

# Accessible Email Tips

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## 1. Accessible Formats

**Use HTML or Plain Text** [Do not use Rich Text]

**HTML** allows for formatting and supports semantic headings, alt text images, links, and lists. **Plain Text** limits formatting but is consistent on any device and compatible with any email program; whereas, **Rich Text** can vary and does not support semantic headings, lists, etc.

## 2. Fonts and Colors

**Use a sans-serif font (e.g., Calibri, Verdana)**

[Do not use cursive, elaborate, or multiple fonts]

**Use bold text**, as it is clearer than italicized or underlined text. Avoid ALL caps when possible.

**Use 12- to 14-point font size**

[Do not use a font smaller than 10-point]

**Use a contrasting font and background color**

[Do not use multiple font colors (i.e., 3 or more)]

Avoid background images, such as stationery. Consistent font coloring that contrast with the background makes reading easier (e.g., black/white or dark blue/white).

## 3. Structure and Long Emails

**Use clear and concise wording**

[Do not use jargon or slang]

Spell out abbreviations and acronyms on first reference to avoid confusion.

**Place important information first**

[Do not use distracting elements]

Keep emails succinct. Use a meaningful subject line. Avoid flashing content, audio, and video streams; **or provide text-only alternatives.**

## 4. Lists and Headings

**Use numbered or bulleted list styles, and heading styles**

[In using **Styles** instead of number or bullet list from the Paragraph group, some screen readers will state how many items will come next.]

## 5. Images and Graphics

**Use alternative text for images**

[Do not use images with embedded text]

Alternative text allows users with screen readers to hear a description of what is being shown. ‘Readers’ cannot declaim embedded text.

## 6. Hyperlinks

**Hyperlink text describing its destination**

[Avoid using vague text]

i.e., Use “[visit the Access Office website](#) for more information,” instead of “[click here](#) for more information.”

## 7. Signatures

**Use a simple, text-based signature**

[Do not use vCards]

Electronic business cards may not be compatible with certain screen readers.

# Accessibility using Outlook

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Create a new email before following these steps:

**To Edit Email Format:** Select the **Format Text** tab, then choose **HTML** or **Plain Text** from the toolbar.

**To Edit Text Font and Styles:** Select the **Message tab** or **Format Text tab** and use appropriate tools.

**To Create an Accessible Image:**

1. Select the **Insert** tab and choose the illustration you would like to include.

2. After the image is added, **right-click** over it and select **Wrap Text > In-line with Text**.

3. **Right-click** over the image again > Select **Format Picture > Alt Text** > Enter a **Title** and **Description** [Don’t include “Image of” or “Picture of” in the Alt Text since screen readers will identify images.]

**To Insert a Hyperlink:**

1. **Type** descriptive text > **Select** text

2. Click the **Insert** tab > **Hyperlink**. Include a meaningful **ScreenTip** . . .

**To Create a Text Signature:**

1. Select the **Insert** tab, then choose **Signature** from the toolbar. Select **Signatures** from the menu.

2. Click **New** > Type a **name** for the signature > Click **OK**. Fill out the signature information. **Keep font formatting simple and easy to read.**

3. Click **Save** > **OK**.



## Additional Tips

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### Attachments

Items attached to your email should be formatted for accessibility as well . . .

### Microsoft Accessibility Checker for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint

File > Info > Check for Issues > Check Accessibility

### Microsoft Windows Access Center

Press the Windows  logo key + U  
[Use features such as Narrator or Magnifier]

### Apple Accessibility Features

Go to Settings > General > Accessibility  
[Use features such as VoiceOver or AssistiveTouch]

### Adobe Acrobat Pro

View > Tools > Accessibility  
[Run a Quick or Full Check; View Report]

### Accessibility Resources

[Microsoft Accessibility Website](http://www.microsoft.com/enable/)  
<http://www.microsoft.com/enable/>

[Apple Accessibility Support](http://www.apple.com/support/accessibility/)  
<http://www.apple.com/support/accessibility/>

[Atomic Learning - Assistive Technology](http://www.atomiclearning.com)  
<http://www.atomiclearning.com>

[AccessibleTech.org](http://accessibletech.org/index.php)  
<http://accessibletech.org/index.php>

[Americans w/Disabilities Act National Network](http://adata.org/)  
<http://adata.org/>

## VSU SUPPORT

### Accessibility Inquiries

(“why, if, or when” type questions)

#### Access Office

229-245-2498

TTY: 229-219-1348

VP: 229-375-5871

[www.valdosta.edu/access](http://www.valdosta.edu/access)

### General Inquiries & Training

(technical “how-to” questions)

#### IT Helpdesk

229-245-4357 (HELP)

[www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk](http://www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk)

### IT Training and Communication

229-333-7395

[www.valdosta.edu/tc](http://www.valdosta.edu/tc)

### Reference:

[Outlook 2010: Creating Accessible Emails](http://governor.state.tx.us/files/disabilities/accessdocs/20-Email.pdf)

<http://governor.state.tx.us/files/disabilities/accessdocs/20-Email.pdf>



Division of Information Technology  
and the Access Office

## Accessible Digital Communication:

## EMAIL



### Quick Reference Guide

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\*Tips provided are suggestions.  
Compliance to ADA or any other regulating  
entity is not warranted.

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