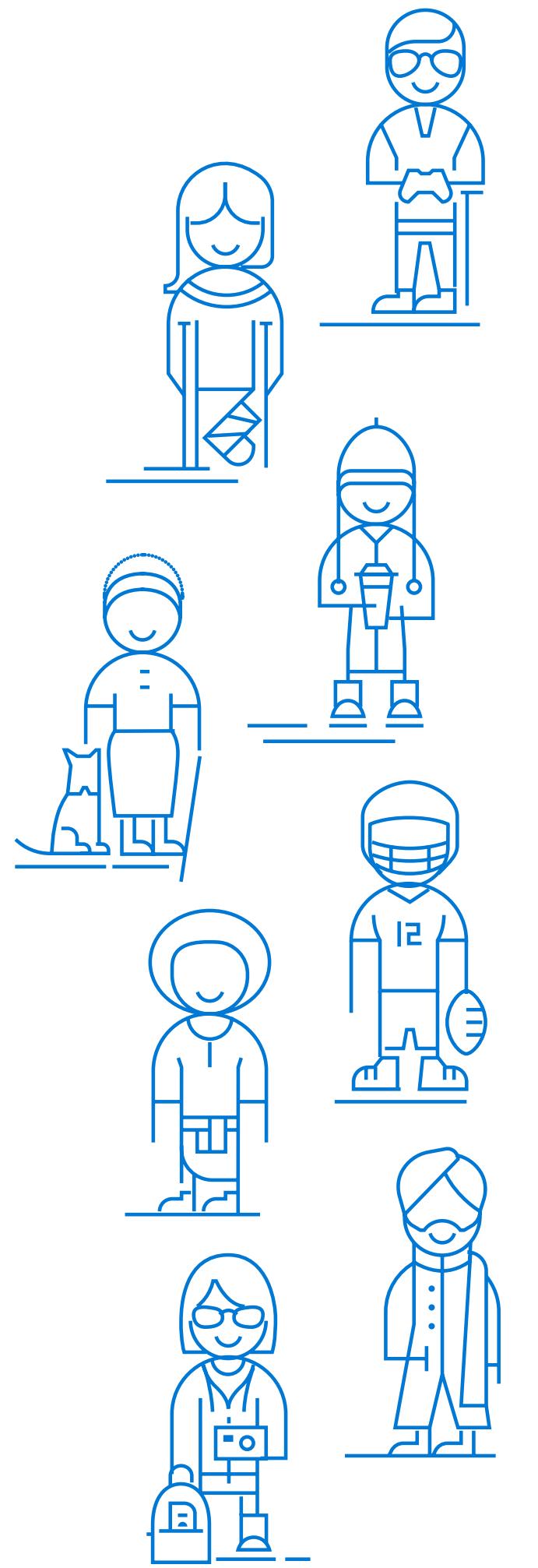


Accessible Marketing for small businesses

A how-to guide to help you reach and connect with more customers





As a marketer or business person, you've thought about all kinds of ways to increase the reach of your organization. Many businesses however, overlook the large audience of people with disabilities. Bottom line? If you aren't doing Accessible Marketing, it's time to start. Whether you're already working on Accessible Marketing, or just beginning to learn about it, this eBook will help you understand why Modern Marketing is Accessible Marketing. It also provides tips and tools to help you on the path to accessibility.

We've learned a lot about how implementing accessibility best-practices to digital marketing can help make your marketing more accessible to all people, including those living with disabilities.

Connecting with and considering people living with disabilities enables you to better solve for their challenges. A few practical steps can make your digital marketing more inclusive and accessible – immediately increasing your reach and revenue.



What does accessibility in marketing mean?

Accessibility in marketing is about making it easy for everyone to experience your marketing, receive and understand your communication, and have the opportunity to invest in or become a fan of your product, service or brand. To do this effectively, accessibility must be built into the beginning of every communication, process, product and service rather than bolting it on later. This might mean providing information in alternate formats, such as captions or audio descriptions for video and more accessible emails and websites. It also includes enabling optimized experiences when using assistive technologies — such as screen readers.

Business value of accessibility

Accessible communication increases audience reach



Reach wider audience

Attract and reach a wider pool of potential customers of all abilities by making it easy to access your marketing content



Increase business impact

The larger the audience you can serve through accessible websites and communications, the higher revenue impact is possible

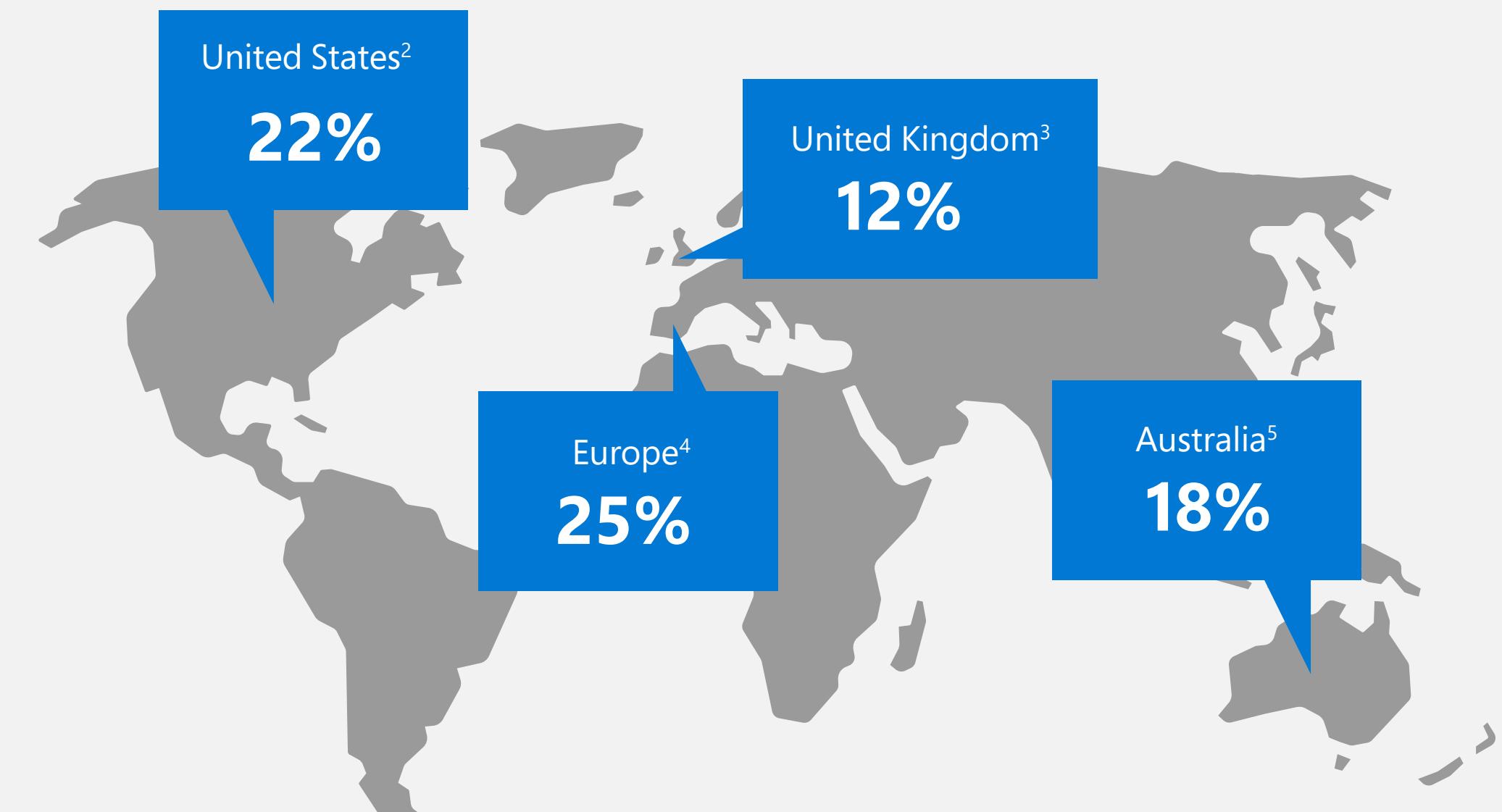


Achieve compliance

Leverage built-in assistive technologies and support services to meet requirements

15% of all people around the world live with disability.¹

That's 1 billion people, including:



Accessibility is a human imperative

Empowering everyone is the right thing to do for many reasons. To begin with, accessibility is a human right. All people should have the ability to get what they want and need with equal opportunity and safety. Accessibility is essential. The right to enjoy meaningful participation in the world both off and online involves easy access. The degree to which a person can access opportunities impacts the quality of their life. Accessibility empowers the widest range of people to unlock their abilities, and live life fully. Inaccessibility negatively impacts all aspects of life including economic, social and mental wellness. Many countries around the world require web accessibility — it's the law. See the full list here: aka.ms/seefulllisthere.

1. https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report/en/

2. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/images/releases/2015/p0730-us-disability.jpg>

3. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/321594/disability-prevalence.pdf

4. <https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1569&context=gladnetcollect>

5. <https://www.and.org.au/pages/disability-statistics.html>

10 Accessibility principles to consider in your media and marketing

The following pages cover ten principles to help you get started building accessibility into and across your media and marketing efforts. The result of our ongoing work, these principles incorporate helpful tips we gathered from participating in Microsoft's Accessibility Summit and consulting with our accessibility experts. These principles serve as solid building blocks to help you on your journey to make your marketing more accessible.

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-  [**6 Color contrast and shapes**](#)
-  [**2 URL & link text & description**](#)
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1 Content writing and structure

Being intentional with your content structure and content writing is very important to those using only a keyboard to access content. This is usually people with vision loss, who rely on a screen reader or narrator to make web pages audible. Clear writing that's easy to read and has a logical structure is also extremely important for those with cognitive or learning disabilities, along with everyone in a hurry or on a mobile screen. Remember to use clean, semantic markup for headings, paragraphs, lists, block quotes, etc. Headings are also a critical element that helps make navigating content easier.

Headings

Use heading tags: `<h1>` to `<h6>`
Make sure headings follow correct hierarchy

EXAMPLE:

```
(h1) SpaceTeddy Inc.
(h2) Navigation Menu
(h2) Sidebar
(h3) More news
(h3) What our clients say
(h3) Ratings
(h2) An inside look at the ...
(h3) Cotton Fur
(h3) Sapphire Eyes
(h4) How they are produced
```



2 URL, Link text and descriptions

Link descriptions are an easy and important element to focus on for accessible content. For example, the phrase "Click here" can be difficult to interpret for someone using a screen reader, even if it precedes more specific information. Put yourself in the shoes of a person with vision loss, and imagine all the 'Click here' calls-to-action you come across on any given day. They don't always explain what the person gets for 'clicking here'. To make a 'Click here' link more accessible you can write it like this: 'Click here to access today's weather'. It can also be shortened to 'Today's weather'. In some cases, you may want to precede a linked phrase with 'Get' or 'Get info about', such as 'Get info about today's weather'. As with all written content, keep it streamlined with as few extra words as possible. For example, 'Today's weather' rather than 'Get info about today's weather'.

Avoid uninformative link phrases

- click here
- here
- more
- read more



3 Text readability tips

Make text easy to read. This seems simple enough, but there are nuances that make a big difference. For example, centered text can be difficult for users with cognitive or learning disabilities. That said, you can center single line headlines above content. In addition, content that wraps to more than 2 lines should be aligned left. You should also steer clear of copy that is justified center or aligned right and avoid text in all capital letters.

Source: aka.ms/UXmovement

Centered Headline

Left aligned paragraph text does not combine well with centered text. Unsymmetrical line lengths of the paragraph can give the headline the appearance that it's slightly off-center.

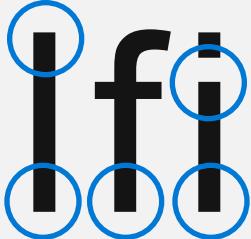
Left-aligned Headline

Left aligned paragraph text does not combine well with centered text. Unsymmetrical line lengths of the paragraph can give the headline the appearance that it's slightly off-center.

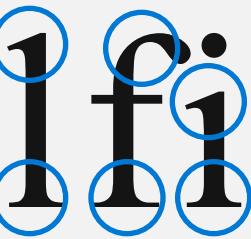


4 Accessible fonts

Sans-Serif fonts are preferred for accessibility. They are easier to read for those with vision loss, cognitive disabilities and anyone reading on a digital device.



Sans-Serif fonts don't use decorative details and are typically have consistent line widths. Sans Serif fonts include Arial, Calibri, Segoe and Franklin Gothic Book.



Serif fonts are not as easy to read due to varying thickness and decorative details as seen on the curve of the 'f' to the left. Serif fonts include Times New Roman, Georgia, and Book Antiqua.

Font tips

- Use font size of 12 points or larger
- Ensure a 4.5:1 color contrast for the background
- Avoid italics, fancy script, or decorative fonts with curly edges
- Use font color that contrasts with background

Source: aka.ms/webaimfonts



5 Images and video

Closed captions must be included for video. They help people with vision loss, those watching in noisy places, and those whose language is different than the language in the video.



Audio descriptions are needed to narrate actions on screen. An example is, "A man walks into an office building."

Additional images and video tips

- Video and audio should not auto-play
- Media requires controls to allow the user to stop/start playback
- Audio files, such as podcasts, should include downloadable transcripts
- All images must have an ALT attribute
- If the image is decorative (doesn't add to the content) the Alt attribute can be empty (i.e. Alt="")
- Images that convey meaning should have clear Alt descriptions
- Don't use the word "picture" or "image" in Alt text

Source: aka.ms/accessibletranscripts



6 Color, contrast and shapes

Be sure not to use color alone to differentiate things. For example, green, yellow, and red are often used to indicate project status. It's more effective to include words such as 'on track', 'at risk', and 'blocking' along with those colors to help colorblind users. Something else to consider is how often you try to convey meaning with color alone. That's a barrier for people who are colorblind unless they're using the Windows 10 and color filter feature to help them. Another way to further support colorblind people, is to add a shape to denote meaning. To learn more about color filters, click here: aka.ms/Win10colorfilters.

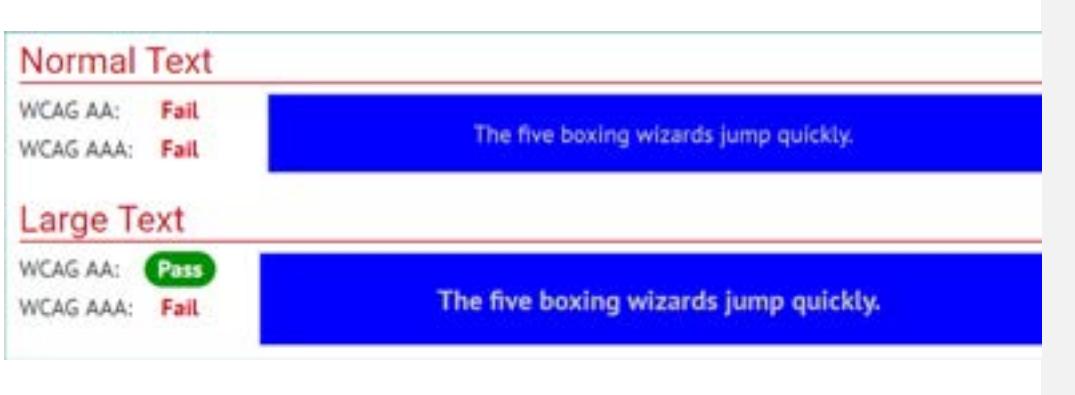
Source: aka.ms/webaimcontrastchecker

Color contrast

Use a 4.5:1 contrast ratio for normal text and 3:1 for large text. Large text is defined as 14 point or larger (typically 18.66px) and bold, or 18 point or larger (typically 24px). Make sure your text has a high enough color contrast with the background color. There are a number of good contrast checkers online. Try this contrast checker: aka.ms/webaimcontrastchecker.

Don't rely on color alone

Links should use more than just color for differentiation. Icons and alerts should be accompanied by descriptive text.




7 Keyboard only navigation

People who are unable to use a mouse or see the screen need to access all website content and functionality through their keyboard alone. To make your website accessible by keyboards it's important to allow users to: 1) use the tab key to follow along with where the keyboard focus is, 2) navigate to all interactive elements, and 3) bypass navigation if there are many links. All aspects of a site must be available for keyboard navigation. All items that get focus must have an indicator, such as a dashed outline, that shows when they are active as shown in this image below. To learn more about keyboard-only navigation read this article: aka.ms/KeyboardAccessibility.

Source: aka.ms/NielsenNormanGroupkeyboard





8 Form prompts

Another common accessibility oversight is when form field labels are eliminated and only feature placeholder text. This adversely affects keyboard users and those with cognitive impairments. Keyboard users and cognitively impaired people face more challenges with prompts built into forms. A few things to keep in mind to make your form prompts accessible:

- Don't replace form labels with placeholder text
- Light gray placeholder text has poor color contrast against most backgrounds
- Not all screen readers can read placeholder text aloud

Worst: In this example, placeholder text is used instead of a label.



9 Call-to-action buttons

In some cases, call-to-action buttons don't include all the information required for screen readers. To make sure your call-to-action buttons are accessible, be sure to include additional information in the "aria-label" attribute.

Announcing the Engage with Bing sweepstakes

January 02, 2019 | Kenneth Andrew | Product news

Participate in the Engage with Bing sweepstakes for a chance to win exciting prizes, including a trip to the Global Partner Summit, an Xbox One console, gift cards and more for yourself or your agency in this brand new sweepstakes, sponsored by Bing.

Read more

<a aria-label="Announcing the Engage with Bing sweepstakes:Read more">Read more



10 Marketing event space and registration

Ensure venue accessibility

The venue should provide a number of things to make it accessible including: specific parking allocations, braille signage on amenities, automatic doors at entrances, access to elevators if venue is multi-level, wheelchair accessible bathrooms.

Language to include during the registration process

It's important to include language in your registration information—something along the lines of: "We strive to create a welcoming and accessible environment for all attendees. If you require an accommodation for a disability please contact [Name] at [Contact information] by [Date—a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the event]."

Floor plan considerations

Make sure there's enough space in the aisles for wheelchair access and service dogs. If you have an elevated stage for presenters, include a ramp with railings. To avoid segregating those with disabilities to the sides and back of the room, leave open spaces at tables or in rows throughout the room for wheelchairs.

Auditory and vision considerations

Create auditory queues at registration. Avoid low lighting for your event, as it makes it hard to see ASL interpreters. If your event has low lighting, make sure the interpreter is well lit. Provide real-time captioning of all event speakers.

Source: CELA Accessibility Events Word Doc titled, "Accessible Events Guide"

Accessible Marketing in search

Over the following few pages you'll find simple ways to optimize each of these 4 campaign categories:



PDFs and PowerPoint presentation



Shopping campaign



Organic search



Video



PDFs and PowerPoint marketing material

There are numerous ways you can optimize PDFs and PowerPoint files in order to make them more accessible. Here are some other simple adjustments you can make:

- Search for friendly file-names for PowerPoint and PDF documents
- Write-protect documents so it's difficult for others to edit or add links to them
- Optimize keyword titles
- Add alt-tags for images and charts within the document
- Complete the description field — this is the meta description within SERPs (Search Engine Result Pages)
- Add company name in Author Field
- Complete additional metadata fields in Adobe Acrobat
- Link to the document wherever it's published and include backlinks with your target keywords
- For more information on PDF accessibility click here:
aka.ms/PDFAccessibility



Take advantage of Shopping Campaign features

Optimizing the feed content within your shopping campaigns and shopping feeds provides valuable context for search engines to index against. It also makes your feed content more accessible to people with disabilities. Here are ways you can optimize your shopping feeds:

- Perform shopping feed optimization at the product level
- Include a title along with product details
- Use relevant descriptions with the most important data at the beginning
- Include size, color, and pattern \for products when applicable

For more information about how to create and organize feed files, click here:
aka.ms/CreateFeedFiles.



Key takeaways

In this eBook we explored many aspects of Accessible Marketing. The upshot? Making your marketing media accessible is a necessary and powerful journey to help you reach and connect with your diverse audience.



The more you know about accessibility, the easier it will be to build it in from the beginning of any campaign, product or service.

Organic search

There are several things you can do to make your organic search marketing more accessible, including:

- Use Alt-Text fields to describe images and videos
- Optimize and create friendly URLs and image names
- To add additional context for Search Engines, include schema mark-up data on page and for images and videos. This also improves the knowledge pane, which can be read out loud as the featured snippet

Video

Optimizing video content makes videos more engaging for viewers and more readable by search engines. Here are some simple ways to improve search engine accessibility while making your content more accessible to visually impaired people:

- Create and provide an accurate video transcript on page when possible
- Use open captions and closed captions to improve engagement
- Ensure text file for closed-caption is attached to the video player, which is readable by search engines

3 things you can do now

- Start using the accessibility checker in all your documents
- Apply the 10 accessibility principles
- Become an accessibility champion in your organization

Resources for your journey towards accessibility

Learning opportunity: webinar series

Watch our Accessible Marketing webinar on-demand, here:

aka.ms/ModernMarketingWebinar.

Interested in more in-depth learning opportunities? Explore these webinars:

aka.ms/AccessibilityWebinarSeries.

Additional resources

Guidelines for web content accessibility:

aka.ms/AccessibilityGuidlinesWeb

Excellent resource for all things web accessibility: aka.ms/WebAIM

Community-driven tips and tricks:

<https://aka.ms/A11yProject>

Screen readers for testing your content:

- NV Access (NVDA): aka.ms/NonVisualAccess
- JAWS: aka.ms/JAWS
- Narrator: aka.ms/Win10Narratorguide



Creating accessible content: Microsoft 365 accessibility features

Watch the overview video: aka.ms/O365Accessibilitytraining

Explore over 100 available features: aka.ms/MSaccessibilityfeatures

Learn how to use these features: aka.ms/HowtouseFeatures

“If you aren’t building accessibility in, you are probably building it out.”

Support for your accessibility questions

We have a dedicated accessibility support desk for people with disabilities. You can also learn more by following us on Twitter [@MSFTEnable](https://twitter.com/MSFTEnable) or through our Accessibility portal: aka.ms/AccessibilityPortal.

Jenny Lay-Flurrie

Microsoft Chief Accessibility Officer



Microsoft Advertising. Intelligent connections.