

Microsoft Word – Best Practices for Authoring and Accessibility

Workshop Schedule

Discussion and overview of page layout and accessibility (00:15)

Word layout and styling tools (00:15)

Word accessibility best practices and checker (00:10)

Discussion the OEI Accessibility Checklist, Q & A, and wrap-up (00:10)

Themes, Style Sets, and Styles

Theme

A Microsoft theme is a predesigned group of paragraph and text styles that is applied to an entire document. Themes are located on the “Design” tab of the ribbon. Themes can be customized and saved for portability to another computer.

Style Sets

These are found by choosing the “Design” tab next to the Themes chooser and can be thought of as sub themes and offer a quick way to change a layout with one click.

Styles

Styles are the components that make up a theme. The Styles Gallery is available on the “Home” tab of the ribbon and they contain font, color, and other attributes. A style can be applied to an entire paragraph or *a section of in-line text*. They can also be updated/modified and saved.

Please see this Microsoft article on customizing styles.

Standard Layout Components

Text: text can be styled with themes if styles have been applied to the paragraphs.

Images: images can be placed within a document, with or without text wrap and must contain alternative text.

Tables: tables can be placed in a similar way as images and must contain a header row.

Page Header and Footer: these important areas can contain document information, page numbers, and other custom or auto-generated items.

What is Accessibility?

From the Chancellor's office website, "**Accessible:** An individual with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use."

Where is the Accessibility Checker?

The Accessibility Checker in Word can be found as follows:

- Mac: choose Tools > Accessibility Checker from the top navigation bar
- Windows: choose File > Info > Check for Issues > Check Accessibility

A Word About the OEI Accessibility Checklist

The checklist is adapted from the Course Design Rubric found on this web page:

<https://cvc.edu/faculty-resources/professional-development/online-course-design-standards/>

Although standards found in the rubric apply primarily to online courses, the Accessibility section serves as a clear map of what accessibility principles apply to digital documents.

A Word About Assistive Technology

The [American Foundation for the Blind](#), "Screen readers are software programs that allow blind or visually impaired users to read the text that is displayed on the computer screen with a speech synthesizer or braille display. A screen reader is the interface between the computer's operating system, its applications, and the user. The user sends commands by pressing different combinations of keys on the computer keyboard or braille display to instruct the speech synthesizer what to say and to speak automatically when changes occur on the computer screen. A command can instruct the synthesizer to read or spell a word, read a line or full screen of text, find a string of text on the screen, announce the location of the computer's cursor or focused item, and so on."

Essentially, a screen reader functions as a set of "eyes" for the visually impaired, enabling them to navigate the computer with keyboard shortcuts. The document is "digested" by the screen reader according to the document reading or tabbing order. Tagged document elements such as headings, lists, and tables are identified for ease of navigation.