Email Accessibility (A11y)
What Is Email Accessibility?

• **Email Accessibility** is the creation of email content that is accessible, usable, and readable for all people including readers with disabilities.

• Removing barriers to reach the greatest amount of audience.

• Accessible emails can benefit everyone.
Email Client, 1 of 2

Software client
Outlook
  • Plain text
  • Rich text
  • HTML

Web/browser
• Gmail, Yahoo, etc.
• Email Marketing
  • MailChimp
  • Campaign Monitor
  • Constant Contact
  • Etc.
Plain Text Format
• No structure but widely compatible

Rich Text Format
• Follow Word best practices
• Not compatible with every client

HTML Format
• Follow web best practices
Email Client, 2 of 2

Outlook Desktop
Microsoft Word features

Outlook Web Mail
Basic features
Creating Accessible Email

Use the same strategies as Word Essentials best practices in Format Text > HTML

Accessibility Tips

• Text Readability
• Heading Styles
• Bulleted and Numbers Lists
• Alt Text to Images

• Descriptive Links
• Extra Spaces
• Color Contrast
FOOD DRIVE FOR THE HOMELESS

It's never a bad time to help those who are in need.

DROP BY AT 12345 ANGELS CITY, LOS ANGELES, CA 91234 ANY DAY!

We're open daily from 9 am to 5 pm.
If you have questions, just call 123-456-7891 or email@donate.org
www.worldvision.org/donate

THE ANNUAL EASTER FAIR & PARADE

This year's celebration will have you hopping for joy!

12-13 April 2020 | 9 a.m.
Los Angeles Park

Come on over and join us for a wonderful day filled with egg-citing games, booths, and surprises for the whole family!

Send Image-Only Email

SUMMIT FOR GAY LATINO MALE COLLEGIANS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2018
10AM TO 4PM
USC UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS, FERTITTA HALL 125 LL
LOS ANGELES, CA
Avoid Image-Only Email

Creating email to send text on image of the event poster/flyer. Two major drawbacks:

1. Text on image will not be accessible to readers who have visual impairments rely on screen readers or braille writers.
2. Readers may be blocking images from their email client if they use plain text format.

Best practices

Provide a text-based equivalent to the information contained in the image. Email with all of the relevant information typed in text then add image with Alt Text.
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Visit World Vision Donation

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Fertitta Hall 125 LL
Los Angeles, CA

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Text Readability

• Text should be clear and easy to read

• Font size of 12 points or larger

• San-serif fonts are more suited to electronic formats (Arial, Calibri, Verdana or Franklin Gothic Book)

• Avoid difficult fonts, fancy script, or decorative fonts with curly edges

• Ensure there is enough contrast between the foreground color and background color
Heading Styles

- Use Heading Styles in a logical sequence
- Heading Styles (Heading 1 through Heading 6)
  - **Heading 1**: Document Title (one time only)
  - **Heading 2**: Major subsection titles
  - **Heading 3**: Further subsection titles, and so forth

**Headings** are styles to give a document structure by category or topic.

**Without headings**, a person using assistive technology like a screen reader **cannot** navigate by sections, subsections, or scan section titles to understand the document structure.
Click the Format Text tab and select an appropriate heading from the “Styles” block.

Use Heading 1 only once as the title of the email.
• Each sub-heading of Heading 1 will be a “Heading 2”. Sub-headings of a “Heading 2” will be “Heading 3”, and so forth.
Modify Style

• To modify the way a heading looks, highlight the heading text, right-click the heading icon in the “Styles” block, and choose “Modify.”

• In the “Modify Style” window, make your desired changes under “Formatting” and click “OK.”
Email Marketing Headers/Styles

Mail Chimp: Templates have heading levels 1-4 to organize the content in a hierarchical structure. Headings are located under the “styles tab” in WYSIWIG.

Campaign Monitor: There are heading levels 1 - 3. In addition, creators can choose from normal text, numbered or bulleted lists, and block quotes.

Refer to Email Marketing Accessibility
Bulleted and Numbers Lists

• Use list to organize information by ideas or processes
• Use Outlook’s built-in functionality to create
  • Bulleted List (order of list items does not matter)
  • Numbers List (order of list items does matter)
Visual Challenge

Normal vision

Low vision

Color blindness

Blind or deaf-blind

What’s the best way to make images accessible to everyone?
The purpose of alt text is to allow low vision or blind users to understand the purpose of the image. Describe only how image relates to content. **What is its purpose? Why the image there?**

• Screen readers and other assistive technologies **can’t** convert images into words/texts.
• Captions are universal and accessible for everyone.
• “Image of...”, “photo of...” is not needed.
• Keep alt text short 8 to 120 characters or less.
• Alt text should be very brief, no more than a sentence or two.

**Best practices for accessible images**

When screen readers encounter an image, they read out the word “image” or “graphic” and then read the alt text:

“*Three plants going through transformation with text quote Accessibility user-friendly document for CSUN student success.*”
A stair chase leading up to an entryway is painted yellow with bold black text that reads "museums are now."

A hand reaches out of a computer screen giving the hand gesture for stop. The screen reads ‘access denied!’

On the left is the book cover for Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law, and on the right is the quote: “In the Tigrinya language of Eritrea and Ethiopia, Haben means ‘pride.’”

Michelle Obama claps and Barack waves.

Student holds a diploma hardcover up in the air during CSUN commencement. Caption text "and together, as Matadors, we will move mountains."

More examples of How to Describe Images

• Document Learning Tools: Describing images
• How to Describe Images (Art, Chemistry, Diagrams, Flow Charts, Formatting & Layout, Graphs, Maps, Mathematics, Page Layout, Tables, Text-only images)
• Periodic Table of the Elements
• UDC Best Practices for Describing Images
Outlook 2016
1. Right-click on the image, select **Format Picture**, select **Layout & Properties**, and then select **Alt text**.
2. Add a detailed description of the image, and why the image is important to your message.

Outlook 365
1. Right-click on the image, select **Edit Alt Text**.
2. Add a detailed description of the image, and why the image is important to your message.
Outlook Client: Adding an image in Email Signature (Alt Text)

**Outlook 2016**

1. After adding Alt Text to an image, select the entire email signature to copy.
2. Open email signature box (File | Options | Mail | Signatures) then paste in signature box.

**Outlook 2016**

1. Right-click the image, select Format Picture, select Layout & Properties, and then select Alt text.

   "Image of...", "photo of..." is not needed.

2. **Outlook 365**

   1. Open email signature box (File | Options | Mail | Signatures).
   2. Add an image, right-click to select Pictures then Alt Text tab.
Office 365 Outlook Web App (Alt Text)

1. Insert Image
2. Right click on image to select Insert alt text
3. Add alternative text to image
4. Run Accessibility Check
5. Check for accessibility issues
Office 365 Outlook Web App Email Signature (Alt Text)

• At the top Settings
• Your app Settings > Mail
• Layout > Email Signature
Descriptive Hyperlinks, 1 of 2

**Not Accessible** – vague and redundant

**CSUN News**

**Woman of the Year for the 18th Senate District**

California State University, Northridge President Dianne F. Harrison has been named Woman of the Year for the state's 18th Senate District by Sen. Robert Hertzberg. [Read more](https://www.csun.edu/universal-design-center).

**Important Dates for CSUN Commencement 2019**

For graduating seniors, CSUN GradFest 2019 will take place from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., March 13 and 14, at the CSUN Campus Store Complex. The event gives students the opportunity to make their final preparations for graduation, including renting caps and gowns, information on ceremony schedules, reserving guest tickets, purchasing souvenirs and taking graduation portraits. [Read more](https://www.csun.edu/universal-design-center).

**Blinky the Friendly Hen: 40th Anniversary Exhibition**

Comprised of a Relic Chamber, a Blinky Theatre, Blinky book editions (1979-2019), chapel, gift shop, stained glass, and historical artifacts, this fourth retrospective exhibition celebrates historical and contemporary works relating to four decades of the Blinky phenomenon. [Read more](https://www.csun.edu/universal-design-center).

**Accessible** – descriptive and unique

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Full URL text [https://www.csun.edu/universal-design-center](https://www.csun.edu/universal-design-center)

(raw URL may not make sense to screen reader users or others, so make the link text descriptive i.e. [Universal Design Center](https://www.csun.edu/universal-design-center))
When creating hyperlinks, make sure the text associated with the link is understandable out of context.

- Avoid this: You may find this tutorial here.
- Do this: You may find this tutorial on creating accessible Word document on our website.

For Printing

- If the document is likely to be printed, include the full URL. If the URL is long, consider creating a shorten URL (tiny.cc or bitly.com or other URL services)

You may find this tutorial on creating accessible Word document on our website (www.csun.edu/udc/word)

- Do not use click here or here or read more or continue or email me.
- Do not use different link text to refer to the same resource.
- Do not use the same link text to refer to different resources.
- Be unique for unique destinations.
- Best practice is to bold or underline links.
- Do not use color links as the only method to convey important information.
- Tab order should read from the upper left to the lower right, and make sense to both sighted and visually impaired users.
Avoid Extra Spaces

- Screen readers will read blank or multiple spaces created using the space bar, empty line, empty tab, empty paragraphs or carriage returns as “Blank”.

- This can be very irritating for someone using assistive technology to listen multiple blank characters and may assume they’ve reached the end of a document.

- Use Outlook’s built-in formatting, alignment, tab stops position in paragraph options to create whitespace instead of repeating blank characters.
Turn on the ruler when composing an email message

In Outlook, a horizontal ruler is available across the top of the message body to help align text, graphics, tables, and other elements.

1. From the Home tab, in the New group, click New Email.

2. In the Message window, click Customize the Quick Access Toolbar, and then click More Commands to display the Outlook Options dialog box.

3. In the Choose commands from list, click Commands Not in the Ribbon.

4. Choose the Ruler command, and then click Add.

5. The ruler is added to the Quick Access Toolbar on top.
Provide descriptions if using color to convey meaning

**Example 1:** Inaccessible color highlights in red

May 11-17, 2019

**Example 1:** Accessible with a description

May 11-17, 2019* (final exams)

**Example 2:** Inaccessible table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments (overdue in red)</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Example 2:** Accessible table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Overdue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example 3:** Inaccessible color shape

Color identical may not be recognized by colorblind users

**Example 3:** Accessible color and number

Color and number
People who have low vision or colorblind could encounter some difficulty distinguishing text color from a background color if the contrast is insufficient contrast ratio 1.5:1.

This example has a great color contrast ratio of 8.7:1. The contrast is sufficient for those who have color deficiencies.

- Download Colour Contrast Analyser onto your computer (PC/Mac) to ensure accessible contrast or use an online contrast checker from WebAIM.
- WCAG Level AA requires a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 for regular sized text (12 or 14 pt. font) and 3:1 for large text (18 pt. font).
- Coblis Color Blindness Simulator
Attachments

• Files attached to an email must also be accessible.
• Use a descriptive and distinct file name.
• Videos in emails must be captioned.

Unclear / Vague File Name
• 00123345667987.pdf
• Resume.pdf
• Reports.docx
• Excel_2019.xlsx

Descriptive File Name
• Accessible_Email_Infographics.pdf
• Nguyen_Van_Resume.pdf
• UDC_Captioning_2018.docx
• UDC_Budget_2019.xlsx
Accessibility Checker

Office 365 Outlook Client

Office 365 Outlook Web App

Outlook 2016/2013 - No Accessibility Checker
Create with Accessibility in Mind

**Best Practices**

**Email Format**
- Plain Text
- Rich Text
- HTML Format

**Attachments**
- Descriptive Filename
- Videos (transcript or captions)

**Images**
- Alternative Text
- Caption

**Links**
- Link Text
- Link Display
- Underline Links

**Content Organization**
- Headings
- Lists
- Numbers

**Text Display**
- Font styles
- Color

**Making digital content accessible for everyone**

Email communication programs

PeopleSoft
Comm Gen

Campaign Monitor

MailChimp

iContact

Yahoo!

Gmail
Resources

• UDC Email Accessibility
• Creating Accessible Emails: Outlook 2013 & 2016
• Improve Email Accessibility
• Improve Image Accessibility in Email
• Add Accessible Tables and Lists to Email
• Accessibility Challenges in Email
  an infographic about accessible email with text-based equivalent
• Email 508 Checklist by HHS.GOV
How can we help you make a difference?

Universal Design Center Offers
- Online, self-paced training
- In-person training each semester
- Consultations
- Tools and Services

Universal Design means design for everyone