

Digital Accessibility

Principles and Guidelines

Introduction

This document is based on Vantage Point's internal Digital Accessibility Guide and is adapted for organizations to consider their unique branding. It will cover software which is commonly used across organizations but are not necessarily universal. However, much of the information is transferrable.

It is also important to note there are many external links provided as resources throughout this document. They may change or discontinue without Vantage Point's knowledge.

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Why Design for Accessibility?

Accessibility is a key factor in inclusive design and services. An organization's level of accessibility for staff and clients, therefore, directly reflects its brand.

Branding is like the iceberg analogy: what you see accounts for only 30% of the brand. For example, when most people think of your organization, they will probably recall its name, its primary colours, and/or its logo. However, those elements just scratch the surface. Brand also encompasses what those elements evoke for people when they think of your organization: Emotions and feelings associated with your services, your guiding principles and how they emerge in your work, and the level of care put into inclusive practices.

Implementing a digital accessibility strategy ensures that everyone can access your digital resources, from newsletters to website, including individuals with disabilities. At any given time, **over 20% of the population is living with a disability**. In fact, most people will experience at least one disability in their lifetime. Disabilities may be temporary or permanent, and can relate to one's vision, hearing, physical abilities, and cognitive abilities. **Cognitive disabilities**, which include (but are not limited to) problems with memory, attention span, or information processing, are the most common type of disability. For example, four times as many people experience cognitive disabilities than blindness.

Universal design is the design and composition of an environment, product, or service so that it can be accessed, used, and understood to the greatest extent possible by everyone wishing to use it – and it is what we are essentially talking about when we discuss digital accessibility. Universal design benefits all users – not just those with disabilities. For example, closed captioning for video benefits individuals in loud or quiet environments in addition to individuals with hearing loss.

While this document focuses on ensuring that your digital resources are accessible to everyone, universal design also applies to physical environments (for example, automatic doors make it easier for anyone to enter or exit a building) and learning environments. Universal design within a learning environment might include:

- Allowing time for quiet reflection before jumping in and asking for participation
- Giving the option to sit quietly and absorb instead of forced participation
- Giving clear, written instructions for activities so people don't have to rely on memory

Design Guidelines

There are a few key principles to ensure documents are accessible for all. All users benefit **from well organized and easy to understand content**. This might include:

- Ensuring a logical flow of ideas
- Using headings and whitespace to separate ideas
- Highlighting key concepts through headings, lists, or bold font
- Choosing formatting that naturally guides the eye
- Using plain language
- Using a table of contents or website map where appropriate

Another key component is ensuring that your **content is presented or accessible in multiple ways/formats**. For example:

- Information can be consumed in a screen-reader friendly format (not as a png or jpg)
- Alternative text (“alt text”) is available for non-text content
- Captions and/or subtitles are available for all video, and transcripts are available for audio files

For more information on Universal Design, read this article on the [Seven Principles of Universal Design](#) and this article on [Accessibility, Usability, and Inclusion](#).

Visual Design

Headings

Headings stand out from the rest of the text through use of larger font sizes, colour, emphasis (e.g., bold font), and surrounding whitespace.

Most applications have built-in heading styles. Using heading styles benefits all users, as it allows screen readers to read the content more accurately and clearly, and, depending on the application, can make it possible to add hyperlinks within the document or automatically generate a table of contents. Headings also help guide the reader’s eye and divide the content into more comprehensive “chunks.”

Colour Selection

How colours, patterns, and images are used in a document can have a significant impact on how accessible the material is to individuals who are partially sighted or colour blind. When considering colour selection, there are several things to keep in mind:

First, using **high contrast colours** makes it easier for partially sighted individuals to distinguish the content. Black on white or white on black offers the highest contrast, however, this can be too extreme for some users. Therefore, other dark colours (navy, dark green, or maroon) or pastels (ivory, light yellow) can be substituted.

Note: Some organizations' brand colours are not conducive to accessibility standards. And because re-branding may be an unrealistic goal in the moment, there may be other ways to situate the use of your brand's colours so they appear more visible in various contexts.

High Contrast Colour Schemes	Low Contrast Colour Schemes
• Black text on a white (or light) background • Black text on a yellow background • Yellow text on a black or dark blue background • Bright green text on a black background	• Grey text on a white background • Grey text on a black background • Blue text on a green background

Contrast ratios can be calculated using an online colour contrast calculator, such as [TPGi Color Contrast Analyser](#) or [WebAIM's Contrast Checker](#). For normal size font, the contrast ratio should be at least 4.5:1. For large, bold text or graphical objects this could be reduced to 3:1.

Another consideration with choosing colour contrast is that **individuals who are partially sighted or colour blind may have difficulty differentiating between certain colours**. Two colours of a similar intensity may be indistinguishable from each other, even if they are on opposite sides of a colour wheel. For example, red and green may look the same to someone who has red-green or complete colour blindness.

For this reason, it is important to avoid using colour as the **only** means of communicating information. Instead, consider combining colours and shapes or patterns to convey the information. For example, in addition to colour coding items green, yellow, and red, also include text and icons to convey meaning:

- **Success** ✓
- **Warning** ▲
- **Fail** ✕

While pattern is an effective means of conveying information, text should be placed against a solid background whenever possible, as partially sighted individuals may have challenges distinguishing text from a patterned background.

Learn more with WebAIM's "[Contrast and Color Accessibility](#)" resource.

Font selection

Font selection can have a significant impact on the readability of your document. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Choose a font size of **at least 11pt** for written (i.e., Word) documents. Larger font sizes are easier to read for partially sighted individuals, along with everyone who spends significant time staring at a computer screen. Since each font is sized slightly differently, the exact size you select can vary.
- Current research suggests that **sans serif fonts (fonts without extending features on each character) are generally easier to read**, especially for digital applications. Note, however, that the research is not conclusive and that there are many factors that contribute to the readability of a particular font. Serif fonts may still work well in small amounts, such as titles and headings.
- Best practice is to use **bold font** for emphasis, as both italics and underlines can make reading more difficult by causing the letters to merge together.
- If using colour for emphasis, choose **high contrast colours**. i.e., a dark font on a light background.

A final note to keep in mind with your font selection is how the font will appear on different devices. If you will be saving your document as a PDF before sharing it, you can choose any font. However, if you will be sharing your content as a Word document, **choose a commonly used font** the reader is likely to have on their device.

Paragraph and line spacing

Adding additional white space to your document by increasing the line spacing and paragraph spacing generally enhances the readability of your document when applied within reason.

For body paragraphs, using a **line spacing of 1.15 to 1.25** is recommended. This helps readers move smoothly from one line to the next. Similarly, space bullet points somewhat further from each other than individual lines. This can be done in Word, for example, by selecting “Line Spacing Options,” and in the dialogue box, ensuring the “Don’t add space between paragraphs of the same style” check box is **unchecked**.

Adding extra space between paragraphs and around headings creates a visual break between ideas. In general, you will want to add additional space **before** headings and **after** body text using the spacing tool, not by inserting line breaks.

Compatibility with Screen Readers

There are several screen readers available (**NVDA** is one of the most popular and is available for free online). Windows Narrator is built into the Windows operating system on PCs, and VoiceOver is available on Macs.

- **Full instructions for using Narrator can be found on the Windows Support website.**
- **Full instructions for using VoiceOver can be found at [apple.com](https://apple.com/voiceover).**

To get you started, here are a few keyboard shortcuts for using Narrator:

- Turn Narrator on or off: press **Windows + Ctrl + Enter**.
- Turn scan mode on or off: press **CapsLock + Spacebar**. **Further scan mode commands can be found [here](#).**
- In general, the up and down arrows will allow you to navigate through a document, with each segment of text (or alt text) being read out sequentially.
- The right and left arrows will typically move one letter at a time.

Similar shortcuts on Macs are as follows:

- Turn VoiceOver on or off: press Command + F5
- Interact with (read) page content: press down arrow
- Stop interacting with page content: press up arrow

There is a learning curve for navigating through a document using a screen reader such as Narrator or VoiceOver, however it is worth spending a bit of time playing with it to understand how different formatting affects the accessibility. The effects may depend on the settings

selected within the screen reader. For example, **Narrator can be set to read out five different levels of detail.**

Depending on the level of detail selected, details such as line breaks used to add white space to a document may be read out as “break”. If multiple line breaks are used, the word “break” would be read out each time. Likewise, other formatting characters such as tabs may be read out each time they are used. To avoid this potential annoyance, it is best practice to use styles, line spacing, paragraph spacing and indentation to create the visual effects you are aiming for.

For non-professional communications, it is worth remembering that the full name of an emoji is read out each time an emoji is used. When corresponding with an individual who uses a screen reader, it is best practice to avoid long strings of emojis. Imagine hearing “face with tears of joy” being read out 12 times and not having the option of skipping over it.

Headings

Almost all applications have built-in heading styles. To ensure that your headings are accessible to all users, it is important to **use the built-in styles** (vs. manually adjusting the size and colour of the font). Using the heading styles ensures that the document or website is coded appropriately so that screen readers can navigate the document by jumping from one section to another. To someone who uses a screen reader, a document that does **not** use the heading styles would be akin to a cassette tape: the user would have to listen to the entire document to find the information they are looking for. However, when styles are enabled, the user can jump from one section to another, just as you can when listening to a CD or a digital playlist.

Alternative Text

All images, regardless of platform or purpose, should include alternative (alt) text. This will ensure people who use screen readers know the information, context, and/or sentiment you are trying to convey. Missing this visual context can create frustration and result in a negative experience, and ultimately cause a lack of understanding of the content. There are many guidelines which indicate it is not necessary to add alt text for purely decorative images. While this may be true, it is recommended to give people with visual impairments the option to know what is presented regardless of the purpose of the image.

Key principles to keep in mind when writing alt text:

- Short and to the point. Alt text should convey the most important aspects of the image and should be kept to a maximum of one or two sentences.

- Avoid redundant information (i.e., “an image of”)
- **When describing a chart**, alt text should say what the chart is, then follow with the beginning, progress, and conclusion of the presented information. (i.e., “The pie chart shows workshop attendance over the first quarter: 90 percent in January, 86 percent in February, 91 percent in March, and 95 percent in April.”)



Alt Text
Stock Images

How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind?

(1-2 detailed sentences recommended)

A bulldog and a Black androgynous-presenting person in a blue jacket and tan pants smiling at each other. They are sitting on a concrete wall in front of a yellow mural.

☐ Mark as decorative

Generate a description for me

Learn more about [best practices when using alternative text](#) in this guide from Cooper Hewitt.

Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks are an extremely useful tool for marketing and communications, making information succinct and easily accessible. However, if implemented without specific accessibility techniques in mind, they can have the opposite effect than what is desired.

- **Hyperlink common words, not URLs.** If a URL is hyperlinked, screen readers will spell them out by individual character and will be difficult to skip over.
- **Hyperlink portions of phrases, not single words.** Portions of phrases such as “on our website” are easier to target with a mouse and indicated where the user will be directed as opposed to hyperlinking single words like “here” or “website”.
- **Ensure colour contrast compliancy.** Most hyperlinks are automatically coded in a vibrant blue. If you would like to use an on-brand colour for hyperlinks, test each colour in a colour contrast checker to see if one will be more visible than others.
- **Pair distinct colours with other distinct visual qualities (i.e., bold).** Never solely rely on colour to convey meaning or context.

Captioning, Subtitles and Transcripts

Captions and subtitles are often used interchangeably but there are some differences.

“Caption” is the most common term on Turtle Island (North America). They were founded in 1972 with the introduction of “open captions” – burned-in on the screen and unable to turn off. Eventually, “closed captions” were provided so people could have the option to use captions or not.

Captions tend to provide more information than just the words being spoken (i.e., music, audible cues, etc.) and are only provided in the original spoken language of the media in question. Subtitles can be found in different languages, and typically only provide the words spoken without other audible cues.

Key principles for adding captions:

- Identify the person speaking when they start speaking (i.e., [Name]: [Dialogue])
- Confirm spelling or proper nouns
- Transcribe verbatim, including slang or non-conventional terms (i.e., “Imma” vs. “I’m”). Colloquialisms and slang should be spelled how they sound (e.g., “y’all”, “lookin’”, etc.)
- If something cannot be understood, use “[inaudible]”
- Non-verbal audio cues and non-dialogue sounds should be placed in square brackets. (e.g., [Sam laughs], [bell rings], etc.)
- Try not to surpass character count, and do not surpass one line of text
- Text should be white on dark background
- Font should be between 24 and 30 pt.

Design Considerations for Different Disabilities

While impossible to list all the disabilities accessible digital media addresses, below are a few examples along with which software or features enhances digital user experience:

Disability	Design Considerations
Colour blindness	• Never exclusively relying on colour to convey information or meaning • High contrast colour ratios (Colour Contrast Checker) • Avoidance of certain colour combinations • Alt Text

Disability	Design Considerations
Blindness or partially sighted	• Screen Readers • High contrast colour ratios (Colour Contrast Checker) • “Dark Mode” • Alt Text
Hearing loss	• Captions / Subtitles • Add visual notifications
Physical disability or loss of mobility	• Enable keyboard navigation • Enable voice commands
Cognitive disabilities	• Screen Readers • Captions / Subtitles • “Dark Mode” • Organized content • Properly spaced content • Mixed media

Microsoft Word

Creating accessible documents in Microsoft Word is fairly straightforward, especially if the document is text-based.

Key elements of an accessible Word document are:

- Use the [styles](#) built into the template
- Ensure that all graphics have descriptive [alt text](#)
- Run the [accessibility checker](#)
- If [creating a PDF from the Word document](#), ensure that you use the “Save As” function

Styles

Using the styles tool to add headings to you document makes it easier for all users to navigate the document. Using pre-specified styles to create your headings is of particular importance for users who rely on screen readers, as headings make it possible to jump from one section to the next to find the right information. Using the heading styles embedded also allows you to automatically generate a table of contents and add hyperlinks within your document.

Styles can be found on the Home menu at the top of your window.

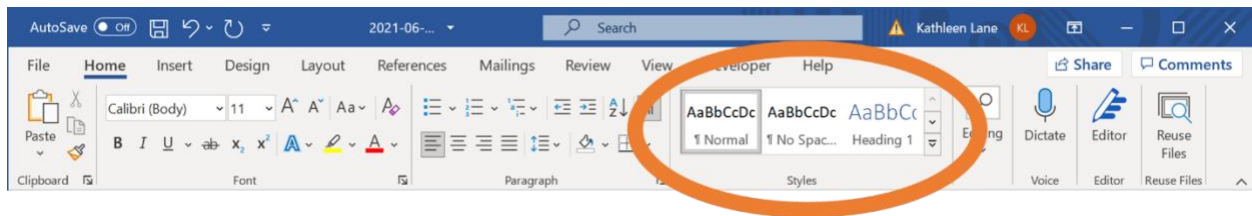


Figure 1: Location of Styles on the Home menu

Note: To create styles for your own documents and document templates, The Microsoft support website has instructions for [customizing and creating new styles](#).

Adding Lists

Numbered, bulleted, and multi-level lists are a common and effective method of organizing content and highlighting key points. The controls for creating lists can be accessed on the Home menu.

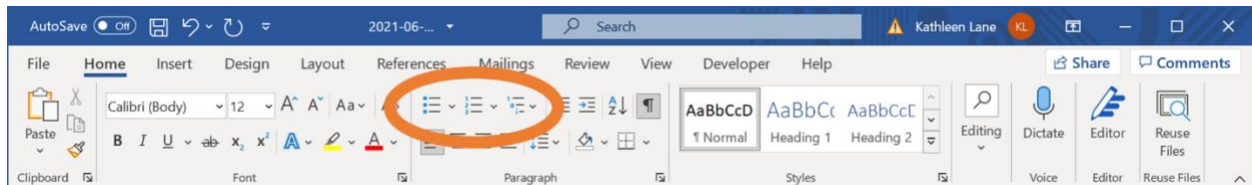


Figure 2: Buttons for creating and modifying lists

Clicking on the small down arrow beside each list type opens a menu of options for customizing your list. Microsoft Support has additional information about [defining new bullets, numbers, and multilevel lists](#).

Remember to add spaces between each bullet item by de-selecting the “Don’t add space between paragraphs of the same style” check box in the “Line Spacing Options” dialogue box, which is explained in more detail below.

Inserting a Table of Contents

Including a table of contents can be helpful so readers can jump directly to the section of interest. When using styles to create your headings, Word can create an automatically generated [table of contents](#). When adding a table of contents, you will also want to include [page numbers](#) in your document.

Inserting Page Breaks

It is best practice to ensure that ideas are presented on the same page. As you near the final stages of editing your document, you may wish to use page breaks to ensure that ideas flow logically from one page to the next, and to **avoid** small chunks of isolated text.

Adjusting Paragraph and Line Spacing

To adjust the line spacing or paragraph spacing:

- Right click on the **Normal** style in the styles pane
- Select **Modify** from the pop-up list. A dialogue box will appear
- Click on the **Format** button in the bottom left corner and select **Paragraph** from the pop-up menu
- Another dialogue box will open which will allow you to adjust the line and paragraph spacing

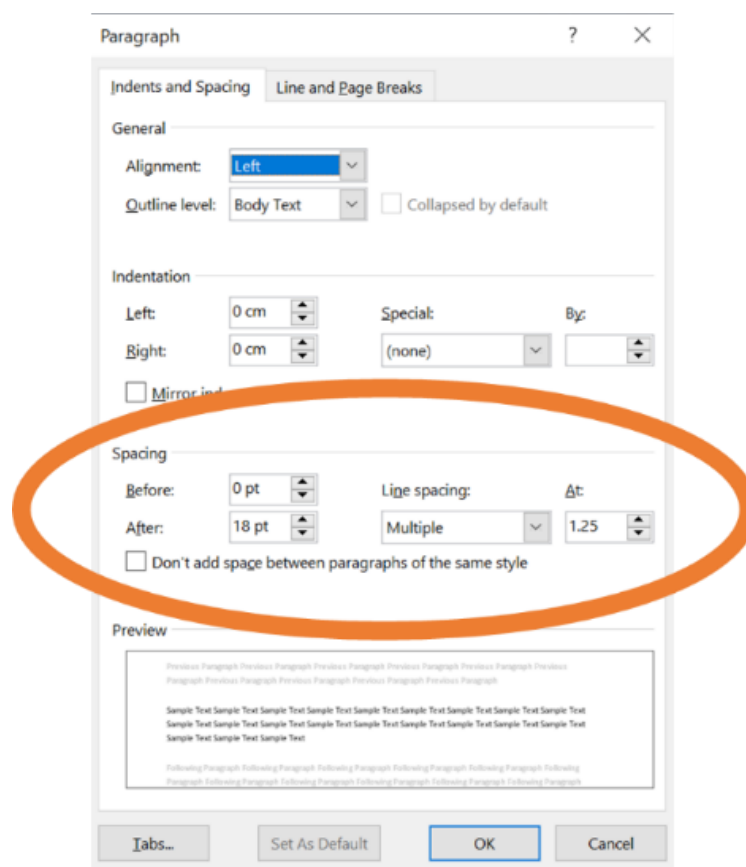


Figure 3: Adjusting line and paragraph spacing.

Images

When adding images to a Word document there are two things to keep in mind:

1. **“In-line”** images are more accessible to a screen reader.
2. Include **“Alt Text”**, so screen readers can describe the image to the user.

Word defaults to “in-line” when you insert an image into the document. For most purposes, in-line images will be suitable. However, some documents may require more elaborate formatting where a different type of text wrapping is used. In this situation, it will be necessary to enhance the document’s accessibility using Adobe Acrobat Pro.

To add Alt text, right click on the image and select **“Edit Alt Text”** from the pop-up menu. A sidebar will open. Edit or insert the Alt Text for your image.

Formatting Tables

Tables can be particularly challenging for screen readers to navigate. Two basic considerations for creating accessible tables are:

1. **Avoid merging cells** as this disrupts how the screen reader navigates the table
2. Format the top row as a **header row**
 - Highlight the top row, then right click on it
 - Select **Table Properties** from the pop-up menu
 - Click on the **Row** tab
 - Select “Repeat as headers row at top of each page” (even if your table will not break across pages).

More detailed instructions for [creating an accessible table](#) can be found on the Perkins School for the Blind eLearning website. **Note that complex tables may require an adjustment in Adobe Acrobat Pro to ensure accessibility standards are met.**

A Note About Editing Marks

Screen readers will read out editing marks such as tabs and line breaks each time they are used. Best practice is to adjust the line spacing, paragraph spacing, and indentation using the styles whenever possible.

Running an Accessibility Check

Microsoft Word, like other products in the Office suite, has a built-in accessibility checker. To run an accessibility check:

- Click the **Review** tab in the ribbon
- Click **Check Accessibility**

A side bar will open in the editor with suggestions for improving the accessibility of your document.

Exporting to PDF

When saving your document as a PDF, it's important to ensure the correct settings are enabled so to preserve the accessibility features which have been added to the document. The first thing to keep in mind is to create the PDF using the **Save As** feature.

To check your settings, click on **More options** to open a dialogue box, then click on the **options** button. A new dialogue box will appear. Ensure that “Document structure tags for accessibility” is selected.

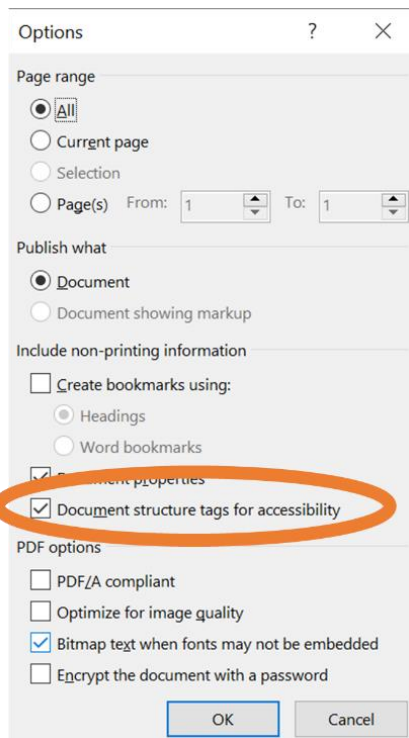


Figure 4: Document structure tags for accessibility when exporting as a PDF

For longer documents, you may also wish to select the “Create bookmarks using headings” setting to add bookmarks to your PDF. Bookmarks will allow all users to easily navigate the completed PDF.

Learn more

- [Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities](#), Microsoft Support
- [Microsoft Word: Creating Accessible Documents](#), WebAIM
- [Accessible Word Document Checklist](#), Queen’s University

PowerPoint

Ensuring accessibility of PowerPoint slide decks is similar to ensuring accessibility in Word. However, due to the complex nature of the program there are a few additional considerations. The following sections will highlight the differences only, so please be sure to **read the Word instructions as well** when considering PowerPoint accessibility.

Content Placeholders

To ensure content in a PowerPoint presentation is accessible to screen readers, use the content placeholders included in the slide layouts. Screen readers will pick up this content much more readily than content that is added to the slide in other ways. The size and location of the content placeholders can be adjusted on the slide to provide the desired look.

To select a slide layout, click on the **Slide** button on the **Home** menu and select the desired slide layout from the pop up menu. If necessary, new slide layouts can be created in the [Slide Master](#).

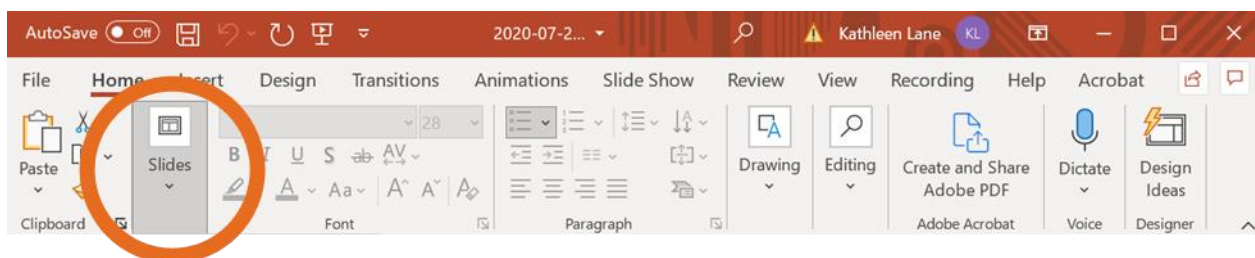


Figure 5: Selecting a slide layout

Once you have created your slides, you can verify that your text-based content is included in the content placeholders by opening the outline view by going to the **View** menu and selecting

outline view. In this view, as shown below, the slide previews on the left will be replaced with the text-based content from your slide.

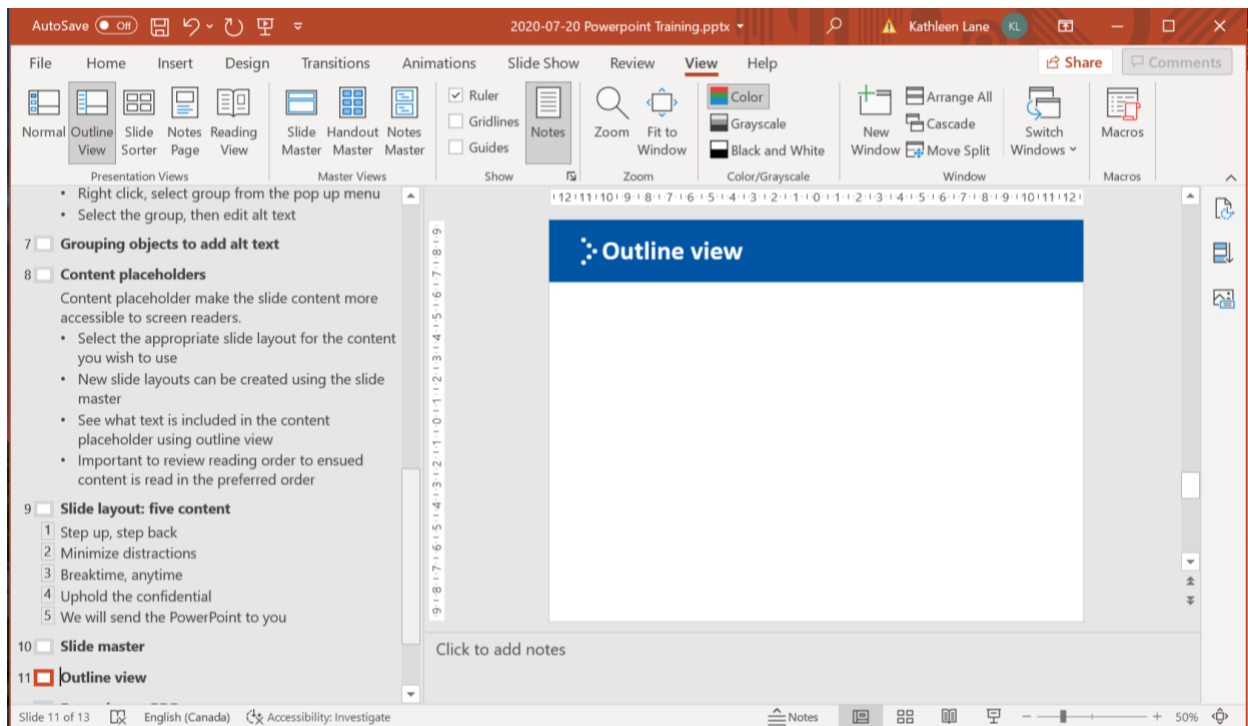


Figure 6: Outline view

Finally, you will want to **ensure the reading order is correct**. The reading order check can be accessed by going to the **Review** menu, selecting **Accessibility Check**, and then selecting **Reading Order Pane**. The Reading Order Pane will open on the right side of your screen as shown in the next figure.

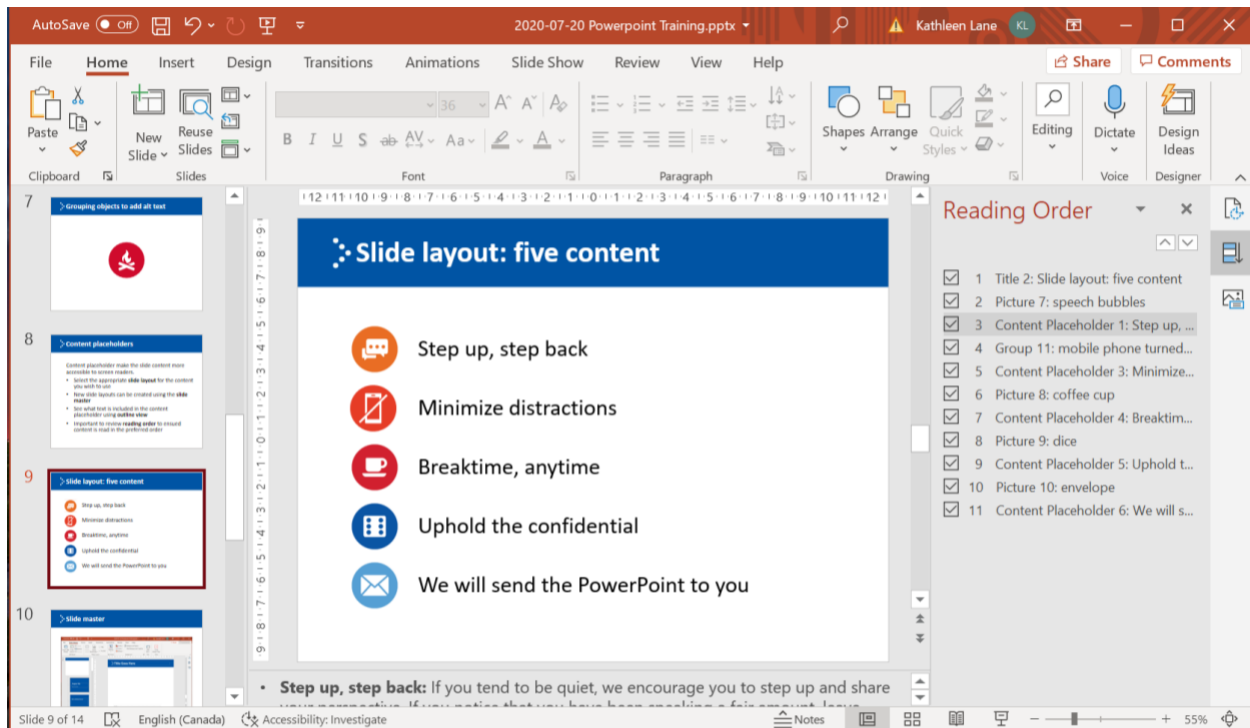


Figure 7: Reading Order Pane

Alternative Text

Adding alt text to an image in PowerPoint follows the same process as adding alt text to an image in Word. The difference is that you can group objects together prior to adding alt text, then add alt text to the entire group instead of the component parts.

To group objects together, first select all the objects you wish to group together, then right click and select “group” from the pop-up menu. Once the objects are grouped, add alt text the same way as you would in Word.

Exporting to PDF

As with Word, the presentation must be exported to PDF to ensure that the resulting PDF retains the accessibility features already added to the document. The process for doing so is slightly different than in Word.

To export as a PDF, go to the **File** menu and select **Export** from the menu on the left. In the menu that appears, select **Create PDF/XPS Document**.

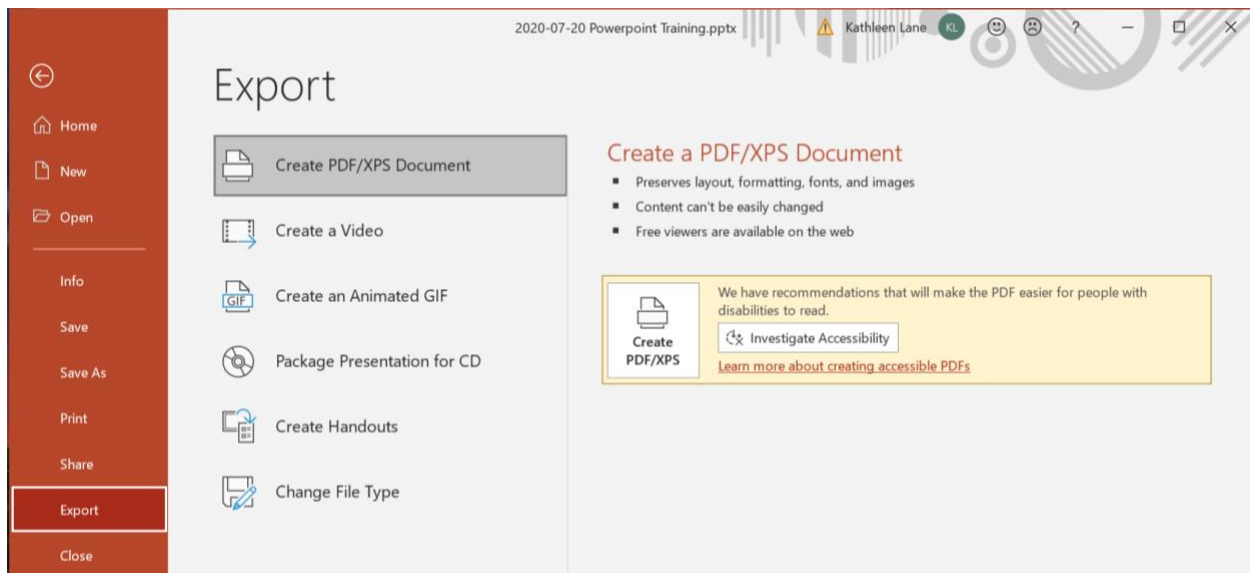


Figure 8: Exporting to PDF

After clicking the button, a dialogue box will pop up. Select **Options**. Another dialogue box, shown below, will open. Ensure the “Document structure tags for accessibility” box is selected.

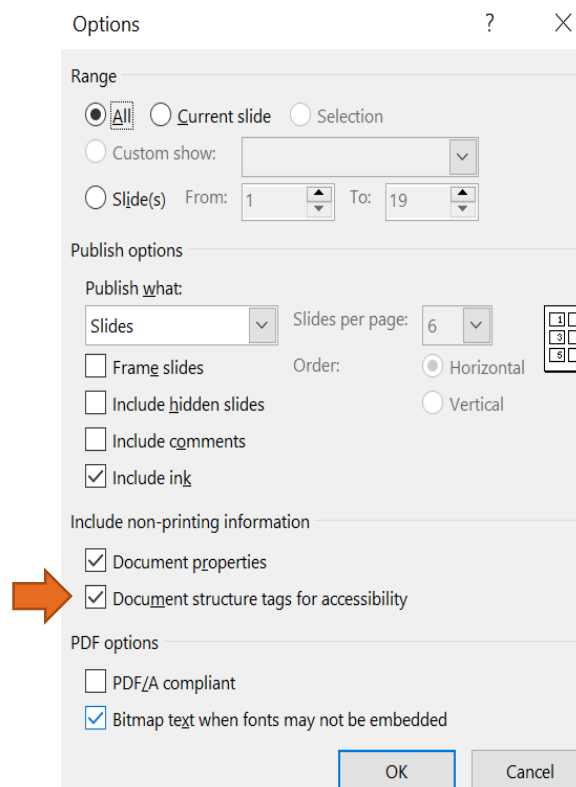


Figure 9: PowerPoint save to PDF settings

Excel

Excel is nearly fully optimized for screen-readers and only requires some considerations:

- **Alt text** is required for all images and charts and is inserted in the same way that alt text is added in Word.
- **Hyperlinks** are added by right clicking on the desired cell and selecting “Link...” or “Hyperlink...” (for Mac users).
- **Specified headings.** Screen readers use specified headings to navigate through tables.
To add headings:
 - Select the cells you want to include in the table
 - On the **Insert** tab, select **Table**
 - Select the **My table has headers** check box
 - Select **OK** (Excel creates a header row with the default names Column1, Column2, etc.)
 - Type new, descriptive names for each column in the table.
 - Once the pre-set has been made, you can use the **Header Row** check box under the **Table** tab for any following headers.
- **Unique names for sheet tabs.** Adding descriptive names to each sheet helps individuals using a screen reader navigate through the spreadsheet. To add unique sheet names, right click on the sheet tab and select **Rename**.
- **No blank sheets.** To delete blank sheets, right click on the sheet tab and select **Delete**.

Additional instructions (with images) can be found on [Microsoft Support](#).

Portable Document Format (PDF)

PDFs were originally created to be images set up for print. Accessibility came into the equation later as an after-thought, and so the function of accessibility is not always intuitive.

Step one is to ask: Is this information meant to be read digitally? If so, could it be set up as a web page? (Note that HTML will always be more accessible than a PDF).

If a PDF is required, it is essential to ensure the original source document (i.e., Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, etc.) is optimized for accessibility **before it is exported** as a PDF, as the accessibility of the source will determine the accessibility of the PDF. As a reminder, exporting is different than printing to PDF. **Do NOT print to PDF**, as this merely creates a non-accessible image file.

In Adobe Acrobat Pro (after following steps for Microsoft Suite export)

There are two tools you will want to keep in your Acrobat tool bar menu:

1. Action Wizard
2. Accessibility

Using Action Wizard, select “Make Accessible” and fulfill all the menu items within the Action Wizard tool.

1. Add Document Description (the following are recommended as priorities, but your organization can determine how much of the metadata it wants to fulfill)
 - a. Title
 - b. Subject
 - c. Author
2. Recognize Text Using OCR
 - a. Document Language: English (UK) or English (US)
 - b. Output: Editable Text and Images
 - c. Downsample To: 600 dpi
3. **If the PDF is a form** – Detect Form Fields
4. Set Reading Language
 - a. en-CA
5. Set Alternate Text
 - a. Ensure all **images, tables, and graphs** have alt text
6. Run Accessibility Full Check

Common Accessibility Check Required Fixes

Title

Right click on the action **Title – Failed** and select **Fix**. A dialogue box will appear, in which you may specify the title of the document, the author (this may be an individual on the staff, board, or volunteer for record keeping, or specified as the organization name as appropriate).

Logical Reading Order

Navigate to the right-hand side of the accessibility menu. At the bottom will be a **Reading Order** item. Select this item and the reading order tool will appear. To learn more about specifying reading order, follow [Adobe's online guide](#).

Colour Contrast

Follow the guides provided above on colour contrast and perform a manual check using a free colour contrast checker (like [this one from WebAIM](#)).

Alternate Text

There are multiple ways to set alternate text. First, right click on the Accessibility Checker menu item **Alternate Text** and select **Fix** if the option is available.

If there is no fix action, navigate to the Accessibility menu on the right-hand side and select **Set Alternate Text**. If this action does not recognize the images requiring alternative text, you will then want to label them correctly in the **Reading Order** tool, at the bottom of the Accessibility menu, by following these steps:

1. If a box exists around the image, right click, and delete it.
2. Once no box exists, drag the cursor around the image and ensure the selection incorporates the full image.
3. Then, make sure the box around the image is highlighted (by clicking on the number in the top left corner if it is not already highlighted) and in the reading order tool panel, select **Figure**.
4. Then, you may close the reading order tool if it is no longer needed, and set alt text through either one of the previous methods, or by right clicking on the image itself and selecting **Alt Text...**

For more in-depth learning on Adobe PDF accessibility, there are [tutorials on YouTube](#) and webpage [guides by Adobe](#).

Zoom

Zoom now offers auto-transcription to support users who benefit from having captions. The feature must be activated in the backend of Zoom (in your account settings). Once activated, it also requires the meeting host to manually "[Enable Auto-Transcription](#)" during each meeting. You can do this by:

- Clicking the **CC** button along the bottom menu of Zoom (where you find Reactions and Share Screen options), then
- Selecting **Enable Auto-Transcription**

Meeting participants can turn off the subtitles in their view by clicking the CC button and selecting **Hide Subtitles**.

Google Suite

[Google has embedded accessibility features within its products](#). The considerations for creating accessible documents within the Google suite is very similar to within other programs. Below are links to Google's user guides for different programs:

- [Make your document or presentation more accessible](#)
- [Present slides with captions](#)
- [Accessibility for Docs editors](#)

MailChimp

Accessible design for email marketing follows the same [design guidelines](#) noted above. The following sections provide specifics on how to apply formatting in MailChimp. Additional information can be found in [Mailchimp's Accessibility in Email Marketing](#).

Headings

As with other documents, the appropriate use of headings makes it easier for screen readers to navigate the document. MailChimp, like Word, uses **Styles** to assign the appropriate code to the

text so that screen readers can navigate it. Under the “**Style**” tab, select “**Page**.” From there, you can pre-set all header styles with your organization’s branding.

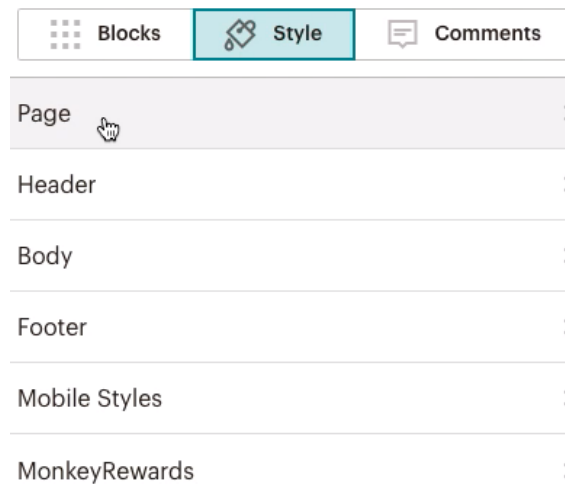


Figure 10: Mailchimp Styles Pane

Note: The **Header** section under **Style** refers to the header at the top of the email, not text headers.

Font Size and Selection

Vantage Point has found 14pt to work best for body text in Mailchimp. Headings are kept between 24 – 30. This way, headings are differentiated from the body while no text is too big or too small.

Use a sans serif font in body text for easy legibility.

Subject Heading

The subject heading is one of the first things people notice when an email reaches their inbox. It’s important to maintain both a marketing and accessibility lens when creating this content. Luckily, these overlap in some ways. Key principles for creating a good subject line:

1. Clear and concise (Tell readers what to expect in the email)
2. No symbols / emojis
3. Personalized is always better (i.e., *|FNAME|* in Mailchimp)

Social Media (Hootsuite & Main Accounts)

All social media platforms have the option to add alt text to images. Should an image be added to a post, describe the image as effectively as possible within the character count boundaries.

A good idea, if the time and means are available, is to create a document to keep track of alt text used with images you frequently share on social media. It will save time in future social media planning.

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