Social Media Accessibility

FAIREN HORNER, SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

OCTOBER 28, 2019
Virginia Tech
Accessibility Resources
Accessibility Resources at VT

The mission of Accessible Technologies is to promote the use of teaching and learning strategies, communications practices, technologies, and technology standards that enable everyone in our university community, regardless of disability status, to learn and work.

• Accessible Technologies works with ADA & Accessibility Services and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) and is a group within Technology-enhanced Learning and Online Strategies (TLOS), a unit of the Division of Information Technology.

• They manage the Assistive Technology Services in Newman Library, Inclusive Media Services, Teaching and Outreach activities, and Web Accessibility consulting and testing services.
Accessibility Laws

Virginia Tech is committed to providing equal access to information, programs, and activities delivered through its official digital resources.

**REVIEW:**

- **The Americans with Disabilities Act:** In addition to physical accessibility, the ADA mandates programmatic accessibility including electronic media and web pages.
- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:** Prohibits programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance from discriminating against individuals with disabilities.
- **Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:** Defines requirements for information technology accessibility (including, but not limited to, web accessibility) for Federal agencies and those receiving federal funds.
- **The Commonwealth of Virginia’s Information Technology Access Act:** Requires public institutions of higher education to ensure IT equipment and software be usable without requiring sight.
- **Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act:** Requires state and local governments to provide individuals with disabilities equal access to their programs, services, and activities.
- **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 and 2.1:** The primary international standard for web accessibility.
- **Virginia Tech Policy No. 7215, Rev.: 1:** University policy, which states Web Consortium (W3C) is an international organization that develops inter-operable technologies (technologies that can communicate with each other), e.g., specifications, guidelines, software, and tools, to lead the Web to its full potential. W3C is a forum of information, commerce, communication, and collective understanding.
- **MORE:** [https://www.3playmedia.com/resources/accessibility-laws](https://www.3playmedia.com/resources/accessibility-laws)
What we will cover

**WHAT, WHY, & HOW**

- What accessibility means, why it’s important, and how content is accessed.

**PLATFORM FEATURES**

- What’s available, what’s lacking, and best practices for alt text, image descriptions, captioning, and graphic design.

**HACKS**

- How to make your content more accessible, despite social media platform obstacles.

**TAKEAWAYS**

- How to make the future more accessible.
What is Accessibility?
DISABILITY:
The term "disability" means, with respect to an individual (A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; (B) a record of such an impairment; or (C) being regarded as having such an impairment.

ACCESSIBILITY:
Refers to the university objective that everyone within the university community, regardless of physical or technological readiness, will have the opportunity for appropriate access to information technology.

ACCESSIBLE:
A site, facility, work environment, service, or program that is easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in, and/or use safely and with dignity by a person with a disability.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY:
Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.
The Problem

Web Content

• Guidance and structure through laws and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 + 2.1.
• Can edit code to meet accessibility needs.

Social Media

THERE ARE NO RULES 😞

• (No officially adopted guidelines).
• Can’t edit code to meet accessibility needs.
Some of the most popular social media features are the least accessible.

- Social Video
- GIFs
- Memes
How does a person with a disability access social media?
Assistive Technology & How it Works

Any device that helps a person living with a disability complete an everyday task.

So in this case, how someone with a hearing or visual impairment accesses content.

Take a second to think about your social media timelines.

If you couldn’t see the images, would anything make any sense?

Probably not. That’s where screen readers come in.
Assistive Technology: Options

Screen readers

- **VoiceOver:**
  Apple (comes installed)
  *Ask Siri*

- **TalkBack:**
  Android (comes installed)
  *Ask Google*

- **JAWS:**
  Windows Desktop

- **ChromeVox:**
  Google Chrome browser extension

---

**Apple**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VoiceOver</td>
<td>Off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>Off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnifier</td>
<td>Off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display Accommodations</td>
<td>On</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger Text</td>
<td>Off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Button Shapes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce Transparency</td>
<td>Off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Contrast</td>
<td>Off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce Motion</td>
<td>Off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On/Off Labels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Android**

- **Accessibility**
- **Categories**
- **Vision**
- **Hearing**
- **Dexterity and interaction**
- **More settings**
  - **Text-to-speech**
  - **Direction lock**
    Unlock the screen by swiping in a series of directions.
  - **Direct access**
    Add shortcuts to specific settings and functions.
  - **Accessibility shortcut**
    Off
Image Descriptions/Alt Text
Image Descriptions & Alt Text

*Image descriptions = social media version of alt text*

Alternative text, or alt text, provides a textual alternative to non-text content.

*Ask yourself:* Does this provide access to programs, activities or services at your school?

*Reasoning:* Some social media platforms don’t have a place to enter alt-text, so we have to implement workarounds (within the context or surroundings of the image itself.)

*Purpose:* To provide context and equal access to your content.
Best Practices: Image Descriptions & Screen Readers

**What to do:**
- Use Camel Case (#LetsGoHokies, #VirginiaTech).

**Why?**
- If not, screen readers will run the words together.

**Note:**
- Instagram will force everything back to all lowercase.

---

**What to do:**
- Avoid using acronyms or spell out whenever possible.

**Why?**
- If under four characters, the screen reader doesn’t read it as separate letters, it’s read as a typical English word.

**Note:**
- Use dashes or spaces when writing image descriptions to effectively communicate or use a different way to convey the information.

---

**Note:**
- AP style is not preferred with assistive technology. Periods add long pauses (think am, instead of a.m. at times).
- Emojis are taken literally, so include the word too.
Best Practices: Image Descriptions & Screen Readers

What to do:
• Since most platforms aren’t accessible, include a link to an accessible website with more information and use short, concise links.

Why?
• These are less likely to frustrate screen reader users than long, imprecise links.

What to do:
• Use plain language (avoid verbose, convoluted language and jargon) This writing is designed to ensure the reader understands as quickly, easily, and completely as possible.

Note:
• Plain language helps everyone.
What should you include in an image description?

- Anything you would need to gather from the image to complete a task/paint the picture.

You should:

- Describe the image using general terms. Be concise, but you can be descriptive in certain situations to paint a clear picture (think frequent campus scenic shots that need to be differentiated).

- **DO describe:** Placement of objects, image style, colors, names of people, clothes (if they are an important detail), animals, text placement, emotions, surroundings.

- **DON’T describe:** Obvious details such as describing facial features, details that are not the focus, overly poetic or detailed descriptions, emojis, multiple punctuation marks.
What should you include in an image description?

- Information about activities, programs and services.
- Event information:
  - What it is
  - Where it is (address)
  - When it is (date/time)
  - Other essential info (cost, registration or contact info)

Consider:

Using a more dynamic photo and have the event details in the caption and alt text, which is more appealing to everyone in the audience and a best practice anyway.
Instagram: Event Promotion

DON’T

YOU CALL THE SHOTS.
Don’t get the flu this winter. Get your flu vaccine!

WALK-IN FLU SHOT CLINIC
OCTOBER 3 | MCCOMAS GYM | 10AM-7PM

#31 open shots. Visa, Mastercard, Discover and American Express accepted.
Please bring your AETNA or ANTHEM ID card

Free Cookies
Provided By

schifferthealth Our flu shot clinic is TODAY!
Just walk-in, no appointment needed!
#FightFlu
@virginia_tech @vtdsa @CCCatVT
@VirginiaTechSSD @HokieWellness
@VTRecSports @VTCampusLife @vthr

DO

VT Student Affairs
@StudentsAtVT

Don’t be victim to the hokie plague this season!
Come get your shot at McComas Hall this
Wednesday, October 2nd, from 10am-7pm! 🍄👍

healthcenter.vt.edu/common_health...

COUGHS & SNEEZES
SPREAD DISEASES
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS.
COVER YOUR COUGH.
v.t.edu/flu

Ask yourself:
Can someone with a
disability access the
event without an image
description?

Note:
Most events are better
displayed on stories or in the
captions via a dynamic photo.

Alt text example:
[Image Description: An event flyer. Schiffert Health Center, Walk-In Flu Clinic. October 3, 10 a-m to 7 p-m, McComas Gym. Bring 30 dollars cash or card and A-E-T-N-A or ANTHEM I-D card]
Inclusive Language

• Don’t make assumptions about someone’s gender, race or identity. Use general and gender neutral terms (student(s), club, team).

• Ask for pronouns if possible.
Person First Language

In life and in your image descriptions

Put the person before the disability.
Do not make it the defining characteristic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People First Language</th>
<th>Language to Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person with a disability</td>
<td>The disabled, handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person without a disability</td>
<td>Normal person, healthy person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with an intellectual, cognitive, developmental disability</td>
<td>Retarded, slow, simple, moronic, defective or retarded, afflicted, special person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with an emotional or behavioral disability, person with a mental health or a psychiatric disability</td>
<td>Insane, crazy, psycho, maniac, nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who is hard of hearing</td>
<td>Hearing impaired, suffers a hearing loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who is deaf</td>
<td>Deaf and dumb, mute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who is blind/visually impaired</td>
<td>The blind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who has a communication disorder, is unable to speak, or uses a device to speak</td>
<td>Mute, dumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who uses a wheelchair</td>
<td>Confined or restricted to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with a physical disability</td>
<td>Crippled, lame, deformed, invalid, spastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with epilepsy or seizure disorder</td>
<td>Epileptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with multiple sclerosis</td>
<td>Afflicted by MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with cerebral palsy</td>
<td>CP victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible parking or bathrooms</td>
<td>Handicapped parking or bathroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person of short stature</td>
<td>Midget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with Down syndrome</td>
<td>Mongoloid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who is successful, productive</td>
<td>Has overcome his/her disability, is courageous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Courtesy of: The CDC
Accessibility Features: By Platform
**Platform Breakdown**

**Image Description/Alt Text Features**

- **Twitter**: was one of the first few platforms to offer anything without a ‘hack.’
- **Facebook**: has ‘auto alt-text’ but isn’t perfect
- **Instagram**: hidden alt text now supported *(NEW!)*
- **Stories (Snap, IG, FB)**: not compatible with assistive technology
- **Pinterest**: no official features, must add in caption
- **LinkedIn**: hidden alt text now supported *(NEW!)*
### Third party management tools

**Do they support accessibility?**

- **Buffer**: yes
- **Hootsuite**: yes
- **TweetDeck**: yes
- **Falcon**: no
- **All others**: no (but some have roadmaps or updates in the works)
LinkedIn

Accessibility settings

• Now supports hidden alt text
• 120 character maximum
• Mobile limitations:
  Can’t add or edit via mobile
Twitter

Accessibility settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@virginia_tech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy and safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content preferences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data usage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Accessibility**

- Go to “Settings and Privacy.”
- Works on desktop or mobile.
- Click on “Accessibility.”
- Check the box that says “compose image descriptions.”
- **NEW:** Reduce motion setting
Twitter

The overview

• Considered one of the most accessible social media platform.
• Has official hidden image description field (not visible to sighted users).
• 420 characters per photo.
• Can turn on in the settings.
• Check your work via VoiceOver or through ‘inspect’ on desktop.

“A nighttime view of Lane Stadium from the South Endzone, showing the V-T football team entering the field from the back left, the stands packed and striped in maroon and orange by Hokie fans, cell phones lit in the air, and red and orange fireworks illuminating the sky from both the left and right of the stadium.”
CONTEXT IS KEY: Jokes can be risky without alt text.

Limitations:

• Can’t retroactively edit alt text.
• Can’t add alt text on behalf of another user’s post you want to share.
Includes:
• General description of photo.
• NEW: Now has built-in accessibility features. Can add alt text to albums!!
• Can only add links in bio.
• Alt text character max: 100

What to do:
• Write caption and then use the alt text to fill in any blanks that someone may need to fully experience it.
• Note that IG hashtags will try to force everything back to all lowercase, but correct this.

Before: (nested style)

Liked by vtpamplin and 5,559 others

virginia.tech When you roll up to the city post-grad with your 🍺 job and #VirginiaTech degree. 🍻🔥 #VTinDC...

[Image description: The HokieBird is in D-C, squatting toward the ground, with arms crossed, with the United States Capitol building in the background]
Instagram Stories

- Currently no built-in accessibility features for transcribing videos.
- You should still: use large text and readable colors, plan your stories ahead of time, so they make sense, and use good lighting for photos and videos.
Stories: Apps to try

- **Clips (FREE):** an app from Apple that allows users to record themselves and then edit captions manually. Download it here: [apps.apple.com/gb/app/clips/id1212699939](apps.apple.com/gb/app/clips/id1212699939)
Quick Alt Text Check

How to bulk-check alt text quickly:
Many of their accessibility features are not fully rolled out/available to all pages.

Facebook is dedicated to improving accessibility on their channel though.

Check this page for updates.
Image Descriptions: Facebook

- Uses object recognition/AI technology to provide automated alt text.
- Can/need to edit the description.
- Can’t add alt text at all via mobile.
- Only social platform other than YouTube that creates editable auto-captions.
- Might need to add the description in caption like with Instagram.
- Can add a clickable link to an accessible website in the caption, unlike on Instagram.
- Less than 100 characters.
Social Media Accessibility: Video Captions
For video with anything spoken, it should always be captioned.

It’s a mobile-first, sound-off world, but sadly, this makes most videos incomprehensible.
Closed captioning (CC), subtitling, and open captioning are all processes of displaying text on a television, video screen, or other visual display to provide additional or interpretive information.
LinkedIn

Accessibility settings

• **NEW:** Can upload SRT file now
• Can’t edit or auto-populate captions
• Can’t upload from mobile

Video Settings

Video Title

Upload a thumbnail (JPG/GIF/PNG only)
The image should be 16:9 aspect ratio for horizontal video, and 1:1 for vertical video.

Select file

Video caption file (SRT only)

Select file

Virginia Tech
233,865 followers
3d

Last week, the nation’s first residential drone delivery service launched right here in SWVA...Christiansburg, VA to be exact. 😊 Thanks to Google’s Wing and the #VirginiaTech Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership, residents can now have goods & packages delivered on demand from Walgreens, FedEx, & select retailers...all in less than ten minutes. 🛒

We didn’t imagine that we will be one of the first of three to do this.
Best Practices: Captioning

Not only do captions assist people with hearing impairments, they also help language learners, and enhance viewing in low or no-sound environments.

**Always:** Edit the auto-captions.

**Keep in mind:**

- Capitalization
- Punctuation
- Formatting
  (no run-ons and no more than two lines)
- Color contrast when writing and editing captions
- Timing

**Try:**

- Watching YouTube videos on this topic from YouTubers who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Learning about this topic from people who live with these disabilities is extremely helpful.
Open Captioning

We’re doing the best we can with what we have.

• Also called “burned-in” captions
• Unselectable - can’t be turned on/off
• Be aware of color contrast/placement of text & logos
• Limitations: benefits people who are deaf but not those who are blind

and navigate rough, steep terrain to support or replace humans
Open Captioning

EVENT
COME TRY OUT THE VT E-SCOOTERS, WIN HELMETS, AND MORE!

E-SCOOTER LAUNCH & SAFETY EVENT
TODAY
11 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.
SQUIRES PLAZA

SWIPE UP
Closed Captioning

- Have a shaded box behind them to create contrast with whatever is on the screen
- Are created with an SRT file (SubRip Text)
- Seen on TV
- Has to be turned on/off
- Be aware of color contrast/placement of text and logos
- Can be added to videos on YouTube and Facebook

- Benefit: Google indexes for ranking and search engine optimization
Closed Captioning

Don’t think you need to edit the auto-generated captions?

THINK AGAIN.
Captioning

When to correct grammar and dialogue

Use your judgement.

If the language would impede the interpretation, then it’s ok to edit it.

If possible, consult the speaker.
sniff his nose lands on a frozen pond a reindeer looks up and pants like
Twitter
The overview: Limitations

• No auto-generated captions. Can’t upload SRT file with video on initial upload, but can add in back-end through the Twitter Media Studio.

• Can’t retroactively add/edit alt text.

• Mobile limitations: Can’t access Twitter media studio on the mobile app to add an SRT file.

• Twitter Media Studio is still invitation only. Visit studio.twitter.com to see if you have access.
Captioning: YouTube & Facebook

- Upload SRT (.srt) file.
- Auto-sync a transcript.
- Create using editor tool. (*Auto-generated captions are close but ALWAYS need to be edited.*)

**Pro Tip:**
- You can export an SRT file from YouTube once you have the captions edited and synced the way they need to be and then upload that with the video on Facebook.
Live Captioning

- Provide as many materials up-front as possible (scripts, presenter titles, etc.)
- We use ACS: Costs $105/hour.
- Small mistakes are still made. Edit SRT file afterward to correct mistakes.
- Limitations: Facebook live captioning -- must upload afterward. This is a problem considering that no one should have to miss out on an event or wait to enjoy it.

Fun Fact: Google’s automatic captioning technology is now available on the Pixel 4 phone. Coming to more Android devices soon

The technology will capture and automatically caption videos and spoken audio on your device, except for phone and video calls.

All in real-time on your device – not in the cloud, so it works even if your device lacks a signal or access to Wi-Fi.
Social Media Accessibility: Graphic Design
Graphic Design

“To be truly accessible, content must allow individual preferences in color, size and typeface to override the author’s suggested design”

Consider Readability and Perceivability.

Doublecheck:

- Color
- Contrast
  (Use a contrast analyzer to ensure enough differentiation between text and background colors, so others can easily distinguish foreground from background)

webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker
Consider color blindness and color vision deficiency

**AVOID BAD COLOR COMBOS**

Green & Red, Green & Brown, Blue & Purple, Green & Blue, Light, Green & Yellow, Blue & Grey, Green & Grey, Green & Black

**DON’T**

**DO**

Use brand color palettes to make beautiful Virginia Tech pieces
Brand Resources

Visit the VT Brand Center

vt.edu/brand
Consider readability

**AVOID TEXT ON IMAGES:**
Hard to read text over complicated backgrounds and in general

---

**DON’T**

**DO**

This is harder to read.

This is better.
Graphic Design: Best Practices

DO:

- Use both colors and symbols
- Keep it minimal; simple is best
- Use patterns and textures to show contrast
- Use a range of clearly contrasting colors and hues
- High contrast - aim for bright colors/contrast
- Instead of using multiple colors, try multiple shades of the same color - monochrome
- Thicker lines

Check creative with a free online Color Blindness Simulator
Graphic Design

“To be truly accessible, content must allow individual preferences in color, size and typeface to override the author’s suggested design”

Consider Readability and Perceivability.

Doublecheck:

• Typographic legibility (font, shape, weight, style, and scale)
• Typography readability (dimension and spaces: leading, kerning, and tracking)
• Text alignment: (Left-aligned is best)
Graphic Design

Designing for users who are deaf or hard of hearing

Do... | Don’t...
--- | ---
write in plain language | use complicated words or figures of speech
use subtitles or provide transcripts for videos | put content in audio or video only
use a linear, logical layout | make complex layouts and menus
break up content with sub-headings, images and videos | make users read long blocks of content
let users ask for their preferred communication support when booking appointments | make telephone the only means of contact for users

Designing for users with low vision

Do... | Don’t...
--- | ---
use good colour contrasts and a readable font size | use low colour contrasts and small font size
publish all information on web pages | bury information in downloads
use a combination of colour, shapes and text | only use colour to convey meaning
follow a linear, logical layout | spread content all over a page
put buttons and notifications in context | separate actions from their context

Credit: Michelle Tylicki
Graphic Design

Designing for users with dyslexia

**Do...**
- use images and diagrams to support text
- align text to the left and keep a consistent layout
- consider producing materials in other formats (for example audio or video)
- keep content short, clear and simple
- let users change the contrast between background and text

**Don’t...**
- use large blocks of heavy text
- underline words, use italics or write in capitals
- force users to remember things from previous pages - give reminders and prompts
- rely on accurate spelling - use autocorrect or provide suggestions
- put too much information in one place

Designing for users with anxiety

**Do...**
- give users enough time to complete an action
- explain what will happen after completing a service
- make important information clear
- give users the support they need to complete a service
- let users check their answers before they submit them

**Don’t...**
- rush users or set impractical time limits
- leave users confused about next steps or timeframes
- leave users uncertain about the consequences of their actions
- make support or help hard to access
- leave users questioning what answers they gave

Designing for users on the autistic spectrum

**Do...**
- use simple colours
- write in plain language
- use simple sentences and bullets
- make buttons descriptive
- build simple and consistent layouts

**Don’t...**
- use bright contrasting colours
- use figures of speech and idioms
- create a wall of text
- make buttons vague and unpredictable
- build complex and cluttered layouts

Credit: Michelle Tylicki
Case studies

2019

Legal Battle Over Captioning Continues

A legal dispute over video captions continues after court rejects requests by MIT and Harvard University to dismiss lawsuits accusing them of discriminating against deaf people.

2017

Berkeley Will Delete Online Content

Starting March 15, the university will begin removing more than 20,000 video and audio lectures from public view as a result of a Justice Department accessibility order.

The department ordered the university to make the content accessible to people with disabilities. Berkeley, however, publicly floated an alternative: removing everything from public view.
Takeaways

1. When you’re creating content, your copy needs context and your videos need captions. This benefits everyone.

2. You must provide equal access to your programs, activities and services.

3. Keep in mind, what’s accessible for one person, may not be for someone else, but it’s important that we all move toward total inclusion.

4. Accessible content makes for better content in general. You will find that you’re paying more attention to detail and posting intentionally.
Questions
FAIREN HORNER, SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
FAIRENC1@VT.EDU | (540) 315-2387