

Social Media Accessibility Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to help University communicators create social media campaigns and content which is accessible to the widest possible audience – regardless of whether people have a visual, hearing, speech, motor, cognitive or other combination of impairments.

Writing accessible social posts

Copy

- Write in plain language to help people understand and use the information provided in your social media posts. Key best practices for writing in plain language include:
 - Choosing words that are common and easy to understand.
 - Aiming to communicate one point or idea per sentence.
 - Writing in the active voice instead of the passive voice.
 - Avoiding jargon, acronyms, and technical language or industry terms.
- Tip: For more guidance on writing in plain language visit the Plain English Campaign website:
 - <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/how-to-write-in-plain-english.html>

Paragraph and formatting

- Use clear, short sentences (no longer than 25 words).
- Use line breaks to create space in your social posts and avoid large chunks of text.
- Avoid using bold, italics or capitalised text.
- Avoid using non-standard symbols as substitutes for words and messages (for example mathematical symbols like the equals sign used as in ‘accessibility = everyone’s responsibility’).
- Tip: Consider using a readability checker tool like Readability Test Tool or Hemingway to test the readability of your work:
 - Visit Readability Test Tool: <https://www.webfx.com/tools/read-able/>
 - Visit Hemingway Editor: <https://hemingwayapp.com/>

Hashtags

- Use initial capitalisation, also known as ‘CamelCase’, when including hashtags that are made up of multiple words (for example #PurpleWave).
- Avoid using more hashtags than necessary.
- Position hashtags and mentions at the end of your post where possible.

Links

- Make it clear where hyperlinks lead to by using descriptive call-to-actions (for example ‘Visit the Careers website’).
- Limit to one link per post.
- Use full links unless shortening is crucial.
- Indicate when links lead directly to videos or audio by including [VID] or [AUD] before the link.

Emojis

- Do not repeat the same emoji more than once or use long strings of consecutive emojis.
- Limit emojis to 2 or 3 per post.
- Position emojis at the end of sentences where possible.
- Avoid using emojis as substitutes for words.

Creating and using accessible images, GIFS and graphics

Alternative text (or 'alt-text')

- Where social media platforms allow for alternative text descriptions, you should provide them (on some platforms this option will need to be activated in the settings). Key best practices for writing alt-text include:
 - Conveying the content and functionality of the image while keeping the description short and specific.
 - Transcribing any text featured in images.
 - Leaving out 'image of' or 'photograph of'.
 - Mentioning colour if it's relevant.
 - Adding a description in your caption if there is no option for alt-text.
- Tip: Consider using a contrast checker tool like WebAim Contrast Checker or Colour Contrast Checker to check the contrast between your background, text and other components:
 - Visit WebAim Contrast Checker: <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>
 - Visit Colour Contrast Checker: <https://colourcontrast.cc/>

Graphics

- When creating graphics/video featuring text, use an adequate font size to ensure that text is legible and avoid using bold, italicised or complex fonts.
- Align text to the left.
- Ensure there's enough contrast between your background, text and other components. The ideal contrast between a text colour and its background should be at least 4.5 to 1. For larger text that ratio decreases, but it increases for smaller text.
- Avoid using colour to convey a key message in isolation (for example to describe an action).
- GIFs have limited accessibility support on most social media platforms so ensure that the post can be understood through its text content alone.
- Tip: Visit the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 for more information about how you can make it easier for users to see and hear content:
 - <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#distinguishable>

Creating and using accessible video and audio content

- Visit the Staffnet Communications and Marketing microsite for guidance on how to provide subtitles and alternative media for audio/video:
 - <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/communications-and-marketing/digital/web-accessibility/subtitles/>

Links to platform accessibility documentation and help

Since, in many cases, there are limitations to the accessibility of a platform, you should check its associated documentation to determine which of its features support accessibility.

Facebook

- Facebook Accessibility Help page: <https://www.facebook.com/help/273947702950567>
- Facebook Accessibility Page: <https://www.facebook.com/accessibility/>
- Facebook Accessibility Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/fbaccess?lang=en>

Twitter

- Twitter Help Centre - How to make images accessible for people: <https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/picture-descriptions>
- Twitter Accessibility Blog: https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/company/2020/making-twitter-more-accessible.html
- Twitter Accessibility Twitter account: https://twitter.com/TwitterA11y?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

Instagram

- Instagram Help Centre - How do I edit the alternative text for a photo on Instagram? : <https://help.instagram.com/503708446705527>

LinkedIn

- LinkedIn Accessibility information page: <https://www.linkedin.com/accessibility>