



ACCESSIBLE SOCIAL MEDIA:

Thoughtful Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Dissemination Practices

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Introduction to Disability

Models of disability provide frameworks to understand disabilities. The social model and medical model give two distinct perspectives.

Social Model of Disability

- Disability is the inability to participate in activities fully due to the barriers posed by society's ableist environment
- The social model of disability considers the role of society's expectations and barriers in place within our environments

Medical Model of Disability

- Disability is the presence of a condition that makes it more difficult for someone to participate in activities and the world around them
- Within the medical model of disability, there are three dimensions of disability:
 - Impairment in a person's mental or physical structure or function
 - Activity limitations that impact a person's life
 - Participation restrictions in activities of daily life
- This model can be limiting, as it views the person with a disability as having the problem rather than the environment being inaccessible



In the United States, 61 million adults live with a disability. **That's roughly 1 out of 4 people.**



Accessibility and Inclusion

Why is Access Important?

- Creating an environment that is accessible lets people know that they belong and there is a place for them
- Accessible environments allow everyone to participate
- Environment does not only refer to physical spaces

Why is Inclusion Important?

- Being inclusive means transforming communities based on social justice principles in which all community members:
 - Are recruited and welcome as valued members of our communities
 - Fully participate and learn with their peers
 - Experience reciprocal social relationships
- Being inclusive allows all members of the community to be heard, valued, and contribute





Accessibility and Inclusion

Inclusive Design and Content

- Inclusive design benefits everyone
- Being inclusive in your design allows for the best user experience for as many people as possible
- Inclusive Imagery
 - Ensure images include people across different demographic groups
 - Gender
 - Disability
 - Age
 - Body Type
 - Race or Ethnicity
 - Geography/Location
 - Avoid imagery that perpetuates any negative stereotypes about demographic groups
 - Use specific terms and filters to find imagery that includes your target demographic groups
 - Focus on creating campaigns that are human, realistic, and that celebrate variety across multiple demographic groups
 - Create visuals with high contrast

Click the light bulb for more information on the **importance of disability inclusion** ---->





Compliance with Section 508



Under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, all video, audio, social media posts, and webpages are required to be accessible

- This accessible social media guide is intended to support conforming to the requirements under Section 508
- For specific information on the rules and regulations under Section 508, please see this link to the Section 508 government webpage
 - Link: <https://www.section508.gov/>
- For information on accessible creation of videos, audio, social media posts, and webpages, please see this link with tips for the Section 508 government webpage
 - Link: <https://www.section508.gov/create/video-social/>



Communication

Plain Language

- Plain language is important in written and verbal communication
- Wording, sentence structure and design are clear and easily understood by your audience
- Using Plain Language:
 - In general, keep language choices at a 6th grade reading level or below
 - Utilize technology tools in writing programs to identify reading level
 - If in Microsoft Word, a readability statistics tool can be found under “Spelling and Grammar”
- Use short, logical sentences
- Include important details, while leaving out unnecessary information that distracts from the main message
- Include visuals to support any written or verbal content
- Avoid technical terms, if possible



Click the light bulb for more information on **plain language** ----->





Communication

Disability Language Considerations

- Person-First vs. Identity-First Language
 - Person-First Language: The person comes before the disability
 - Example - Jane is a person who is autistic
 - Identity-First Language: The disability comes before the person
 - Example - Jane is an autistic person
 - Both language choices are used within the disability community
 - People with disabilities should be listened to individually as to the preference in language options
- Avoid commonly-used harmful terms and speech



Phrases to Avoid

- Able-bodied or normal
- Abnormal
- Handicap
- Wheelchair-bound
- Mentally challenged
- Special needs
- Non-verbal or can't talk



Phrases to Use Instead

- Person without disability
- Atypical
- Person with a disability
- Person who uses a wheelchair
- Person with an intellectual disability
- Disability
- Person who uses a communication device or someone who uses an alternative method of communication



Accessibility in Social Media Posting

General Accessibility Tips for Social Media

- Make contact information available publicly
- Use multiple channels/platforms in social media posting
- Reduce use of hashtags, abbreviations, acronyms
- Put all hashtags and mentions at the end of the post
- Capitalize the first letter of compound words (example, #SocialMedia)
- Avoid using emojis and emoticons
- Use accessibility resources from the platform itself
- Avoid using fancy fonts
- Add closed captions and subtitles to videos
- Do not mention someone's disability unless it is essential to the story

Keep learning. More accessible options are being made available on social media, and language evolves to reflect our changing lives, experiences and cultures.

Click the light bulb for more information on **social media accessibility** ----->





Accessibility in Social Media Posting

Accessible Content Creation

- **Alternative Text (Alt Text) for Images**
 - Descriptive captioning allows individuals who are unable to see visualize the imagery that includes in posts
 - Although automatic alternative text captioning is available on some platforms, it isn't as reliable as creating a custom description
 - Platform Specific Instructions
 - X (formerly Twitter)
 - Click the **Compose Post** button
 - Select the photo
 - Click **Add Description**
 - Input desired alternative text
 - Click **Done**
 - Note: limit is 1,000 characters
 - Instagram
 - Click on the **plus sign** at the top of the feed to upload an existing photo
 - Click **Next** at the top of the screen
 - Click **Accessibility**
 - Input desired alternative text into the **Alt Text box**
 - Click **Share** to post
 - Facebook
 - Click **Photo/Video** at the top of your feed
 - Select the desired photo



Accessibility in Social Media Posting

- **Alternative Text (Alt Text) for Images (cont.)**
 - Hover over the photo and click Edit
 - Click Override Generated Alt Text to edit the descriptive text
 - Input desired alternative text
 - Click Save at the bottom left
- Provide captioning on videos
 - Use a consistent font
 - Display only one or two lines of text
 - Caption exact wording
 - Describe sound effects, music, or other auditory cues
 - Sync captions to audio content
 - Use italics when someone off screen is speaking
- Content should be in an easy-to-read format, meaning the information is clear, easy to understand, and supported by visuals
- Jargon is used infrequently, and defined if necessary
- Use a font that is clear to read, with a minimum font size of 24 point for body text
- Use wide spaces between words
- Replace numbers for words (Example: **3**, not **three**)
- Use high contrast colors to make text easier to read against the background

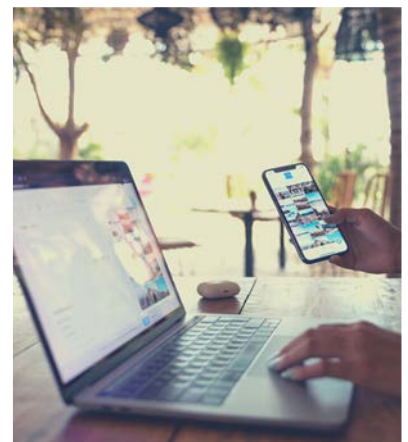
Click the light bulb for more information on the **importance creating an accessible environment through communication** ---->



Platform-Specific Accessibility Tips & Resources

Facebook

- Take advantage of the space Facebook provides for text by spelling out all acronyms, followed by the acronym in parenthesis
- Provide captions on each individual image and video
 - Captions need to provide context, but do not need to be lengthy
- If posting videos directly to Facebook, a SubRip (.srt) file must be used along with the video file to provide captioning
 - To add captions, choose a video that has been uploaded previously
 - Click the **Three Dots** and choose **Edit Video** in the top right corner
 - Click **Upload SRT Files**
 - Click **Choose File**
 - Select the SRT file that accompanies the video
 - Click **Save**
- Alternatively, to upload videos directly to Facebook, users can upload videos from other platforms that provide integrated captioning, like YouTube





Platform-Specific Accessibility Tips & Resources

X (formerly Twitter)

- Avoid using unfamiliar acronyms, spelling acronyms out when space allows
- If a link is included in the post, provide an indication of what the link is
 - For example, if a photo is being linked, include [PIC] in the description
- If the post links out a photo, video, or piece of audio, use the written space to provide a descriptive caption to give context to the reader about the link
 - Use a second post if necessary to provide this context
- If the post refers to another agency's content that is inaccessible, provide a description of the limitations to the reader
 - For example, if a photo being shared doesn't provide alternative text, inform the reader by saying "Alt text unavailable"
- Enable the **Image Description** feature to provide descriptive captioning to all imagery
- All linked content should be included in the alt text field
 - For example, if linking out to the CDC webpage, include "Link to CDC website" in the alt text box
- Describe the type of post at the beginning of your post. Use text like [PIC], [AUDIO], [VIDEO], [ARTICLE], etc. so screen readers can communicate to your followers what to expect before it's read out loud



Platform-Specific Accessibility Tips & Resources



Instagram

- Provide detailed captions on all posts
- If a link is included in the post, provide an indication of what the link is
 - For example, if a photo is being linked, include [PIC] in the description
- If the post links out to a separate a photo, video, or piece of audio, use the written space to provide a descriptive caption to give context to the reader about the link
- Avoid posting important information solely in Instagram stories, as they are not accessible by screen readers, and make sure to share the information on your Instagram feed as well
- Put hashtags in a reply comment instead of in the actual post



Platform-Specific Accessibility Tips & Resources

YouTube

- Ensure audio is high quality whenever possible to avoid barriers in auditory access
- Reduce background noise when someone is speaking within the video
- Provide closed captioning on all videos
 - Captions include all verbal and auditory components of the video, including speaking, music, sound effects, or other auditory indicators
 - Enable captioning by default, as there are limitations in the keyboard shortcuts for enabling captions on videos
 - Free tools for creating captioning for videos:
 - MAGpie: Free Windows applications for the National Center for Accessible Social Media
http://ncam.wgbh.org/invent_build/web_multimedia/tools-guidelines/magpie
 - Subtitle-Horse: Free web-based application that allows users to upload a FLV file, add captions, and export them both together <http://www.subtitle-horse.com/>



Platform-Specific Accessibility Tips & Resources

LinkedIn

- Add descriptive alternative text to any images posted
- Use closed captioning when sharing a video on LinkedIn from a desktop

TikTok

- Add video descriptions in the caption or comments
- To create open captions, add text to videos
- Make the onscreen text more readable with enough color contrast, and easily readable font size and style, and good placement
- Turn on auto volume adjustment to prevent videos playing too loudly (this does not change the device's volume setting)
- Turn on text-to-speech to convert the video's typed text to voice-over
- Tip: Loud background music can overpower the text-to-speech voice



Platform-Specific Accessibility Tips & Resources

Blogs

- Use a simple visual layout, using only a few columns of text
- Keep formatting consistent across all blog pages to avoid unnecessary confusion
- Add alternative text and captions to all visual content within the blog
- Ensure that sounds or videos do not automatically play upon entering the blog, allow individuals to choose when a video starts
- Replace phrases like “click here for more information” with the full title and description of the link being referenced out to
- Use additional indicators beyond a color change to show when something is hyperlinked
- Allow any links embedded within written content to be accessed within the same webpage to allow users to utilize the “back button” in their web browser
- Keep writing simple, using plain language to ensure the audience understands
- Break paragraphs into smaller, more readable chunks of text



Stay Connected

For assistance with disability best practices and successful inclusion of community members, please contact:

**Oregon Office on Disability and Health
(OODH)**
oodh@ohsu.edu



For more information about OODH **click here.**

The Oregon Office on Disability and Health is a public health entity under the Institute on Development and Disability at Oregon Health and Science University and the Public Health Division of the Oregon Health Authority. OODH has been funded since 1994 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Our mission is to promote health equity and well-being of people with disabilities. We collaborate with disability communities, public health entities, healthcare systems, and community-based organizations to prioritize access and equity throughout Oregon.

If you are interested in receiving updated information about OODH projects and work, please **sign up for our quarterly newsletter here.**