

# Accessibility Guide

ACRL DOLS Instruction Committee

*Adapted from [LITA's Accessibility Documentation](#)*

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## Introduction

The DOLS Instruction Committee values accessibility and inclusivity, and strongly encourages all committee members and presenters to consider accessibility when creating their materials.

22% of adults in the United States have some type of disability ([Source](#)). In addition to permanent disabilities, people may also have temporary disabilities (e.g., a broken arm that makes typing difficult) or situational impairments (e.g., the speakers on their computer don't work and so they can't hear the sound from a video). In order to make DOLS sessions and resources as inclusive as possible, it is vital that presenters and committee members consider accessibility.

Further, "accessible design is good design." Features that improve accessibility generally make the poster more usable for everyone, just as curb cuts on the sidewalk can help people with carts and strollers, and not just those in wheelchairs.

This guide will give some quick tips for making your documents, videos, and tools more accessible. However, note that following rules mindlessly is unlikely to lead to a truly accessible site. You need to continually keep in mind the experience of people with disabilities when creating documents or choosing tools. These disabilities may include vision issues, hearing issues, mobility and dexterity issues, and cognitive issues.

# Creating Accessible Materials

The following guidelines can help committee members and presenters ensure that their documents, videos, and tools are accessible:

## Use Built-In Styles and Formatting

Headings, lists, and other formatting add structure to your pages. To ensure these elements are accessible, use the built-in formatting in Word or style codes in HTML. Do not make a “heading” by bolding and enlarging the font, and don’t skip heading levels (e.g., go directly from “Heading 1” or “<h1>” to “Heading 3” or “<h3>”). Use bullets instead of typing in asterisks to make lists, and use tables for tabular data, not for layout.

## Provide Alternative (ALT) Text for Images

Alternative text provides a textual alternative to images and other non-text content on web pages. It is especially helpful for people who are blind and rely on a screen reader to have the content of the website read to them. You can add ALT text in HTML and most applications (including Word and PowerPoint).

The alternative text should provide an alternative for both the content and the function of the image on the page, which means that the same image may have different ALT text in different contexts ([click here for examples of using different ALT text for the same image](#)). If an illustration does not convey content (for example, a decorative element) or repeats information found in the text, use empty alt tags on HTML pages to tell the screen-reader to skip the illustration.

## Ensure Hyperlinks are Easy to Identify and Make Sense Out of Context

Identify links with color and additional formats like underlining to highlight them with low vision or color blindness.

Links and clickable “hot spots” need to be large enough for visitors with limited motor control to click. Ensure that all content can be accessed with the keyboard alone; do not use elements that only activate when a user hovers over items with a mouse.

Ensure links make sense out of context. Every link should make sense if the link text is read by itself. Screen reader users may choose to read only the links on a web page. Certain phrases like “click here” and “more” should be avoided.

## Use Colors Carefully

Do not rely on color alone to convey meaning. The use of color can enhance comprehension, but do not use color alone to convey information. That information may not be available to a person who is colorblind and will be unavailable to screen reader users.

High contrast colors are easier for visitors to read. Avoid red and green because they present a challenge to many color blind users.

## Ensure Content is Clearly Written and Formatted

Make sure content is structured, clearly written, and easy to read. When it comes to text presentation and formatting, use large and clear fonts (san serif is best for web documents), add blank lines between paragraphs, and use headings and lists appropriately.

When it comes to writing style, organize your ideas logically, avoid double negatives, keep sentences simple, and avoid using jargon or acronyms without explanation.

## Provide a Text Transcript for All Audio Media

Transcripts are text versions of an audio file. This allows anyone that cannot (or prefers not to) access content from a web audio or video to read a text transcript instead. Transcripts do not have to be verbatim accounts of the spoken word, and can contain additional descriptions, explanations, or comments that may be beneficial. For example, if the transcript is from a video, a transcript may also contain information about what is visible on the screen.

## Provide Synchronized Text Captions for Videos

When your audio is associated with any visuals, such as images, slides, or video, you should provide captions that are synchronized with the visual in addition to the text transcript. Again, these do not have to be verbatim accounts of the spoken word.

For most web video, both captions and a text transcript should be provided. For content that is audio only, a transcript is usually enough.

## Ensure Content is Compatible with Screen Readers

Ensure that PDFs and other documents and web objects can be read by screen readers, or provide an alternate format. For example, Prezi is not accessible. If you are using Prezi, ensure that you also provide a text transcript.

Accessible PDFs contain real (not scanned) text, are structured and tagged, and have alt-text for all images and graphics. Creating a PDF from an accessible Word document is the best way to ensure accessibility. Avoid scanning physical texts, but if you must do so, use OCR and then clean up the text recognition file.

## Ensuring Accessibility of Tools/Websites

When considering using tools for collaboration, project management, video conferencing, etc., consider accessibility. Do research to see both what the vendor claims about the accessibility of their tool as well as reviews from users with disabilities. Some vendors will provide online Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPATs) to show their compliance with accessibility

guidelines and/or may provide information about compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0).

## Resources

- [Universal Design for Learning](#) - When considering accessibility for learning, the Universal Design for Learning framework is incredibly helpful
- [Creating Accessible Word Documents](#)
- [Converting Word Documents to PDFs](#)
- [Converting Non-Accessible PDFs](#)
- [Creating ALT Text in Drupal](#)
- [Creating ALT Text in Mediawiki](#)
- [Creating ALT Text on WordPress](#)
- [Add Subtitles/Closed Captions to YouTube Videos](#)
- [Aegisub](#) – A free, open source tool for creating and modifying subtitles
- [Lynda Trainings on Accessibility](#) – UX Foundations: Accessibility is the best for a broad, not-too-technical overview of accessibility considerations.
- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG 2.0) – International accessibility standards
- [WebAIM's Articles on Accessibility](#) – One of the best sites on web accessibility
- [Cornell's Web Accessibility Primer](#)
- [Top 10 Tips for Making Your Website Accessible](#)