Developing Your Social Media Accessibility Toolkit

Justin Romack, Texas A&M University Department of Disability Resources
Melanie Thornton, University of Arkansas, Partners for Inclusive Communities
Conference Civility Statement

We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects…

Access and Inclusion

and

Civility and Respect

…this week and in all aspects of our organization.
What We’ll Cover Today

1. Overview on the importance of social media accessibility
2. Basics of web accessibility
3. How-tos to address accessibility with social media
4. Additional tools and resources to create accessible content
How Does Social Media Influence Our Lives?

• Communication and messaging
• News and culture
• Entertainment
• Employment
And cat memes, of course!

ZOOM MEETING
Audio Only  With Video

WHEN YOUR WORK BFF GOES TO A CONFERENCE
AND LEAVES YOU ALL ALONE

Austin, Texas | July 19-23, 2021
How do our institutions use social media?

• Event and program promotion
• Awareness and branding
• Admissions
• Culture
• Announcements
What is Digital Accessibility?

• Digital accessibility involves the creation of websites, mobile applications and electronic documents that can be easily navigated and understood by a wide range of users.

• Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

• Deque: What is Digital Accessibility? (YouTube)
Common Barriers in Social Media

• Images and Animated GIFs with no alt text
• Use of features that are not accessible
• Videos without captions
• Videos that are only visual
• Overuse of hashtags and emojis
Alternative Text Descriptions

• A textual alternative or description for non-text content such as images and visuals used in digital content.

• * Adapted from the definition by WebAIM (https://webaim.org/techniques/alttext/)
How to Create Great Alt Text

• Should be accurate and provide equivalent information conveyed visually
• Should be succinct
• Should not be redundant or provide same information as surrounding content
• Should not include "Image of" or similar
Facebook: Alt Text - 1

- Upload your photo.
- Scroll over the thumbnail and select 'Edit.'
Facebook: Alt Text - 2

- Select the Alternative Text option to the left of the image.
- Write the description of the image.
Facebook: Alt Text - 3

- Select the Save button
Facebook: Editing Alt Text - 1

• Select photo.

• Select ellipsis (...) to the right of page name.
Facebook: Editing Alt Text - 2

- Select Change Alt Text.
Facebook: Editing Alt Text - 3

• Edit or add the alt text.
• Select the Save button.
• Alt text cannot be edited once tweeted.
Facebook: Sharing Images

• Does it have alt text already?
• If yes, share away
• If no (or not sure), add alt text in your post
Facebook: Link Previews

- Is what you are sharing accessible?
- Is the image in the link preview purely decorative?
  - Yes...no need to describe
  - No...add a description to your post
Twitter: Adding Alt Text - 1

- Upload image
- Choose Add Description
Twitter: Adding Alt Text - 2

• Add description
• Allows up to 1000 characters
• Select the Save button
• Tweets and alt text cannot be edited once it is tweeted
Twitter: Retweeting Other Content

• Is it accessible?
  • Yes – retweet away
  • If not, use “Quote Tweet” option and add as much description as possible in your comment.
Instagram: Adding Alt Text on Mobile - 1

- Choose a filter and edit the image, then tap Next.
- Tap Advance Settings at the bottom of the screen.
• Tap Write Alt Text
• When finished writing alt text tap Done.
• Share post!
Instagram: Adding Alt Text with Creator Studio

- Write post and choose a photo or video using Add Content.
- Click Advanced Settings.
- Type your description in the Write Alt Text field.
- Publish your post!
Other Things to Know About Alt Text on Social Media

• Many third-party apps like Sprout Social and Hootsuite allow you to add alt text when scheduling content

• If a platform doesn't support alt text natively, you can add the alt text in the body of your content.
What Are Captions?

Textual version of speech and other important audio content which are synchronized to display alongside interactive media.
What Are Transcripts?

A textual version of spoken words, important audio and sounds, as well as visual information to provide equitable access to interactive media like video.
What is video description?

A narrated description of key visual elements shown on screen such as actions, scenery, costumes, character descriptions and any other details which are necessary to understand the intent and information provided through interactive media.
Facebook Business Pages: Captioning Videos - 1

- **Open Facebook Creator Studio**
- Choose the page where you want to add the video
- And select Upload video
Facebook Business Pages: Captioning Videos - 2

- Enter the title and description.
- Select Captions.
• Make sure “Don’t Add Captions Until I Review” is checked.

• Auto captions will be generated.
Facebook Business Pages: Captioning Videos - 4

- Once the automatic captions are generated, select Review.
Facebook Business Pages: Captioning Videos - 5

• Edit the captions and adjust timings if needed.
• Select Approve.
• Select Next.
• Select Publish.
Facebook Personal Pages: Captioning Videos - 1

• Creator Studio not available for personal pages.
• Upload video.
• Select Edit.
Facebook Personal Pages: Captioning Videos - 2

• Select Add Captions.
• Upload Caption file.
• Select Save.
Facebook Live: Captioning

- You can add a third party to caption live stream
- Typically, that provider will be able to guide you through the setup
- The option is available to turn on auto-captions during the event
- If you want to edit those auto-captions after the event, follow the instructions provided previously.
Twitter: Captioning Videos - 1

- Media Studio is required to add captions to videos
- Media Studio may or may not be available on your account
- To locate Media Studio, select the Ellipsis
- When the menu opens, if you have access to Media Studio, it will be listed there
- When you select it, it will open in a new browser window
Twitter: Captioning Videos - 2

• In the top right corner, choose Upload Media
• Once you have uploaded the video and it has processed, select it
Twitter: Captioning Videos - 3

- Select Subtitles
- Select the language
- Select Upload to add a captioning file
Instagram: Captioning 1

• After you record the video in Stories, tap the sticker icon at the top of the screen.

• Now select the “Captions” sticker.
Instagram: Captioning 2

• The captions will appear on-screen. You can move them around and select from four different text styles.

• You also have the option to tap the text to make any corrections and to customize the color.

• Tap Done when finished.
Captions on Instagram

• Captions are currently only supported on Stories
• For posts in your Feed, Reels and IGTV, you should "burn in" your captions
• Also include a link to a transcript
YouTube: Captioning 1

- Using **YouTube Studio**
- Open video in Channel Content.
- On the Video Details page, click Subtitles in the right column.
YouTube: Captioning 2

- Select Upload File.
- Choose With Timing as your file type.
- Click the file in your Browser and Open.
YouTube: Captioning 3

- You can review the subtitles and change anything as needed.
- Click Done to save!
Including a Transcript with Your Social Media Content

• Captions are synchronized in real-time, whereas transcripts often are not
• Both are necessary to facilitate equitable access
• Transcripts also provide visual cues and elements
• Transcripts also promote universal design, as many people prefer to read through content rather than watch it in real-time
Video Description

• Also called audio description, this provides narration of important visual elements on screen
• No native support for audio description tracks exists with popular social media platforms
• YouTube is beta testing audio description via a secondary audio track
• Best practice is to create a second version of your video with audio description
Animated GIFs

Image format which allows for still or animated visualizations.
More About GIFs

- GIFs are not videos
- Think of GIFs like a flipbook
- Countless libraries available to express emotions in web content
- Twitter is currently the only platform to support description for GIFs
Facebook: Animated GIFs 1

• In the comment section, choose the GIF icon
• Select the GIF you want to share
• It is posted automatically so you’ll have to edit it.
• Choose the ellipsis at the top right of the comment
• Then select Edit
Facebook: Animated GIFs 2

• Add your description in the comments
• Example: GIF of woman pointing upward with text: What she said.
Twitter: Animated GIFs

• Select the reply icon
• Select the GIF icon
• Select the GIF you want to use as a reply
Twitter: Animated GIFs 2

• Scroll to the bottom of the GIF
• Select the Alt symbol in the bottom right corner
Twitter: Animated GIFs 3

• Add your description
• Select Done in top right corner
• Hit Reply to share your GIF with the alt text
Using Plain Language

• Use active voice
• Avoid acronyms and jargon
• Use the simplest form of words
• Use short sentences (15-20 words maximum)
• Use bullets and lists when possible
Using CamelCase with Hashtags

• Use a capital letter to begin each new word in your hashtag

• Example: #SocialMediaAccessibilityRocks

• Improves readability and comprehension for everyone
Considering Accessibility for Emojis

- Be judicious and limit emoji use
  - Assistive technology reads verbose descriptions which can become wordy
- Avoid emojis in display names
- DO NOT use script-style emojis to spell text
Consider Providing Content Warnings

• When posting content about violence and other topics which may carry trauma or triggering emotions

• Include CW (content warning) or TW (trigger warning) and a reason for the warning

• Example: {CW: Violence}
Clearly Indicate the Destination of Links
Follow Official Accessibility Channels for Social Media Platforms
Beware of Automated Accessibility
Include Accessibility Data in Your Editorial or Content Calendar
Avoid Click Bait and Inspiration Porn
Follow Influencers in the Disability Community

wheelchair_rapunzel

1,166 posts 138k followers 2,794 following

Alex Dacy
Blogger
Disability representation & body confidence
disabled | creator | writer | model | advocate
🔥 collabs: alexdacymanagement@gmail.com
linktr.ee/wheelchair_rapunzel

Followed by sophjbutler and arti.speaks
Tips, Tricks and Tools

• Kapwing
• Creator Studio
• Chrome extension – Visual Alt Text
• Accessibility Oz: Social Media Accessibility Resources
Contact Us

Justin Romack
Texas A&M University
Department of Disability Resources
justinr@disability.tamu.edu

Melanie Thornton
University of Arkansas
Partners for Inclusive Communities
mthornt@uark.edu
Session Evaluation

• Your feedback helps shape future programming.

• Thank you for attending!