toolbar and make the necessary adjustments. You can select that the modifications be applied to the entire document. This will change the text using that style throughout the document.

Reading Order

Reading order applies when using PowerPoint or other presentation programs. Unlike documents, there are many elements on each slide and it is not as simple as reading from left to right, top to bottom.

Check/Rearrange Reading Order

1. Open 'Review' ribbon
2. Select 'Check Accessibility'
3. Select 'Reading Order Pane'
4. Move items up and down the list to put them in the correct reading order

If an item is decorative and should not be read, uncheck the box next to the item.

Recheck the reading order whenever you move elements around on your slide.

Formatting

Use Your Tools

Use the built-in tools to format your document. Repeated use of tab or return creates dead air for screen readers and there is no indication the document continues.

- Increase the space between paragraphs by expanding the 'Paragraph' tools under the 'Home' menu and adding space before or after the paragraph.

- To start a new page, use the 'Page Break' option under the 'Insert' menu.

Inserting Tables

- Use the built-in Table tool under the 'Insert' menu.
- Enable the option 'Header Row' under 'Table Style Options'.

Lists

- Use the built-in options in the 'Paragraph' options under the 'Home' menu.

Inserting Columns

- Use the built-in column options under the 'Layout' menu.
- To create columns:
 - select the content you want to be in columns.
 - open the 'Layout' ribbon
 - 'Columns' is located in the 'Page Setup' tools

Hyperlinks

Long or uninformative hyperlinks can create problems for all users. Edit hyperlinks to state where the link will take the end user.

- Highlight the text that will act as the hyperlink.
- Select link/hyperlink option under the 'Insert' menu.
- Paste the URL

A screen reader will read this as, 'You are on a link, (reads text), you are on a link.' Never use non-descriptive text such as 'Click Here'.

A variety of websites are available to help you create shortened hyperlinks such as:

- Ow.ly
- Bit.ly
- Tiny URL

Alt-Text for Images and Graphics

Alt-text provides a non-visual means of representing the content or function of the image. When a screen reader encounters an image, it says 'You are on an image, (reads the alt-text describing the image), you are on an image.' The description should be concise and relevant to the function of the image. Every detail of the image does not need to be described.

Creating alt-text

- Right click on the image
- Select 'View Alt-Text'
- There is no 'save' button. The text will automatically save.

Things to consider

- ALL images in a document MUST have alt text.
- What is a sighted person getting out of this image?
- Do not rely on auto-generated alt-text.
- Avoid redundancy, do not provide information that is in the surrounding text

If you copy and paste the picture anywhere else, the alt-text will go with the picture.

If an item is decorative and should not be read, uncheck the box next to the item, a screen reader will ignore this element.

Accessibility Checker

Most of Microsoft's tools have a built-in accessibility checker. Be advised: no accessibility checker is perfect, and you should always review your content in addition to using one. These checkers will produce a list of errors, warnings, and tips. Errors must be fixed to ensure accessibility. Warnings should be checked as these are often smaller errors that may not impede access but can cause problems. Tips are extra things you can do to increase accessibility.

To use the Accessibility Checker:

- Under the 'Review' menu, select 'Check Accessibility'
- Select 'Info'

Videos

Captions

All videos are required to be captioned. Most editing platforms/software have this capability. Free platforms, such as YouTube, allow you to upload your video and create or load captions to it. There is also the option to auto-generate captions. While this can be used to save some time, these captions should be reviewed closely and corrected as needed. (Think about how many times you've used voice to text on your phone and it has made an error.)

There are also third-party vendors you can pay to caption content.

If the video does not belong to you, contact the creator to ask for a captioned version or request they caption the content. If this request is not fulfilled, you can supply a transcript of the video. This should be used only as a last resort as it is not very functional.

Audio Description

Audio description is an additional audio track on a video that describes important visuals and actions someone with a vision impairment may miss. The content is provided between the video's dialogue. While required, this is not heavily enforced as this is a more complex process. There are limited third-party vendors who can supply this service.

This can be done without an additional audio track as well. If you are creating content, you can verbalize your actions and important visual details as you go.

Here is an example of audio description: [Lion King clip with audio description](https://tinyurl.com/4z97c998), <https://tinyurl.com/4z97c998>.

Web Accessibility & Social Media

WCAG, [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines international standards](https://tinyurl.com/3vxj3n8b), <https://tinyurl.com/3vxj3n8b>

- Images must have Alt Text
- Apply accessibility concepts
- Format hashtags for readability
- Avoid using all caps
- Be mindful of emojis

Resources

Social Media

[Sprout Blog](https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-accessibility/), sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-accessibility/
[Accessible Social](http://www.accessible-social.com/), www.accessible-social.com/

Microsoft:

[Accessibility Training Essentials](https://tinyurl.com/4vzydusb), <https://tinyurl.com/4vzydusb>
[Accessibility Fundamentals](https://tinyurl.com/4c2vz7kc), <https://tinyurl.com/4c2vz7kc>
[Microsoft training courses](https://tinyurl.com/5cz8bv7z), <https://tinyurl.com/5cz8bv7z>
[Microsoft short video tutorials](https://tinyurl.com/4m8rmjt8), <https://tinyurl.com/4m8rmjt8>

Maine CITE Webinars

[Work Smarter, Not Harder: Creating Documents Using Built-In Features](https://tinyurl.com/5n95xxzt), <https://tinyurl.com/5n95xxzt>