

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]

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

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/)
<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

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)

<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

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



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