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EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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# Creating Accessible Content

Updated: January 2024

# Why this matters

- Being inclusive is the **right thing to do**.
- Optimizing for accessibility will improve the experience of **all users**.
- Accessible content drives **better results**.
- It is the **law**.



# Is it more work?

## Yes, but...

- Starting with accessibility in mind lightens the load.
- Changing old habits is the hardest part.
- It's important.



# It's about context

“Disability is... a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which they live.”

–World Health Organization



# Different Perspectives

## Limited or no...

- Hearing
- Vision
- Mouse
- Bandwidth (technical and mental)



# Conduct an Accessibility Audit

## Test your content...

- ✓ On a screen reader
- ✓ With the sound off
- ✓ With captions on
- ✓ Sans pictures or images
- ✓ By navigating with your keyboard only
- ✓ When squinting
- ✓ When viewing at a distance



# Resource: Color Contrast Checker

[Coolers Color Contrast Checker](#)

Text color

#FFFFFF

Background color

#FFC72C

Contrast

1.56

Very poor



Small text



Large text



Poor contrast for all text sizes. [Click to fix](#)


Quote n. 14


Work like you don't need money, love like you've never been hurt, and dance like no one's watching.

Unknown Author

# Resource: Color Contrast Checker (Continued)

[Colors Color Contrast Checker](#)

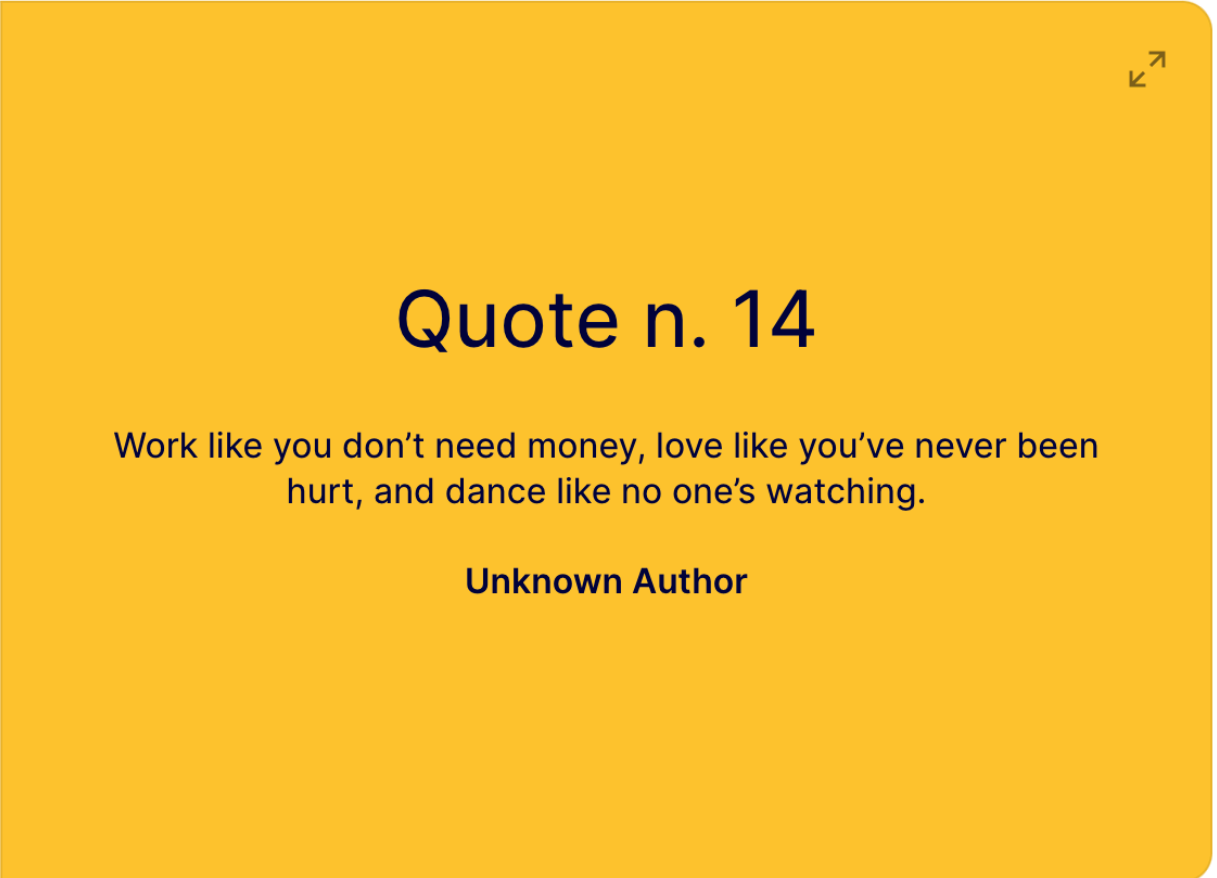
Text color: #00053E 

Background color: #FFC72C 

Contrast: **12.33** Super ★★★★★

Small text ★★★	Large text ★★★
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Great contrast for all text sizes.



Quote n. 14

Work like you don't need money, love like you've never been hurt, and dance like no one's watching.

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# Documents

PDFs, web pages, social, audio and video



# Which is easier to read visually?

## Content Accessibility Checklist

### Social Media Posts

#### Emojis

- Have I limited emojis to two or less?
- Do my emojis appear at the beginning or end of my text (and not in the middle)?
- If a screen reader were to skip my emojis, would my post still make sense?

#### Hashtags

- Are the words in my hashtags delineated through capitalization? (Ex. #ThisWorks)
- Have I been thoughtful in my use of hashtags? (#LessIsMore)

#### Text

- Am I using capitalization intentionally? Remember: screen readers read capital letters individually instead of as a word.
- Have I avoided using non-native fonts?
- Have I avoided instructions based solely on location on the page? For example, "check out the link below" may not make sense for all viewports or readers.

#### Media

- Have I followed the accessibility best practices for any attached images, videos, or audio files?

### Images

#### Alt Text

Resource: [aHrefs Alt Text Generator](#)

- Have I included descriptive, proofread alt text for all images and figures?
- Does my alt text avoid acronyms?

## Content Accessibility Checklist

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Does my alt text avoid acronyms?

Have I replaced generic descriptors with proper nouns, as applicable? For example, a more specific description for "a person in a business suit speaks with employees seated around a conference table" may be "CEO Margot Alvarez speaks with Acme Corporation employees seated around a conference table."

Does my alt text provide a robust experience for non-sighted users?

Does my alt text convey any "flat text" included in the image?

Are my alt text descriptions gender-neutral?

Does the alt text for my charts and figures convey the same meaning and context as the image?

##### Design

Resource: [Colors Color Contrast Checker](#)

If there are charts, graphs, or text in my image, do they meet contrast standards for readability?

If there is text in my image, is it large enough to be read easily?

##### Video

##### Captions

Resource: [Notta SRT/Caption File Generator](#) (free for limited use)



# Which is easier to read with a screen reader?

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# Tools

## Accessibility Checkers

- [PDF Accessibility Checker \(PAC\)](#)
- Acrobat Pro Accessibility Tools
- [Colors Color Contrast Checker](#)

## Screen Readers

- JAWS (Windows OS)
- NVDA (Windows OS, free)
- Voice Over (Mac OS, free)
- Vox (Chromebook OS, free)




# PDF Accessibility

Document

Sect

Figure



EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

Alt ETSU Logo

P

TH	TR	TH	TR
P	CAMPUS CLOSING		
P	DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER		
P	Responsible Official: Chief Operating Officer	TH	P Responsible Official: Administration

P

## H1 Policy Purpose

P

P This policy specifies the institutional response plan to local and regional inclement weather.

P

## H1 Policy Statement

P

P East Tennessee State University (ETSU) will communicate with the campus community regarding the suspension of activities, or delayed opening.

P

P I. Closure, Suspension, or Delayed Opening.

P



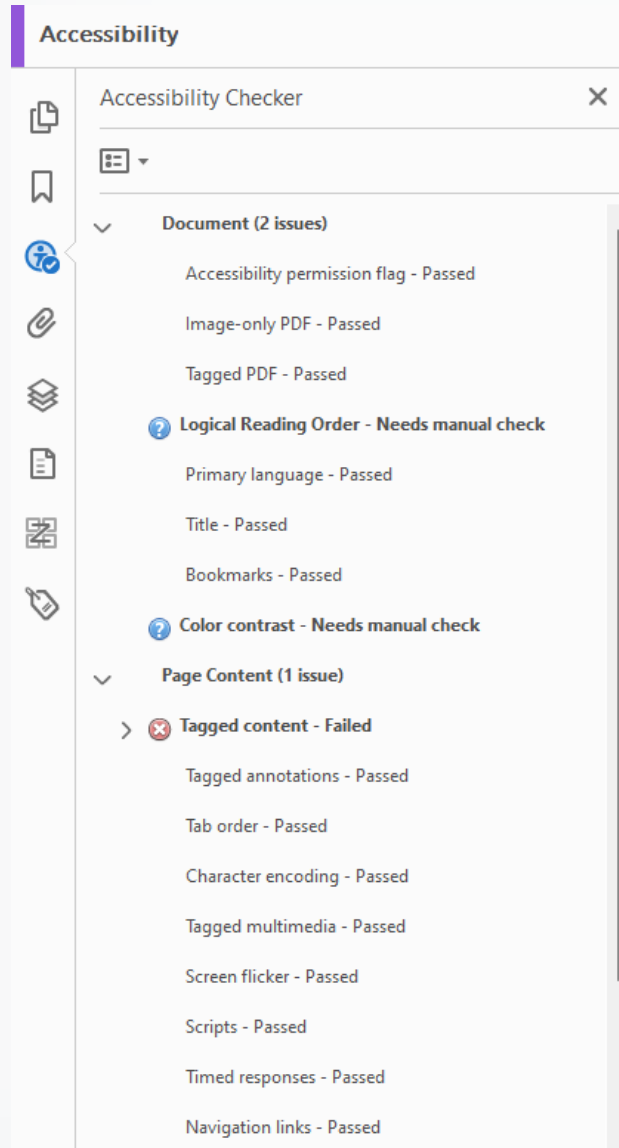
# PDF Accessibility Checklist

- Check if your PDF has tags
- Review reading order and tags
- Ensure image accessibility
- Set file properties





# Acrobat Accessibility Checker



1. From the left panel, select **Accessibility check**.
2. The right-hand pane changes to display each task included in the Make Accessible action, as well as the instructions to execute the action.
3. Once the check is complete, it displays a panel on the right that lists the accessibility issues. Select each issue type drop-down to view the details and make fixes, as suggested.



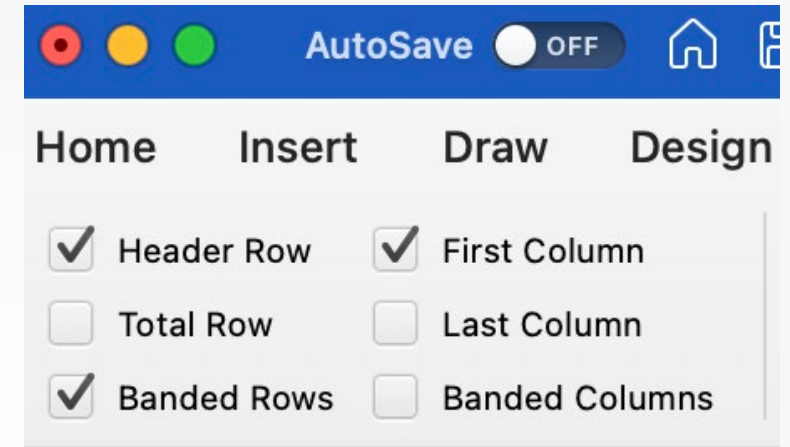
# PDF Tags

- `<H1>`, `<H2>`, `<H3>`, `<H4>`, `<H5>` Heading tags add structure to your document. There is only 1 heading 1 tag per document. Heading tags should be used in outline form – in ascending order, never skipping levels. Heading tags are used in readers to help scan a document.
- `<p>` - Paragraph tag – this tag holds text in paragraph(s) form
- `<figure>` - Holds the image and the Alternative Text for the image





# PDF Tags



- <Table> - Main Table Tag, contains at least 1 table row tag and is used to encompass a single visual data table
- <TR> - Table Row tag, contains 1 Table header tag and/or table data cells tag and is used to encompass a single row of a data table
- <TH> Table Header tag, used to encompass data table cells that are header cells (header cells define data cells)
- <TD> Table data cells, used to encompass data table cells that are purely data

# Reading Order

## Accessibility

Order

MZ - President's Annual Report -

- Page 1
- Page 2
- Page 3
- Page 4
- Page 5
- Page 6
- Page 7
- Page 8
- Page 9
- [1] Jessica Potter, a Univer
- [2] Path Image
- Page 10
- Page 11
- Page 12
- Page 13
- Page 14
- Page 15
- Page 16



## 1arning Prestigious Prizes

**Jessica Potter**, a University Honors scholar, spent weeks in Tanzania this summer thanks to a prestigious scholarship.

A recipient of a Critical Language Scholarship – a highly competitive award offered annually through the U.S. Department of State – Potter studied Swahili.

She is the first ETSU student to receive the award.

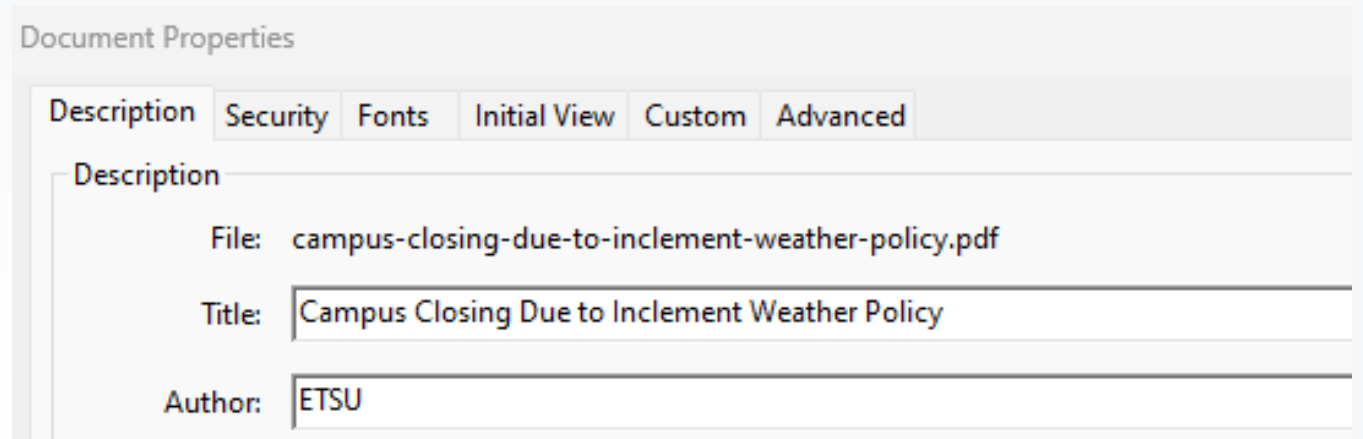
“Jessica has worked hard and is very deserving of this. The award is a perfect fit to help her realize her personal and professional goals in the non-profit and NGO (non-governmental organization) sector,” said Dr. Christopher Keller, Senior International Officer at ETSU and Dean of the Honors College.

The award signals the university's growing efforts to assist students in winning nationally competitive scholarships.

“ETSU's Office of Prestigious Awards is committed to helping our students apply for and be awarded some of the most impressive nationally competitive scholarships available,” said Dr. Carson Medley, Interim Director of Prestigious Awards at ETSU.



# PDF Document Properties



- Ensure every document has a meaningful title.
- You can usually find edit access for metadata under the “properties” menu.



# Exporting in Word

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- Export your tags and bookmarks
- Export for electronic distribution

File Format:

PDF



- Best for electronic distribution and accessibility  
(uses Microsoft online service)
- Best for printing



# Export in Word continued

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Bookmarks ×

- ✓ **General**
  - Communication Style
  - Technical Considerations
- > Images
- > Video
- > Audio
- > Social Media Posts
- > Documents

## Content Accessibility Checklist

### General

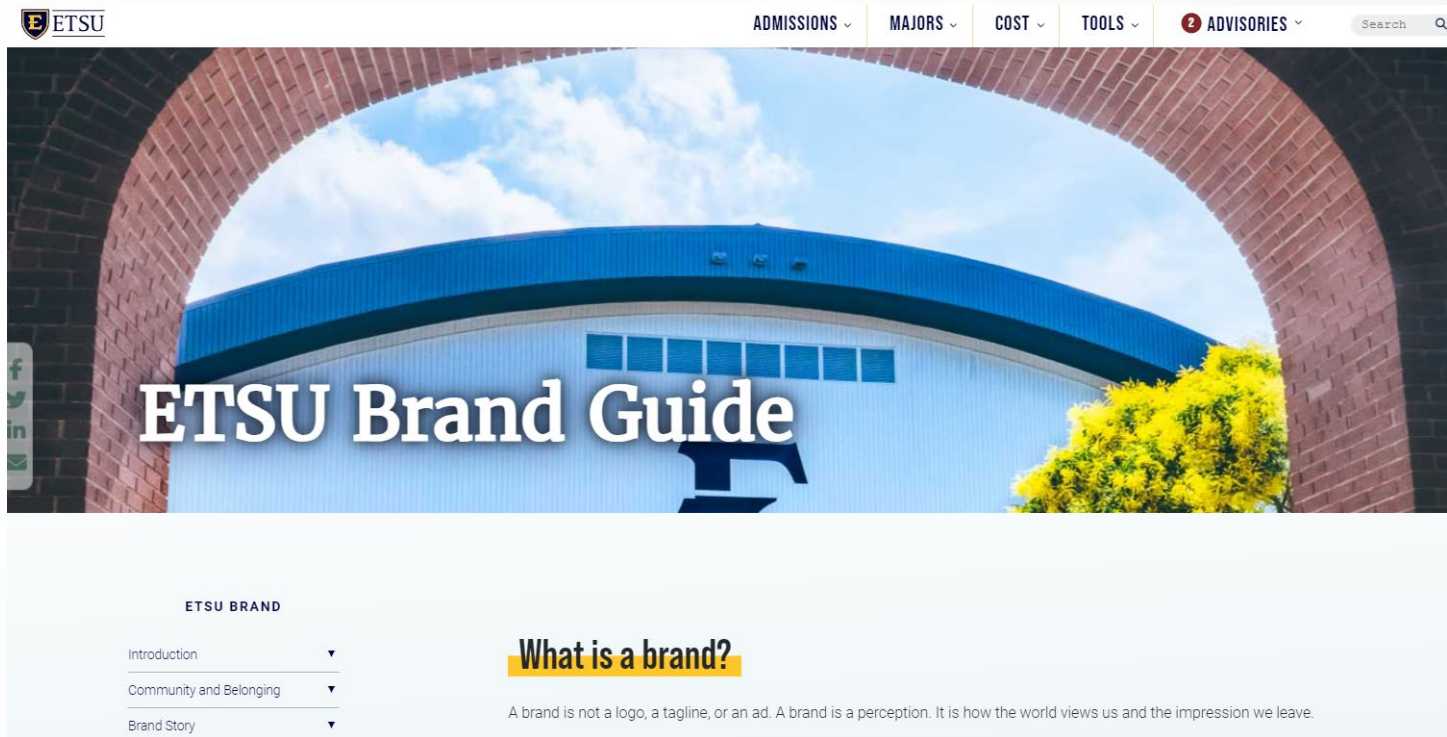
#### Communication Style

Reference: [Hemingway Editor](#)

- Is my content free from jargon, acronyms, and other language that may be unfamiliar to my intended audience?



# Web



ETSU

ADMISSIONS ▾ MAJORS ▾ COST ▾ TOOLS ▾ 2 ADVISORIES ▾ Search

## ETSU Brand Guide

**ETSU BRAND**

- Introduction ▾
- Community and Belonging ▾
- Brand Story ▾

### What is a brand?

A brand is not a logo, a tagline, or an ad. A brand is a perception. It is how the world views us and the impression we leave.



# Technical Considerations

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- Write page titles that accurately reflect the topic on the page for better SEO results and improved visitor experience.
- Use headings correctly so assistive technologies can correctly read the page.





# Technical Considerations Continued

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- Use built-in editing features in Omni to create bulleted or numbered lists.  
Understand the differences between ordered, unordered, and definition lists—and use them properly.
- Can users navigate my content using only a keyboard (no mouse)?





# Media

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- Have I followed the accessibility best practices for any linked documents or videos?
- Are linked PowerPoint presentations accessible?



# Hyperlinks

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- Am I providing appropriate context for links? (For example: “Download the Accessibility Checklist” instead of “Click Here.”)
- Avoid using the page URL as linking text.



# Alt Text for Images

- Most websites and software platforms have built-in tools for adding alt text for photos.
- If you are unable to add alt text, another option is to include a description of the image at the bottom of the caption.
- Alt text is not needed for purely decorative images. Ask yourself “if this image were not here, would the reader miss important information?”



# Alt Text Best Practices

- Do not begin alt text with “image of” or “figure” but do include more specific descriptors such as “aerial view,” “bar chart,” “state map,” or “infographic” as appropriate.
- Use simple language and keep it short.
- If the image is linked, describe the link destination in the alt text.
- If text is included in an image, include it in the alt text.



# Alt Text Best Practices Continued

- Use proper nouns and names.
- Avoid acronyms.
- Do not include URLs.
- Try to keep descriptions gender neutral.



Guy in a bowtie.

# Use Proper Nouns in Alt Text

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## **Okay:**

A person in a business suit speaks with employees seated around a conference table.

## **Better:**

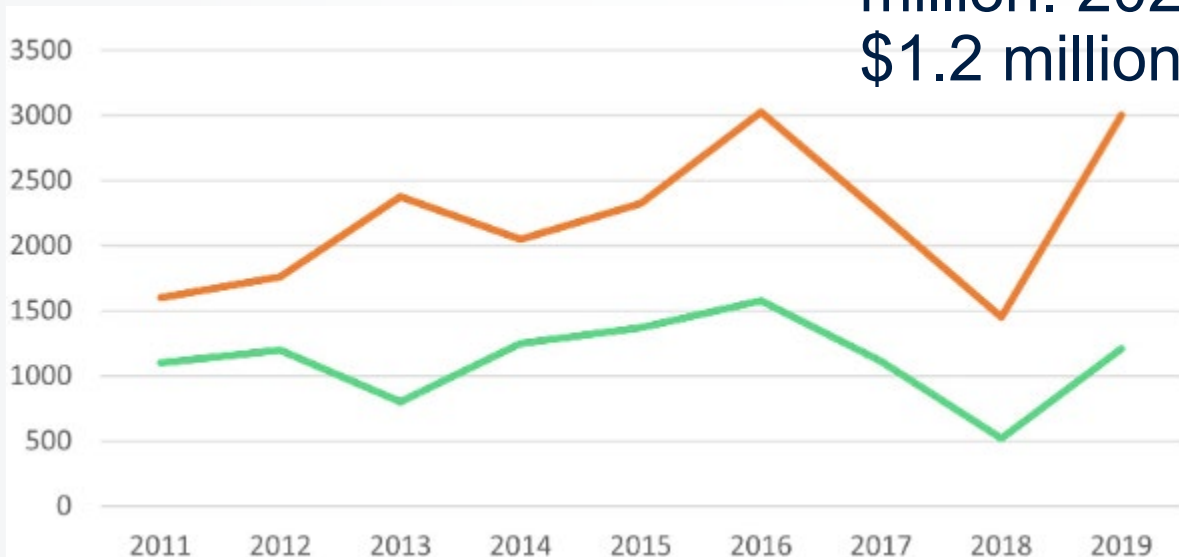
CEO Margot Alvarez speaks with Acme Corporation employees seated around a conference table.



# Describing Complex Information

## Don't Say:

A line chart outlining revenue trends with losses noted in red and growth in green.



## Don't Say:

A line chart. Horizontal axis reads 2020, 2021, 2022. Vertical axis reads \$1 million, \$2 million, \$ million. 2020 data point: \$1.2 million.

## Do Say:

A line chart highlighting the 32 percent decline in revenue from 2018 to 2019 with cumulative losses during that time period totaling \$1,500.



# Symbols and Punctuation in Alt Text

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- Commas translate to short pauses in narration.
- Periods translate to longer pauses.
- Avoid excessive punctuation in alt text.
- Do not use uncommon symbols such as [] + - = \*
- Do use commonly written symbols such as \$ @ %







# Social Media Posts

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# Text and Custom Fonts



# Text Considerations

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- Custom fonts can be used in bios, posts, and Tweets, but is not recommended.
- Text-to-speech programs skip over the customized text entirely without even attempting to read them.
- Fonts can be script, block, bolded or italic.



# Text Considerations Continued

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- Is any of my text “flat” or included in an image? If so, have I added appropriate alt text or duplicated the information as real text?
- Am I using appropriate capitalization? Remember: many screen readers read all caps as individual letters.





# Emojis

You better 🙄 out. You better not 🤔. You better not 🤔 I'm 🗨️ you why. 🧑🏻 Is coming to 🏛️ 🏠. 🧑🏻's making a 📄, 👍 it 2. Gonna find out who's 🙄 and 😊. 🧑🏻 Is coming to 🏠 🏢. He 🙄 you when you're zzz, he knows when you're awake. He knows if you've been 👎 or 👍 so be 👍 4 goodness sake. You better 🙄 out. You better not 🤔. You better not 🤔 I'm 🗨️ you why. 🧑🏻 Is coming to 🏛️ 🏠.



# How Screen Readers Interpret Emojis

Using



# Emoji Best Practices

- Limit emojis to two or less
- Avoid consecutive emojis
- Place emojis at the beginning or, ideally, the end of your social post



# Emoji Best Practices Continued

- Be thoughtful about color customization
- Avoid relying on emojis to convey meaning
- Avoid emojis in your profile name





# Hashtags

- Many text-to-speech programs read the # symbol as “number.”
- Screen readers use spaces and capital letters to differentiate.
- Individuals with visual impairments or trouble reading can more easily process hashtags divided by visual breaks.



**#BestPractices**

**Difficult**

#etsuaccess

**Better**

#ETSUAccess



# Best Practices for Custom Fonts

- Remember: native tools are typically better for accessibility.
- Custom font plugins often create problems for screen readers. Often, they skip custom text entirely.
- Fancy fonts can be difficult to read, even for sighted people. *Very Difficult.*



# Social Alt Text

- Facebook automatically assigns alt text to uploaded pictures. Typically, the descriptions are vague or at times, inaccurate.
- Alt text can also help when the image fails to load online.
- Adding alt text to images for online use can affect SEO (Search Engine Optimization).





# Video

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# Captions

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- Whether it's a GIF, MOV file, or an MP4, captioning helps users who are deaf or hearing-impaired enjoy content like everyone else.
- YouTube and Vimeo offer captioning, as well as Instagram stories, Facebook stories, and Snapchat.
- Adobe Premiere Pro now has auto captioning (Fall of 2021).



# SRT Caption Files

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- SRT files are used to generate and edit caption files.
- You can export SRTs and transcripts from most video editing software platforms.
- SRT files can be edited and corrected in any basic text editor. Just make sure you save the file with the extension .SRT!
- You can also use built-in caption tools on YouTube and most social platforms.



# Caption Considerations

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- Have I generated and uploaded a proofread caption file?
- Have I kept graphics and text clear of the area where closed captioning will appear?
- For instances where closed captioning is not available, have I included burned-in captions?
- Burned-in captions can be added in most video editing software platforms.





# Video Graphics

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- Is my text large enough to read from a distance?
- Do graphics and text meet contrast standards for accessibility?
- Are graphics or text on screen long enough to be fully perceived and understood?

**Tip:** A good rule of thumb is to leave text on screen for as long as it takes you to read it aloud twice.



# Transcripts & Bookmarks

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- Have I provided descriptive transcripts for scenes with limited audio? Example: “visual footage of ROTC members running in the woods.”
- Have I added bookmarks or chapter markers as appropriate?



# YouTube Video Chapters

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## Description

This presentation from the Office of University Marketing and Communications outlines ETSU's brand strategy, key messaging, visual identity system, and ways to collaborate to amplify our story.

## Segments

00:00 Brand Strategy  
10:09 Messaging Strategy  
17:32 Visual Identity  
26:15 Collaboration and Resources

## Segments

**00:00** Brand Strategy  
**10:09** Messaging Strategy  
**17:32** Visual Identity  
**26:15** Collaboration and Resources

[Live example](#)





# Audio

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# Transcripts & Captions



**Dr. Patrick Brown:**

You know, we focus so much, rightly or wrongly, on career preparation -- yeah -- in higher ed. And are we, are we preparing them for their 21st century careers? But, you know, the purpose of higher ed is so much more than that. We're not just training students for a career. We are ideally preparing informed, compassionate citizens.

**Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle:**

Hi, I'm Kimberly McCorkle, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at East Tennessee State University. From the moment I arrived on this campus, I have been inspired by our faculty: their passion for what they do, their belief in the power of higher education, and the way they are transforming the lives of their students. This podcast is dedicated to them, our incredible faculty at ETSU. Hear their stories as they tell us Why I Teach. In this episode, we will talk with Dr. Patrick Brown, Associate Professor in the ETSU College of Public Health's Department of Health Sciences. Dr. Brown is a past recipient of ETSU's Distinguished Faculty Award in Teaching and has received national recognition for his work with the Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning, or POGIL, method of instruction. He earned a Ph.D. in cellular biology from the University of Georgia and a B.S. in biology from the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. His research includes studies of the application of student-centered, active learning pedagogies in undergraduate science curricula. In 2015, Dr. Brown was ETSU's keynote commencement speaker, and he shared his inspiring insights with graduates. Today, I am pleased to have him here to share his expertise on teaching and preparing our students for graduation and success beyond the classroom. Enjoy the show. Dr. Brown, welcome to the show.

**Dr. Patrick Brown:**

Thank you.

**Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle:**

I start my podcast with the same question for every guest. Take me back to your first day of teaching at

# Presenters

Jeanette Jewell  
Sherry Martinez  
Lindsey Mumpower

**Contributor**  
Raina Wiseman



# Accessibility Training Dates

- January 30, 2-4 p.m. Fixing Accessibility Problems in Documents
- February 21, 2-4 p.m. Creating Accessible Documents from Scratch
- February 28, 2-4 p.m. Social Media & Video Content Accessibility
- March 19, – 9-11 a.m. Fixing Accessibility Problems in Documents
- March 26, – 9-11 a.m. Creating Accessible Documents from Scratch
- April 18, – 9-11 a.m. Social Media & Video Content Accessibility
- April 25, – 9-11 a.m. Fixing Accessibility Problems in Documents
- May 22, 2-4 p.m. Creating Accessible Documents from Scratch
- May 29, 2-4 p.m. Social Media & Video Content Accessibility

