

An Introduction to Microsoft PowerPoint Accessibility

Melanie Thornton
Digital Accessibility Consultant

Partners



1

Housekeeping

- Recording
- Captioning & Interpreters
- Handouts
- Q and A
- Evaluation
- Certificates of Attendance



Partners



2

Handouts & Resources

- Access PDF of PowerPoint:
exploreaccess.org/handouts



Partners



3

A Partnership between U of A Partners and iCAN

- iCAN (Increasing Capabilities Access Network) is the Arkansas statewide Assistive Technology program designed to make technology available and accessible for everyone who needs it.
- Partners collaborates to promote disability access through training, technical assistance, resource development and dissemination, and research.



Partners



4

Introduction

- Provide training and technical assistance at Arkansas' University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disability (UCEDD)
- **Focus areas:** digital access, civil rights, access in higher education, universal design, leadership.



Partners



5

Common Barriers in Slide Decks

- Poor contrast
- Too much text on a slide
- Images with no alt text
- Duplicate headings



Partners



6

Providing Good Contrast

- Select a slide design with good contrast between text and background.
- Black or dark blue text on a light grey or white background
- Light text—white or light grey—on black or dark blue background
- If you are unsure about the contrast, check it with a contrast analyzer

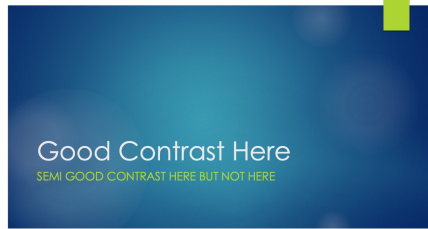


Partners



7

Choosing Design Templates



Partners



8

Checking Color Contrast 1

Foreground Color #9ECF28 Lightness 	Background Color #2B4D79 Lightness 	Contrast Ratio 4.67:1 permalink
Normal Text WCAG AA: Pass WCAG AAA: Fail The five boxing wizards jump quickly.		
Large Text WCAG AA: Pass WCAG AAA: Pass The five boxing wizards jump quickly.		

Partners



9

Checking Color Contrast 2

Foreground Color	Background Color	Contrast Ratio
#9ECF28	#287494	2.84:1
Lightness	Lightness	permalink

Normal Text

WCAG AA: **Fail**

WCAG AAA: **Fail**

Large Text

WCAG AA: **Fail**

WCAG AAA: **Fail**

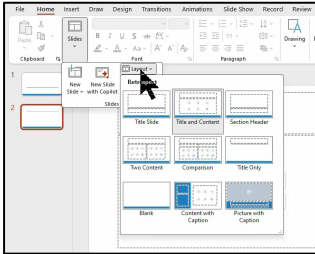
The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

Partners UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

10

Choosing Slide Layouts

- Do not choose the blank slide and then add text boxes.
- Choose the layout that fits your content best.
- This allows all of the text content to be available in the Outline View for easier exporting.



Partners UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

11

Using Unique Headings for Each Slide

- Make sure each slide has a unique heading.
- If you have information that continues across more than one slide add "continued" if there are 2 or number them if there are more than 2.
 - Data from Our Study - 1
 - Data from Our Study - 2
 - Data from Our Study - 3

Partners UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

12

Choosing Fonts and Font Size

- Choose fonts that are clear and easy to read
 - Sans Serif or Times New Roman
 - Avoid very decorative or thin fonts
- Avoid putting too much text on slide and making fonts too small
 - 28+ for in person presentations
 - 24+ for webinars

✓ Font

✓ Font

✗ *Font*

✗ *Font*

✗ Font

Partners



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

13

Alt Text:

**a text description of an image
(or other non-text content)**

Also called:
alternative text, image description

Partners



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

14

Making Images Accessible with Alt Text

- Without alt text, a screen reader user will not know what an image is.
- The screen reader will just say "graphic"
- Describe what is in the image. No need to say "image of" or "picture of"

Partners

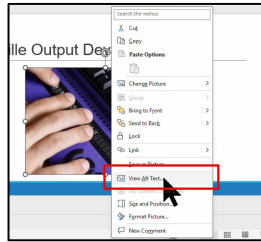


UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

15

How to Add Alt Text (1)

- Right click on the image
- Choose View Alt Text
- A pane will open to the right



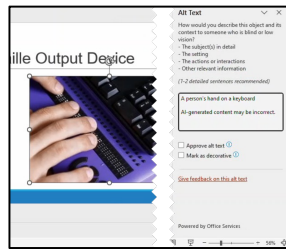
Partners

UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

16

How to Add Alt Text (2)

- Write the description in the Alt Text pane that appears to the right of the slide.
- Describe what is in the image.
- No need to say "image of" or "picture of"



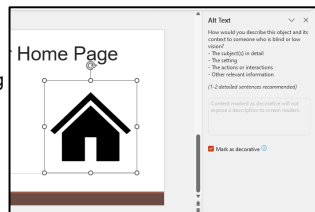
Partners

UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

17

Purely Decorative Image

- If an image is purely decorative, mark as decorative
- Images that do not add anything to the content
- Images that are redundant to the content
- Images that are visual separators



Partners

UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

18

Example: Adding Alt Text



- A bird/woodpecker with black feathers, a red crest and long black beak perched on a branch
- Caption: Male pileated woodpecker

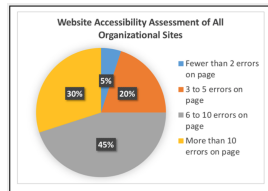
Partners



19

More Complex Images

- For charts and graphs, make sure to select the outside edge when adding alt text
- Option 1: Place full description in alt text
- Option 2: Include brief description in alt text and summarize the rest of the data in the slide content



Partners

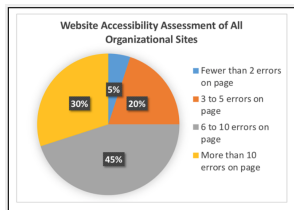


20

Chart Sample

Errors on organization web pages:

- 45% have 6 to 10 errors
- 30% have more than 10 errors
- 20% have 3 to 5 errors
- 5% have fewer than 2 errors



Alt text: Pie chart title: Website Accessibility Assessment of All Organizational Sites. Data summarized on slide.

Partners



21

Meaningful Links and Usability

- Do people need to access the link right away?
 - Give them the full URL on the slide
 - Download the handout at: exploreaccess.org/handouts
- Will everyone likely use a digital handout to access the resources?
 - Provide meaningful links
 - [Creating Accessible Documents Toolkit](#)
- Will some people have the digital and some a print version?
 - Provide both
 - [Create Accessible Documents Toolkit](#)
(exploreaccess.org/creating-accessible-documents)

Partners



22

A Few More Suggestions

- **Data Tables:** Only simple tables with the same number of columns and rows.
- **Embedding videos:** Remember to caption and make sure captions show up.
- **Animations:** Use sparingly. Avoid flashing objects.
- **Design Ideas:** Use with care.

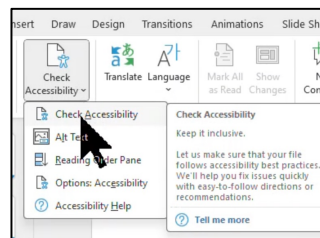
Partners



23

Using the Accessibility Checker

- Select Review or Accessibility Ribbon
- Select Accessibility Checker
- Panel opens to the right



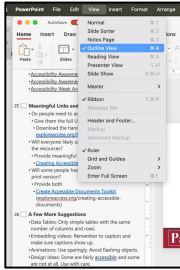
Partners



24

Checking Outline View

- Choose View > Outline View
- Check to see if the text is there
- Cut and paste if you want to create a text version of your slides.



Partners UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

25

Save as PDF

Always "Save As" PDF instead of Printing to PDF



- PC:
 - File > Save As > Choose PDF from File format menu
- Mac:
 - Save a Copy
 - Choose PDF as the file format
 - Make sure "Best for electronic distribution and accessibility" is checked

Partners UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

26

Resources

- [University of Washington: Slide Deck Accessibility](#)
- [Explore Access: Creating Accessible MS PowerPoint Presentation](#)
- [Microsoft: Make Your PowerPoint Presentations Accessible to People with Disabilities](#)
- [WebAIM: PowerPoint Accessibility](#)

Partners UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

27

Upcoming Webinars

- December 4th:
The Basics of PDF Accessibility
- January 15th:
Universal Design and Instruction
- Dates to be determined:
 - Accessible Excel Worksheets
 - Accessibility with Canva
 - Creating an Accessible Campus
- Visit: uofapartners.uark.edu/news-events



Partners

 UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

28

ArkAHEAD Fall Virtual Workshop

Navigating Title II Digital Access Regs in Higher Education

Presented by Korey Singleton

- November 13, 2025
- 9:30 AM to 12:00 Noon Central
- Registration:
 - \$40 Individual
 - \$75 Institutional
- Register at arkahead.org



Partners

 UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

29

Contact Me

Melanie Thornton
Digital Access Consultant
University of Arkansas Partners
Email: mthornt@uark.edu



Partners

 UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

30
