Accessible Email Tips

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]

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.

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

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

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/

Apple Accessibility Support
http://www.apple.com/support/accessibility/

Atomic Learning - Assistive Technology
http://www.atomiclearning.com

AccessibleTech.org
http://accessibletech.org/index.php

Americans w/Disabilities Act National Network
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

General Inquiries & Training
(technical “how-to” questions)
IT Helpdesk
229-245-4357 (HELP)
www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk

IT Training and Communication
229-333-7395
www.valdosta.edu/tc

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

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