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

Presentation slides shareable from National Center on Accessible Educational Materials

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My disability exists not because I use a wheelchair, but because the broader environment isn't accessible.

Stella Young, Disability Rights Activist
What is Assistive Technology?

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

- Screen Readers
- Magnification Software
- Speech Recognition
- Trackball Mouse
- Keyboard
- Zoom Text
- Braille Computer Keyboard
- Captions/Subtitles
- Captioned Telephone
- Video Relay Services
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.

• Provides access to someone who is visually impaired, mobility or has a learning disability to access text on the screen.

• Offers same level of independence and privacy as anyone else.
Types of screen readers

Screen reader program for Microsoft Windows that allows blind and visually impaired users to read the screen either with a text-to-speech output or by a refreshable Braille display. 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

WebAIM’s Screen Reader User Survey #7 (2019)
What’s Your Social Media Flavor?
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.”

What is Plain Language?

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?

#notcamelcase  #CamelCase
#themoreyouknow  #TheMoreYouKnow
#followfriday  #FollowFriday
#udlchat  #UDLchat
#notsoeasytoread  #SuperEasyToRead
#a11y  #a11y or #A11y
#csun4all  #CSUN4all or #CSUN4All
#exploreaccess  #ExploreAccess

Created by Tatiana Belkina from Noun Project
What’s the best way to make images accessible to everyone?
Image Descriptions

Images *without* descriptions are like an *unfinished* story.
Alternative or Alt Text

• A written description of images and/or objects that can be read by a blind or low vision using screen reader technology.

• 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.

• **Alternative text # of characters or less depends on social media platforms.** Keep text brief and precise.

• [Best practices for accessible images](csun.edu/udc)
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."

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

- Explore Access Social Media Toolkits
- 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)
- UDC Best Practices for Describing Images
Image Descriptions: Twitter, 1 of 3

1. Settings
2. Accessibility
3. Compose image descriptions
4. Accessibility options
I love quoting @ResearchMark. He really gets #UDL #UDLchat
Image Descriptions: Twitter, 3 of 3

I CAN WORK WITH THE MEANS.

BUT I'D RATHER PARTY WITH THE OUTLIERS.

I CAN WORK WITH THE MEANS.

BUT I'D RATHER PARTY WITH THE OUTLIERS.

Mark Wahlberg with the text "I can work with the means. But I’d rather party with the outliers."
Image Descriptions: Instagram
Image Descriptions: Facebook

Explore Access: Accessible Images and Posts
My book is now an Amazon Best Seller! #1 New Releases in Lawyer & Judge Biographies. Thank you, readers!!!


Instead of Alt Text, some social media users use one of the lists to describe an image for screen readers

- Photo: text description
- Photo description: text description
- [Photo description: text description]
- Image: text description
- Image description: text description
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.
Captioning Videos

Per federal and state law, and CSU policy, instructional media (e.g., videos, captured lectures, recorded presentations) must have captions. This includes instructional media used in classrooms, posted on websites or shared in Canvas.

- All students who are enrolled in a course must be able to access the content in the course.
- **Faculty**: Funding is available to help faculty generate captions and transcripts for instructional media. Materials should be submitted **at least six weeks** in advance of their use in instruction.
- **Staff**: For CSUN staff who do not provide classroom material, there is a cost through chargeback. For information on the chargeback, email ncod@csun.edu.

[www.csun.edu/captioning](http://www.csun.edu/captioning)
Captioned Video: YouTube
Users have two options to embed captions on Facebook:

- By uploading a **SubRip Subtitle (SRT)** file
- By editing the video after uploading and **manually adding the captions**.

**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](#).

- Users can **upload a video on YouTube and add captions**, a less technical route.
Captioned Video: Instagram and Twitter

• **Instagram** does not have a feature to add captions to videos.
• **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.

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

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

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

Universal Design means design for everyone