Accessible Marketing & Communications

Practical guidance for creating clearer, more inclusive websites, emails, and other communications.

Using Emojis

Use emojis sparingly. Screen readers announce each emoji by name, which can interrupt the reading flow or bury your message. For example, "I'm 😂 at this" may be read as "I'm Face with Tears of Joy at this."

- Place emoji at the end of a sentence rather than in the middle.
- Avoid emoji as bullet points; hearing the same emoji repeatedly can be tedious.
- Use emoji to supplement words, not replace them.
- Choose emoji with clear, literal meanings whose spoken names match your intent

Consider whether hearing the emoji read aloud would help or hinder the message. If it adds no clear value, leave it out.

Emojipedia - explore emoji names and meanings

Writing Accessible Links

Use descriptive hyperlink text that identifies the destination or action. Instead of "Click here," write "Register for the webinar."

Guidance on writing accessible hyperlinks

Using Respectful Disability Language

"Disability" and "disabled" are standard, respectful terms used by disability advocacy organizations and style guides. Individual preferences and context still matter.

Smarter in Seconds video about disability terminology

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Writing in Plain Language

Plain language helps people find what they need, understand it the first time, and act on it. Use everyday words, short sentences, active voice, clear headings, a logical order, and the main point first.

Examples of clearer language:

- Website buttons: Replace “Click Here” or “Submit” with “Download our membership policy” or “Send my scholarship request.”
- Email subject lines: Instead of “Exciting Guest Joining Us Soon,” write “Moses will deliver guest sermon December 4th.”
- Policies: Instead of “Failure to remit payment by the deadline may result in the assessment of late fees,” write “If you pay after July 1, we will add a $15 late fee.”

U.S. plain language guidelines

Alt Text and Image Descriptions

Write concise alt text that conveys an image’s content and purpose.

- Use a longer image description in a caption when additional context is needed.
- Describe visible identity characteristics when relevant to the image’s meaning,
- but do not guess someone’s identity.
- Mark purely decorative images as decorative (empty alt text, alt="") so screen readers skip them.

Ask: If the image disappeared, what would the reader miss? Describe that.

Perkins School for the Blind — writing alt text and image descriptions

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Before You Publish: Accessibility Checklist

☐ Is the main message clear and written in plain language?
☐ Do informative images have meaningful alt text?
☐ Do links clearly describe where they take the reader?
☐ Are text contrast, fonts, and layout easy to read?
☐ Are videos accurately captioned, with essential information available in text?
☐ Are hashtags capitalized by word, such as #DisabilityInclusion?
☐ Can people navigate and understand the content with a keyboard or screen reader?
☐ Have you invited both creative input and feedback from people with disabilities?

Additional Resources

- **Understanding Accessible Fonts & Typography** — Guidance on readable typography and accessible font choices.
- **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)** — The international standards for web content accessibility.
- **Yeshiva University Accessible Marketing Checklist** — A practical marketing accessibility checklist.
- **Demystifying Disability by Emily Ladau** — Recommended reference on disability language.
- **JBI Library** — source for Jewish materials serving anyone who is blind, has low vision, or has a print disability.

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