



Digital Marketing Accessibility Best Practices

Introduction to Digital Accessibility

What is digital accessibility?

Digital accessibility refers to the inclusive practice of making digital materials – including websites, e-newsletters and social media – usable by people of all abilities and disabilities. When we create digital materials are correctly, all users can have equal access to the information on them.

Who is affected?

There are different disabilities that affect people using the web, including:

- **Auditory** – Difficulty hearing, deafness and hearing impairments
- **Cognitive** – Conditions that affect the brain's memory, attention or ability to interpret information
- **Motor** – Various forms of paralysis caused by injury, congenital conditions and tremors
- **Visual** – Blindness, color blindness and low-vision caused by various eye conditions

Why is accessibility important?

Legal liability is a common reason why organizations work to make their digital materials accessible, and increasingly websites are being held legally accountable. According to the [Seyfarth ADA Title III News & Insights Blog](#), the number of website accessibility lawsuits filed in federal court increased by 177% from 2017 to 2018.

But the importance of digital accessibility goes beyond legal regulations! According to a report from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), new government research finds 61 million U.S. adults – about 1 in 4 Americans – have a disability that impacts a major part of their life.

UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

Published by Sendible · September 29 at 2:48 PM ·

CAES alum Tamlin Hall is passionate about spreading joy and hope. So much so that he's turned it into his personal mission - first through his film "Holden On," a narrative feature film about his childhood friend, Holden Layfield. Holden secretly began to self-medicate his undiagnosed mental illness and died by suicide at the age of 19. After the success of "Holden On", Hope Givers officially formed in late 2018 with its mission to create and produce content that uplifts the human spirit.

And now, through a collective partnership with [Georgia Public Broadcasting](#) and the [Georgia Department of Education](#) Hall is launching a documentary series called "Hope Givers", exploring anxiety, depression, bullying, human trafficking, inclusion and more.

Learn more about the incredible work Hall, who graduated from CAES in 2002, is doing at the link: <https://bit.ly/3ok04xc>

#SuicideAwareness

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#ImageDescription: Two men sit in chairs, inside a recording studio. They are facing each other. The man on the left is Black, he is smiling. He has short black hair and has a little bit of a black beard and mustache on his face. He is wearing a dark blue baseball cap turned backwards, which has a red brim. His t-shirt and jeans are also black. He is sitting in a computer chair that is leaning backwards. The man on the right of the image is white, he is smiling. He has grey hair that is gelled to be spiked up. He is wearing a white collared shirt with a purple sweater over the top, plus black jeans. He is also sitting in a computer chair. There are several large black speakers behind them, plus a computer monitor on the desk that is off.

Example 1 Accessible Facebook Post

Making Digital Materials Accessible

No matter what kind of digital material you are creating, it can be accessible. Here's how:

General Guidelines

- **Utilize alternative (alt) text.** For visual accessibility, add alternative text to each image. This text should describe the image fully to the consumer, as if you were there describing it to them. Consider reading this [how-to guide on writing alternative text](#) for help getting started.
- **Avoid text in images when possible.** Screen readers cannot read text that is on an image. If text is necessary, be sure to add it to the alternative text of the image and within the text elsewhere, so no information is lost.
- **Use descriptive links.** Instead of linking a phrase like "click here," use descriptive language that helps the viewer know where the link will take them.

Websites

OIT has a wide variety of tools and tips to help make your website accessible, such as:

- [Web Accessibility 101](#)
- [Web Accessibility Compliance Webinar](#)
- [Web Accessibility Checklist](#)
- [Accessibility Tips for Wordpress Sites](#)

E-Newsletters

Tips for making your e-newsletters accessible for everyone:

1. **Use descriptive subject lines**
Your subject line should be brief but descriptive and give subscribers an accurate idea of what's in the email. This improves accessibility and increases overall engagement.
2. **Use a template that is responsive**
It's important for all your subscribers to be able to view your content in a logical order, no matter what device they're using, but it's especially vital for people who use screen readers – which can only happen if you are using a responsive template.
3. **Use headers**
Screen readers rely on elements like headers to determine the informational hierarchy. This is how they scan and navigate through your content to access what's most important.
4. **Use color contrast**
It's a good idea to stick to one text color and one contrasting background color, so that people who are color blind can access your content. They might not see the exact colors you pick, but they won't miss the content of your message.

5. **Don't put important information on images**
Subscribers who use a screen reader, or have images blocked in their email, aren't going to see any of the information on images or infographics. Make sure the most critical content in your message is presented in text and use images to complement that text. If you include links to videos in your campaigns, offer a transcript and subtitles for subscribers.
6. **Use Alt Text for Images**
Make sure all your images have appropriate alt text - this should be short but descriptive, highlighting the relevance of the image to your message.
7. **Use meaningful link text**
When you add a link, make sure the link text tells your subscribers what they're clicking on. It's best to avoid vague link text. Instead of just saying "Click Here," add some context like "Click here to view XYZ." This tells your reader what to expect when they click the link.
8. **Limit emoji usage**
Otherwise, [the screen reader can struggle to read the text](#).
9. **Include a plain-text version**
Plain-text newsletters are simple, without any images, text formatting, or embedded links. Many people who use screen readers prefer this format to clearly receive your message.

Social Media

Social media platforms have different accessibility capabilities. Depending on the platform you are using, there are several ways you can ensure your posts are accessible.

Make sure you know what sort of accessibility features offered through a social media scheduler if you are using one. Many of them allow you to add alt text to your images before scheduling the post.

In addition to following the above practices, use these tips to make your message accessible on each platform:

Facebook

Whether you're creating a post right from your Facebook page, or working in the Creator Studio, once you add an image to your draft post, **before** you hit publish you can click the edit button (that looks like a pencil) and that will take you to several options, one being accessibility and the option to add alt text.

Unfortunately, Facebook does not allow you to add alt text after the image has been posted. However, you can and should add an image description in the body of your post as well. This ensures that people using screen readers get all the information, as sometimes screen readers miss the alt text. The proper way to do this is by using “**#ImageDescription**” followed by a colon and then the descriptive text, like Example 2.



Note that when using hashtags, the first letter of every word should be capitalized, to ensure that screen readers pick up the information properly.

Instagram

When you're creating an Instagram post, once you've gotten to the point of writing your post content, you can scroll down to the “advanced settings” section and at the bottom is “Accessibility” with the option to write alt text.



If you've already posted the image, you have the option to edit the post by clicking the three dots (at the top right, just above the picture). From there, an option comes up to edit alt text (on the bottom right of the picture).

You should also add an image description in the body of your post as well (many opt to include this as the first comment on Instagram, as seen in Example 3). This ensures that people using screen readers get all the information, as sometimes screen readers miss the alt text.

Again, note that when using hashtags, the first letter of every word should be capitalized, to ensure that screen readers pick up the information properly.

*Example 3 Instagram First Comment
Image Description*

Twitter

When you're creating a Twitter post, once you add an image to your draft post, *before* you hit publish you can click the black edit button down in the righthand corner of the image. From there, you will see a tab labeled "ALT" which gives you the option to add alt text.

Unfortunately, once you've published a post in Twitter, you cannot edit it to add alt text. Character limits make the #ImageDescription option unavailable for most posts as well.

YouTube

Your videos should be properly captioned, but don't rely on the auto-captioning function to get all the captions correctly. Instead, consider providing a video transcript with all your videos, so that people who are both blind and deaf can still consume your video content.

- **If the video is short**, you could put the transcript within the video description on YouTube.
- **If it is longer**, you could host these transcripts on another site and make sure there is a link to them in the video description.