

Preparing Word Files For Accessibility

Step	To create accessible documents in Word
1	<p>Design with accessibility in mind (see www.webaim.org for more information). Screen readers prefer reading a document that is structured and consistent. To that end, do the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use defined styles, preferably in a template, including for applying bold and italic character formatting, numbering, and bullets.• Use page numbering codes to number pages within a document in the footer.• If you must break a page before arriving at the end of it, use a hard page break rather than repeatedly pressing Enter. This helps assistive technology accurately identify a new page.• Avoid using text boxes for text layout. Text in text boxes is not ordered on the page; screen readers rely on text ordering to read content accurately.
2	<p>Add alternate text to images. In the case of multiple related images located near one another, group them together first, then add alternate text to the single combined image.</p> <p>Word 2003</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Right-click the image, then select Format Picture. The Format Picture dialog box appears. Note: If the Format Picture menu option is not available, show the Picture toolbar and click the Format Picture button.2. Select the Web tab and then add the appropriate alternative text. <p>Word 2007</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Right-click the picture and select Size. The Size dialog box appears. Note: If the Format Picture or Size menu options are grayed out even when the image is selected, click Picture Tools in the top right of the screen. In the Size section of the Picture ribbon, click the small arrow in the lower right corner to open the Size dialog box. Continue this procedure.2. Select the Alt Text tab. The image file name is entered into the field by default.3. Delete the image file name and enter <i>useful</i> and concise alternate text.
3	<p>Use row and column headings and captions for all tables; in lieu of those, write a descriptive intro. Do not merge table rows or columns. Do not allow rows to break across pages.</p> <p>Caution! The Draw Table option does not create an accessible table within Word 2007.</p>
4	<p>Use meaningful link anchors rather than URLs when possible. Avoid "click here."</p> <p>Good: Visit the STC WDC events page to register for upcoming professional events.</p> <p>Good: Visit the STC WDC events page (http://www.stcwdc.org/events_calendar.shtml) for more information about upcoming professional events.</p> <p>Bad: Click here to download class files.</p>
5	<p>Configure the PDFMaker to tag the document properly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Word 2003, select Adobe PDF > Change Conversion Settings. On the Settings tab, select Bookmarks, Links, and Enable Accessibility and reflow.• On the Word tab, select Convert cross references, Convert footnote and endnote links, and Enable advanced tagging.• On the Bookmarks tab, select Convert Word Headings to Bookmarks and set the proper indent levels.

Preparing FrameMaker Files For Accessibility

Step	To create accessible documents in FrameMaker
1	<p>Design with accessibility in mind (see www.webaim.org for more information). Screen readers prefer reading a document that is structured and consistent. If you must break a page before arriving at the end of it, use the Keep With pagination options rather than repeatedly pressing Enter. This helps assistive technology accurately identify a new page.</p>
2	<p>Add alternate text to images.</p> <p>FrameMaker 7.0 and 9.0</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Place all graphics in anchored frames, even drop caps.2. Click an anchored frame one time to select it.3. Right-click the anchored frame and select Object Properties.4. Click the Object Attributes button. The Object Attributes dialog box appears.5. In the Alternate box, type an alternate text description for the content of the anchored frame6. Click Set and then Set again. A screen reader can now read the alternate text.

Step	To create accessible documents in FrameMaker
3	Use row and column headings and captions for all tables. Do not merge table rows or columns. Do not allow rows to break across pages.
4	Use meaningful link anchors rather than URLs when possible. Use the Go to URL hypertext marker to specify the destination of all URLs in FrameMaker.
5	In the PDF Setup dialog box, select Generate PDF Bookmarks , Generate Tagged PDF (click Default to tag all styles), and Create Named Destinations for All Paragraphs .

Creating Accessible PDFs

Step	To create accessible PDFs
1	In the PDF file, update the document properties as much as you can.
2	Specify the document language. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Select File > Document Properties.2. Click the Advanced tab.3. In the Language list, select the language of the document.
3	Use the document structure to prevent errors in the accessibility report. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Select all pages in the document.2. Right-click and then select Page Properties.3. Select Use Document Structure.
4	Run an accessibility full check using the Adobe PDF option. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Select Advanced > Accessibility > Full Check. The Accessibility Full Check dialog box appears.2. Keep the defaults, which include the checking option of Adobe PDF.3. Click Start Checking.
5	Fix any problems reported by the accessibility checker. Documents from Word tend to have more problems than documents from FrameMaker. To begin post-processing in Acrobat, select Accessibility > TouchUp Reading Order . In the TouchUp Reading Order dialog box, click Show order panel , then do the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirm that each numbered box in the document is properly tagged.• Add alternate text as needed to figures as needed.• Remove nonessential content from the logical structure tree as needed.• Note that if you remove the tags, you cannot undo that action. Save your file often.
6	Once the steps above result in a PDF with no accessibility errors according to Adobe, set the scope of your tables. Adobe does not require you to set the scope but it is one more thing that you can do quickly to prepare your PDFs better for assistive technology. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Select Accessibility > TouchUp Reading Order.2. Scroll to your first table and click the number in its upper-left corner.3. On the TouchUp Reading Order panel, click Table Editor to select the table.4. Select the cells that serve as column or row headers.5. Right-click and select Table Cell Properties.6. Keep the Type as Header Cell and from the Scope list, select Column. This tells a screen reader to associate column headers with the cells in that column.7. Click OK.

Other Resources

- Dona Patrick's blog: <http://accessdp.wordpress.com/>
- Monthly accessibility meet-up in DC: <http://www.accessibilitydc.org/>
- Open source screen reader, NVDA: <http://www.nvda-project.org/>
- Web Accessibility in Mind: <http://www.webaim.org>
- HHS Checklists: <http://www.hhs.gov/web/policies/checklistword.html> and <http://www.hhs.gov/web/policies/checklistpdf.html>
- Adobe Reference Card: http://blogs.adobe.com/accessibility/2008/03/reference_card_for_accessible.html
- PDF-specific tips: <http://www.planetpdf.com>
- Software for converting MS Office files to accessible HTML: <http://www.virtual508.com>
- Software for creating accessible MS Office files: <http://www.net-centric.com/products/PAW.aspx>