ATD Accessibility Guidelines and Resources

Questions about these accessibility guidelines and resources? Contact *ATD* Associate Editor Julia Voss (jvoss@scu.edu).

Table of contents

Alt text for images and charts **1**
- Why alt text is important 1
- Additional resources on alt text 2
  - Images 2
  - Charts 2
- Image alt text example 2
- Chart alt text example 3
- How to add alt text in Microsoft Word 3

Transcripts/captions for video and audio files **4**
- Why transcribing/captioning is important 4
- Additional resources on captioning 4
- Free transcription tools: 4
- Audio file captioning example: 5
- Video file transcription example: 6

Alt text for images and charts

Why alt text is important

- From Harvard's Digital Accessibility Office: "Alternative (Alt) Text is meant to convey the “why” of the image [or chart] as it relates to the content of a document or webpage. It is read aloud to users by screen reader software, and it is indexed by search engines."
- Alt text is also valuable because whenimage files go missing or get corrupted and the image is no longer visible on the page,, alt text also provides info for all readers on the important content of the missing image.
- As this guidance suggests, alt text will be specific to the purpose the image/chart serves in your article: what about it is important for your purposes? This means that your alt text is interpretive, drawing readers' attention to particular aspects or interpretations of the image/chart and not others. In the examples below, the features of the images/charts that the alt text highlights are specific to what the author wants them to show readers.
- *Note about how much detail to include in alt text for charts:* if you describe the information represented in a chart in the text of the article (e.g. the campus stakeholders

listed and their rates of frequency in the example below), you don't need to repeat this information in the alt text since readers will already get it from the paragraph text.

Additional resources on alt text

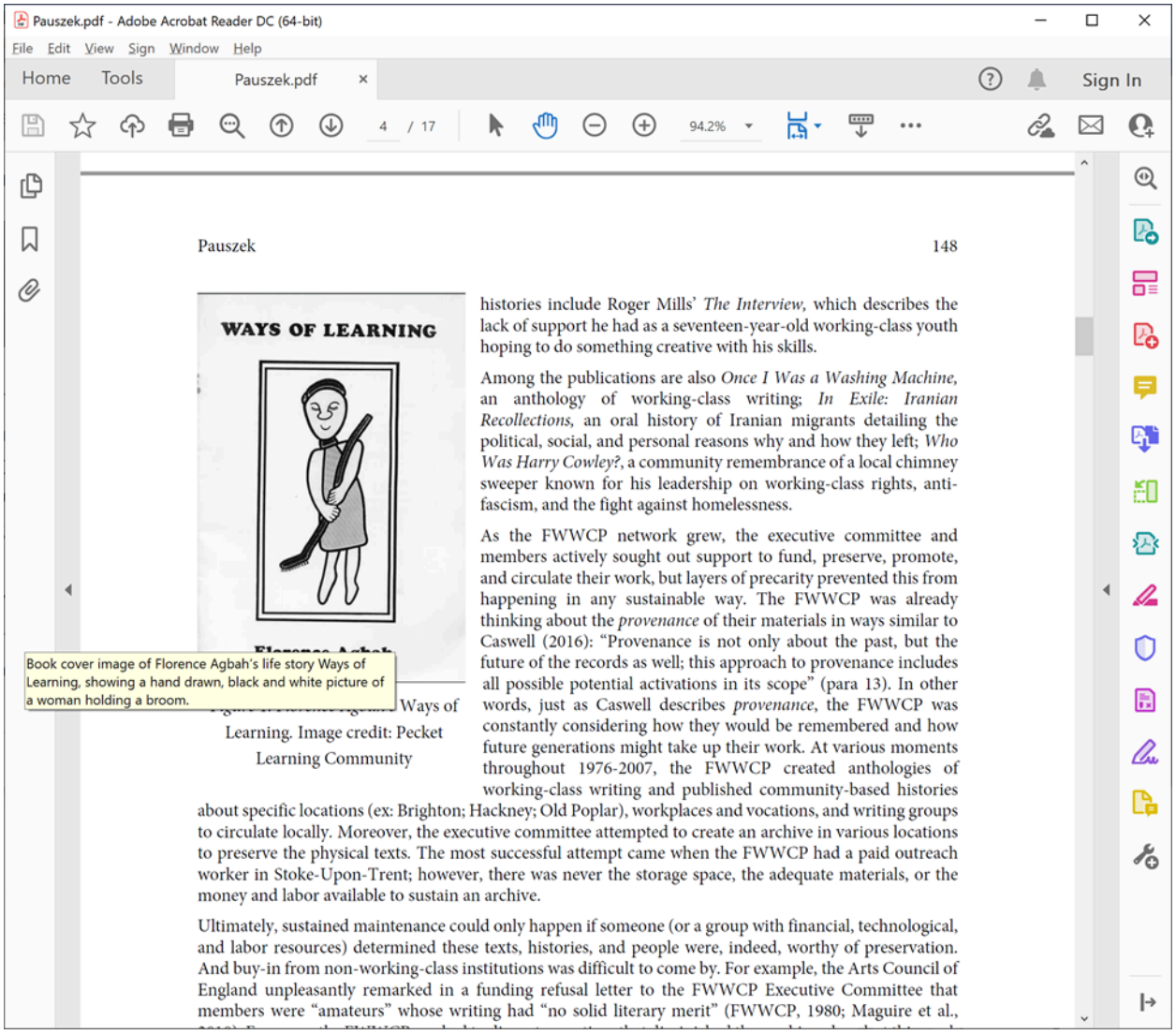
Images

- *Introduction to Accessible Images*, Poet Training Tool
- "Alternative Text," WebAIM/Accessibility in Mind
- "How To: Write Good Alt Text," *SUPERCOOL*

Charts

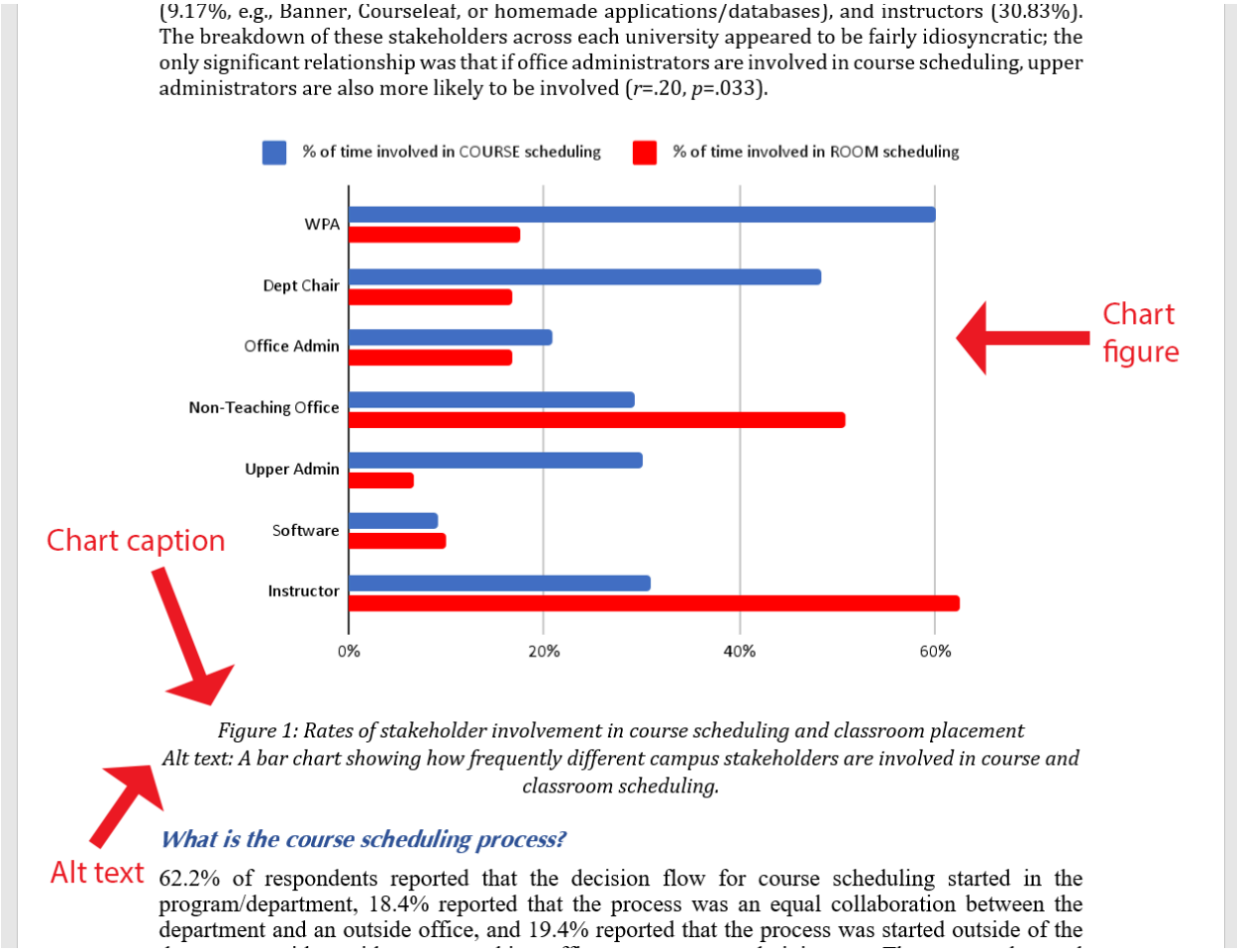
- "Writing Alt Text for Data Visualization," Amy Cesal, *Medium*
- *"Beyond Basic Alt Text – Charts, Maps, and Diagrams," Tammy Albee,*

Image alt text example



Source: Pauszek, Jessica. (2021, November 8). Preserving hope: Reanimating working-class writing through (digital) archival co-creation. [Special issue on Unsettling the Archives.] Across the Disciplines, 18(1/2), 145-161. https://doi.org/10.37514/ATD-J.2021.18.1-2.12

Chart alt text example



Source: Voss, Julia, & Bruchmann, Kathryn. (forthcoming). "It's complicated": Scheduling as an intellectual, networked social justice issue for WPAs. In Genesea Carter, Aurora Matzke, & Bonnie Vidrine-Isbell (Eds.), *Network theories, social justice, and supersystems in writing program administration*, WAC Clearinghouse.

How to add alt text in Microsoft Word

See instructions provided by Microsoft here

Note: Please **do not use** the following options in Word's alt text wizard:

- Mark the image/chart as decorative
- Use the "generate a description for me" option

Transcripts/captions for video and audio files

Why transcribing/captioning is important

- Transcripts/captions make video and and audio content accessible to deaf and hearing-impaired audiences, as well as to anyone who doesn't have the ability to listen to audio while reading an article (for example, users of devices without speakers, users without headphones, etc.).
- Transcribing vs. captioning: Transcription focuses on the spoken content of the file, while captioning also includes information about non-verbal noises and sounds. Captioning is necessary to convey the meaning of an audio/video file if things like background sounds, hesitations, changes in pitch or person being addressed, and other non-verbal aspects are essential to understanding the meaning of the file in your use case. Transcription may be sufficient if the significance of the audio/video content comes from its verbal content and does not rely on other sounds.
- The choice to caption vs. transcribe, and what information to include in captions, are interpretive decisions, shaped by your understanding of the audio/video artifact and the way you're using it in your article.

Additional resources on captioning from captioning expert Sean Zdenek

- "More than Mere Transcription: Closed Captioning as an Artful Practice," *User Experience*
- All captioning content from Zdenek's website
- *Reading Sounds — The ultimate guide to closed captioning*, book-size project by Zdenek

Free transcription tools:

You can transcribe/caption using just a media player and a word processing document, playing the file, pausing, typing, restarting, etc. However, captioning this way can be very time consuming and difficult because of the need to stop and start, toggle between programs, rewind to catch missed words, etc. Below are some free tools you can use to generate transcripts (not captions) automatically, which you can revise to correct mis-recognized words, add punctuation, add speaker names, add non-verbal cues and sounds (as necessary), etc.

- "Add subtitles & captions," YouTube Help
- "Transcribe Audio to Text - Best Free and Paid [AI] Methods," Mike Russell
- "Qualitative Data Analysis: Transcription tools," NYU Libraries

Audio file captioning example:



Source: Danforth, Courtney S., Stedman, Kyle D., & Faris, Michael J. Preface. (2018). In Courtney S. Danforth, Kyle D. Stedman, & Michael J. Faris (Eds.), *Soundwriting pedagogies*. Computers and Composition Digital Press/Utah State University Press. Retrieved from https://ccdigitalpress.org/book/soundwriting/#buckner-daley-intro

Video file transcription example:

Interview Videos

Interspersed throughout the text are a series of interview videos. To provide easy access to them together, we compiled all of them on this page in the order they appear in the text. Video titles are in the upper left-hand corner.

Introduction



Download a PDF transcript of this video.

00:00:00.02 → 00:00:44.00

Gail Hawisher: Our first authored book I just had to bring it, to hold it up and show it to you Jen. Computers and the teaching of writing an American higher education 1979-1994. It is with Charlie Moran as you know and Paul LeBlanc. One quick story with this is Cindy said I really want to do this book. She said do you think we could have it sort of gold blue? So anyway, this was her conception of a design which we wanted it to look very serious.

00:00:45.00 → 00:01:52.00

Paul Leblanc: It is easy to forget that there was a real sense of promise and wow so it changed things and there was a lot of this opportunity and youthful energy about it and of course one is always nostalgic for one's own youth so for those two things to come sliding in at the same time was great. And then there was this amazing, wonderful sense of colleagues and unlike the full timed faculty tenured professors that so many of my graduate colleagues had in their traditional fields, the full time tenured faculty we dealt with like Cindy Self, Gail Hawisher and Hugh Burns, they were great and they made us feel like colleagues. We felt like we were all forging, well we were, at the time it was a new field. That is a pretty heady and wonderful feeling and I think we were riding the technology wave before much and maybe even most of the higher ed. So when you think about the disciplines in the academy that first embraced networking and PC's, it was writing almost before every other field.

00:01:53.00 → 00:03:10.00

Charles Moran: I think computers and composition started at least my sense of it by people like Cindy and Gail who were in the field of composition but very much excited about what technology could do to improve the teaching and writing. So there had been this libertarian, liberal push from the beginning coming from Gail and Cindy and the people who joined that happy crowd and I think all of us were still part of the composition network but saw that something was going to be happening and if we could somehow get on top of it and direct it and use computers to help writers write as opposed to counting their spelling errors that maybe we could effect the way writing was going to be taught in this new era.

Source: Marlow, Jennifer, & Purdy, James P. *Are we there yet? Computers and the teaching of writing in American higher education–twenty years later*. Computers and Composition Digital Press/Utah State University Press. Retrieved from https://ccdigitalpress.org/book/arewethereyet/interviews/.