

How to: Create an Accessible MS Office File

What is an Accessible Office File?

An accessible Office file includes characteristics that allow it to be can be successfully accessed by a user without a mouse using keyboard commands and using a screen reader (read aloud software). There are four basic characteristics of accessible files:

1. Text is formatted with the Styles options on the Home Ribbon.
2. Objects (images, charts, graphs) include Alt Text.
3. Tables include Header Rows.
4. Hyperlinks are constructed with clear text.

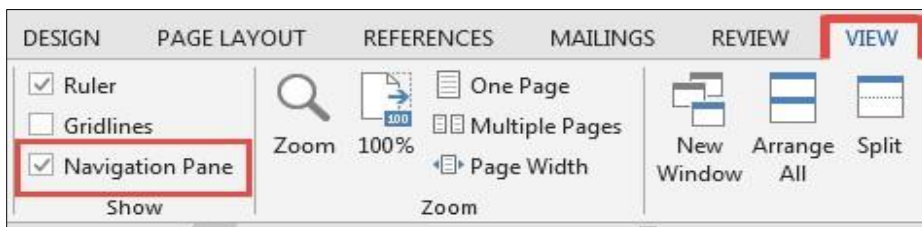
Steps to Create an Accessible Office File

Step 1. Format Text with Styles

1. Use built-in Styles and Headings to apply formatting to text.
 - a. Before you begin typing, select a “Style” from the options in the “Styles” group on the “Home” ribbon, *or*
 - b. Select the text to format, and then select a “Style”.
2. To modify a “Style”, format your text using “Font” and “Paragraph” commands, then right-click on a “Style” name and select “Update to Match Selection”.



3. As “Headings” are added to your document, they will create an automatic document map, displayed from the “View” tab, by selecting “Navigation Pane” in the “Show” tools group.



Step 2. Add Alt Text to Objects

Alt Text (Alternate Text) is added to objects to be read aloud to convey the instructional purpose, message, or explanation for the use of the object. To add Alt Text to an object:

1. Right-click on an object and select “Format”.
2. In the next window, select the “Layout & Properties” icon with the two crossed arrows.

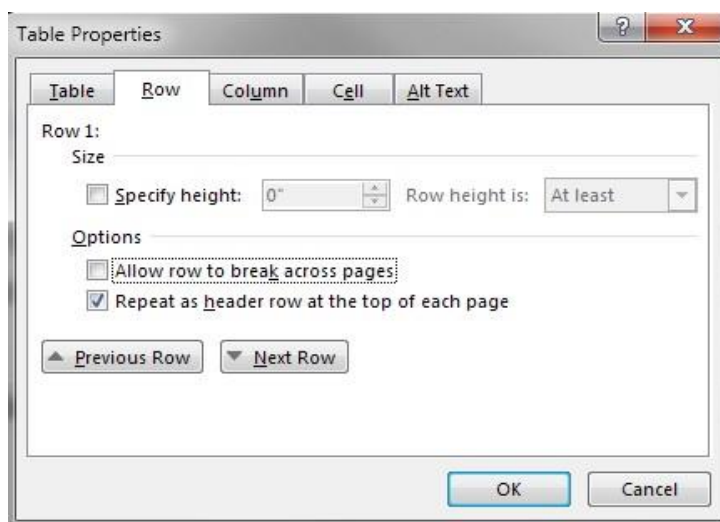


3. Expand the “Alt Text” field and add a description in the Title and Description fields. You do not always have to add a title because all screen reader software reads from the Description field and some read both.

Step 3. Format Tables to include Rows marked as table headers

Although a table may only be present on one page, by marking the header row, screen reader software will distinguish that row for the listener. To select one row as a table header:

1. Select the row in your table that includes the column header information.
2. Right click on the selection and select “Table Properties”.
3. In the “Table Properties” dialog box, select the “Row” tab, check the box labeled “Repeat as header row at the top of each page”, and select OK.



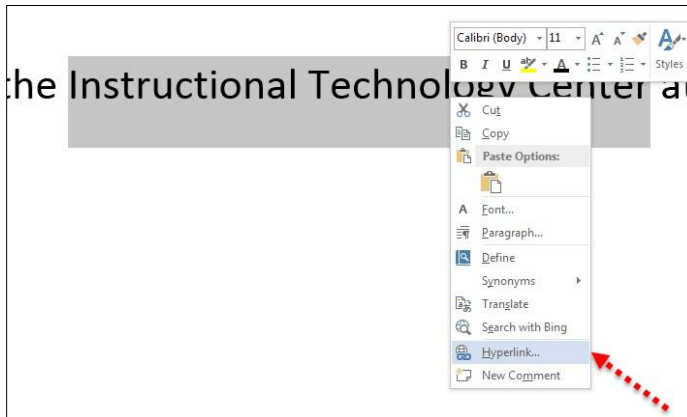
Step 4. Format hyperlinks with clear text

Hyperlinks are clickable or live links in a document that can be selected to move to another location. Hyperlinks may be links to a location in a local file such as the [Instructions for Creating an Accessible file](#) in this document; an application or file on a local device, such as the email client that will open when you select the email address in the footer of this document; or a web location, which will only activate when the link is accessed on a device with Internet access.

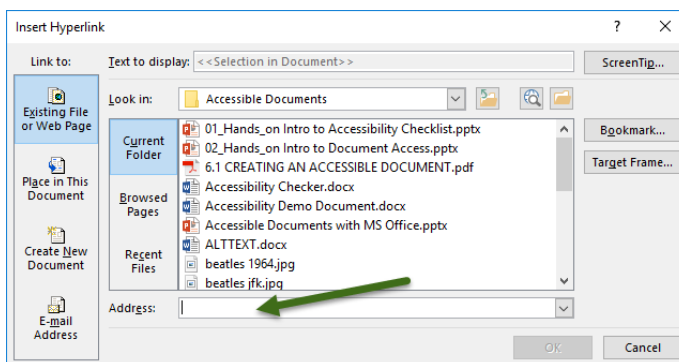
An example of a clear text hyperlink is the following reference to the [Instructional Technology Center](#) at American River College, which is the location where you are receiving this training. An example of unclear text is the address <https://itc.arc.losrios.edu/>, which would be read, letter by letter to a user listening to the file on a screen reader.

To create a hyperlink:

1. Select the text to reformat as a hyperlink.
2. Right-click on the selection and choose “Hyperlink”.



3. First copy the Web address you would like to use from the site. Then in the next window, paste the address.

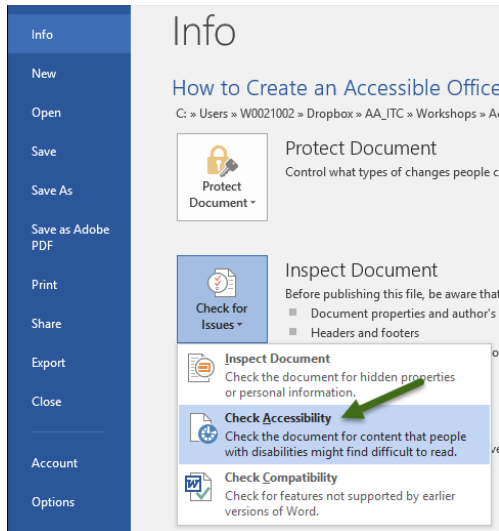


4. Click OK.

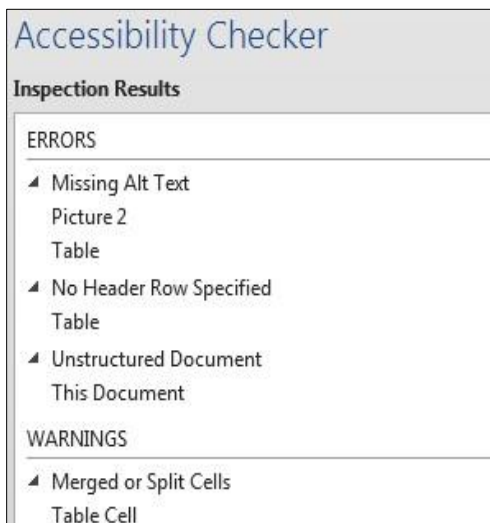
Check the Accessibility of an Office File

You can check the Accessibility status of an Office file and correct any issues using the Accessibility Checkers in Word, PowerPoint, and Excel.

1. From the “File” menu, in the “Info” window, select the “Check for Issues” button.
2. From the list of options, select the “Check Accessibility” option.



3. In the “Accessibility Checker” pane that opens to the right of the document, click on each item that is identified as an error and correct it by selecting a built-in “Style”, adding “Alt Text”, identifying the “Header” row, or creating “Clear Text” links. As the corrections are completed, the item will be removed from the list.



4. Save the file when the issues are corrected.