Making imagery and audio 508 compliant

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Document properties

What document properties must be set for a document to be 508 compliant?
Document properties, also known as metadata, include the title, author, subject, and keywords assigned to a document. They must be filled out for a document to be 508 compliant. You may also have the opportunity to select a language description for the document. If you have this option, note that the document is in English. If you have Word 2010, English is the default language setting for every document.

How do I set the properties for a document?
To set the properties on a document:

1. Select the “file” tab on the Word toolbar and choose “info.”
2. Select the “properties” drop-down button. Choose “advanced properties” from the drop-down menu and select the “summary” tab in the “advanced properties” dialogue box.
3. Add your title, author, subject, and keywords (tags). Please note, the author of a document should always be the department or program distributing the document, rather than the name of the individual who made the document.
4. If you’d like to check the language setting on the document, choose “file” and select “options,” then choose the “language” tab and be sure the language is set to “English (U.S.).”

Please be aware, if you are redacting information form a document and you choose to remove metadata, the document may no longer be accessible.

What other resources are available to help me with this topic?
- CMS’s how to make your Word 2010 documents 508-compliant
- Learn about section 508 requirements and responsibilities
- View or change the properties for an Office document

Graphics

What does it take for a graphic to be 508 compliant?
There are many ways to include graphics in your document or design that will meet 508 compliance standards. The simplest thing to remember when designing and adding graphics is that graphics shouldn’t tell the story alone, and words or alt-text have to supplement the graphic to make sure all users can access important information.

How do I make my graphic 508 complaint?
To add alt-text in a Word document:

1. Right click on the image and selecting “format picture.”
2. Choose “layout and properties” and “alt text.” If an image is decorative, you can give the image a title in alt-text and note that the image is decorative in the description.

To add alt-text in a PDF:
1. Open the document in Acrobat.
2. Select “tools,” and choose to edit the document in “accessibility mode.”
3. Left click on the image in the PDF and choose “set alternate text” in the right-hand menu. You will be asked to look at (and change, if desired) the alternate text for all images in the document. You can also choose to mark some images as decorative figures only.

Remember, if you have an image that includes lots of significant information, it’s possible you won’t be able to explain the image in alt-text, as there can be a character limit. To make these images accessible, provide short alt-text on the image and present the same information the image shows in an alternative format in the same document (not necessarily on the same page) so non-visual users can access it.

What other resources are available to help me with this topic?
- Designing for accessibility: what to watch for
- Making images visible to blind users

Charts and graphs

What does it take to make a chart or graph 508 complaint?
There are many considerations to take when making a chart or graph 508 compliant as well as accessible. The most important things to remember are that color shouldn’t be used to denote anything too significant, and alt-text needs to accompany charts or graphs that communicate integral information.

How do I make my chart or graph 508 complaint?
To make a chart or graph 508 compliant:

1. Make sure the chart or graph is just as understandable if printed in black and white as if in color; in addition, use symbols to distinguish each line or segment, and note symbols in a legend. For help finding colors that offer contract, read Viget’s Designing for accessibility resource.
2. If applicable, clearly categorize the X axis and Y axis to make it easy to read.
3. If the information is too complex to communicate in alt-text or text-only format, offer an alternative method of obtaining the information. In Human Resources, you’ll most often want to direct users to the HR Service Center for additional information. You can simply include a note in alt-text or in a caption under the chart or graph that notes: “If you’re having difficulty reading this graph/chart, please contact the HR Service Center; you will be put in touch with a content expert who can help you understand the information.” Please be sure the HR Service Center is aware of the communication and prepared to offer assistance before distributing the material.

What other resources are available to help me with this topic?
- MSKTC making your charts and graphs 508 compliant
- Web Accessibility’s ensure charts and graphs provide an informative and visible alternative description
- EvergreenData’s 508 compliance and data visualization
- Designing for accessibility: what to watch for
- Penn State’s charts and accessibility guide

Video and audio

What does it take to make a video or audio recording 508 complaint?
When making a video 508 complaint, it’s important to address the visual aspects of the video as well as transcript. For audio recordings, a transcript or an alternative method of understanding the content is required. If the video or audio is ambient—for example, on a website and not integral to the understanding of content—no transcript or alternative method is needed.
How do I make my video or audio recording 508 compliant?

To make your video or audio clip 508 compliant:

1. Provide a transcript for any video or audio communication materials you distribute. A transcript should include not only spoken word, but also any other pertinent information that is communicated through graphics or body, facial, or vocal expressions of those in a video or audio recording.

2. Ensure your video does not include content that flashes at frequencies of more than three flashes per second in case a user has a photosensitive seizure disorder, or avoid use of video flashes altogether to avoid this issue.

What other resources are available to help me with this topic?

- 508 accessible videos – why (and how) to make them
- How to make a video 508 compliant
- Create accessible video and social media
- DigitalGov’s making multimedia section 508 compliant and accessible
- Designing for accessibility: what to watch for