<u>Tools to Improve the Accessibility of Documents, Slides, Videos, and Websites</u>

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We all have different needs and preferences when it comes to consuming the media in our lives. Our students are the same. Some need webpages read aloud, some need different color schemes or fonts, and others need captions enabled on videos. Those are just a few of the things that can be done to improve the accessibility of documents, slides, videos, and websites used in our classrooms.

Improving the accessibility of documents, slides, videos, and websites used to be a lot more difficult than it is today. Here are some tools that you and your students can use to improve the accessibility of media used in your classroom.

Improve the Accessibility of Websites

Microsoft Edge
- If you have access to Microsoft Edge (the default for Windows computers) then should familiarize yourself with Microsoft's Immersive Reader tool. Immersive Reader in Microsoft Edge can be used to have pages read aloud, to alter the font size and spacing, and to alter the color scheme of articles read on websites.

- Microsoft Edge is also available to use on Android and iOS phones and tablets. A read-aloud function is available in the iOS and Android versions of Microsoft Edge.

- Mac users aren't left out of using Microsoft Edge and Immersive Reader. Microsoft Edge is currently (November, 2019) available as a beta product to install on Mac OS. It contains the Immersive Reader functions that are available in the Windows version of Edge. You can find the Mac OS version of Edge right at https://www.microsoftedgeinsider.com/en-us/?form=MO12FS&OCID=MO12FS

Safari
- Safari has a "reader view" option that you can find to the left of the URL in the address bar. The reader view menu appears as four horizontal lines. Click the

menu to enter reader view. The reader view will lets users change the font style and size as well as the overall page color scheme.

- Safari's reader view is in addition to all of the other accessibility options that are built into the Mac operating system. A comprehensive list of Mac accessibility options is available at https://www.apple.com/accessibility/mac/

Chrome
- The Chrome web browser can be customized to each user's preferences regarding font size, font style, and spacing. Those setting choices can be made by typing chrome://settings/fonts into the address bar in Chrome. The choices will apply as the default wherever you go in with Chrome.

- You can zoom-in or zoom-out on individual pages in Chrome by simply holding the control key then tapping the "+" key on a Windows or Chromebook keyboard or by holding the command key then tapping the "+" key on a Mac keyboard.

- There are Chrome extensions that offer read-aloud capabilities. Read & Write for Chrome is one of the most popular ones for use in school settings. Other accessibility extensions can be found at https://chrome.google.com/webstore/category/ext/22-accessibility

Firefox
- The Firefox users can customize default font sizes, spacing, and colors. These options are available by opening the options menu listed under the "Tools" drop-down menu in Firefox. Alternatively, the options menu can be accessed by typing "about:preferences" (without quotation marks) into the address bar in Firefox.

- Other accessibility options for Firefox include using a keyboard to navigate webpages, zooming to enlarge pages, and installing screen reader add-ons. You can enable keyboard navigation from the options menu under general settings. To zoom in to enlarge pages simply hold down the ctrl key then press the "+" key. To reverse that process hold ctrl and press the "-" key. A couple of screen reader add-ons for Firefox can be found at http://bit.ly/accsettings and complete list of Firefox accessibility settings is available at https://mzl.la/2DSxHhy

Improve the Accessibility of Your Slideshows

- **Automatic Subtitles for Your Live Presentations**
Both PowerPoint and Google Slides offer automatic subtitling tools that you can use when presenting to an audience.

  In Google Slides the subtitles appear at the bottom of your screen when you are in full-screen presentation mode. You can enable subtitles by entering presentation mode then hovering your cursor over the lower-left corner of your slides to make the subtitles option appear. This short video (https://youtu.be/cuH8n0UqpJU) provides a demonstration of how to enable subtitles in Google Slides.

  PowerPoint gives you the choice of having subtitles appear at the top or bottom of the screen when you are using the full-screen presentation mode. The process of enabling subtitles is slightly different depending upon whether you're using the web browser version or desktop version of PowerPoint. In both versions the subtitles options are found by choosing the "slideshow" menu. This video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrLRJlbNlRc) demonstrates subtitles in the browser version of PowerPoint and this video (https://youtu.be/IvXO47uaPpc) demonstrates subtitles in the desktop version of PowerPoint.

- **Add Alt Text to Your Slides**
Alt text, short for alternative text, is text that you can add to images and videos to describe what they are and or what they contain. Adding alt text can make your slideshows accessible to people who use screen readers. The alt text describes what is in a picture, chart, or video that is included in a slide. PowerPoint, Keynote, and Google Slides all provide options for adding alt text to your presentations.

  To add alt text to images or videos in Google Slides simply right-click on the image or slide to which you need to add alt text. The menu that appears when you right-click on the image or video will include an alt text option where you can then write a title and description for the image or video. This

(https://youtu.be/Z5RnzMfj9Qk) video provides a demonstration of how to add alt text to Google Slides.

You can add alt text to PowerPoint slides by right-clicking on an image in your slides. One of the options that appears when you right-click on an image in PowerPoint is "edit alt text." Select that option then write your description of the image.

Keynote users can add alt text to images by selecting an image on a slide which then opens a panel on the right-hand side of the slide. In that panel select the image tab then add your alt text in the description box that appears at the bottom of the screen.

Improve YouTube Video Accessibility

YouTube can be a great source of educational videos to either display in your classroom or have students watch on their own. Fortunately, YouTube offers some easy ways to improve the accessibility of the videos that you use in your instruction.

- **Enable and Customize Captions Display**
  You can enable captions on any YouTube video by clicking on the little "CC" icon in the lower-right corner of any video that you're viewing. This will turn on the automatically generated captions for any spoken words in the video you're viewing.

  The default size, style, and color of the automatic captions on a YouTube video may not work for every viewer. If that's the case for you or your students, you can adjust how the captions are displayed. To adjust the captions display click on the small "gear" icon in the lower-right corner of the video that you're viewing. Once you click that icon you'll be able to select "subtitles/CC." Within that menu there is an "options" menu that you can click on to select the size, style, and color of the captions display. This video (https://youtu.be/p0NgXg7A5U8) will walk you through the process of customizing the display of the captions on YouTube videos.

- **Edit the Captions on Your Videos**
  If you're making original videos for your students to watch, when you upload those videos to YouTube they will be automatically captioned. However, the automatic captions are not always accurate. For example, my last name is always captioned as "Bern" instead of it's proper spelling of Byrne. You can edit the automatic captions. I've outlined the caption editing process in this video (https://youtu.be/4eCdC47AKJM).

- **Create a Transcript of any YouTube Video**
  VidReader (vidreader.com) is a free tool that you can use to create a transcript of any YouTube video that has spoken English in it. To create a transcript with VidReader you simply copy and paste the URL of the video that you want transcribed. VidReader will then generate a transcript for you. The transcript will be time-stamped so that when students are reading the transcript they can click on any word in the transcript to jump to the corresponding section of the video.

Improve Document Accessibility

- **Google Documents**
  Google Documents has some built-in accessibility options that you should know how to enable. There are also some third-party Google Docs add-ons that can help you improve the accessibility of your documents.

  In Google Documents there is a built-in voice typing capability. To find the voice typing tool simply open the "Tools" drop-down menu then select "Voice typing." A microphone icon will appear in the left margin of your document. Click it to activate your microphone then start speaking and your words will appear on the page. You will have to speak directions like "question mark" to add punctuation and "new line" to start writing on a new line.

  In the same "Tools" drop-down menu that contains the voice typing tool you will find the general accessibility settings menu. It is there that you can enable support for screen readers and screen magnifiers.

  On the topic of screen readers, when you insert an image into a Google Document you can right-click on it to bring up the option to add alt text. Alt text is text that

you add to an image to describe what is in the image. Screen readers will read the alt text.

Grackle is a Google Docs and Slides add-on that will check your documents and slides for accessibility compliance. When you run Grackle's accessibility checker it will identify places where your slide doesn't meet accessibility standards. It makes suggestions for improvement on the areas in which your document, slide, or sheet doesn't meet accessibility standards. Some of the suggestions can be implemented with just a click from the Grackle Add-on menu while others are changes that you will have to make yourself.

You can watch a demonstration of all of the Google Docs accessibility options mentioned above right here https://youtu.be/w9ocW9sh3zs

- **Word Documents**
When it comes to accessibility options, Microsoft Word is far ahead of Google Documents. Not only does Word come with many built-in accessibility options, Word also contains extensive help documentation that can access without exiting the document that you are working on.

  Speech-to-text is built into the current versions of Word. To use speech-to-text simply open a new document then on the "Home" ribbon select "Dictation." Dictation is available for a variety of languages in Word.

  Text-to-speech or read-aloud capabilities are available in Word through the power of Microsoft's Immersive Reader. Immersive Reader will read documents aloud. Additionally, Immersive Reader can be used to alter the spacing of a document, to highlight words and syllables while the document is read aloud, and to highlight parts of speech as a document is read aloud. Immersive Reader can be found in the "View" menu in Word.

  Microsoft Word has a built-in accessibility checker. You can find the accessibility checker under the "Review" menu in Word. Simply click "Check Accessibility" and Word will run an accessibility check then give you feedback on areas for improving the accessibility of your document. That feedback will appear in the right margin of your document. Below the suggestions for improvement you will see a link to "read more about making documents accessible." Click that link will open help documentation and suggestions that you can read in while simultaneously implementing them into your current document.

Microsoft offers a good video overview of Word's accessibility checker. That video is available at https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/video-check-the-accessibility-of-your-document-9d660cba-1fcd-45ad-a9d1-c4f4b5eb5b7d

More About Immersive Reader

As mentioned in the sections about the Edge web browser and Word, Microsoft's Immersive Reader is a fantastic accessibility tool. Not only can it be used as a read-aloud tool, it can also be used to alter the font size, font spacing, and page color schemes of pages that students view. And Immersive Reader includes a picture dictionary tool for students to use. Microsoft's official guide to Immersive Reader can be found at http://bitly.com/33Qt3Lx

Immersive Reader is available in most of the Microsoft products in use in schools today including OneNote, Word, Forms, Teams, Office Lens, Flipgrid, and Outlook. Additionally, Immersive Reader has been incorporated into more than a dozen popular third-party programs including Thinglink, Wakelet, and Nearpod. The full list of third-party services that have incorporated Immersive Reader can be found at http://bitly.com/immr3rd