Fact sheet

Creating accessible documents

This fact sheet outlines some key tips for accessible documents that will improve the way you deliver information in your workplace and community.

Why are accessible documents important?

We communicate through a range of printed and digital documents every day. Many of them are not accessible for everyone. Common issues include:

- small font size and difficult to read fonts
- poor contrast between background and information including poor colour choices
- digital documents which are not accessible for screen readers which look for navigational structures such as headings, links and alternative text
- complex sentence construction and concepts which are poorly explained and don't consider cognitive ability or literacy.

What should I focus on when improving accessibility?

Firstly, design your document with accessibility and inclusion at the core. Consider the target audience – what information do they need and how will they engage with the document? Include other people who communicate in a variety of ways in the design of the content.

Make sure your document is available in multiple formats. PDFs are not always accessible for everyone. Choose Word and/or HTML where possible.

Consider technical elements and make your document more accessible by:

- Using headings and built-in style guides to make your document easy to navigate.
- Using simple fonts (i.e. 'sans-serif') and avoid fancy or stylised fonts.
- Using a colour contrast checker between the text and the background.
- Utilising white space to improve readability and avoid crammed content.
- Ensuring any diagrams, image or graphs have alt-text and a caption to describe them.
- Making sure your table has a header row and no merged cells.
- Avoiding text boxes and use text directly in the document.
- Naming your document's properties accurately including document title, subject, keywords and author. Don't forget to update your metadata.

What are accessibility checkers?

Common software such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, and Adobe Acrobat for PDFs have accessibility checkers. If you have followed the above steps, you should be able to reduce accessibility issues and improve access for people with disability.

Further resources

This resource is part of a suite of training resources including a disability-friendly language guide and accessible and inclusive communication. Visit the Queensland Disability Plan website at www.qld.gov.au/qld-disability-plan

Queensland Government