

CREATING ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS

Email - Microsoft Outlook

NDSU

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Use this list to check for common accessibility issues in Emails. This document specifically addresses Microsoft Outlook as that is the campus-supported software. Microsoft offers step-by-step instructions on [how to fix accessibility issues](#), and further explanation on why these are important. Use this quick tips sheet to meet the basic accessibility requirements.

Include Alt Text With All Visuals

Why: For screen reader users, alternative text helps to communicate what is important in images and other visuals. Alt text helps people who can't see the screen to understand what's important in images and other visuals.

- » **How:** Control + Click the image or object > Edit alt text > Type 1-2 sentences in the text box to describe the object and its context.

Do Not Use Infographics in Place of Text

Why: Screen readers cannot read images or infographics without alt text. Unless your image has alt text, do not send a jpg or PDF as the only item in an email. Another option would be to add the text in the image or infographic as text in your email.

Add Meaningful Hyperlink Text

Why: People who use screen readers sometimes scan a list of links. Links should convey clear and accurate information about the destination. For example, instead of linking to the text Click here, include the full title of the destination page.

- » **How:** Click on the insert link option on the bottom toolbar > Insert Link > Write the information about the destination in the description > Write the URL in the web address box

Don't Use Color To Convey Information

Why: People who are blind, have low vision, or are colorblind might miss out on the meaning conveyed by particular colors.

- » **How:** Add an underline to color-coded hyperlink text so people who are colorblind know the text is linked even if they can't see the color. For headings, consider adding bold or using a larger font.

Use Good Contrast

Why: High contrast text is easier to read for sighted and low sighted individuals. If you use black or gray text in your emails, use at least 70% tint for your gray colors. When using color, choose dark colors on a light background. If you struggle to read the email, so will your readers.

Add Table Header And Column Information

Why: To keep track of their location in a table, screen readers count table cells and use header information to identify rows and columns. If a table is nested within another table or if a cell is merged or split, the screen reader loses count and can't provide useful information about the table. Blank cells in a table could also mislead someone using a screen reader into thinking that there is nothing more in the table.

Use A Larger Font Size

Why: People who have dyslexia describe seeing text "swim together" on a page (the compressing of one line of text into the line below). They often see text merge or distort. To reduce their reading load use a larger font size, 11pt or larger.

- » **How:** Click on the font size bar > Select a font size of 11pt or larger

Include Sufficient White Space

Why: In order to reduce workload for individuals with dyslexia, make sure there is ample white space between sentences and paragraphs

Request Accessible Emails

Why: If you wish to make sure you receive accessible emails, you can let the sender know that you prefer to receive accessible content.

- » **How:** Click the settings icon on your Outlook on the web > In the search bar type "Accessible Content" > Click on Accessible Content > Select the "Ask senders to send content that's accessible" checkbox > Click save

For more information or assistance, contact:

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