Accessibility Toolkit

Section 1

Purpose of toolkit

Why this toolkit?

This toolkit offers simple and easy to read information about the needs of people with disabilities and how to accommodate these needs in different situations.

It is intended for ICT professionals, educators, healthcare providers, carers, students, policy makers and the general public.

The **ACCESSIBILITECH** project aims to improve and enhance e-inclusion and e-accessibility for people with disabilities and other groups with similar needs. This project is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, that aims to empower this population, so they can realise their rights.

To ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities it is important to keep accessibility in mind and to comply with current standards and laws.

Although there have been many advancements in accessibility in the past few years, many technological products that are not accessible are still reaching the market. This is partly due to the fact that there is still a lack of knowledge and misinformation about accessibility and needs of users.
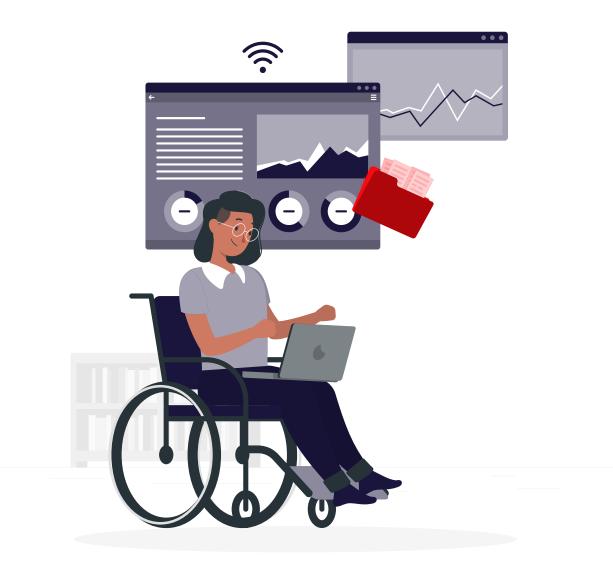
The goal of this toolkit is to provide knowledge about the needs of users when interacting with technology and guidelines on the following:

> Common accessibility mistakes

> How to improve accessibility in digital documents

> How to improve accessibility in videos

> Organizing accessible events

> Accessibility features in mobile devices

The toolkit also provides external resources that complement the information provided.

Section 4

Improving accessibility in digital documents

10 tips to improve accessibility in digital documents

1. Set the language of the document

Setting the language of your document allow screen readers to identify words in different languages, and help the software pronounce and intonate words correctly.

How to set the document language.

2. Use sufficient colour contrast

Select a combination of foreground and background colour with a contrast ratio of at least 7:1. In larger text or images the contrast ratio should be of at least 4.5:1. The colour contrast in decorative elements and a text that is part of a logo are not important.

How to adjust colour contrast.

3. Use proper font size and style

Adjust the font size to 12 pts or larger. Make sure to use a sans serif font style with a design that makes it easy to tell between upper and lower cases. Avoid using italics or writing a large text in upper cases. Examples of sans serif font styles:

> Arial

> Verdana

> Tahoma

> Verdana

> Calibri

How to adjust the font.

4. Add alternative text to image and graphics

Add a written description to images, graphics and other non-text elements included in the document. This helps people who use screen readers.

The alternative text should be brief with no more than two sentences. Avoid writing phrases such as "image of", "photo of", "picture of", etc. If the image is purely decorative, an alternative text is not necessary.

How to add alternative text.

5. Do not use colour to convey information

Avoid using colours as the only means to convey information. Add a text description. This helps people who rely on screen readers or that have difficulties seeing colours.

6. Use a heading hierarchy to structure your document

Use a logical heading hierarchy to divide the content into manageable sections. For the title use Heading 1 or h1. For subheadings use h2 up to h6 following the order of importance and minding the rank or level of each heading. For example:

H1: Spanish food recipes

    H2: Rice dishes

        H3: Paella valenciana

            H4: Recipe

        H3. Arroz negro

            H4. Recipe

    H2: Fish dishes

        H3: Andalusian style fried fish

            H4: Recipe

Do not overuse the headings and avoid skipping levels. For example, make sure that h2 is not followed by h4.

7. Add descriptive hyperlinks

When directing readers to an external source such as a website, do not copy and paste the URL. Instead, embed the link to a string of text already in the document that is relevant to the content of the link.

Another way to make links accessible is to write a brief description such as "Visit the project's website" or "Learn how to obtain tickets" and embed the links. Avoid phrases such as "click here" or "here".

How to create or edit a hyperlink.

8. Keep tables simple

Keep tables simple and avoid using nested rows and columns. Use column headings instead of row headings and identify them. Try to keep the entire table in a single page.

How to create an accessible table in word.

9. Avoid using the enter key for double spacing

When adding a space below or between paragraphs use the paragraph formatting feature instead of hitting the enter key twice. Consider using double spacing between the lines and left alignment rather than justified text.

How to change the line and paragraph spacing.

10. Writing style and language

Know your audience and consider using a simple writing style, keeping sentences and paragraphs short. Use descriptive examples, such as images, to support your text. Avoid using technical jargon if possible.

Resources

Make your Word documents accessible

Creating accessible documents

Accessible documents

Create accessible documents (with videos)

Accessible publishing