

WCAG 3 Method Format update

This document proposes a new structure / format for WCAG 3.0 methods. It was created in collaboration between select persons from the Silver and ACT groups. This proposal blends the existing method format, with the ACT Rules format. This document showcases one such method, [Decorative Images](#), for the [Text alternatives available](#) outcome.

This new method is based on the existing [Decorative images](#) method, and the [Image not in the accessibility tree is decorative](#) ACT rules. The *Text alternative available* outcome is taken as a given. No changes will be made to it as part of this proposal.

Outcome: Text alternative available

Provides text alternatives for non-text content for user agents and assistive technologies. This allows users who are unable to perceive and / or understand the non-text content to determine its meaning.

This outcome relates to guideline [Text alternatives](#).

Functional categories

This outcome relates to the following functional categories:

- Sensory - Vision & Visual
- Sensory Intersections
- Cognitive - Language & Literacy
- Cognitive - Learning
- Cognitive - Memory
- Cognitive - Mental Health
- Cognitive & Sensory Intersections

Critical errors

- Any image of text without an appropriate text alternative needed to complete a process.

Rating

Rating	Criteria
Rating 0	Less than 60% of all images have appropriate text alternatives OR there is a critical error in the process

Rating 1	60% - 69% of all images have appropriate text alternatives AND no critical errors in the process
Rating 2	70%-79% of all images have appropriate text alternatives AND no critical errors in the process
Rating 3	80%-94% of all images have appropriate text alternatives AND no critical errors in the process
Rating 4	95% to 100% of all images have appropriate text alternatives AND no critical errors in the process

Methods

1. HTML / ePub methods:
 - a. [Text alternative for Image of text](#)
 - b. [Functional Images](#)
 - c. [Decorative images](#)
 - d. [Informative images](#)
 - e. Titles for time-based media
 - f. Unicode-based graphics
 - g. CSS-based graphics
 - h. [Author control of text alternatives \(ATAG\)](#)
2. PDF methods:
 - a. @@@
 - b. @@@
 - c. @@@
 - d. @@@
3. Native Android app:
 - a. @@@
 - b. @@@
 - c. @@@
 - d. @@@
4. Native iPhone app:
 - a. @@@
 - b. @@@
 - c. @@@
 - d. @@@
5. ...

The rating system of the *Text alternatives available* outcome requires the following:

- A list of images with an appropriate text alternative
- A list of images with an inappropriate text alternative

Each method adds to these two lists. For any given supported technology, all methods together return a complete list of images for that technology, without including any image more than once. If an image is used more than once in the view, each use of it is included in the list.

Method: Decorative Images

Description

Outcome: This method supports the outcome Text alternatives available.

Platform: All web platforms

Technology: HTML, CSS, ARIA, ePub

Input aspects for testing:

- DOM Tree
- Accessibility tree
- CSS Styling

Summary

Decorative images don't add information to the content of a page. Text values for these types of images would add audible clutter to screen reader output or could distract users if the topic is different from that in adjacent text. Merely omitting the alternative text can cause problems as some screen readers will try to repair the omission by reading the image filename.

How it solves user need

Explicitly marking an image as decorative will cause assistive technology to skip over the image as if it didn't exist on the page. This reduces time and fatigue needed to listen to descriptions of decorative images or long cryptic file names.

When to use

Decorative images don't add information to the content of a page. For example, the information provided by the image might already be given using adjacent text, or the image might be included to make the website more visually attractive.

In these cases, a null (empty) alt text can be used (`alt=""`) so that they can be ignored by screen readers and other assistive technologies. Text values for these types of images would add audible clutter to screen reader output or could distract users if the topic is different from that in adjacent text.

Images may be decorative for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Background behind textual content
- Visual styling such as borders, spacers, and corners;

- Supplementary to link text to improve its appearance or increase the clickable area;
- Illustrative of adjacent text but not contributing information (“eye-candy”);
- Identified and described by surrounding text.

Examples

This section will include the complete list or test cases from the ACT rule. Since these may be fairly lengthy, UI components may be used to organize them. The full list can be seen here:
<https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/act/rules/image-not-in-acc-tree-is-decorative-e88e9e/#test-cases>

Tests

Summary

This test checks that visible `img`, `svg` and `canvas` elements that are ignored by assistive technologies are decorative.

Applicability

This outcome applies to any `img`, `canvas` or `svg` element that is [visible](#) and for which one of the following is true:

- **excluded:** The element is not [included in the accessibility tree](#); or
- **ignored `svg`:** The element is an `svg` with an empty ("") [accessible name](#) and a [semantic role](#) of `graphics-document`; or
- **ignored `canvas`:** The element is a `canvas` with an empty ("") [accessible name](#) and no [explicit semantic role](#); or

Exception: This outcome never applies to elements for which one of the following is true:

- The element has an [ancestor](#) in the [flat tree](#) that is [named from author](#); or
- The element is an `img` element where the [current request](#)'s [state](#) is not [completely available](#).

Note: An example of an image ignored because of an [ancestor](#) with [named from author](#) is when the image is a descendant of a `button` element that uses `aria-label` for its accessible name.

Expectation

Each test target is [purely decorative](#).

Note: It is relatively common for an informative image such as an icon to be marked up as decorative, if the text alternative is adjacent to the image. This is a [conforming alternative version](#) for the image. This fails the rule but meets [conformance requirement 1 of WCAG 2.1](#).

Mapping these rules to the outcome:

- All `passed` outcomes: Add the test target to the list of elements with an appropriate text alternative.
- Any `failed` outcomes: Add the test target to the list of elements with an inappropriate text alternative.
- An `inapplicable` outcome: No impact on the outcome

Background

W3C Resources

- [Web Accessibility Tutorials: Images: Decorative Images](#)
- [CSS Generated Content Module Level 3 Working Draft](#)
- [PDF4 Hiding decorative images with the Artifact tag in PDF documents](#)
- [H67: Using null alt text and no title attribute on img elements for images that AT should ignore](#)
- [Understanding Success Criterion 1.1.1: Non-text Content](#)

Non-W3C Resources

- [Accessible Publishing Knowledge Base: HTML: Images](#)

Accessibility Support

No accessibility support issues known.

Assumptions

- svg elements with a [semantic role](#) of graphics-document and with an empty ("") [accessible name](#) are ignored by assistive technologies tested for this rule. If some assistive technology does not ignore these elements, and that assistive technology is required for conformance, passing this rule does not ensure all decorative svg elements can be ignored, and the [success criterion 1.1.1 Non-text content](#) may still not be satisfied. The same is true for canvas elements with no [semantic role](#) and an empty ("") [accessible name](#).
- A web page with informative images without an [accessible name](#) may conform to WCAG 2.1 Level A when the information provided by that image is available elsewhere on the web page itself. For example if an equivalent text is adjacent to the image, or if the text alternative is included in the [accessible name](#) of a parent element.

Glossary

As in the

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/act/rules/image-not-in-acc-tree-is-decorative-e88e9e/#glossary>How to update a method

1.

Questions from the group

- It is not clear if tests should start from how something is marked up, and check that that is what it should be. Or if the direction should be reversed. For example a functional image that is marked up as decorative. Should that be part of the decorative images method (proposed today), or should it be under functional images.
 - **Advantage** of starting from how it is actually marked up is that ACT rules work like this today already. This is in part because automated tools can start from the actual markup, but not from the intended markup.
 - **Disadvantage** of this is that in scoring, it would skew results, if decorative images are failed under the informative images category, or vice versa.