

The Basics of PowerPoint Accessibility



**OFFICE of EQUITY
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CITY OF PORTLAND



Who am I?

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- Available for training, consults, and document review. Open virtual Office Hours every other Tuesday, 1pm to 3pm. Next session is June 20th. Email for office hours information or to set up consults and appointments.

Compliance

1. City of Portland

- ADA Titles I (employees) and II (public)- Requires Nondiscrimination and Effective Communication

Compliance is just the start of accessibility – ultimately it is about the User Experience! Equal parts Art and Science.

Presenter Best Practices

- If possible, provide your slides as Power Point or PDF prior to your presentation. This allows persons with limited vision to follow along using their assistive technology.
- Describe your slides as completely as possible. This allows nonvisual learners to follow along.

Accessible documents

- A document or application is considered accessible if it meets certain technical criteria and can be used by people with disabilities. This includes access by people who have mobility challenges, are blind, low vision, deaf, hard of hearing, or who have cognitive difficulties.
- For text documents, we are primarily concerned with Assistive Technology users. Assistive Technology is any hardware or software that helps a user access digital content. Examples of Assistive Technology are screen readers, screen magnifiers, alternate input devices, and voice control.

Creating accessible documents

- To ensure that documents are ultimately accessible, content authors must utilize the formatting and layout options within PowerPoint and Adobe Acrobat Pro that support structural markup. This structural markup ensures that assistive technology software can correctly discern and interpret the structure of the document.

File Name, Templates and Themes

- A descriptive file name identifying the document or its purpose helps everyone (including people with disabilities) locate, open, and switch between documents.
- Be sure to choose a theme with good color contrast and simple backgrounds.

Slide Master

- It is possible to make changes to all slides within a presentation, like changing the text size of all slide titles. You can also make changes to a specific slide layout, or even create new custom layouts. All these changes are possible in the Slide Master view. This view allows you to create accessible layouts that meet the needs of the presentation while maintaining a proper heading structure and reading order.
- To open Slide Master, select the **View** tab > **Slide Master**.

Slide Master part 2

- The first slide in this sidebar is the Master Layout. Changes made to the Master Layout will usually be applied to every slide in the presentation. Below this Master Layout are the different individual layouts. Changes made to one of these will be applied to every slide that uses this layout.
- To create a new slide layout, select Insert Layout, and then Rename to give the new layout a descriptive name. You can then insert placeholder objects, change the size and position of objects on the slide, etc.

Slide Layouts

- The most important part of PowerPoint accessibility is the use of slide "layouts." Used correctly, these will ensure information on the slides have the correct heading structure and reading order.
- Most slide layouts include a slide "title," usually at the top of the slide. They also typically contain one or more "placeholder" areas where you add content like lists, images, and tables to each slide. The title will be presented as a heading to screen reader users and will be the first thing read on each slide.
- Every slide must have a unique descriptive title.
- Try to avoid the use of text boxes (use content placeholders on template layouts instead). Text boxes may disrupt reading order and require remediation if converted to Word or PDF for large print or braille.

Slide Reading Order

- Make sure slide contents can be read by assistive technology in the order that you intend. The Selection and Reading Order Panes control the reading order for the PowerPoint file. The Selection Pane reads from bottom to top, and the Reading Order Pane reads from top to bottom. The panes are linked, so a change in one pane will change the order in the other pane.
- PowerPoint Designer may interfere with Reading Order. Be sure to confirm the order in the Selection or Reading Order Panes.

The Selection Pane

- In the Selection Pane, to the right of each item is an icon that looks like an eye. Clicking on this icon will hide the object visually in the slide, but it will still be read by a screen reader.
- Items in the Selection Pane also have a lock icon. This locks items in position which is convenient if you want to make sure nothing moves while you work on one specific object.

Alternative Text for Images

- Add alternative text descriptions to images. Images on the Slide Masters are ignored by assistive technology.
- Right-click on the image and select Edit Alt text, then enter appropriate alternative text in the field that appears in the Alt Text sidebar.
- If the image is decorative, leave the field blank and check Mark as decorative.
- Be careful about the “automatic Alt-text”. It is not very accurate currently.

Tables

- If you use tables, create a simple table structure for data only, and specify header information.
- Use the Insert Table command. Do not use Draw Table.

To identify the headers in a table:

- Click inside the table. The Table Tools options should become visible, and the Design tab should be open .
- If the top row of the table contains headers for each column (most tables do), check the make sure the Header Row checkbox is checked.
- If the first column of the table contains headers for each row, check the First Column checkbox.
- In the Table Styles section, select a style where the table headers are clearly identified visually. Make sure the style has good contrast.

Table Example

Color

- Ensure that color is not the only means of conveying information.
- Use sufficient contrast for text and background colors. Use a color contrast tool to check for contrast issues.

Links

- Add meaningful, descriptive, unique, and accurate hyperlink text.
- To change the link text right-click the link and select Edit Hyperlink. A dialog will appear. Click in the Text to Display field at the top of the dialog and enter descriptive link text.
- If you are creating a presentation that is intended to be displayed both electronically and in print, you may want to include the URL and descriptive link text.

Smart Art

- Smart Art components are not accessible. Copy and Paste as a graphic and describe the graphic in Alt-text.

Lists

- Lists organize and structure content. Assistive technology users cannot infer meaning if you just format with tabs, a dash, or a number. Using built-in list features applies the formatting that assistive technology needs to both identify and present lists to users with disabilities.
- Use bulleted and numbered lists by selecting the built-in list styles.

Language

- A document can contain sections written in different languages. Assistive technology cannot infer the correct pronunciation from just text, so text must be formatted in the correct language.
- If the presentation contains words or phrases in a language other than the predominant language, place your cursor on that text. Go to “Review Tab>Language Group>Language Button>Set Proofing Language.”

Check Accessibility

- PowerPoint includes a tool that will identify many common accessibility issues.
- To run the accessibility checker, select Review and then Check Accessibility.
- The Accessibility Checker sidebar will appear to the right. The checker presents accessibility errors (e.g., images with no alternative text), warnings (e.g., unclear link text) and tips (e.g., check slide reading order for slides with custom content). Selecting an item in the report will highlight the issue within the slide. Information about the issue, and instructions on how to repair it, will also appear at the bottom of the sidebar.

Convert PowerPoint to PDF

- PowerPoint is effective for face-to-face presentations, but it is usually not the best format for content on the web. The file can be large, and users must either have Microsoft Office or a plugin in order to view the file. PDF is often a better format to present PowerPoint presentations electronically. The file size is relatively small, distracting slide transitions are usually removed, and everyone has a PDF reader.
- All the accessibility features discussed here will be retained in a PDF file, assuming it is created correctly. If your presentation has tables or decorative images, and you know how to add accessibility information in Adobe Acrobat, your PDF file could even be made more accessible than the original PowerPoint file.



Thank you! Questions?

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