

Social Media A11y – The Basics

Social media was built to bring people together, it has the word ‘social’ in it for a reason. This culturally important form of communication can present new challenges and even introduce new barriers for people with disabilities. Luckily, many of the big social media players have gotten onboard and are providing ways to ensure full inclusion on their platforms.

Text Alternatives

Facebook

To add alternative text to a photo

- Once your photo to upload is selected and showing in the post window > Hover over the image > Select ‘Edit’ > Alternative Text > Add your description in the provided input field > Select ‘Save’

Twitter

- For the ability to add alt text to images in a tweet, you have to go to your settings to turn the feature on. Settings > General > Accessibility > and turn on Compose image descriptions.
- Once your photo to upload is selected and showing in the tweet window > Select ‘Add Description’ > Add your description in the provided input field > Select ‘Save’

Instagram

- Instagram gives their users an easy to tap ‘Edit Alt Text’ when you edit a post
- To add to a be post. Following the filter screen > Select ‘Advanced settings’ > Select ‘Write Alt Text’ > Add your description in the provided input field > Select the checkmark

If your favourite social media platforms don’t let you add alt text, describe what’s happening in the photo as part of your post.

Captioning videos

Captioning a video got a lot easier with YouTube’s auto-captioning abilities. While that technology is improving all the time, you still need to check it for errors.

Whether you add your own caption file (SRT file) or use YouTube’s auto-captioning services try and follow best practice when it comes to captions. Best practice means ensuring all words spoken by characters and/or narrator are captioned, this includes words to any song.

Also ensure there are descriptions of sound events that impact on the story or meaning and using a san serif font, such as Arial or Helvetica for easy reading.

Emojis

Emojis have alt text which is great for users who rely on screen readers. So, go ahead and add that heart emoji to the end of your post, but one is enough. Having to hear "red heart" repeated 5 times in a row is a bit too much when you are already listening to everything. Our advice, use emojis, but use them sparingly.

Hashtags

When using multiple-word hashtags, capitalise the first letter in each word. This will make it more readable for everyone but especially for screen reader users. The screen reader will have an easier time making sense of #JoinTheHuddle instead of #jointhehuddle or #JOINTHEHUDDLE

Placing for @mentions and Hashtags

Place hashtags and @mentions at the end of your post. A simple adjustment on your part means the main part of the post be read without interruption.

With great social media, comes great responsibility! We hope these few tips will help you on your accessibility journey. #UnlockTheWeb

