

Accessible resources for people with disabilities and Deaf people

Tip Sheet
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Tips for Using Accessible Social Media

Social media is a global communication and marketing tool. How can you ensure that your social media content is accessible to people with disabilities and Deaf people? Here are some tips for making your posts and other content more accessible across popular social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

General Tips across all Social Media

- > Include your organization's contact information (phone number, address, email, other social media) in your bio section of all social media sites.
- > Avoid using acronyms in posts and bios.
- > Use plain, active language. Social media posts are meant to be casual and direct.
- > Include #hashtags and @mentions at the end of tweets and posts.
- > Capitalize the first letter of compound words in hashtags (for example: #VeralnstituteOfJustice) – this is called *camel case*.
- > Add image descriptions and captions for all images you upload. Read below for details.
- > Include closed captions *and* transcripts with all videos.
- > Provide links back to original (accessible) media in your posts. Link back to transcripts in your posts' captions and comments as well.
- > Screen readers *can* read emojis. Here is a video example of how [VoiceOver reads and identifies emojis on iOS](#).
- > Be strategic about where emojis are located in your posts. Avoid interspersing emojis *between* words, which awkwardly breaks up phrase. Here you can find [video examples of problematic emoji placement and incorrect all lower case text](#).
- > Consider sharing links to apps that improve social media accessibility in your profile or bio (for Twitter, one example is [Easy Chirp](#)).
- > Draft tweets or posts in advance and test them using screen reader software before posting to social media (VoiceOver for iOS and Talkback for Android).
- > Consider that mobile versions of social media apps are often more accessible than web versions.

- > Share information about accessibility features of social media sites (like this tip sheet) with your organizations!

Facebook

Facebook Basics:

- > Put all @mentions and hashtags at the *end* of your posts.
- > Facebook automatically adds alternative text for images, but it isn't very precise. You can expand and edit the alternative text:
 1. Click **Photo/Video** at the top of your News Feed.
 2. Select the photo you want to add.
 3. Click **Edit Photo**, then click **Alt Text**.
 4. The automatically generated text will be shown on the left side of your photo. Click **Override generated alt text** to edit it.
 5. Write your alt text in the box. To change back to the automatically generated text, click **Clear**.
 6. To save your alt text, click **Save** in the bottom right.
 7. To change alt text in a photo that is already posted, click on the image, click on "**options**" under the photo and click "**change alt text**."
- > Enable facial recognition on your account. When facial recognition setting is enabled, screen readers can read the names of people who appear in a photo. To respect privacy, it is best to ask before tagging people in your photos
- > Add descriptive text to the images you post. On Facebook, descriptive text is like the image caption.

- > Rather than uploading a video to share on Facebook, post the video to YouTube first. Then, link to the YouTube video from your Facebook post. It is generally easier to include captions on YouTube videos than Facebook videos.

Facebook Tips:

- > Facebook has its own [accessibility page](#) for reference.
- > Follow [@accessibility on Facebook](#) to stay updated on Facebook accessibility features.

Facebook Issues:

- > Facebook changes its layouts frequently, so its accessibility changes. Users must regularly check back on Facebook's accessibility page (@accessibility) for updates.

Twitter

Twitter Basics:

- > Twitter automatically shortens hyperlink URLs to fit the Tweet character limit.
- > When you include a hyperlink in your Tweet that leads to a photo, video, or audio clip, add prefixes that indicate this. For example: [PHOTO]: *hyperlink to photo* [VIDEO]: *hyperlink to video*; [AUDIO]: *hyperlink to audio*.
- > Put all @mentions and hashtags at the **end** of your tweets.

Adding photos or other media in Tweets:

- > When posting GIFS or videos, describe the content in your Tweet directly.

- > Turn on Twitter’s alternative text feature to add alt text to photos:
 1. Navigate to **Settings** > Display and sound > Accessibility > and turn on *Compose image descriptions*.
 2. When you post a picture, you’ll see an option to “Add a description for the visually impaired.”
 3. Click on the **Tweet compose** button
 4. Attach your photo(s).
 5. Open the thumbnail preview dialog by clicking on the thumbnail photo.
 6. Type your description of the image and click the **Apply** button. To edit the description, re-open the thumbnail preview dialog prior to posting the Tweet.

Twitter Tips:

- > Follow [@PleaseCaption on Twitter](#) if you want reminders about captioning photos.
- > Follow [@TwitterA11y on Twitter](#) to stay updated on Twitter accessibility features.
- > Recommend Easy-Chirp to users as a web-accessible Twitter tool in your Twitter bio. The Easy Chirp layout is more consistent, it has easier keyboard navigation, and provides better support for screen readers.

Twitter Issues:

- > You **cannot** add image descriptions to GIFs or videos. This is why it is important to include image descriptions in the tweet.

Instagram

Instagram Basics:

- > Always add image captions in the post description area – there is no alternative text for Instagram images.
- > Put all @mentions and hashtags at the end of your posts.
- > Capitalize the first letter of compound words in hashtags (#VeraInstituteOfJustice) (camel case).

Instagram Videos:

- > Use the post description area to provide a video transcript if your video is not captioned.

Instagram Tips:

- > You can be explicit about the accessibility of your post by including the hashtag #accessibility in your image description: **#accessibility [Image description: detailed description of the image.]**
- > When using a photo collage or photo slideshow, describe images in an order, and be explicit about the order. For example, in a collage: #accessibility [Image description (L-R): 1. Image description 2. Image description 3. Image description].
- > In Instagram stories, don’t include text in your uploaded images. Only use in-app text.

Instagram Issues:

- > There is not an option for adding closed captioning to videos in Instagram.

- > Instagram app uses low color contrast. This can impact its usability for people who have low vision.

YouTube

YouTube Basics:

- > Always enable closed captions on YouTube videos. You can edit them if they are inaccurate.
- > Provide a description of your videos in the space provided beneath the video.
- > Consider including American Sign language (ASL) and other sign language interpretation in YouTube videos. This could involve filming sign language interpreter as they interpret your video content, and embedding this smaller video of the sign language interpreter in the video stream. You would want to be sure that the video can be viewed full screen. Visit the World Wide Web Consortium W3C website for [more information about the web accessibility criteria for this editing technique](#).

YouTube Tips:

- > Edit YouTube's automatic captions and subtitles when necessary:
 1. Go to your [Video Manager](#).
 2. Next to the video you want to edit captions for, click Edit > **Subtitles and CC**.
 3. Click on the caption track you want to edit.
 4. Click inside any line in the caption track panel and edit the text.
 5. Click **Save** changes.

- > Learn more about [how to add your own captions and subtitles to YouTube videos](#).
- > YouTube uses either an HTML 5 player or Flash player. The HTML player is fully accessible, but the Flash player is not accessible.
- > Recommend alternative viewing portals for Flash users such as [Access YouTube](#) and [Accessible YouTube](#)
- > Share this [Guide on How to use YouTube with Screen Readers](#) with your organizations.

YouTube Issues:

- > There are few keyboard controls for the YouTube video player.
 - Keyboard controls help users who are blind and have low vision navigate a webpage. Clicking a mouse or trackpad requires visual focus. People who are blind may use screen readers or other assistive technology that provide audio cues for keyboard controls.
 - Keyboard controls also help users with physical disabilities, such as limited dexterity, who may use modified keyboards instead of a mouse or trackpad. Visit the [WebAIM site](#) for more information about accessible keyboard navigation.
- > YouTube doesn't automatically add audio descriptions – you must add them.
- > YouTube's machine-generated captions are often inaccurate.

Additional Resources

- > [Accessible U – University of Minnesota](#)
- > [Accessibility Hub – Queen’s University](#)
- > Facebook:
- > [Digital Accessibility – Case Western Reserve University](#)
- > Twitter:
- > [Picture Descriptions – Twitter](#)
- > [Tweet Accessibility – Adrian Roselli](#)
- > Instagram:
- > [Online Communications – Case Western Reserve University](#)
- > YouTube:
- > [Google Support – YouTube Accessibility](#)

For more information:

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