

# SC Problematic for Closed: 1.4.5 Images of Text

## Original WCAG Language for 1.4.5 Images of Text

If the technologies being used can achieve the visual presentation, [text](#) is used to convey information rather than [images of text](#) except for the following:

### **Customizable**

The image of text can be [visually customized](#) to the user's requirements;

### **Essential**

A particular presentation of text is [essential](#) to the information being conveyed.

NOTE: Logotypes (text that is part of a logo or brand name) are considered essential.

## Applying SC 1.4.5 Images of Text to Non-web Documents and Software

This applies directly as written, and as described in [Intent from Understanding Success Criterion 1.4.5](#) (also provided below).

NOTE: See also the discussion on [Closed Functionality](#).

## Intent from Understanding SC 1.4.5

The intent of this Success Criterion is to encourage authors, who are using technologies which are capable of achieving their desired default visual presentation, to enable people who require a particular visual presentation of text to be able to adjust the text presentation as needed. This includes people who require the text in a particular font size, foreground and background color, font family, line spacing or alignment.

If an author can use text to achieve the same visual effect, he or she should present the information as text rather than using an image. If for any reason, the author cannot format the text to get the same effect, the effect won't be reliably presented on the commonly available user agents, or using a technology to

meet this criterion would interfere with meeting other criteria such as 1.4.4, then an image of text can be used. This includes instances where a particular presentation of text is essential to the information being conveyed, such as type samples, logotypes, branding, etc. Images of text may also be used in order to use a particular font that is either not widely deployed or which the author doesn't have the right to redistribute, or to ensure that the text would be anti-aliased on all user agents.

Images of text can also be used where it is possible for users to customize the image of text to match their requirements.

The definition of image of text contains the note: Note: This does not include text that is part of a picture that contains significant other visual content. Examples of such pictures include graphs, screenshots, and diagrams which visually convey important information through more than just text.

Techniques for satisfying this Success Criterion are the same as those for Success Criterion 1.4.9, except that they only need to apply if the visual presentation can be achieved with the technologies that the author is using. For Success Criterion 1.4.9, the sufficient techniques would be applied only when the user can customize the output.

See also [1.4.9: Images of Text \(No Exception\)](#).

## Content for SC problematic for Closed functionality section

### Option 0: Current content in editor's draft - for reference purposes

1.4.5 Images of Text—Because there is no need to impose a requirement on all closed functionality that text displayed on the screen actually be represented internally as text (as defined by WCAG 2), given that there is no interoperability with assistive technology.

### Option 9: Only state the problem

1.4.5 Images of Text—Requires text for high-quality modification of displayed text (e.g. high contrast, increase of font size). Not all ICT with closed functionality has the capability to support visual modification of displayed text or images of text, given there is no interoperability with assistive technology and/or lack of platform support.

### Option 11: Only state the problem, more detail

1.4.5 Images of Text—High-quality machine-readable text (and not mere images of text) is needed for assistive technology functionality to provide modification of displayed text (e.g. high contrast, increase of font size). Not all ICT with closed functionality has the capability to support visual

modification of displayed text or images of text, given there is no interoperability with assistive technology and/or lack of platform support.

STOP REVIEWING HERE. THE FOLLOWING ARE OLD PROPOSALS

## **Archived:** proposals of Content for 1.4.5 Images of Text

The following are some of the iterations we worked on and some we previously surveyed. These are not for the latest survey review.

### Option 1: Latest proposal (from survey in December 2024)

Requires text for interoperability with assistive technology and high-quality resizing. Where other mechanisms achieve equivalent results, this criterion does not apply. An example of a system with closed functionality achieving equivalent results would be for that system to provide audio description for all on screen information, and either support zooming or ensure that text is large enough to be legible if zooming is not supported.

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### Option 2: From edits suggested by Phil in the last survey

Requires text for interoperability with assistive technology and high-quality resizing. Where other mechanisms achieve equivalent results, the intent of this success criterion would be met. An example of a system with closed functionality achieving equivalent results would be for that system to provide audio description for all on screen information, and either support zooming or ensure that text is large enough to be legible if zooming is not supported.

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Option 3: From Bruce in the last survey (an edit of the original proposal, quoted in reference material below)

There is not a requirement that text displayed on the screen actually be represented internally as text (as defined by WCAG 2), given that there is no interoperability with assistive technology.

Option 4: Mary Jo - variation on option 2, changed the example due to comments in issue 276

Requires text for interoperability with assistive technology and high-quality modification of displayed text (e.g. high contrast, increase of font size). Where other mechanisms achieve equivalent results, the intent of this success criterion would be met. For example, a technology that is closed to text customization by the user, might provide text that meets the minimum font size, text contrast, and self-voicing requirements set in standards that specifically cover closed functionality products would meet the intent of this success criterion.

Option 5: from Mitchell's February 2024 comments in issue 276

Question for the Task Force: For this or other options, should we mention dependencies on the underlying platforms for users to achieve text customizations?

1.4.5 Images of Text—For content that meets the "can achieve" condition and does not meet the "customizable" or "essential" exception, this Success Criterion requires text in a programmatically determinable form.

Option 6: like option 5, responding to Jon Avila's comments in issue 276

1.4.5 Images of Text—Requires text in a programmatically determinable form, rather than images of text, so that users could customize the text visually.

## Option 7: Similar to Mary Jo's option 4; edited for brevity

1.4.5 Images of Text—Requires text for high-quality modification of displayed text (e.g. high contrast, increase of font size). Where other mechanisms achieve equivalent results, the intent of this success criterion would be met.

## Option 8: defer discussion

Defer discussion on 1.4.5 Images of Text until we have first decided on 4.1.2 Name, Role, Value. Both criteria normatively rely on programmatic information.

## Option 10: Address similar to 4.1.2 Name, Role Value

1.4.5 Images of Text—Requires text for high-quality modification of displayed text (e.g. high contrast, increase of font size). Where this is not possible, providing equivalent information and operation through another mechanism, such as functions built into the software that behave like assistive technology, would help meet the intent of this success criterion.

## Option 12: state problem, then suggest work-around

1.4.5 Images of Text—High-quality machine-readable text (and not mere images of text) is needed for assistive technology functionality to provide modification of displayed text (e.g. high contrast, increase of font size). Not all ICT with closed functionality has the capability to support visual modification of displayed text or images of text. Where this is not possible, providing equivalent information and operation through another mechanism, such as functions built into the software that behave like assistive technology, would help meet the intent of this success criterion.

## Background/Reference materials

- July 2023: [Original survey on SC problematic](#) indicating need for guidance for 1.4.1

Original text for the bullet:

1.4.5 Images of Text—Because there is no need to impose a requirement on all closed functionality that text displayed on the screen actually be represented internally as text (as defined by WCAG 2.2), given that there is no interoperability with assistive technology.

- Jan. 2024: [Survey results for 1.4.1 Images of Text](#) from the last survey
- [Discussion from Issue 276](#)

- The latest editor's draft for [1.4.5 Images of Text](#).  
(Note: this does not contain content or proposals from pull requests that are open and not yet approved.)