



Accessibility Checker in Microsoft Word

Introduction

Many documents contain hidden obstacles that can impede students with a vision or reading disability. Word has a built-in Accessibility Checker to help find and fix these obstacles. Following these guidelines will allow you to create and remediate documents created in Microsoft Word so they are accessible. Microsoft Word provides a task pane that enables you to view and fix these issues before the content is finalized.

Running the Accessibility Checker:

1. Select File > Info.
2. Select the Check for Issues button.
3. In the Check for Issues drop-down menu, select Check Accessibility.
4. The Accessibility Checker task pane appears to the right of the content and shows the inspection results.
5. To see information on why and how to fix an issue, under Inspection Results, select an issue. Results appear under Additional Information.

Understanding the Inspection Results:

After Accessibility Checker inspects the content, it reports the inspection results based on the severity of the issue found, categorized as follows:

- **Errors:** Issues reported as errors include content that is very difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to understand. The most serious issues are listed under Errors.
- **Warnings:** Warnings, in many cases, mean that the content is challenging for people with disabilities to understand. Warnings are less serious, but still make it difficult for people with disabilities to read your document.
- **Tips:** Tips let you know that, even though people with disabilities can understand the content, it could be better organized or presented to improve their experience.

Please note: All errors and warnings must be addressed. If you cannot resolve an error or warning, insert a comment for the instructional designer to review.

Checklist item	Rationale	Additional Notes
Structure the document using styles for headings (not just bold, italics, and/or a different font size) and other formatting elements (such as color). Styles are on the right side of the Home tab.	Screen reader users navigate through a document using heading styles. Styles also convey emphasis and semantic meaning, where formatting (i.e. bold or size) does not.	Go to "View" – select "Navigation Pane" to give you an outline of each of the current headings listed throughout the document.
Use the column or table feature to create columns. (Tables are located in the Insert tab, columns are located in the Layout tab)	Screen readers read from left to right, top to bottom. Using the column feature will override this and allow the information to be read top to bottom before being read across.	Avoid using tabs and/or spaces to create columns. Insert a comment to the instructional designer if the Course Schedule table appears as a Warning.
Use text in addition to the color to convey information. Do not use color as the only indicator. Instead, use a text marker in addition to the color. (e.g. "Important items are red and marked with an *.")	Color blind students may not discern different colors ("required items are in red") and need a textual marker (such as * next to the required item.)	Example: *Register/complete exams in Examyty.
Text should be in a sans serif font, at least 12 point in size, and at least 4.5:1 contrast with the background.	Students with poor visual activity and those with certain learning disabilities such as dyslexia have difficulty reading text with poor contrast, small type, or fonts with serif.	Sans serif example: Calibri, Arial Serif example: Times Roman
Use meaningful link text so that students understand where the link leads. To edit a link, right click on the link and select "Edit Hyperlink" to add "ScreenTip text."	Link text should be able to stand alone independently of its context.	Non-example: links like "click here" and "more" are meaningless out of context.
Providing alternative descriptions for images (Alt text) read by screen readers in place of images allows the content and function of the image to be accessible to those with visual or certain cognitive disabilities.	There are two fields available on the Alt Text screen: "Title" and "Description." For the purposes of allowing Assistive Technology to read the content, information MUST be placed in the "Description" field. The Title field is a place to enter a shorter description than the alternate text, but this field is not automatically recognized by assistive technology. So, in order for users to see or hear the alternate text the content MUST be placed in the Description field.	In a Canvas course, icons and images should not contain any ".png" alt text in the HTML Editor. (This is a warning for screen readers)

Disability Resources and Services:

Disability Resources and Services (DRS) supports Temple University students with disabilities in accessing the multitude of opportunities and services available to them through the University. A department within the Division of Student Affairs, DRS promotes a campus environment in which accommodating students with disabilities is a natural extension of the University's vision to provide access to superior education for committed and capable students of all backgrounds.

- Webpage: <http://disabilityresources.temple.edu/>
- Disability Resources and Services on campus – voice (215) 204-1280
- Brent Whiting: Director of Information Systems, brent.whiting@temple.edu - voice (267) 468-8380

Center for the Advancement of Teaching:

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- [Creating an Accessible PDF in Adobe Acrobat DC: Part 2](#)
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