Social Media Accessibility (A11y)
Best Practices for Accessible Social Media

Presentation slides shareable from National Center on Accessible Educational Materials

Mindy Johnson  |  AEM Center & CAST
Director of Digital Communications & Outreach

aem.cast.org
What’s Your Social Media Flavor?
In general, how accessible are social media web sites to you?

Perceptions of social media accessibility are generally unchanged over the last several years.

WebAIM’s Screen Reader User Survey #9 (2021)
What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology (AT) are “products, equipment, and systems that enhance learning, working, and daily living for persons with disabilities.”
What are Screen Readers

**Screen readers** are a form of assistive technology (AT) software that **enables access** to a computer, and all the things a computer does, by attempting to identify and interpret what is being displayed on the computer screen using **text-to-speech**. Screen readers can only access and process **live text** (fully editable or selectable text).

- **Provides access** to someone who is visually impaired, has a mobility or a learning disability, to access text on the screen.
- **Offers same level of independence** and privacy as anyone else.
Types of screen readers

- NVDA screen reader can be downloaded free of charge by anyone.
- Provides auditory descriptions of each onscreen element using gestures, a keyboard, or a braille display.
- Adds spoken, audible, and vibration feedback to your device.
- Screen magnifier for Microsoft Windows that allows you to see and hear everything on the computer.
Social Media Accessibility

- Plain Language
- CamelCase Hashtags
- Image Descriptions
- Captioning & Audio
- Link Shorteners

Mindy Johnson | @min_dj

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Plain Language

Avoid acronyms, abbreviations, and jargon.
Plain Language: Example

Not plain language:

“It is imperative that our MTSS includes UDL at all levels of instructional support.”

Plain language:

“Universal Design for Learning isn’t just for students who struggle. It’s for everyone.”

[Links to What is Plain Language? and Social Media: You Still Need Plain Language]
CamelCase Hashtags

CamelCase makes hashtags easier to read.

CamelCase is the practice of capitalizing the first letters of words in multiple-word hashtags. This not only helps screen readers distinguish the separate words in a hashtag, but also increases legibility for sighted people, as well.
What is CamelCase?

CamelCase

#notcamelcase
#themoreyouknow
#followfriday
#udlchat
#notsoeasytoread
#a11y
#csun4all
#exploreaccess

#CamelCase
#TheMoreYouKnow
#FollowFriday
#UDLchat
#SuperEasyToRead
#a11y or #A11y
#CSUN4all or #CSUN4All
#ExploreAccess

Created by Tatiana Belkina
from Noun Project

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Images without descriptions are like an unfinished story.

To increase the accessibility of your social media, what’s the best way to finish your story?
Image Alternative or Alt Text

The purpose of Alt Text is to allow low vision or blind users who use text-to-speech assistive technologies (AT), such as screen readers, to understand the purpose of graphic images. Sighted users usually don’t see alt text unless they use AT.

Screen readers and other AT can’t convert images into texts. So, when writing alt text, consider the following for images:

- What is its purpose?
- Is the image important enough to be there?
- If there is no description, what will the screen reader users miss?
- Be concise and eliminate unnecessary words.
- When completing the alt text, use proper punctuation such as periods to indicate the end of the alt text. Without proper punctuation, some screen readers will run the alt text into the body text that follows and cause confusion to the user.

“Image of...”, “Photo of...” is not needed because screen readers and other AT announce that it’s an “image” or “graphic”.

There is no limit to the number of characters, but keep alt text descriptions short around 200 characters or less.

Don’t insert hyperlinks in alt text because they are not clickable and can’t create descriptive link text.
How to Describe Images?

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.’”

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

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.”
Image Descriptions: Twitter

Image description is limited to 1,000 characters
Image Descriptions: Instagram

- New Post:
  - Write a caption...
  - Tag People
  - Add Location
  - Also post to:
    - Facebook
    - Twitter
  - Advanced Settings

- Advanced Settings:
  - Comments
  - Turn Off Commenting
  - Preferences
    - Share Your Posts to Facebook
  - Accessibility
    - Write Alt Text
      - Alt text describes your photos for people with visual impairments. Alt text will be automatically created for your photos or you can choose to write your own.
    - Close Friends
    - Edit Your Close Friends List

- Alt Text:
  - Elliott the dog laying on a bed with his Henry the Hippo stuffed toy

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Image Descriptions: LinkedIn

Alt Text is limited to 120 characters
Image Descriptions: Facebook

- Select the photo that you’d like to describe in Alt Text.
- Select the **three dots** in the top right corner of your post.
- When the menu opens, select the **Change Alt Text**.

Credit to Explore Access: Accessible Images and Posts
Image Captions

• Captions are universal and accessible for everyone.

• Captions are read and visible to all users whether they use assistive technologies (AT) or not.

• Captions and alt text have different purposes.
  • Captions convey what’s visible in the image.
  • Alt text describes the visual aspect of the image and should be brief.

• If captions and alt text are similar in their descriptions, alt text can say “Photo caption below.” For example, see caption example as shown on the right side.

• Don’t repeat the image's caption as the alt text. People don't need to hear the same information twice.

Caption Example

Caption: People buying peanuts at the local farmer’s market.

Alt Text: Photo caption below. (Indicate where image position above, below, left or right side.)
My book is now an Amazon Best Seller! #1 New Releases in Lawyer & Judge Biographies. Thank you, readers!!!

In-line Image Descriptions: Facebook & Instagram, 2 of 2
Flyers on Social Media

Example: PDF event flyer can’t post on a social media, how do we make it accessible?

1. Export PDF to image i.e. JPG, JPEG or PNG
2. Upload an image and type exact text description from the flyer on social media post
   • “Image of…”, “photo of…”, “graphic of…” is not needed
4. Provide link shortening i.e. bit.ly, tiny.cc, etc.

Note: Event flyer creates in

• Word: Use SnagIt screen capture to save as image file
• PowerPoint, Publisher, InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, or Online Canva: Export to or Save As image file
Alt Text Tester used to show Alternative Text of Image on Hover. We can also copy the Alternate Text by double click on image.
GIFs or flickering media

The Internet is full of fun content, and adding creative media elements to your course can boost student engagement. However, GIFs and other rapid-movement, flashing or flickering media - even overly complex still images - have the potential to trigger seizures or other harmful responses in susceptible individuals. Therefore, flashing or flickering content should be avoided.

W3C provides a more precise technical formula for calculating general flash and red flash thresholds. The Trace Center at the University of Maryland has developed a Photosensitive Epilepsy Analysis Tool (PEAT) for measuring whether web or computer applications are likely to cause seizures.

Inclusive Teaching: An Introduction to Content Warnings and Trigger Warnings.
Captioning & Audio

Transcribing and captioning videos is easier than ever.

Audio descriptions are the next frontier.

Who is the largest audience that benefits from captions?
Captions and Audio Files

All videos and audio files posted in social media must have captions.

CSUN Captioning: csun.edu/captioning
Video Accessibility: csun.edu/udc/video
Captioned Video: YouTube
Users have two options to embed captions on Facebook:

**Option 1:**
- Select the video that you’d like to add captions.
- Select the **three dots** in the top right corner of your post.
- When the menu opens, select the **Edit Video**.
- By uploading a **SubRip Subtitle (SRT)** file
  - **SubRip Subtitle** (SRT) files use the file’s subtitles and timings to match them with the video on the screen. Content creators must ensure that the file is properly formatted and labeled for the captions to correctly appear on screen visit [Common SRT Formatting Issues](#).
- By editing the video after uploading and **manually adding the captions**.

**Option 2:**
- Users can **upload a video on YouTube and add captions**, a less technical route.
Captioned Video: Facebook – Business Pages

• Facebook LIVE Videos: Real Time Captioning
  
  **Facebook Live** videos can also be captioned. The videos can be automatically captioned or you can connect a third-party application that captions your videos in real-time.
  
  • [Enabling Closed Captions on Facebook Live Broadcasts](#)
  • [Facebook Live Closed Captions How-To Guide](#)

• Upload Facebook Videos: Business Pages
  
Instagram just releases NEW auto-generated captions for IGTV in 16 languages.

Visit New IGTV Captions.
Captioned Video: Twitter

Twitter: Only Twitter Media Studio users can upload closed captions to Twitter videos. Subtitles now available in iOS and Android from Twitter. However,

- There are apps that will add open captions to your videos while users recording them. Clipomatic and Clips for iOS devices, and AutoCap for Android devices offer live auto-captioning and editing.

- Content creators working from a desktop/laptop computer, tools like Camtasia and Kapwing allow you to “burn” open captions onto video using a caption file.
Audio Description

Audio descriptions have a narrator that describe critical content that is not conveyed through audio such as settings, graphics, and on-screen activity. Audio descriptions are commonly used for pre-recorded material such as video tutorials, video resources, and instructional videos. They are mainly intended for users with visual impairments such as blind and low vision users.

For example, you do not need audio description for talking heads only, or for text on slides as long as the slide text is woven into what you say.

Frozen - Trailer with Audio Description
Link Shorteners

Save characters.
Save lives.
Link Shorteners: Example

- Bit.ly
- Tiny.cc
- Tinyurl.com
- Ow.ly

Link shortening services not only save you characters in your posts, but they help limit the raw characters a screen reader has to read aloud.
Putting It All Together

Social Media Accessibility

Accessibility features, best practices, and resources
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