Accessibility Basics for Public-Facing Electronic Material

All University of Mississippi programs, services, and activities should be accessible to all students, staff, faculty, and the public. This includes all technology products used to deliver academic programs and services, electronic and information resources, student services, information technology services, and auxiliary programs and services. Accessibility is an institution-wide responsibility that requires commitment and involvement from all members of our campus community. It is the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do. It is the law. The following strategic areas were identified because of their impact on students, employees, and visitors.

Websites and Social Media

- Ensuring our websites are accessible means providing everyone equal access and equal opportunity to access online resources, documents, and multimedia. Federal regulations require public universities to have accessible websites. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0) are the prevailing standards of website accessibility and is the guide to our practice at UM.
- Captions are required by law when videos are published on UM-sponsored and UM-affiliated public-facing websites, including social media accounts. All videos on UM-sponsored and UM-affiliated public-facing websites must include captions.
- Most automatically generated captioning programs, such as YouTube, Echo360, or others, are not ADA compliant because there are accuracy issues, misspellings, and a lack of proper punctuation. Automatically generated captions must be edited to 99% accuracy to meet the university’s legal requirements for public facing websites.
- Alt-text is the written copy that appears in the place of an image on a webpage or social media account. This text helps screen-reading tools describe images to visually impaired readers and can allow for better search engine optimization. Concise, descriptive ‘Alt Text’ must be provided for all images, objects, graphics, and animated GIFs used on all UM-affiliated websites and social media accounts.
- Use good semantic structure by using headings in a logical order (h1, h2, h3, etc.); do not skip heading levels so that a screen reader can properly relay information.
- Make sure all content and navigation is accessible using the keyboard only.
- Use the WAVE Accessibility Tool to assess accessibility issues. The tool is available online and as a browser extension for Firefox and Chrome.
- Use descriptive wording for hyperlink text (“DO-IT Knowledge Base” rather than generic “click here” or “read more”).
- Use strong color contrast and avoid using color as only means of relaying information.
• Departmental or program social media accounts, including Facebook, YouTube, and Vimeo should include closed captions. If necessary, generate and edit captions in YouTube and link from YouTube to a social media platform.
• When using Instagram, free or paid app options are available to add captions as an overlay on the video file. A transcript of the video can also be provided in the caption space using #Transcript.
• Use CamelCase hashtags that utilize initial capitalization for each word so screen readers know there are different words. Example: #AccessibilityIsImperative instead of #accessibilityisimperative

Events
• All informational, promotional, and registration materials for all campus events, including departmental events and student organization events, must include an accessibility statement with a contact person and information on requesting accommodations, i.e., “If you require special assistance relating to a disability, please contact (enter name, number of contact person, email of contact person).”
• If a request is received, you are legally required to provide the appropriate accommodation. For assistance in providing requested accommodations, contact Student Disability Services, Accessibility, or EORC for additional information.
• All pre-recorded videos/films shown at campus events open to the public must include captions.
• For large events open to the public where the audience is unknown, consider working with the Accessibility office to provide live captioning and/or a sign-language interpreter to ensure effective communication with deaf or hard of hearing individuals. Live captioning is preferred because it reaches a wider audience.

Public Spaces
• When choosing content or creating new content to display in promotional videos, PowerPoint presentations, or other promotional materials played in a public place (e.g., common areas, hallways, the Student Union, the Pavilion, Rebel Market, academic buildings, etc.) captions are required by law and must be 99% accurate.
• Whenever captions are already available (e.g., television) they should be displayed. TVs located in UM public spaces must have closed captions turned on at all times (e.g., the Student Union, the Turner Center, the South Campus Recreation Center, Rebel Market, The Pavilion, housing, academic buildings, etc.).

Contact Accessibility at accessibility@olemiss.edu for assistance or questions regarding accessibility.

Contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at sds@olemiss.edu for assistance or questions regarding accommodations for students with disabilities.