



UC Riverside Social Media Accessibility Guidelines

Overview

These guidelines are intended to help University staff, faculty, and students create social media content that is accessible to people with disabilities.

It's our job to make sure that every piece of content we publish on social media is accessible to all. However, social media platforms don't always make it easy to add alternative text or take into account other disabilities like hearing impairment or loss, visual impairment or loss, distractions, etc. Here are some tips to make your social media content as compliant as possible so everyone can participate.

Alternative Text (Alt-text) Descriptions for Images

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn all have the ability to edit alternative text on video, photos and graphics. Take the time to put in more descriptive language about the image/video. Remember to describe what is happening in the image rather than simply listing what is in the image. Your goal is to provide the visually impaired with the same or similar experience as someone who is sighted. Avoid classifying someone's race or gender in the alt text or any commentary - keep it neutral and fact-based.

Note that alternative text is only available to screen reader users. If there is visible text in your image that is small, low-contrast or low-resolution (cannot be enlarged), low-vision users who do not use a screen reader may not be able to read it.

1. [Twitter alt text guide](#)
2. [Facebook alt text guide](#)
3. [Instagram alt text guide](#)
4. [LinkedIn alt text guide](#)

Captioning of Videos

For video content, you should provide captions of the audio for the benefit of those without hearing, who are hard-of-hearing, and who are non-native speakers. Captions can be either closed captions (where a user can turn them on and off) or open captions (where the text is embedded into the video and cannot be turned on or off).

Most social media platforms allow you to add captions automatically, but be sure to check them for accuracy and edit as needed. You may also burn in captions for platforms, like Twitter, where captions are not an automatic option. Make sure to use a sans serif font at 12 points or larger to make reading easier for viewers.

Context for Animated GIFs

On platforms that allow for alternative text descriptions on GIFs, you should provide them in the same manner as for still images.

Note that this alternative text is only available to screen reader users. Many users who do not use screen readers may have trouble reading images of text in a GIF that are low-resolution, low-contrast, distorted or only shown briefly.

In either case, make sure the post can be understood through its non-graphical text alone, even if this means the text seems visually redundant to the image.

Avoid using graphics that have text overlay.

Those flyers you're asked to post? Unless you want to also put that copy in the body of the post and edit the alt text, you should not be posting these.

Shorten your URLs.

URLs are read character-by-character by site-readers, so make them short and customize them when possible. Use a free link shortener tool like bit.ly.

CamelCase Hashtags

Hashtags are an important component of social media posts. When authoring hashtags that are made up of multiple words, use initial capitalization, also known as CamelCase. Utilizing this simple technique makes the hashtag easier to read for all users and is more consumable by screen readers since their synthesized voices can recognize and pronounce individual words, and won't concatenate and garble them.

Avoid acronyms.

They are tricky for site-readers, and frankly confuse folks who are not in the know anyway.

Emojis and Emoticons

Emojis displayed on a screen will be described by a screen reader. The 🙌 emoji, for example, will be read aloud as "clapping hands." Please be considerate of screen reader users by using emojis judiciously and by placing spaces between them.

When creating emoticons with text, consider the experience for screen reader users. In this example, this visual experience of "shruggie" `¯_(\ツ)_/` will be read aloud by a screen reader as: "Macron, backslash, underline, katakana, underline, slash, macron."

Be aware of color contrast.

Check your images, your bio section, thumbnail images and graphics, and your Instagram and Snapchat stories to make sure there is a high contrast of colors to ensure legibility, particularly for those who live with color blindness. Use a color contrast analyzer tool, such as [this Chrome plug-in](#). It can help you determine if your content complies with accessibility standards.

Accessibility Documentation by Platform

- [Facebook Accessibility Support Features](#)
- [Twitter Accessibility Support Features: Images](#)
- [Instagram Accessibility Support Features: Images](#)
- [LinkedIn Accessibility Support Features](#)