

# What is digital accessibility?

Digital accessibility ensures that all individuals, regardless of ability, can access and interact with the content you create. It's about inclusivity, legal compliance, and making sure ECU's digital spaces are welcoming to everyone.

Digital accessibility applies to websites, documents, social media, emails, and video and audio.

More information about digital accessibility can be found on [ECU's Digital Accessibility website](#).

## Accessibility Checkers

There are several accessibility checkers available with many of them built in the systems you will be working in. It is always important to manually check after running the checker, as sometimes these checkers do not catch everything.

- **Microsoft Word** has a built-in accessibility checker in the Review tab. This will flag potential issues and suggest fixes
- **Adobe Acrobat Pro** also has a built-in accessibility checker that allows you to add tags to PDF documents.
  - Note: Make sure you make your source document (your paper written in Microsoft Word) accessible before exporting as a PDF to allow for easier updates.
- **UDOIT** is a tool available to faculty members on Canvas. If you wanted to use this as an option, your faculty mentor could upload your paper to check the document.
- **PAC checker** is a downloadable accessibility checker for PDFs but is only available for PC/Window, not Macs.
  - Download PAC checker on the [PDF Accessibility Checker website](#).

## Resources

ECU has a website dedicated to Accessibility. You can view a variety of resources and trainings there. Here are a few of the relevant pages for easier access:

- [Common Accessibility Errors in Word webpage](#)
- [Document Accessibility webpage](#)
- [Colour Contrast Analyser website](#) (Non-ECU webpage)

# Tips

## Headings

- Use built-in heading styles rather than changing font size or just making it bold
- In Microsoft Word, there is a Styles dropdown menu located in the Home tab. You can select the level of heading needed. Heading 1 will be used for the overall sections of your paper, such as Abstract, Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, References, etc. Sections within these will use Heading 2 (for example, if you have Study Design and Participant Selection as subheadings in your Method section, they would use Heading 2)
- You can change the Styles of each header to match your preferred font size and color by right clicking on the header.
- Note: your title and subtitle on the cover page will use the Title and Subtitle styles, not the Headings styles.
  - You also need to include the title in the Properties field of your document.
    - On Mac, go to File > Properties > Summary and add the title in the Title field.
    - On Windows, go to File > Info, and add the title in the Title Field under Properties.

## Descriptive alt text for images

- Describe what's important in the image. If it's just decorative, mark it as decorative in the alt-text bar. Only do this if the image serves no purpose to your paper.
- This can be completed in Microsoft Word by either right-clicking on the image and selecting "Edit Alt Text" or, after selecting the image, clicking the "Format" tab and selecting the "Alt Text" option from there.
- Example: If you're using a photo of the Cupola with students walking around it, appropriate alt text could say, "Cupola with students walking around." You shouldn't use "building and people" as it's not descriptive enough
- Charts/Graphs: These also need alt text. In the alt text, begin by stating what type of chart/graph is pictured, such as "a bar chart of..." and include the title of the chart/graph.
  - Do not try to convey large amounts of data through an image of a chart/graph. Instead, this should be conveyed through an accessible table.

## Tables

These should only be used for organizing structured data. Avoid merging cells and don't leave blank cells. All tables must have column and row headers.

## Lists

Lists must be either bulleted or numbered. If items in the list must be in a specific order (such as steps in a process), use a numbered list. If the order isn't important (such as a list of people who attended an event), you can use a bulleted list.

## Colors & Contrast

- If you're using any color in your paper, it must adhere to a 4:5:1 contrast ratio. You can check that with a contrast checker.
- You must not only use color to differentiate between items.

## Hyperlinks

Make sure the text for your links is descriptive of where the link is going. Don't use "Read more" or "click here." Instead, you can use wording such as "The admissions timeline is on the [Honors College website](#)."

## Audio & Video

- All videos should have captions – many apps have captioning capabilities, including YouTube and Edits by Meta among others.
- Any audio-only submissions must also have a text transcript submitted with it.