Top hints and tips for creating accessible documents.

Compiled by Volunteering WA' Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group

1. **Structure** Word documents using preset styles for headings, lists, indents and tabs. This will make your document easier to read with assistive technologies such as screen readers.

2. A **Table of Contents** makes it easier to find things in larger documents.

3. Include **Page numbers** in documents longer than one page.

4. **Hyperlinks** should be 'live' and written in full. – e.g. https://www.volunteeringwa.org.au/volunteer-management instead of this - Volunteer Management - Volunteering WA. QR codes can also make it easier to access hyperlinks, especially in printed documents.

   a. **HTML**: Hypertext Markup Language is the standard markup language for creating web pages. Structure HTML documents to comply with accessibility guidelines and are compatible with various assistive technologies.

5. **Text** is more readable if it is sized to greater than 12 point.

   a. Use **bold** for emphasis instead of italics and underline.

   b. Choose **sans serif fonts** ie Arial or Calibri rather than **serif fonts** like Times New Roman.

   c. Text is best **left-aligned** and set horizontally.

    d. **#Hashtags** used on social media platforms can combine multiple words together without spaces. **#CamelCaseHashtags** capitalises the first letter of each word to improve readability.

6. **Images** should be described in the **Description** field rather than in the **Title** field in the MS Word Dialogue box.

    a. Image layout should be **'in line'** with the text.

    b. Text should never be placed over an image.

7. **Layout** should be clear, consistent and logically ordered.

    a. Use minimum of 1.2 point line spacing **within** paragraphs.

    b. Use 6 point or 10 point spacing **between** paragraphs.

    c. **Use dot points or numbers** where possible.

8. Use **high colour contrast** between text and backgrounds.

    a. Don't rely on colour to convey a message.

    b. Use the **Paciello Colour Contrast Analyser** to check the contrast of colours used in documents, websites, etc.

9. **Tables** can be difficult for assistive technologies to read. Use them only where necessary to represent data. When using tables:

    a. Include bold, visible borders.

    b. Include adequate space between the border and the contents of each cell.

c. Use header rows across the table.

d. Repeat header rows if a table is across more than one page.

10. Use simple, **plain language.**

   a. Include one clear message in each sentence and paragraph.

   b. Keep your sentences short and to the point.

   c. Avoid using slang.

   d. Check for confusing language such as double negatives eg. "I never not liked that program" (which really says that you **did** like it).

   e. Give examples where possible, or clearly explain what you mean.

11. Use the Accessibility Checker in MS Word. On your **toolbar,** go to **Review** then click on **Check Accessibility.** Note, you can also set it to check while you are working.

12. When you are **exporting a document to PDF** tick the **Document structure tags for accessibility** and **Create Bookmarks.**

13. Create accessible **PowerPoint presentations** by:

   a. using slide titles,

   b. alternative text for images,

   c. readable fonts and

   d. a logical reading order.

14. Use **EPUB** to create e-books. EPUB is an Electronic Publication standard which supports accessibility features such as text to speech, resizable fonts and reflowable text for better readability on different devices.

15. Spreadsheets should be created with accessibility features to ensure compatibility with screen readers and other assistive technologies. This includes the use of:

    a. properly labelled rows and columns,

    b. descriptive headers,

    c. clear organisation.

More detailed information can be found here: https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/about-this-website/accessible-documents/creating-documents-meet-accessibility-guidelines