



# Included and Engaged: Best Practices for Accessibility

The Center for Financial Independence and Innovation  
Tools for Life, Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program  
AMAC Accessibility  
College of Design | Georgia Institute of Technology

Credit Builders Alliance  
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# Tools for Life



**Tools for Life (TFL), Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program, provides Georgians of all ages and disabilities the opportunity to gain access to and acquisition of assistive technology devices and services so they can live, learn, work, and play independently in the communities of their choice.**



# AMAC Accessibility



AMAC creates practical solutions that work, with a focus on utility, ease of use, and high quality.

- Accessibility Consulting
- Braille Services
- Captioning Services
- Professional E-Text Producers
- Certified Assistive Technology Team

For more information, please visit our website at [www.amacusg.org](http://www.amacusg.org)



# Credit-Able

- Georgia's alternative financing program for assistive technology
- Thanks to a partnership between Center for Financial Independence and Innovation and Tools for Life



# 1 in 5



**People with disabilities are the largest minority group in America.**

**This group cuts across racial, ethnic, religious, gender and age boundaries.**

**Anyone can become a member of this minority group at any time.**



# Document Accessibility

# Document Types



Format	Description of Accessible Features
PDF	PDF files that retain the same layout as the print textbook and include bookmarks for navigation, synchronized highlighting of text, and can be read aloud by screen readers. Students can easily magnify the text or change color contrast options. Images do not have alt text descriptions.
MS Word Doc	DOCs are best for students who use screen reading software such as JAWS and are formatted in a single column layout. Three levels of headings and page numbers are included, reading order is determined manually, and alt text descriptions are provided for all images except for decorative images and images with adequate captions.
DAISY	DAISY files are read by Dolphin EasyReader, which has a wide range of voices. These files have three levels of headings, correct reading order, and alt text descriptions are provided for all images except for decorative images and images with adequate captions.
PowerPoint	Each PowerPoint slide has a unique descriptive title, all images and tables are fully described, and the reading order is determined for all objects on the slide. Also, all content will be placed in accessible content boxes that will be read aloud by screen readers.
HTML	HTML files have three levels of headings that provide navigation, reading order is determined, and alt text descriptions are provided for all images except for decorative images and images with adequate captions.
Audiobooks	Books are downloaded and read with Learning Ally software. These files are audio only, but are read aloud with human narration, not synthetic speech.



# Why Make Things Accessible?



- Making material accessible allows for equity and fairness in information distribution and opportunities.
- Accessible files can be converted into multiple file formats easily and can reach more people.
- WCAG 2.0 stands for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. Following these guidelines protects you from litigation.
- The United States Department of Justice recommends the ADA Compliance Guidelines for ICT Accessibility.
- Section 508 Guidelines are determined by the GSA, the Government-wide Section 508 Accessibility Program.

# Accessible Fonts



- Use font sizes between 12 and 18 points for body text.
- Use standard fonts with clear spacing and easily recognized upper and lower case characters. The following fonts are the most accessible: Calibri, Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, and Times New Roman.
- Sans serif fonts (e.g., Calibri, Arial, Verdana) are generally considered easier to read than serif fonts (e.g., Times New Roman, Garamond).
- Avoid large amounts of italicized, bold, or underlined text. Text in all caps is also difficult to read and produces eye strain.

# Alt Text



All images in a document should be fully described so that everyone has equal access to visual information. Remember to use proper capitalization, grammar, spacing, and punctuation.

To add alt text to an image:

- Right-click the image.
- Choose Format Picture.
- Select the Layout Properties icon.
- Click on the Alt Text link.
- Type in the description field.

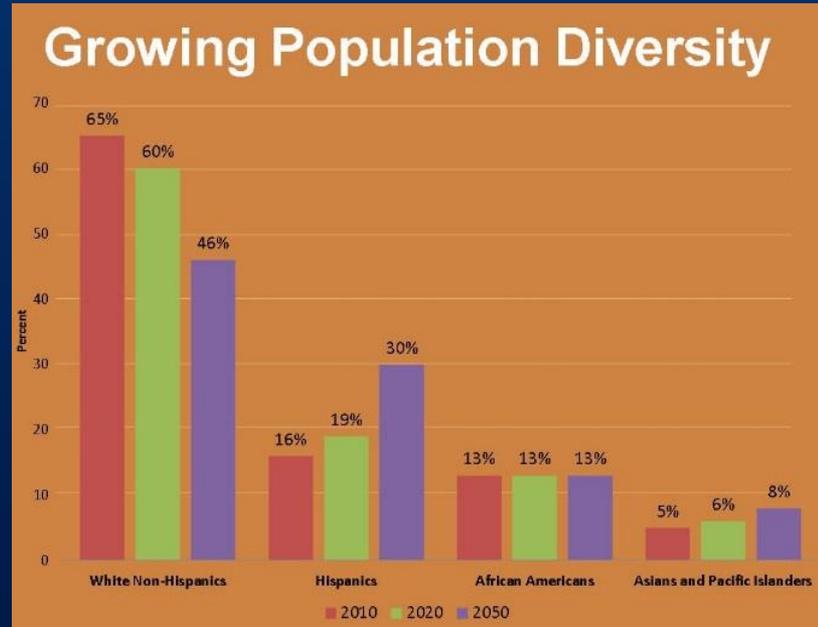
# Alt Text Example



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**Brief:** A bar graph showing projected population diversity growth by ethnicity in the years 2010, 2020, and 2050. Ethnicities measured include White/Non-Hispanic, Hispanic, African American, and Asian and Pacific Islander.

**Complete:** A grouped bar graph showing the growing population diversity in 2010, 2020, and 2050. The horizontal axis is labeled with different ethnicities and the vertical axis is labeled with percentages from zero to seventy. In 2010, the percentage of white non-Hispanics was 65 percent, and is estimated to be 60 percent in 2020 and 46 percent in 2050. In 2010, the percentage of Hispanics was 16 percent, and is estimated to be 19 percent in 2020 and 30 percent in 2050. In 2010, the percentage of African Americans was 13 percent, and is estimated to remain at 13 percent in both 2020 and 2050. In 2010, the percentage of Asians and Pacific Islanders was 5 percent, and is estimated to be 6 percent in 2020 and 8 percent in 2050.



# PDF Accessibility



1. Text highlights in proper reading order.
2. Bookmarks provide structure and organization.
3. Pagination is clear and navigable.
4. File size is manageable, under 25 MB is ideal.
5. File names are clear and contain no symbols.
6. Images have alt text descriptions if necessary.
7. Language and metadata are included in properties.

# Adding Bookmarks to a PDF

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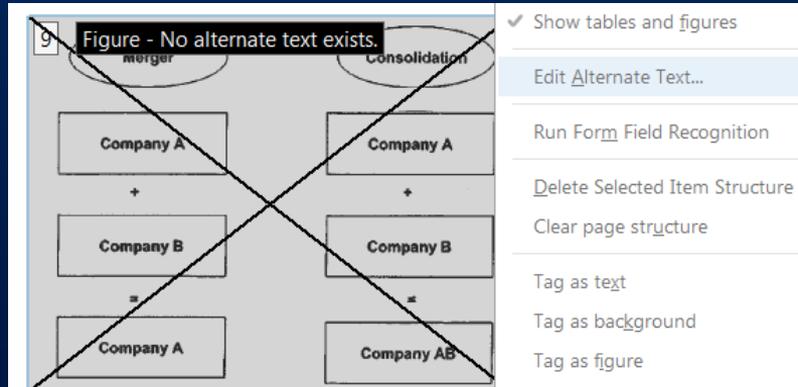
**PDFs should have bookmarks to help a user easily navigate to different sections of the file.**

**Bookmarks can be generated from a Word document with headings, or you can add them directly into your PDF by highlighting text and clicking Control + B or right clicking and choosing “Add Bookmark.”**

# Adding Alt Text to PDFs



To add alt text descriptions to images in a PDF file, it's easiest to turn on T.U.R.O. in the Accessibility Tools, which stands for "Touch Up Reading Order." This highlights all figures for you, and you can then right click on the ones needing descriptions and select "Edit Alternative Text."



# PowerPoint Accessibility



- Consider design and formatting in terms of clarity.
- Add content by using accessible Templates and Layouts.
- Slide titles are unique, descriptive, and in a logical order.
- Select proper reading order for objects on each slide
- Text is accessible to screen reading software in outline view.
- Extra white space is eliminated in outline view.
- Bulleted and numbered lists are created properly.
- Graphics are described with alternate text descriptions.

# Design Considerations



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- **Fonts** - use a readable font in a large enough size that your presentation will be seen throughout the room.
- **Backgrounds** - Always place text on a plain or solid background.
- Inserting a **background image** allows you to include graphics that are not read aloud by screen reading software. For example, the AMAC logo above is simply a background image.
- **Colors and contrast** - text color should provide enough contrast with background color that people can easily read it. Readers with low vision read yellow font on a black background most easily.
- **Layout** - use a standard layout template with text placeholders. This will help with logical reading order and make sure that all of your content will be accessible.

# Presentation Tips

# Best Practices for Using PPTs in Presentations



- Provide electronic copies ahead of time for participants
- Describe any images on the screen
- Never refer to text or images without a verbal description
- Don't use uncaptioned/undescribed videos
- Be aware of pacing for those with hearing/cognitive disabilities, or those using interpreters/CART captions
- Pay attention to slide design

# **Exploring Disability Awareness and Culture**

# The Importance of Disability Awareness



- **There are more than one billion people with disabilities in the world who must overcome challenges every day – including stigmatization. As a society, we are all different and must recognize the importance of acceptance.**
- **Disability awareness is important when it comes to breaking stereotypes and overcoming preconceptions regarding disabilities.**
- **Learning about disabilities, the ADA, and taking part in awareness activities and events is a step towards breaking these barriers and promoting change.**

**Disability  
is often a  
consequence of the  
environment**

# One Definition



## What is Disability Culture?

**“People with disabilities have forged a group identity. We share a common history of oppression and a common bond of resilience. We generate art, music, literature, and other expressions of our lives and our culture, infused from our experience of disability. Most importantly, we are proud of ourselves as people with disabilities. We claim our disabilities with pride as part of our identity. We are who we are: we are people with disabilities.”**

**Steven E. Brown, Ph.D., Co-Founder, Institute on disability Culture,  
Published in a 1996 issue of MAINSTREAM Magazine**



# Medical Model

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- Impairments or differences should be “fixed”
- The emphasis is on dependence.
- Focus is on the “impairment,” rather than the needs of the person.
- Often institution is the norm where basic needs can be met.
- Environmental and design barriers make it difficult to have a successful future

# Social Model



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- Disability is caused by the way society is organized, rather than by a person's impairment or difference.
- Disability is socially created
- Barrier Removal
- Traditional medical model did not explain their personal experience of disability or help to develop more inclusive ways of living.
- People with disabilities define what disability is

# Understanding Attitudinal Barriers



People with disabilities face many barriers every day—from physical obstacles in buildings to systemic barriers in employment and civic programs.

Often, the most difficult barriers to overcome are attitudes other people carry regarding people with disabilities.

Whether born from ignorance, fear, misunderstanding or hate, these attitudes keep people from appreciating—and experiencing—the full potential a person with a disability can achieve.



# Types of Attitudinal Barriers



- **Inferiority** - Because a person may be impaired in one of life's major functions, some people believe that individual is a "second-class citizen."
- **Pity** - People feel sorry for the person with a disability, which tends to lead to patronizing attitudes.
- **Hero worship** - People consider someone with a disability who lives independently or pursues a profession to be brave or "special" for overcoming a disability.

# More Types of Attitudinal Barriers



**Ignorance** - People with disabilities are often dismissed as incapable of accomplishing a task without the opportunity to display their skills.

**The Spread Effect** - People assume that an individual's disability negatively affects other senses, abilities or personality traits

**Stereotypes** - The other side of the spread effect is the positive and negative generalizations people form about disabilities.

**Backlash** - Many people believe individuals with disabilities are given unfair advantages, such as easier work requirements.

# The Power of Language

Value Laden

People First Language

Helpful Tips

# What is Value-Laden Language?



What you say and write may enhance the dignity of people with disabilities or inadvertently reflect stereotypes and negative attitudes.

Some words and phrases don't recognize the broad range of capabilities of people with disabilities.

People with disabilities don't need or want to be pitied, nor should they be deemed "courageous" or "special" as they accomplish daily activities or work.

# Value-Laden Language



## Promotes

- Distance
- Stereotypes
- Pigeon-holes

## Reduces sense of:

- Self-worth
- Power
- Self-direction

# Value-Laden Language: Creates Categories



**We vs. They**

**Good vs. Bad**

**Strong vs. Weak**

**High vs. Low (expectation)**

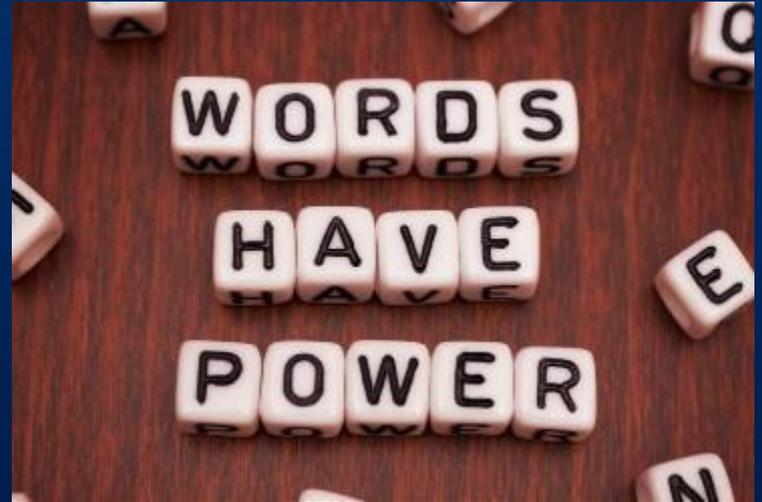
**Sick vs. Well**

**Superior vs. Inferior**

# Using People First Language is Crucial



People First Language puts the person before the disability, and it describes who a person is not what a person has.



# Communication Tips

Physical Disabilities

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Cognitive

Blind and Low Vision

Communication / AAC

# General Communication Tips



- Don't be afraid to make a mistake.
- Always be respectful.
- Don't make assumptions about what a person can or cannot do. Ask before giving assistance.
- If someone with a disability is accompanied by another individual, address the person with a disability directly rather than speaking through the other person.
- Treat adults as adults.
- Expect diversity of preferences and opinions.

# Communication Tips: Physical Disabilities



- **Respect the individual's personal space: personal space includes a person's wheelchair, crutches, or other mobility aid. Never move someone's crutches, walker, cane, or other mobility aid without permission**
- **Do not push a person's wheelchair or grab the arm of someone walking with difficulty without first asking if you can help.**
- **When speaking for more than a few minutes to a person using a wheelchair, try to find a seat for yourself so that the two of you are at eye level.**

# Communication Tips: Deaf/Hard of Hearing



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- Ask the person how he or she prefers to communicate.
- Before you start to speak, make sure you have the person's attention.
- Speak in a clear, expressive manner.
- Unless asked, do not raise your voice. Speak in a normal tone.
- Talk directly to the person who is Deaf or hard of hearing, not to the interpreter.
- If you are speaking through an interpreter, remember that the interpreter may lag a few words behind. Pause occasionally.

# Communication Tips: Cognitive Disabilities



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- **When speaking to someone who has a cognitive disability, try to be alert to his or her responses so that you can adjust your method of communication if necessary.**
- **Use language that is concrete rather than abstract.**
- **People with brain injuries may have short-term memory deficits and may repeat themselves or require information to be repeated.**

# Communication Tips: Blind, Low Vision



- Identify yourself when you approach a person who is blind. If a new person approaches, introduce him or her.
- Identify yourself when entering a room and let the blind person know when you are leaving.
- Never push, pull, or grab a blind person.
- Alert people who are blind or visually impaired to posted information.
- Don't hesitate to use words like "see" and "look."
- Don't use hand signals or gestures.

# Communication Tips: Communication Disabilities



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- **If you are having trouble understanding what is being said, ask the person to repeat rather than pretend you understand. The former is respectful and leads to accurate communication; the latter is belittling and leads to embarrassment.**
- **In conversation, people may respond slowly, so give them time.**
- **Don't try to finish sentences or guess what the person is saying.**

# Communication Tips: AAC Specific



- Acknowledge values and multiple modes of communication
- Ask/determine the individual's preferences in communication interactions.
- For example: Some people may prefer that you read along as they type or read the completed message. Depending on the device it can be more convenient, especially in crowds and noisy settings.

# Communication Rights



- ✓ **Be spoken to with respect and courtesy**
- ✓ **Be spoken to directly and not be spoken for or talked about in the third person while present**
- ✓ **Have clear, meaningful and culturally and linguistically appropriate communications**

# Contact Us



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