



Creating accessible content

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Talking about disability

In this guide, we use the term 'disabilities' as used by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) [1] ratified by over 175 countries.

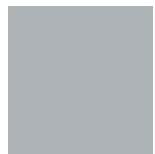
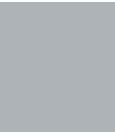
The UN CRPD Article 1 provides a definition for 'persons with disabilities':

"Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."

In practice, this could include people with a wide range of impairments or conditions such as dyslexia, cancer or diabetes to name just a few. If in doubt, use the language that the person uses to describe themselves. Focus on the person and the barrier, not the impairment.

[1] United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: [un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html)

Introduction



Approximately 15% of the world population has a disability; this represents one billion people and as the population ages, this number is set to increase. It is likely that you are already working or will be working with colleagues who have a disability.

Understanding and recognising how disability can affect a person's needs and preferences is therefore incredibly important.

The aim of this guide is to help you understand some of the barriers that people with disabilities can face when accessing content and provide you with tips on how you can ensure your is content accessible.

Remember: Never make assumptions. Always ask the individual how you can best meet their needs.



Talking about adjustments

Adjustments (in some countries referred to as 'accommodations') remove or reduce the effect of the barriers experienced by candidates and employees with disabilities.

Examples of adjustments might include providing a ramp as an alternative to stairs or an electronic version of a paper document so that an employee with a visual impairment can use screen reader software to access the information. Working hours and locations can be made flexible, and managers can agree different ways to communicate with their employees e.g. over the phone, via email, face-to-face or in writing.

These are small changes that can remove barriers that prevent someone from doing their job and can support good performance. In this guide, we refer to these types of changes as 'adjustments'.

What is 'accessibility'?

In this guide, we use the word accessibility to describe the extent to which meetings, devices, services, or environments are designed to meet the needs of people with a range of physical and mental disabilities and long-term conditions.

Assistive technology

Some people with disabilities will use specialist equipment to help them complete some of their daily tasks such as accessing or creating documents and presentations, browsing on the Internet, better access content during meetings and events etc. These pieces of equipment or software are commonly referred to as 'assistive technology'.

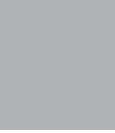
To allow this technology to work efficiently, there are a number of principles that should be applied. In this guide, we outline the principles that should be applied when looking at digital and written content.

Who is this guide for?

We are all responsible for creating content that will be read and modified by different users who may have a range of access needs. For many of us, this content will include day-to-day activities such as creating Word documents, PowerPoint presentations and writing emails. This guide sets out some good practices to ensure that these communications are as accessible as possible.

Other content creators will have more specialist roles creating web, video or audio content where an additional set of accessibility principals should be applied. This guidance also sets out some of the best practice in these areas.

Accessible digital content



General principals of accessibility

The requirements to create an accessible Word document are different to those for creating an accessible website. However, some principles such as the use of plain English (or other language), the use of accessible fonts and good colour contrast should be applied to both web content and Word documents.

Adopting good practice for all the content we create ensures that everyone can access our content, whether they have a disability or not.

Whether you create reports, write emails, are an experienced web developer or a communication professional, having a basic understanding of best practice in digital content can help you identify and remove barriers that can prevent colleagues and clients with disabilities from accessing content.

Make sure your document is clearly written and easy to understand. Don't forget that it's not just about technical accessibility. As with all communications, your document should be easy to understand, avoiding the use of jargon and long, complicated sentence structures.

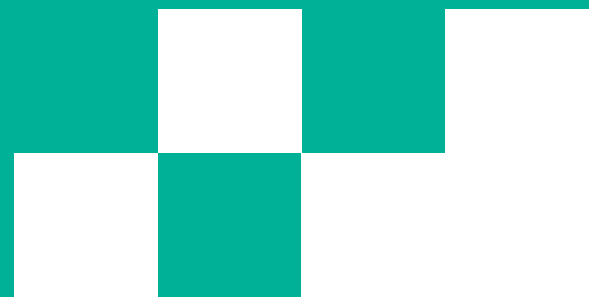
Consistency is key. The structure of your content, colour schemes and layouts should be consistent to aid both usability and understanding. A simple layout that is easy to understand and navigate will benefit all users, not just those with disabilities.

If you are creating content that will be seen by a wide audience, ask disabled users to review your information. Listen to what they say and make changes based on feedback.

Inclusive design is a field that may seem difficult to grasp at first. The additional resources sections throughout the guide provides web links to videos and other guides to explore this field further.

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11 to 42 are available in the
full booklet.**

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