NEIGHBORHOOD
LEGAL SERVICES

Because Justice is for All

Neighborhood Legal Services

ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE

Jan 11, 2022

FISA
Foundation

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The Importance of Accessibility

When resources, information, and services are not accessible, then people with disabilities are unfairly barred from access.

People with disabilities may use assistive technology – including screen readers, voice recognition software, and video relay services – to interact with digital content. However, many people with disabilities do not use aids and rely on the accessibility of digital content. It is important to create content that is compatible with that assistive technology, and that is accessible for people with disabilities without any aids or assistive technology.

When sharing information, there are easy steps you can take to make ensure accessibility for those with disabilities.

Making Your Content More Accessible

You can make your presentations and visual content more accessible to those with disabilities through simple tweaks to:
- **language,**
- **color,**
- **font,**
- **visual design, and**
- **user experience.**
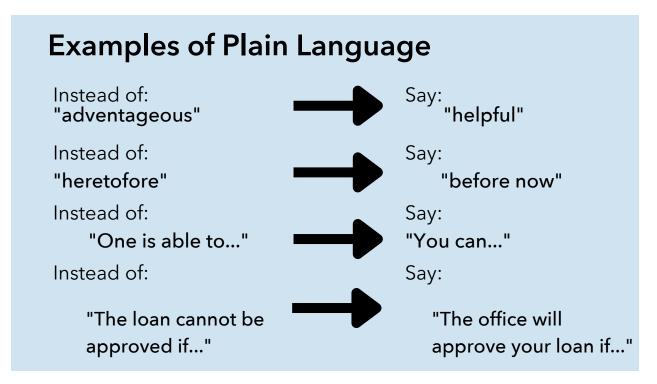
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Making Your Content More Accessible: Plain Language

Using plain language ensures that your content is understandable to a wide audience.

Plain language guidelines:
- Write at a 6th-grade reading level or below.
- Guide your audience through the information, and focus on procedural logistics.
- Organize your information in a logical order.
- Use simple, familiar words and phrases.
- Avoid jargon such as overly technical language or legal language.
- Minimize abbreviations.
- Write positively and avoid the passive voice.

Examples of Plain Language

Instead of:
"adventageous"   →   Say:
                                     "helpful"

Instead of:
"heretofore"   →   Say:
                                     "before now"

Instead of:
"One is able to..."   →   Say:
                                   "You can..."

Instead of: Say:

"The loan cannot be   →   "The office will
approved if..."   approve your loan if..."

For more information, visit www.plainlanguage.gov

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Making Your Content More Accessible: Plain Language

Using plain and inclusive language also ensures that you do not alienate or "other" your audience members.

Plain language guidelines continued:
- State your major point(s) first before going into details
- Write for your reader, not yourself. Always keep your audience in mind when writing.
- Write in active voice when possible.
- Use inclusive and sensitive language.
- Write concisely and omit unnecessary detail.

Examples of Inclusive Language

Instead of:
"addict"
→
Say:
"person with a substance abuse disorder"

Instead of:
"you guys / ladies and gentleman"
→
Say:
"you all / folks / people"

Instead of:
"illegal alien/ illegal"
→
Say:
"undocumented"

For more information, visit www.plainlanguage.gov

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Making Your Content More Accessible: Color

- Use high contrast colors.
- Do not use color as the only method for distinguishing information.
- Red/green color blindness is the most common, so avoid using red and green as distinguishing colors. If you are using red and green to signify some information, convey that information in another way as well.

Most Popular Ice Cream Flavors

- Chocolate
- Vanilla
- Strawberry
- Mint Chocolate Chip
- Cookies and Cream

This slide has high contrast between the background and the text color, so it is easy to read.

Most Popular Ice Cream Flavors

- Chocolate
- Vanilla
- Strawberry
- Mint Chocolate Chip
- Cookies and Cream

This slide has low contrast between the background and the text color, so it is difficult to read.

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Making Your Content More Accessible: Font

- Use a large font size (24-point font minimum for presentations).
- Use sans serif fonts like Arial, Helvetica, or Verdana, because elaborate, ornate typefaces can be difficult for people with visual impairments to read or see clearly.

Examples of accessible fonts:

This font is clear and legible.

This typeface works as well.

This font is also accessible to those with visual impairments.

Examples of inaccessible fonts:

This serif font is too complex for those with visual impairments to easily read.

This decorative font is also too complex.

This font size is too small.

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Making Your Content More Accessible: Visual Design

Organize and structure your written information using defined headers.

- This is important because people who are blind, have low vision, or have a reading disability rely on slide titles to navigate.

Minimize text and visual clutter; less is more.

- Try to keep written text concise and avoid dense blocks of text.
- Limit the number of visuals used.
- Make graphics (such as photos, graphs, and charts) as simple and clear as possible.

Ice Cream: Categories

- Novelty Treats
  - Includes ice cream sandwiches, ice cream bars, and prepackaged cones.
  - Often associated with ice cream trucks.
- Soft Serve
- Hard Ice Cream
  - This is the traditional, best-known type of ice cream.

✓ The clear headings and minimal visual clutter maximize accessibility.

Ice Cream: Categories

- Novelty treats includes ice cream sandwiches, ice cream bars, and prepackaged cones, and are often associated with ice cream trucks.
- Soft Serve
- Hard ice cream is the traditional, best-known type of ice cream.

✗ The lack of headings and cluttered background make this hard to read.

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Making Your Content More Accessible: User Experience

- Include audio recordings of the written text for those with visual impairments.
- If you are using photos, include alternative text or descriptive captions.
- If you are using charts or graphs, include a caption that describes and summarizes those graphics.
- If you are using a slideshow in a presentation, share the slides with the presentation audience in advance of your presentation.
- Make sure that people can navigate your content and access all elements using only the keyboard.
- When presenting a slideshow, pause on a new slide before speaking. This gives the audience time to read the slide.
- Include closed captions on recorded video and Zoom meetings and seminars.

Accessibility on Social Media

- Ensure that posts are clear and visually organized.
- Include alternative texts for all images.
- Include closed captioning for all videos.

Accessibility Checking Tools

PowerPoint Accessibility Checker

PowerPoint Accessibility Checker allows you to ensure your presentation is inclusive before sharing it.
It checks your presentation to make sure:
- That alternative text is included with all visuals.
- That slide contents are read in the correct order.
- That there is sufficient color contrast.
- That each slide has a unique title.
- That tables use a simple, clear structure.

To use this tool in PowerPoint, select Review, then select Check Accessibility.

Website Accessibility Checker

The Website Accessibility Checker checks how well any website meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 standards.

To use this tool, visit www.WebAccessibility.com and enter the URL of your website or another website you would like to check.

Contrast Checker

This Contrast Checker allows you to input your background and foreground colors to check if the contrast is accessible for people with visual impairments.

To use this tool, visit https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/ and select your foreground and background colors.

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Additional Resources

Plain Language Collection

Over 50 Sample documents on
- Family law
- Seniors
- Housing
- Consumer Rights
- Self-representation
- Public benefits

NACM Plain Language Guide

How to Incorporate Plain Language into Court Forms, Websites, and Other Materials

https://nacmnet.org/resources/publications/guides/plain-language-guide/

Accessibility Resources

10 Great Tips for Accessibility

https://www.lsntap.org/node/266/10-great-tips-accessibility

Strategies for Developing Accesible Documents and Presentations

Tip Sheet from the National Center on Law & Elder Rights

https://ncler.acl.gov/getattachment/Legal-Training/upcoming_event/Accessibility-Tip-Sheet.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US

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Additional Resources

Usability & Web Accessibility

Yale University article covering the use and best practices for web accessibility and using headings.

https://usability.yale.edu/web-accessibility/articles/headings

Accessibility Checklist

Accessible Infographics and Flyers Checklist

https://usability.yale.edu/web-accessibility/articles/headings

Live Event Captioning Solutions

A potential solution for captions for live events

https://eegent.com/

WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool

Suite of evaluation tools that helps authors make their web content more accessible to inviduals with disabilities.

https://wave.webaim.org/

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