**At Purdue, we are committed to continuous improvement and as accessibility practices are updated, we will update our manuals. This version of the manual was finalized on 6.29.18**

## Headings

| Check | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] | Create headings by using built-in styles in Word. |
| [ ] | Write short, concise headings that include keywords. |
| [ ] | Write headings that give people good clues about the information that follows them. |
| [ ] | Arrange headings in order – H3 headings under H2, H2 headings under H1, and so on. |
| [ ] | Make sure each heading contains no more than 2-3 paragraphs of content. |

**Why is this important?**

* Most people just scan a page, so headings might be the only information that gets read.
* Screen readers and text-to-speech tools are programmed to find Heading styles.
* People who use screen readers depend on headings for navigation.
* People who have any reading issues depend on headings to:
  + Provide clues about the content
  + Organize content into groups of related ideas
  + Limit bursts of reading to a few paragraphs

## Images

| **Check** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] | Add Alt Text to images, diagrams, SmartArt, and tables. |
| [ ] | Write Alt Text that describes what’s important in the image for this article. |
| [ ] | If you included an image for visual emphasis or decoration, write “ “ (Double quote –space – double quote) in the Alt Text title and description. This tells screen reader software to skip over the image, and not describe it for a blind person. |
| [ ] | If the image contains text, repeat the text exactly in the Alt Text description or adjacent content. |

**Why is this important?**

* Screen readers read Alt Text out loud.
* Alt Text is the only information that people who are blind have about images and diagrams.
* Blind people depend on Alt Text to explain what the image or diagram communicates. Does it show how something works? Does it show important data?

## Lists

| **Check** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] | Create lists (bulleted and numbered) by using built-in features in Word. |
| [ ] | Insert a lead phrase or sentence to introduce the list. |
| [ ] | Make lists that contain related items. If you have to, make more than one list |
| [ ] | Use numbered lists if the order of items is important. |

**Why is this important?**

* Screen readers and text-to-speech tools are programmed to understand lists that you create with the built-in features. This is especially important for nested lists.
* People who use screen readers appreciate hearing that a list is about to be read.
* It’s easier to remember list items if they are related to one another.

## Links

| **Check** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] | Give every link meaningful display text. |
| [ ] | Make sure the link display gives a clear idea of the destination and purpose of the link. |
| [ ] | Avoid meaningless phrases such as “Click here” and “Learn more”. |

**Why is this important?**

* If a link does not have meaningful display text, then screen readers read the link URL one character at a time. This can be extremely difficult or impossible to follow while listening.
* If you must use a phrase such as “Click here”, include some contextual information. For example, use “Click here to see our low sale prices,” or “Click here to try again.”
* Check the destination site. If you can, learn its title and use that in the link display text.

## Tables

| **Check** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] | Insert tables by using built-in features. |
| [ ] | Use the Tab key to move through the table cells. Make sure the tab order of cells matches the table appearance. |
| [ ] | Make sure that the table has one Header Row. |
| [ ] | Add column labels in the Header Row that describe their contents. |
| [ ] | Fix any merged or split cells in the table. |

**Why is this important?**

* Screen readers and text-to-speech tools are programmed to understand how tables are organized, if you create the table by using built-in features.
* Some screen readers can repeat column labels on request. This can be very helpful on large tables with lots of data.
* Screen readers keep track of their location in the table by counting table cells. If a cell is merged or split, then the screen reader loses count. It can’t provide helpful information to the listener any more.

## Whole Document

| Check | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] | Save the file as a Word document (.docx). |
| [ ] | Give the file a meaningful name. |
| [ ] | Make sure the filename gives a clue about the document contents. |
| [ ] | Add the author’s name and the document title to the document properties on the Word Backstage. |
| [ ] | Add “AC” at the end of the filename for accessibility or “ACAN” for accessibility with animation. |

**Why is this important?**

* Meaningful file names help people locate the information that they want.
* Some organizations put documents on websites and organize them by using information from the document properties. It’s a good idea to make sure your document is ready for this.

# More Tips for an Accessible Document

## Fonts

* Use Sans Serif fonts.
* Minimize the use of character formats like italics and bold.
* Avoid setting specific sizes because this removes the user’s ability to resize pages with application or browser functions like Zoom.

## Alignment

* Use left-aligned text whenever possible.
* Centered (justified) text creates uneven vertical lines that are very difficult for people with reading disabilities and people with low vision.

## Colors

* Think strong contrast; but avoid using pure black text on a pure white background. If possible use a background that is not pure white.
* Never use color alone to indicate information. People who are color-blind might not be able to see the point. Texture is a great alternative to color when creating graphs.
* Avoid using orange, red, and green in your graphs or objects.

## Writing Style

* Use short, simple sentences.
* Avoid abbreviations except when the abbreviation is part of common language, like USA or NASA.
* Group related ideas under a heading.
* If possible, limit paragraphs to one idea.
* Check readability statistics.

## White Space and Background

* Allow ample white space between lines and between paragraphs.
* Clearly separate text and background.
* **Note**: Extra spaces, tabs, and empty paragraphs may be perceived as blanks by people using screen readers.

## Audio and Video

* Include closed captions for all audio and video.
* **Note:** Ensure all audio and video is available in alternative formats for users with disabilities, such as transcripts, closed captions, or alt text.