

# Accessible Microsoft Word Documents

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Microsoft Word provides various options for including accessibility information into the document to support individuals using assistive technologies. Such information also provides improved accessibility when converting the document into other formats (e.g., tagged PDF, EPUB, DAISY, etc.). Microsoft Word document accessibility can be improved for the following content items:

- Document Headings
- Descriptions for Images
- Tables for Data
- Multiple Columns
- Document Hyperlinks
- Mathematical Content

### **Document Headings**

Headings can provide an organizational and navigational framework for a document's content. Headings, when used appropriately, can be effective to communicating a document's informational hierarchy and the relationship between different sections of content. For an individual using assistive technology, the presence of headings offers a simple mechanism to determine the organization of the content and to "jump" from heading to heading when navigating the document. Such headings can also be used as the navigational landmarks upon conversion into other formats, such as tagged PDF, HTML or EPUB.

#### Styles in MS Word 2010

- 1. From the Home tab in the top ribbon, select the appropriate heading level.
- 2. Headings should follow a logical structure that identifies content based on its importance in the document.
- 3. Maintain a sequential organization for headings, e.g., avoid having a heading 2 before a heading 1.
- 4. You can change the formatting of a heading by using the formatting palette.

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#### Styles in MS Word for Mac 2011



- 1. From the Home tab in the top ribbon, select the appropriate heading level. You can also set headings from the Styles formatting palette.
- 2. Headings should follow a logical structure that identifies content based on its importance in the document.
- Maintain a sequential organization for headings, e.g., avoid having a heading 2 before a heading 1.
- 4. You can change the formatting of a heading by using the formatting palette.

## **Descriptions for Images**

For images in MS Word, you can add a text description (also called "alt text") that communicates the purpose and/or content of the image. This information is then communicated to individuals who cannot view the image using their assistive technology. Image descriptions should be short and communicate the main purpose of the image. If a longer description of the image is necessary to fully explain its content, consider inserting a more detailed description of the image within the document text that precedes and/or follows the image.



#### Image descriptions in MS Word 2010

Format Picture	? 🔀
Fill	Alt Text
Line Color	<u>T</u> itle:
Line Style	
Shadow	Description:
Reflection	Put the Image Description in this region!
Glow and Soft Edges	
3-D Format	
3-D Rotation	
Picture Corrections	Titles and descriptions provide alternative, text-based
Picture Color	images, and other objects. This information is useful for people
Artistic Effects	understand the object.
Crop	A title can be read to a person with a disability and is used to
Text Box	determine whether they wish to hear the description of the content.
Alt Text	

- 1. From the Insert ribbon, choose Picture and select the desired picture to add to the document.
- 2. Right-click on the image and choose Format Picture. In the left-side settings, choose Alt Text.
- 3. Enter the description of the image in the Description region. Leave the Title field empty.
- 4. The image description should focus on the purpose and/or content of the image in the document.



#### Image descriptions in MS Word for Mac 2011

	Format Picture
<ul> <li>Fill</li> <li>Line</li> <li>Shadow</li> <li>Glow &amp; Soft Edges</li> <li>Reflection</li> <li>3-D Format</li> <li>3-D Rotation</li> <li>Adjust Picture</li> <li>Adjust Picture</li> <li>Artistic Filters</li> <li>Crop</li> <li>Text Box</li> <li>Size</li> <li>Layout</li> <li>Alt Text</li> </ul>	Alt Text         Title:         Description:         Put the Image Description in this region!         You can type alt text for tables, diagrams, images, and other objects. Screen readers can then read the alt text to people who may have difficulty seeing the objects.

- 1. Choose Insert > Photo > Picture from File... and select the image to add to your document.
- 2. Right-click on the image and choose Format Picture. In the left-side settings, choose Alt Text.
- 3. Enter the description of the image in the Description region. Leave the Title field empty.
- 4. The image description should focus on the purpose and/or content of the image in the document.

### Tables for Data

Tables should be used for information, not for controlling the layout or presentation of a MS Word document. To create a data table in MS Word, choose "Table" from the menu bar and select "Insert Table". Identify the appropriate columns and rows and enter in the data for your table. A simple data table is as follows:

CityStateZip CodeSan JoseCalifornia95101San FranciscoCalifornia94126DenverColorado80210

The first row of the table consists of the column headers. These help "define" the category of information for the data in that column. In MS Word, it is possible to identify the headings such that when the data table is interpreted by assistive computer technologies and read to the student, the information in the cells below each heading will have meaning and context.



#### Table headings in MS Word 2010 and Word for Mac 2011

City	State	Zip			
San Jose	California	California OE101			
San Francisco					
Denver		Table Row Column Cell Alt Text			
	Size Row 1: Specify hei	ight: 0" 🕆 Row height is: At least 💠			
	<ul> <li>✓ Allow row</li> <li>✓ Repeat as</li> </ul>	to break across pages header row at the top of each page			

- 1. Create your data table using the Insert Table option under Table on the menu bar.
- 2. Select (highlight) the first row of the data table with your column headers.
- 3. Right click in the highlighted area and choose the Table Properties menu.
- 4. Under the Row tab, check the checkbox Repeat as header row at the top of each page.
- 5. Choose OK and return to the MS Word document.

At this time, there is only support for adding table heading information for table column headers, not row headers. This does not mean you are limited as to the types of tables you can create, rather this is a limitation in MS Word.

### **Multiple Columns**

The Column tool provides the capability to create multi-column documents using MS Word. The advantage to using the Column tool is that multi-column documents will retain the proper reading order if using assistive technologies or when converting to other formats. Creating a multi-column layout using the tab-key, spacebar, or text boxes will result in an incorrect reading order and reflow of the document.

### Columns in MS Word 2010 and Word for Mac 2011



- 1. Select the text you wish to change from a single column to a multi-column layout.
- 2. Choose "Format" on the menu bar and select "Columns...". Alternatively, choose the Column tool in the Home ribbon.
- 3. Select the number of columns or set your specific spacing requirements. Return to the document to review the new layout.

## **Document Hyperlinks**

Documents containing hyperlinks to websites or other online resources can be improved by including hyperlink text that is understood by the reader. For instance, using the full hyperlink URL may not make sense to the reader without some context. You can modify the text to display in the document while retaining the hyperlink destination.

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e		ScreenTip	m
as		Web Page Document E-mail Address	ıt
		In the Link to box, enter the address (URL) of the Web page that you want to link to.	
i n		Anchor:	r, d

- 1. Right-click on the hyperlink text in the document and choose Edit Hyperlink, or press Ctrl+K (Mac: Cmd+K).
- 2. In the field "Display" (or "Text to Display" for MS Word 2010) enter the correct text information.
- 3. You can include both the text description and full URL if you prefer. Using the full URL is helpful for when the document is printed.

## **Mathematical Content**

Microsoft Word documents that contain math equations using the MathType Equation Editor can be converted into other formats while retaining the accessibility functionality of the mathematical content. At this time, MS Word documents must be saved as DOCX and use the MathType Equation Editor to input the math equations. Alternatively, you can input equations using LaTeX, but these equations will need to be converted to MathType Equations before the document can be used with assistive technologies or submitted to SensusAccess.

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#### **Key Points**

- 1. You will need to install the <u>MathType Equation Editor</u> from Design Science to support accessible math equations in MS Word documents. MathType is available for both the Mac and Windows platform.
- 2. With MathType installed, you can enter equations using the MathType Equation Editor or by adding LaTeX. If using LaTeX, you will need to convert all equations to MathType equations.
- 3. MathType should be used for equations and not for entering text information. Avoid using MathType for formatting purposes.
- 4. At this time, documents must be saved as DOCX in order to be converted into alternate formats using SensusAccess (e.g., DAISY+Math, EPUB 3, etc.).



5. We are investigating additional input formats, including LaTeX and MathML, to support conversions into alternate document formats. Thank you for your patience.