Accessibility – Handouts – Creating Accessible Handouts (GVTC Best Practices)

GVTC has standardized its process for making accessible handouts. The process starts with Word where the document is formatted to our accessibility standard documented below. In the final step, the word document is converted to a PDF for easier access across multiple devices and screen readers.

NOTE: This document was built following the guidelines discussed below.

File Properties – Document Title

Under the properties for the file include the title of the document; this is blank by default. This field is one checked by some accessibility tools and should not be blank.

- Word 2010 (PC) Location – File and then Info; Properties are on the right.
- Word 2016 (PC) Location – File and then Info; Properties are on the right.
- Word for Mac (Office 365) Location – File and then Properties; under the Summary Tab.
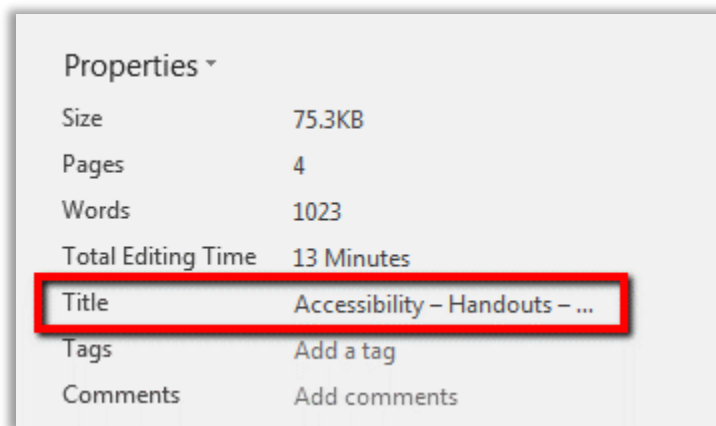
Header and Footer Entries

The header field is left blank; the document title is the first line in the document body (explained in the next section).

The footer has a revision date on the left and page information on the right in the following format:

- Revision Date Example: Revision Date: 03/07/17
- Page Number Example: Page 1 of 3
    - Word page number and number of pages' fields are used to allow for automatic entry of the correct values.

Structuring and Formatting Text

Fonts

The font for all text is sans-serif (one of a group of typefaces that do not have short lines across the top and bottom of the long parts of the letters). The default font used in our documents is Calibri. If headers are applied and the font changes to a serif font, there is a location to adjust the defaults for the document to avoid having to correct fonts line by line. This feature just updates the structure fonts (headers, etc.). The body text is updated as normal from the font drop-down (select all and update the font if needed).

AaBbCc — Sans-serif font

AaBbCc — Serif font

AaBbCc — Serif font (red serifs)

"Serif-Sans-Comparison.png" is licensed under CC-BY-SA

- Word 2010 (PC) Location – Home tab then select the Change Styles button; select Fonts. Use Composite.
- Word 2016 (PC) Location – Design tab then select the Fonts button; use Calibri.
- Word for Mac (Office 365) Location – Design tab then select the Fonts button; use Calibri.

NOTE: Any font package could be used if both fonts are sans-serif. GVTC has adopted Calibri.

Structure

- The first line in the document is the title formatted as Heading 1.
- Main section titles use Heading 2, a sub-section title uses Heading 3.
- Main body text remains Normal.

Bullets and Numbering

Use Word's bullet and numbering tools. Do not create lists by hand typing each number or symbol.

Hyperlinks

Linked text should avoid instructions using the term *click here* type instructions and instead include a descriptive identifier. Each link should be denoted that it opens in a new window; location depends on context.

Word Choice

Be mindful of wording so that choices are appropriate for various users and their interaction methods.

- Rather than click; use select.
- Rather than scroll; use locate or navigate to.
- Rather than mouse, use cursor.
- Rather than type (to enter values), use enter.

Images

Images must remain in-line when used in a document and have appropriate alt-text values. If the image is not in-line, the alt-text can confuse the screen reader and cause issues such as looping through the document or all alt-text being read at the start or end of the document.

Some references state that alt-text values can be left blank if the image is described in preceding or following text. For our purposes, alt-text values are never left blank. If left blank, the accessibility checker may flag images without alt-text as an issue for concern.

Alt-text is provided for all images based on the following criteria:

- If the image is completely described by the text preceding or following the image use one of the following lines:
  - Title – Provide a Short Descriptive Title
  - Text Option 1 – Image explained in text above/below.
  - Text Option 2 – Image is an example of text above/below.
    - NOTE: Use the word above or below as appropriate.
- If the image needs additional text to explain what is being displayed:
  - Title – Provide a Short Descriptive Title
  - Text – Explain in detail what the image is meant to convey. Start the first sentence with Image depicts, or Image of.
    - NOTE: Some references state not to use the word image in the alt-text. GVTC has chosen to do so because not all screen readers denote that an image is being read and in these cases the alt-text does not flow into the preceding text structure cleanly and can be confusing to users.
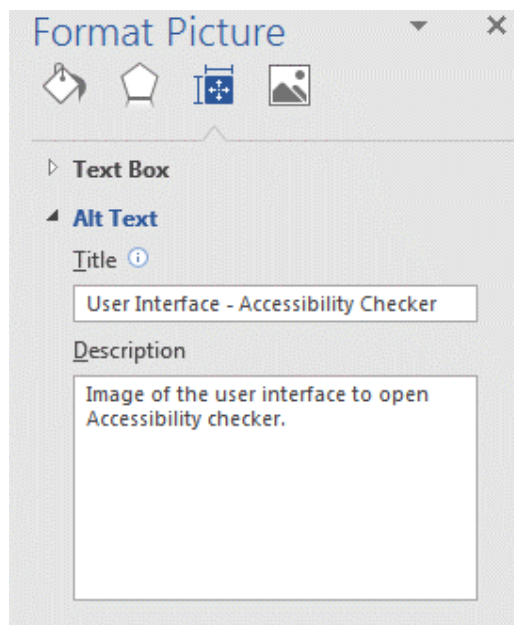
NOTE: Always make sure credit is provided to the author of the image when re-using images from the web. Some images may have copyright restrictions and may not be available for re-use.

Accessibility Checker for Microsoft Word (If Available)

Starting with Office Release 2013 (Excel and Word), 2016 (Excel, Word and PowerPoint), and Office 365 Office has included an Accessibility Checker to help find accessibility issues.

NOTE: Office 2010 does not have this feature.

From Microsoft's Support page: *The Accessibility Checker tool finds accessibility issues in your Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, and PowerPoint presentations. The tool generates a report of issues that could make your content difficult for people with disabilities to understand. Accessibility Checker also explains why you should fix these issues and how to fix them.*

Read the full article titled Use the Accessibility Checker on your Windows desktop to find accessibility issues (link opens in a new window).
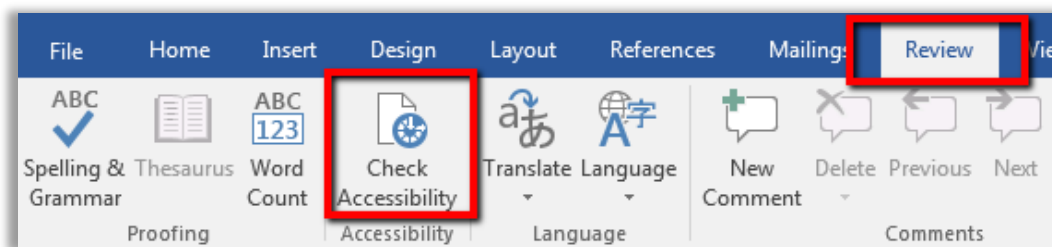
Saving as a PDF

Once the document is formatted appropriately it is saved as a PDF with accessibility tags included.

- Word 2010 (PC) Location – Select File, Save & Send; Create PDF/XPS Document.
  - Select Optimize for Standard (publishing and online printing).
  - Under Options the checkmark for Document structure tags for accessibility should be checked by default.
- Word 2016 (PC) Location – Select File, Export; Create PDF/XPS Document.
  - Select Optimize for Standard (publishing and online printing).
  - Under Options the checkmark for Document structure tags for accessibility should be checked by default.
- Word for Mac (Office 365) Location – Select File, Save As. In the File Format drop down choose PDF under Export Formats.
  - Two options appear directly below the drop down.
  - Select the first option: *Best for electronic distribution and accessibility (uses Microsoft online services)*