

AT / FYI . . . ©

**Volume 17, Issue 6 MN Regions 5 & 7 Assistive Technology Committee
February 2015**

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Sponsored by MN Regions 5 & 7

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Freshwater—Eric Weber

Little Falls—Jeannie McKee

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Calendar of Events

2014-2015 REGIONAL MEETINGS

Benton-Stearns Ed District Office, Sartell MN

9:00 A.M. – 11:30 P.M.

September 16—Models of Service for AT; Components of an AT Program

October 7—AT in Due Process—Consideration/Assessment/IEP

November 5—Accessibility: Word, PPT, PDF; Switches and Bluetooth

December 3—Resource Lists: Website/Apps; Tools Used in AT

January 7—Resource Lists: Website/Apps; Tools Used in AT

February 4—Resource Lists: Website/Apps; Tools Used in AT

March 4—Resource Lists: Website/Apps; Tools Used in AT; Planning for 2015-16

April 1—Resource Lists: Website/Apps; Tools Used in AT

May 6—Google, Chrome, Dropbox, Wiki

32nd ANNUAL CLOSING THE GAP CONFERENCE

Minneapolis MN

Pre-Conference Sessions: October 13-14, 2014

Conference Sessions: October 15-17, 2014

CHARTING THE CS CONFERENCE

Arrowwood, Alexandria, MN

Pre-Conference Sessions: April 25-26, 2015

Conference Sessions: April 27-28, 2015

AT Information: Listservs

AT Listserv

The AT Listserv is a wonderful resource for educators who work with students who use technology for learning. Members ask questions, share information, and discuss topics that are relevant to our day-to-day work with students ages birth through 21.

How to Join: To subscribe, visit <https://webmail.mnet.state.mn.us/mailman/listinfo/assistive-tech> or send a message with the word “help” in it to the request address, assistive-tech-request@lists.statemn.us for further instructions.

To Post on the Listserv: Send message to assistive-tech@lists.state.mn.us. Complete the subject line identifying the topic of your post. Type your message and send it. Remember confidentiality when posting!

QIAT Listserv

The Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT—pronounced quiet) listserv is a place to share resources, questions ideas, and problem-solving in an on-going email discussion (there are archives and a website of resources to assist you, too). To sign up, go to the following website <http://qiat.org> and follow the links to join the listserv.

Accessibility of Educational Materials

Accessible documents are not only needed by students with disabilities, they are required to be available under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Agencies or schools that receive federal dollars must “make electronic and information technology (E&IT) accessible to users with disabilities, including:

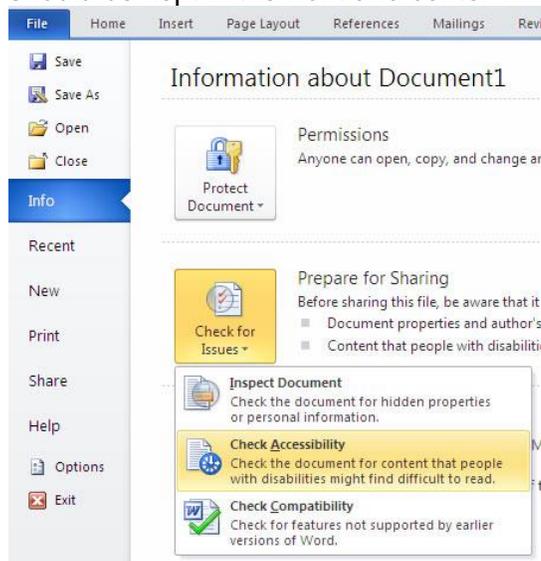
- Blindness, color blindness, visual impairment
- Deafness, hearing impairment
- Speech impairment
- Mobility, strength, dexterity or reach impairment.” (Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act)

Microsoft Word and PowerPoint are the documents most often created by teachers for students to use in the classroom. Accessibility to those documents for students using screen readers is provided through the actual structure of the document. The way the writer constructs the document will allow the user to access it efficiently with a screen reader.

When read visually, a document is often scanned to locate information using headings and lists. The user of a screen reader is unable to do that unless the document writer has inserted the necessary markers to allow navigation of materials by jumping through the material without reading every word. The use of headings and lists is essential in allowing auditory scanning. Headings, lists, objects, pages, etc. are given a tag for the screen reader to use in identifying the different levels and areas of the reading material. For lengthy materials, a table of contents is essential to the efficiency of the materials (and can be automatically created when using Word) by inserting links from the table of contents to the section of materials to be read. The screen reader program utilizes the internal “signals” the writer has inserted to assist the reader in locating information quickly without reading every word on the document.

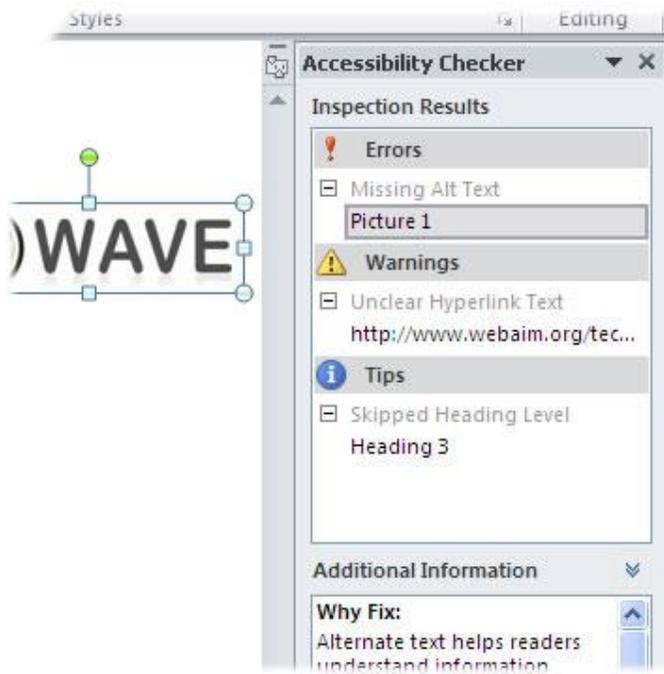
Word Documents

Using Word 10 or Word 13 makes accessibility issues very easy to troubleshoot. There is a panel that can be accessed from the File screen (under Inspect Document) that allows the writer to monitor the accessibility of the document as it is written. If the writer is using another version of the Word software, the writer will need to keep in mind how accessibility works within a document. The following are ideas that should be kept in the front and center when writing in a Word document:



Source: <http://webaim.org>

On the File Page, click on “Check Accessibility” to get the Accessibility Checker pane on the document.



Source: <http://webaim.org>

Determine what your document will need to look like in the end.

1. You may want to use templates (save a format you like) to create new documents.

Font usage must be clean and not visually confusing:

1. San Serif fonts only: Arial, Calibri, etc.
2. Font size of 11 or 12.

Arial 11

Arial 12

Calibri 11

Calibri 12

Verdana 11

Verdana 12

NOT: Batang 12

Script 12

3. Black print on white background preferred.
4. Be aware of any breaks or poor contrast in font chosen—if it is there use another font.

Contrast

1. When using color backgrounds, be certain the print is clearly visible.
2. Not all colors are contrasted well with other colors!
3. Color contrast in documents is the difference between the brightness of the text compared with its background.
4. Avoid color to emphasize meaning.

Spacing

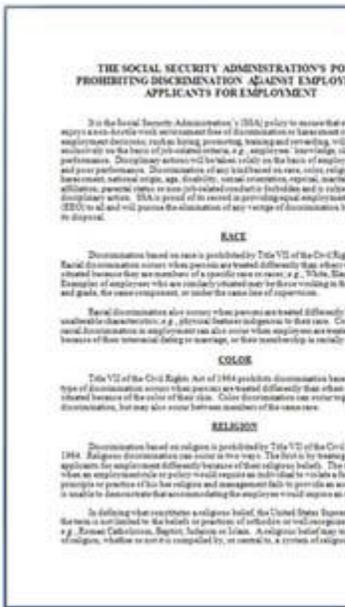
1. Do not leave multiple spaces after a period or paragraph.
2. Do not use Enter to space down for a new page (insert page break from the ribbon bar).
3. Determine the spacing between lines using the Page Layout ribbon
4. Spacing between letters should be considered when choosing font and font size.
5. Spacing between lines/paragraphs should also be considered (under Page Layout).

Headings (used to define the reading order of the document)

1. Headings are used to divide the document into sections and subsections
2. The document title should be in the body of the document—not as a header.
 - a. Without a heading, the screen readers will not distinguish any breaks in text.
 - b. A screen reader, reading a document without accessibility, can only use commands for the following:
 - i. Read previous/next word
 - ii. Read previous/next paragraph
 - iii. Go to the beginning/end of document.
 - c. A screen reader, reading a document with accessibility, can use the previous commands plus:
 - i. Jump to next/previous heading
 - ii. Jump to next/previous level
 - iii. Display a list of all headings in this document
 - iv. Sort the list of headings in this document alphabetically
 - v. Sort the list of headings in this document as they appear

How it appears visually

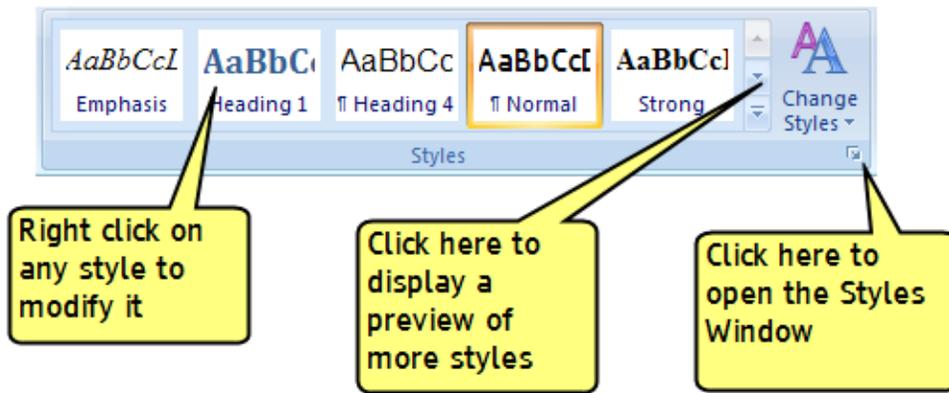
How it appears using a Screen Reader



The social security administration's policy prohibiting discrimination against employees and applicants for employment. It is the social security administration's policy to ensure that every employee enjoys a non-hostile work environment free of discrimination or harassment of any kind. All employment decisions, such as hiring, promoting, training and rewarding, will be made exclusively on the basis of job-related criteria, e.g., employees' knowledge, skills, abilities and performance. Disciplinary actions will be taken solely on the basis of employees' misconduct and poor performance. Discrimination of any kind based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual harassment, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, reprisal, marital status, political affiliation, parental status or non-job-related conduct is forbidden and is subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Ssa is proud of its record in providing equal employment opportunity (eoo) to all and will pursue the elimination of any vestige of discrimination by every means at its disposal. Race. Discrimination based on race is prohibited by title vii of the civil rights act of 1964. Racial discrimination occurs when persons are treated differently than others who are similarly situated because they are members of a specific race or races, e.g., white, black, asian, etc. Examples of employees who are similarly situated may be those working in the same position and grade, the same component, or under the same line of supervision. Racial discrimination also occurs when persons are treated differently because of unalterable characteristics, e.g., physical features indigenous to their race. Courts have held that racial discrimination in employment can also occur when employees are treated differently because of their interracial dating or marriage, or their membership in racially oriented groups. Color. Title vii of the civil rights act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on color. This type of discrimination occurs when persons are treated differently than others who are similarly situated because of the color of their skin. Color discrimination can occur together with race discrimination, but may also occur between members of the same race. Religion. Discrimination based on religion is prohibited by title vii of the civil rights act of 1964. Religious discrimination can occur in two ways. The first is by treating employees or applicants for employment differently because of their religious beliefs. The second occurs when an employment rule or policy would require an individual to violate a fundamental belief, principle or practice of his/her religion and management fails to provide an accommodation and is unable to demonstrate that accommodating the employee would impose an undue burden. In defining what constitutes a religious belief, the united states supreme court held that the term is not limited to the beliefs or practices of orthodox or well recognized denominations; e.g., roman catholicism, baptist, judaism or islam. A religious belief may include any exercise of religion, whether or not it is compelled by, or central to, a system of religious belief.

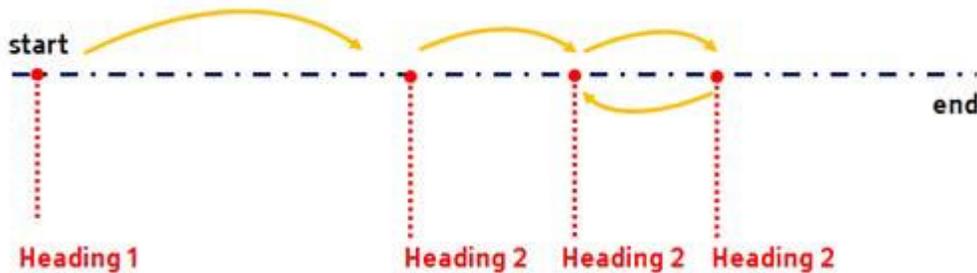
Source: www.section508.gov

- d. Using only bold or capital letters to indicate a section will not allow the screen reader to locate that heading or section easily.
- e. Using headings allows the section to automatically be added to the Table of Contents.
3. Headings are used to define importance or levels of text:
 - a. Heading 1: main topics
 - b. Heading 2: sub-topics
 - c. Heading 3: sub-sub-topics, etc.
4. Customize your headings by going to the heading ribbon and right clicking on the heading number—insert your preferences—save it (future headings on the document will be in the same settings).



Source: www.section508.gov

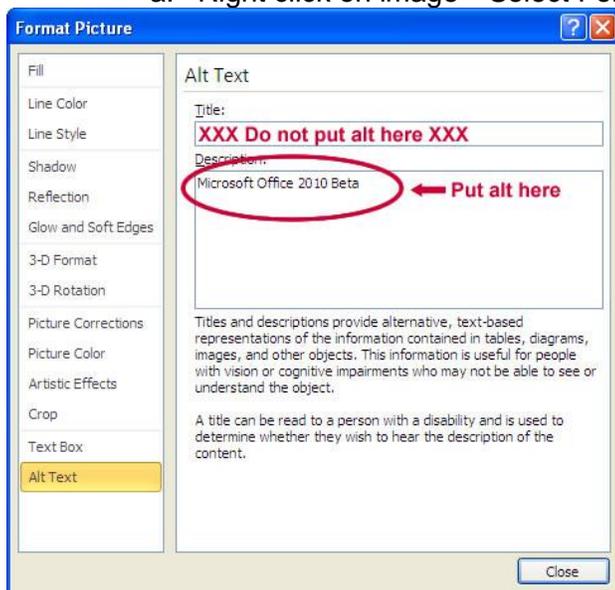
- a. Headings must be in order Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3 etc. (you can repeat).
5. Text in a paragraph is Normal text.



Source: www.section508.gov

Images/Graphics

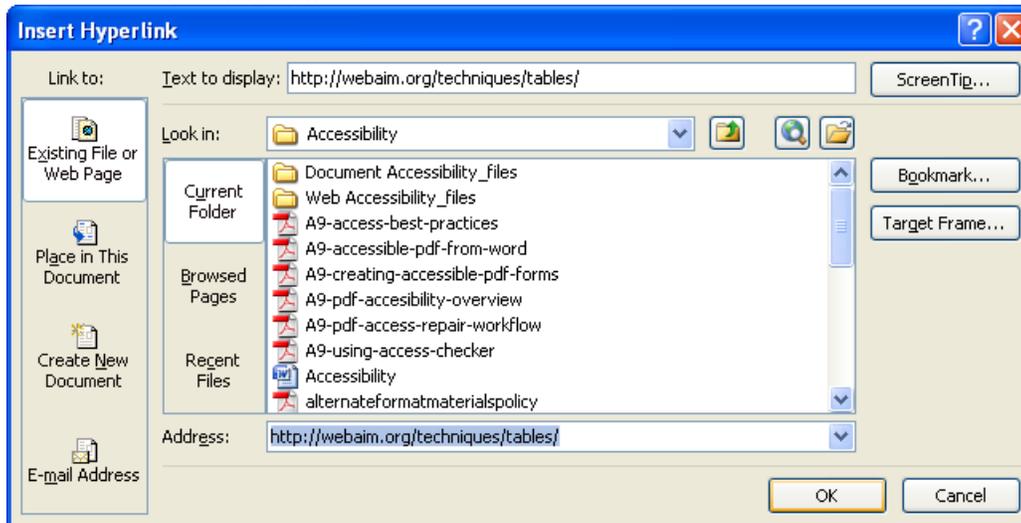
1. Screen readers cannot convert a picture or a graphic to text.
2. Determine if the picture or graphic is necessary for the text or just decorative.
3. All necessary pictures and graphics need a label and a brief description.
4. Alt Text should state picture's: meaning, function or purpose of the image—don't describe.
 - a. Right click on image—Select Format Picture—Add the Alt Text information—Close.



Source: <http://webaim.org>

Hyperlinks (websites)

1. Screen readers can read email addresses.
2. Screen readers cannot read web addresses unless they are hyperlinked.
 - a. Go to the area where the web address/URL is to be listed.
 - b. Go to the Hyperlink ribbon.
 - c. Select the document name.
 - d. Type in the URL.
 - e. Click OK.



Source: www.webaim.org

Lists

1. Always select the bulleted or numbered list format from the Home Ribbon under Paragraph.
2. Do not use asterisks or pictures/emoticons.

Columns

1. When Column Formatting is used from the ribbons, the screen reader will read one column to the bottom then go to the top of the next column (without Column Formatting, the screen reader will read across both columns and not know there are columns in place).

Tables

1. There is, actually, no way to make a data table completely accessible for a user who is blind.
2. Tables must be formatted for tab access by using the Insert Table ribbon.
3. The layout of the table should use “repeat row headers” as a part of the formatting.
 - a. The screen reader can then read the header with the row.
4. It is often best to find alternative ways to present material if it is a text table.
5. The Department of Rehabilitation Services states (Source: Temple University Staff Documents)
 - a. “If you have a very large or complex table, consider reformatting the data into two simpler or smaller tables. All your students will probably appreciate this move if it makes the data easier to locate and understand.

Screen readers will read across the table from left to right, unless you insert code to change the read order. Therefore, orient the data table so that your students will be able to work with it most readily (given the purposes you have for the task) by reading across each row.

Be sure to include an alt text label for every table. If the table has multiple heading rows or a great deal of data, provide a longer text description of the content.”

Text Boxes

1. Text boxes are like images or graphics, they cannot be read by the screen reader.
2. Convert all information in text boxes to regular paragraphs

Hyphenation

1. Do not hyphenate words at the end of lines (they will be read as separate words).

Page Numbers

1. To add page numbers, go to the Insert Ribbon and insert the page numbers using the ribbon. Do not manually add page numbers to documents.
2. The page numbers that are added automatically will be used in the Table of Contents.

Table of Contents

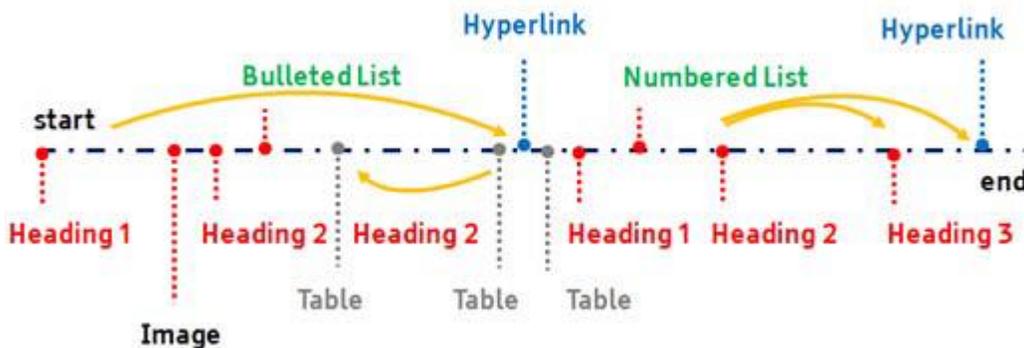
1. An automatically formatted and inserted Table of Contents will assist in navigation of lengthy documents.
 - a. Go to the Reference Ribbon to start the Table of Contents.
 - b. Be certain the cursor is in the location where you want the Table of Contents to be.
 - c. Choose a format from the menu.
 - d. All Headings will be listed with a page number when you update the Table of Contents as you write.

Frequent Errors to Avoid

1. The title of the file and the title of the document should match: the screen reader will read the document title, not the file name when the user opens the file.
2. The page width should be no more than 80 characters.
3. Repeated characters (blank spaces at the end of a line or a paragraph or blank lines between paragraphs) must be eliminated. Use Page Break under the Insert ribbon to go to a new page when there is a break in the print.
4. Do not justify type alignment on both the right and the left as it adds spaces between words that make it difficult to understand what the screen reader is reading. Only left or right justify.
5. Word 10 and Word 13 will give you feedback on your accessibility errors and even show you where the error is located. The feedback indicates the writer should make accessibility changes so the materials can be used with a screen reader or a screen magnifier. The feedback can be:
 - a. Error: “An error is for content that makes a file very difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to understand.” Source: Word 13 Software
 - b. Warning: “A warning is for content that in most, but not all cases, makes a file difficult for people with disabilities to understand.” Source: Word 13 Software
 - c. Tip: A tip is for content that people with disabilities can understand, but that might be better organized or presented in a way that would improve their experience.” Source: Word 13 Software

There are many features to consider when creating accessible documents. It is not a difficult task, but it will take some initial thought and learning. The key is to use the Ribbons/Styles at all times when creating the document. This will allow the document to become navigable—it will have sections and internal signs to direct the screen reader about reading order. This will assist the user in understanding and reading the material. It makes sense auditorally, not just visually!

The accessible document will have navigation built into it. The screen reader will be able to follow commands to navigate the features of the document as shown in the diagram below.



Source: www.section508.gov

PowerPoint

PowerPoint is an entirely different program in terms of accessibility. Brevity is PowerPoint. Some thoughts about accessibility:

1. Only use the templates provided to create your slides.
2. Narrate the PowerPoint if you like under Slide Show: Record Slide Show.
3. Only put important information on each slide.
4. Use short statements.
5. Use 32-36 sized font.
6. Use Arial, Calibri, or any other San Serif font.
7. Make certain your slides and statements are in the order you want them read.
8. If you use images, they must be tagged with Alt Text.

If you want the PowerPoint in its most basic format, save it as a Word file and apply the accessibility features and standards previously discussed. Using an outline format from PowerPoint, you will be able to make the PowerPoint into an accessible Word file.

Apps of the Month

AudioNote—Notepad and Voice Recorder by Luminant Software

\$4.99 on iTunes

“AudioNote combines the functionality of a notepad and voice recorder to create a powerful tool that will save you time while improving the quality of your notes. It’s the perfect app for students or business.

“By synchronizing notes and audio, AudioNote automatically indexes your meetings, lectures, interviews, or study sessions. Each note acts as a link directly to the point at which it was recorded, taking you instantly to what you want to hear. Didn’t take any notes during the meeting? No problem, you can add them later.

“With the convenience of the iPad or iPhone, you can use AudioNote anywhere: meetings, interviews, conferences, lectures, study sessions. Even use it to record memos to yourself as you jot down new ideas.”

Join the thousands of students, teachers, business executives, and other professionals who have already discovered what an indispensable tool AudioNote can be