CREATING ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS

Microsoft Word

Use this list to check for common accessibility issues in Microsoft Word documents. Microsoft offers in-depth information on the use of its accessibility checker feature as well as step-by-step instructions on how to fix accessibility issues, and further explanation on why these are important.

Insert Document Titles
Why: Document titles provide information on what a screen reader is reading.

» How: File menu > Properties > Summary > Title > Enter descriptive title for your document.

Use Alt Text For All Images
Why: Screen readers cannot read photos without alt text or descriptions. Individuals may miss or wonder if they have missed important information.

» How: Click image > Picture Format menu > Format Pane > Layout & Properties (_alt) > Alt text > Simple images, fill in title, Ex: John Doe; Images with words or diagrams, fill in title and description box with information explaining image significance or what text in the image says.

Use Table Headers
Why: Table headers explain the information in columns a screen reader reads. Without table headers, a screen reader reads, “Accessibility issues, 10, 14, 3” versus “Book title accessibility issues, Page 10, Total pages 14, Number of follow up questions 3.”

» How: Insert menu > Table > Choose columns & rows + 1 extra row > Table Design menu > Ensure Header Row box is checked > Type column headers in first row of table.

Use Headings And Sub-Headings
Why: Provides a logical reading order for screen readers. Saves time with accessibility when exporting to a PDF.

» How: References menu > Add Text > Highlight text to classify as heading or sub-heading > Choose Level 1, then Level 2, then Level 3 as needed.

Use Descriptive Hyperlinks
Why: Descriptive hyperlinks enable users to know what information they will receive if they click the link. A screen reader reads a link as, “link click here” versus “link how to fix accessibility issues.”

» How: Write a description of what the link provides > Highlight link text > Insert menu > Link > Click web or email option > Insert web or email address

For more information or assistance, contact:
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