

Got images? Then you need alt text.

A11y CoP

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Alt text:

What it is, and why it matters.

Current state of website accessibility

WebAIM Million

- Top 1 million web sites
- Evaluated using WAVE
(automated web accessibility evaluation tool)

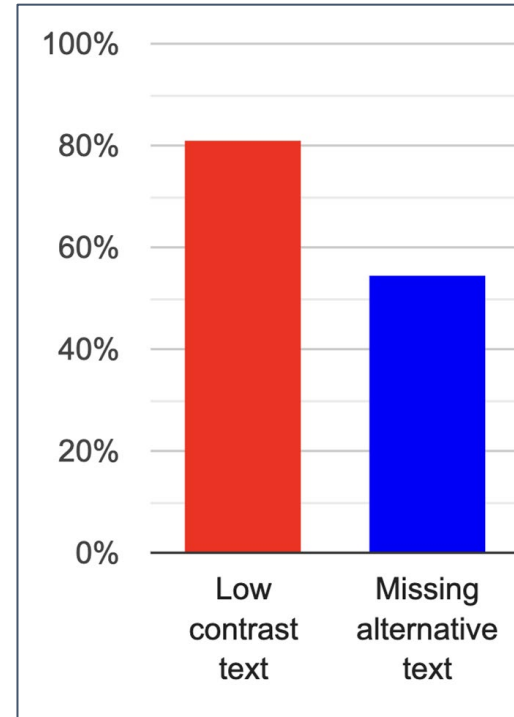
The results from Feb. 2024

56,791,260 distinct accessibility errors

56.8 = average # of errors per page

Common types of accessibility failures

- **Missing alt text**
- Low contrast text
- Ambiguous link text
- Improper heading structure





What is alt text?

- Added in the alt text box or attached to image metadata
- Imagine describing the image over the phone
- Be detailed, but succinct
- Include imperative information
- Context is everything
- What happens if I remove the image?

Who uses alt text?

People:

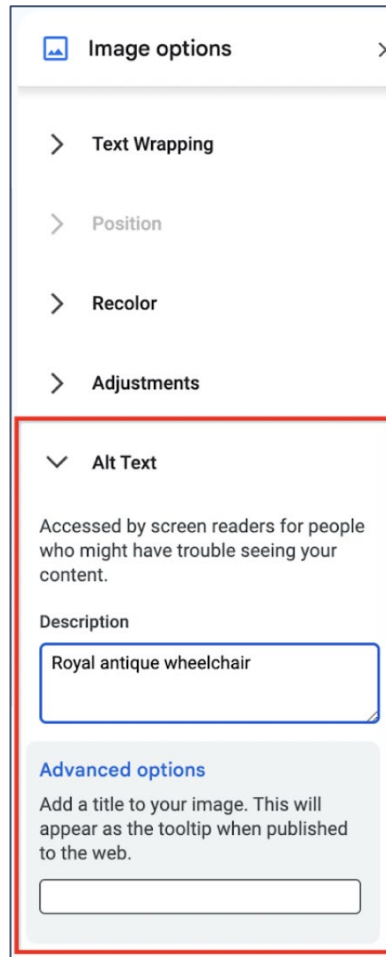
- Using screen readers
- Using speech input software
- Browsing speech-enabled websites
- Accessing a webpage that isn't loading images

Also, images become indexable by search engines (SEO).

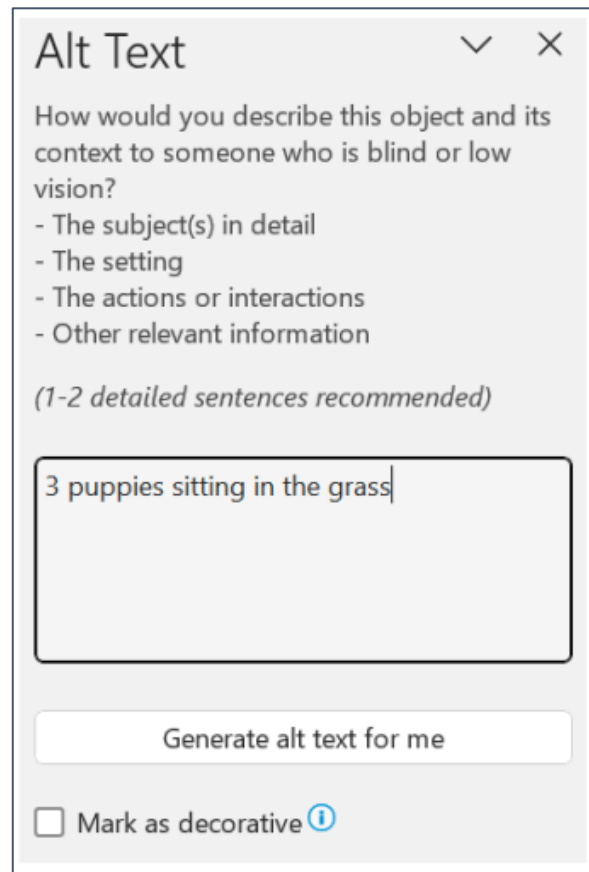
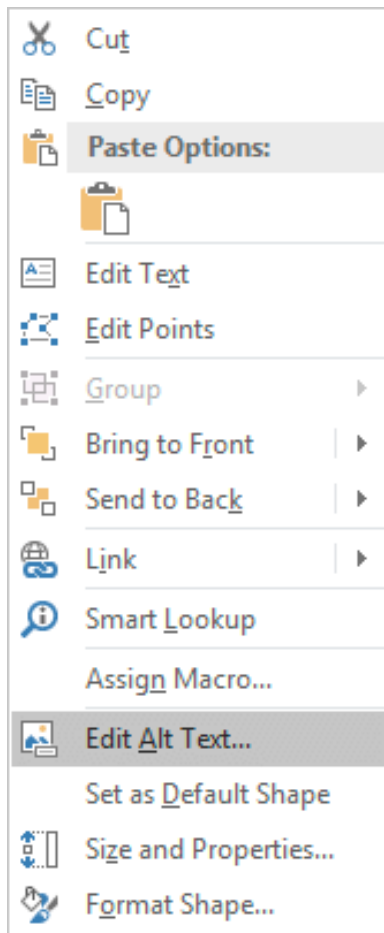
WCAG 2.1 AA 1.1.1

All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose, except for the situations listed below.

Google doc image options



Microsoft alt text panes



Adding alt text in content creation tools

- [Canva](#)
- [Microsoft tools](#)
- [Google tools](#)
- [Canvas](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Adobe Acrobat Pro](#)

Accessing alt text: screen reader


- Chrome OS: [ChromeVox](#)
- macOS: [VoiceOver](#)
- Windows OS: [Narrator](#)


Accessing alt text: Chrome “Inspect”

- Right-click the image and select "Inspect."
- Look for the `` tag in the Elements pane of the Developer Tools.
- Check for an alt attribute within the tag.
- Example: ``

Accessing alt text: Chrome settings

Settings > Privacy and Security > Site Settings > Images

 Sites can show images

 Don't allow sites to show images
Features that need images won't work

Writing effective alt text

3 types of images

1. Informative images
2. Decorative images
3. Functional images

Informative images

- Provides content
- Need alternative text near the image or in an alt attribute (**alt=**)

What to include when describing image

- Type of image (not “image of”)
- Text
- Who is in the image
- Setting of the image
- Color(s)
- Expression and emotions
- Item locations and descriptions

Example



[Photo credit](#)

Context: Howling Cow intro

Alt text: A person in the Talley Student Union holds a waffle cone filled with cookies and cream ice cream.



Context: Photography textbook

Alt Text: Close-up photo of a hand holding an ice cream cone. The building in the background is blurred, demonstrating a shallow depth of field.



Alt text vs. caption



Harry Potter meme

Alt text vs. long description



The background of this Webb and Hubble composite image of galaxy pair VV 191 is black. Two large, very bright galaxies dominate the center of the image. The elliptical galaxy at left is extremely bright at its circular core, with dimmer white light extending to its transparent circular edges. At right is a bright spiral galaxy. It also has a bright white core, but has red and light purple spiral arms that start at the center and turn clockwise going outward. They end in faint red and appear to overlap the elliptical galaxy at left. Throughout the scene are a range of distant galaxies, the majority of which are very tiny and red, appearing as splashes.

Example tweet with image





Avoid images of text

Period	Time
1	7:30 – 8:50 30 minutes Live Instruction 50 Minutes Non-Live Instruction
2 & Homeroom	9:00 – 10:30 40 minutes Live Instruction (30 + 10 Homeroom) 50 Minutes Non-Live Instruction
Lunch Break	10:30 – 11:30
3	11:30 – 12:50 30 minutes Live Instruction 50 Minutes Non-Live Instruction
4	1:00 – 2:20 30 minutes Live Instruction 50 Minutes Non-Live Instruction

Example image with text



Donna Murray @MurrayGirl · Nov 30, 2018



Share your thoughts about digital learning in North Carolina! The 2018 Speak Up Survey is open! tomorrow.org/speakup/

[#nced](#) [#ncitf](#) [#nctlchat](#) [#ncadmin](#)



Decorative images

- No content, just visual appeal
- Alt text “Decorative.”
- Empty alt attribute
`alt=""`



Try it!

IMAGINARIUM
OF ILLUSIONS



Functional images

- Initiate action rather than convey information
- Buttons, links, interactive elements
- Need alternative text nearby
or in an alt attribute
- Include description of the image &
makes it clear where the link goes

Image used alone as a link

Alt text indicates where the link will take the user.



Alt text: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction home

```
<a href="https://www.https://www.dpi.nc.gov/">  
    
</a>
```

Logo image within link text

Image is decorative. Alt text would be redundant.



Alt text: Decorative.

```
<a href="https://www.https://www.dpi.nc.gov/">  
   NCDPI Home  
</a>
```

Icon image conveying information within linked text

Alt text conveys meaning of the icon.

[NCDPI Twitter](https://twitter.com/ncpublicschools/) 

Alt text: new window

```
<a href="https://twitter.com/ncpublicschools/"  
target="_blank">  
  NCDPI Twitter   
</a>
```


Stand-alone icon image with function

Alt text conveys the purpose of the icon.



Alt text: Print this page

```
<a href="javascript:print()">  
    
</a>
```

Image used in a button

Alt text conveys the purpose of the button.



Alt text: Search

```
<input type="image" src="searchbutton.png"  
alt="Search">
```

Resources

- [Images Tutorial](#)
- [Alt text decision tree](#)
- Practice writing alt text for various image types
 - [WHEN to describe](#)
 - [HOW to describe](#)

Additional tips



Alt text for emoticons and gifs

- 😊 Grinning Face.
- 😄 Grinning Face with Big Eyes.
- 😁 Grinning Face with Smiling Eyes.
- 😆 Beaming Face with Smiling Eyes.
- 😏 Grinning Squinting Face.
- 😓 Grinning Face with Sweat.
- 😂 Rolling on the Floor Laughing.
- 🙂 Slightly Smiling Face.



Hashtags/links in alt text

If you have a link or hashtag to share, include it in the body text, not the alt text.

Automatic alt text

"May be an image of food and text."

"May be an image of outdoors."

Do not rely on the A.I.-generated alt text. The result is often vague and does not provide context or adequate information about the content of the image.

A11y Alt Text Assistant GPT



A11y Alt Text Assistant

By Donna Murray 

Supports digital content creators in writing effective alt text.

Upload an image and draft alt text for feedback.

How do I write alt text for a graph?

Tips for writing alt text for academic images.

Share digital accessibility tips for web content.



Message A11y Alt Text Assistant



ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info.

Accessible math and data

- [Accessible Math Editor: Word](#)
- [Video: Insert equations - Microsoft Support](#)
- [Digital Math Summary Page](#)
- [Data Visualizations, Charts, and Graphs](#)

Progress over perfection.

Resources

- [NCDPI Digital Accessibility website](#)
 - [Creating accessible digital content](#)
 - [Procuring accessible digital content](#)
- [X: A11y Awareness](#)

User experiences

- [Veronica With Four Eyes](#)
- [How To Write Alt Text and Image Descriptions for the Visually Impaired](#)

Designed with accessibility in mind

Perceivable

- Alt text on images
- High color contrast
- Readable font

Operable

- Distinct slide titles
- Descriptive links

Understandable

- Clear structure and layout
- Consistent formatting
- Effective use of images

Robust

- Automated and manual accessibility check

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