



Beyond 99 Red Balloons

A pragmatic guide to alternative
text

Link to deck:
bit.ly/99balloons-fldc24





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Spot (he/him/they)

Spotty McSpots A Lot

Neighborhood love bug

- **Chasing his own tail**
- **Getting pets**
- **Drools**



What we'll discuss today

- ▶ What is accessibility?
- ▶ Terms and definitions
- ▶ Image types
- ▶ Alt text examples
- ▶ Bonus: Overview of slideshows (if time permits)
- ▶ Resources and tools



Terms and Definitions

International Web Accessibility Laws and Guidelines

- ▶ [Web and Mobile Accessibility Directive](#)
- ▶ [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)
- ▶ [Bill 81c](#)
- ▶ [European Accessibility Act \(proposed\)](#)
- ▶ [Section 508](#)
- ▶ [Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act](#)
- ▶ [Equality Act 2010](#)
- ▶ [Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities](#)

<https://commonlook.com/international-web-accessibility-standards/>

WCAG Guidelines

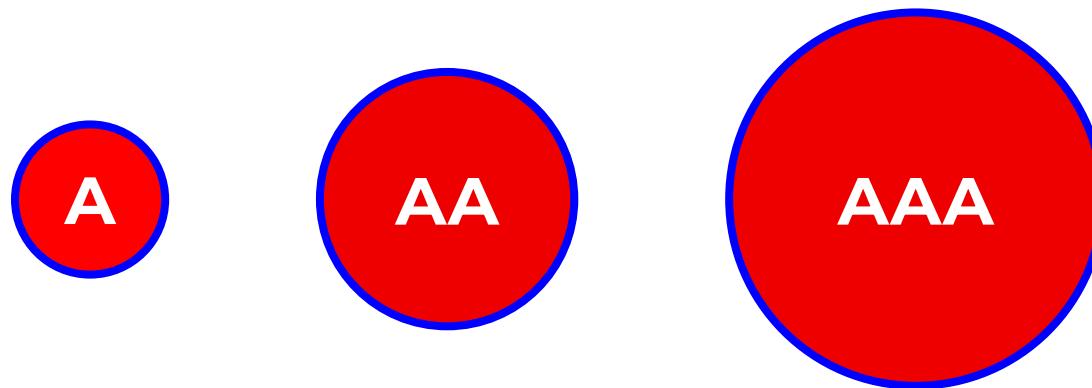


Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) goal is to provide a single shared standard for web content accessibility.

They are success criteria, not an end all.

Guidelines

WCAG is broken down into three levels; A, AA, and AAA. Each increasing A in the level indicates additional criteria to follow.



WCAG

Success criteria around images

1.1.1 Non-text Content (Level A)

1.4.5 Images of Text (Level AA)

1.4.9 Images of Text (No Exception) (Level AAA)

This success criterion benefits those:

- ▶ Who are blind or low vision
- ▶ Using AT (screen readers, mobile phones)
- ▶ Who have difficulty perceiving visual content
- ▶ Who have images turned off
- ▶ SEO (Search engine optimization)

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/>

POUR

An acronym for four high-level principles around accessibility

► **Perceivable**

- The user can identify content and interface elements by means of the senses.

► **Operable**

- A user can successfully use interactive elements.

► **Understandable**

- Users are be able to comprehend the content, and learn how to use the interface.

► **Robust**

- Users should be able to choose the technology they use to interact with digital assets.



Let's Break it Down

Visual Needs

Make it easy to see, accommodate visual needs.



Motor Needs

Make it easy to interact,
accommodate motor needs.



Auditory Needs

Make it easy to hear,
accommodate auditory needs.

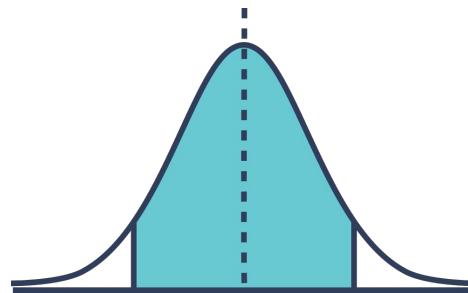


Cognitive Needs

Make it easy to understand,
accommodate cognitive needs.

“ When you call something an edge case,
you’re really just defining the limits of
what you care about. ”

— Eric Meyer





Assistive Technology (AT)

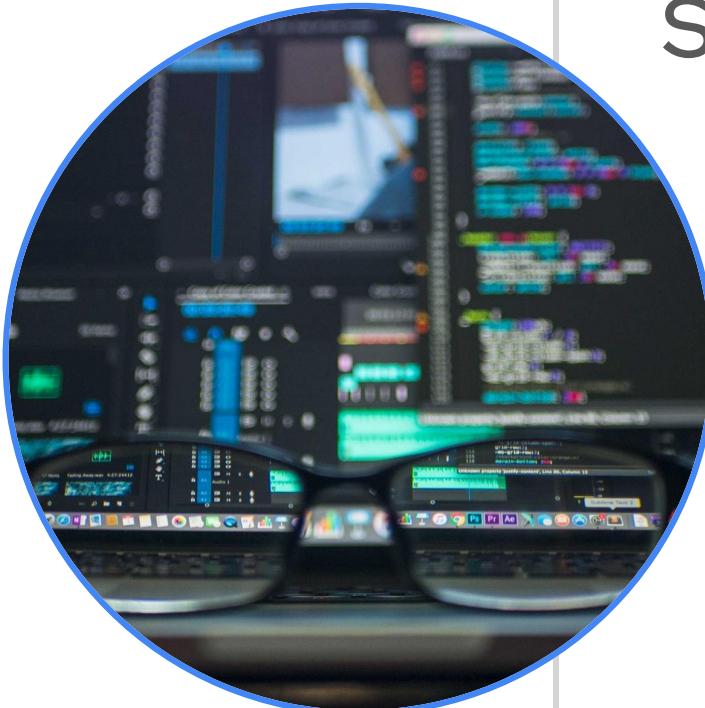
Screen Readers



Screen readers – used to listen to the content of a webpage.

Screen Magnification Software

Enlarges screen content to make it easier to read for users with a partial sight impairment.



Alternative Input Devices



- ▶ Head pointers
- ▶ Motion tracking or eye tracking
- ▶ Single switch entry devices
- ▶ Large-print and tactile keyboards
- ▶ Speech input software

Virtual Reality



VR comes with new chances to include people with disabilities and make games more accessible.

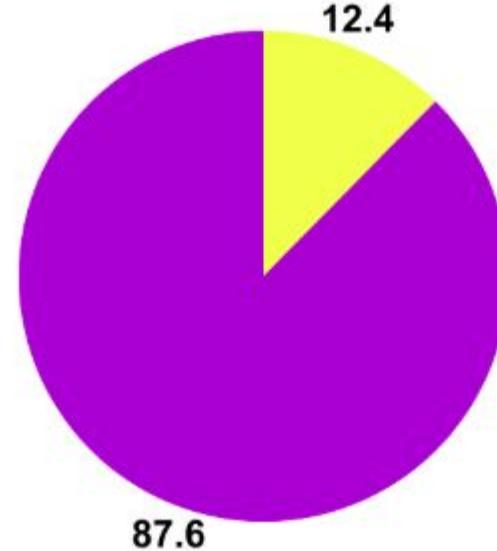
More Assistive Technologies and Adaptive Strategies

- ▶ Eye tracking
- ▶ Accelerators
- ▶ Keyboard customization
- ▶ Pop-up and animations blockers
- ▶ Refreshable braille display
- ▶ Reading assistants
- ▶ Page maps

Screen Readers

Who uses them?

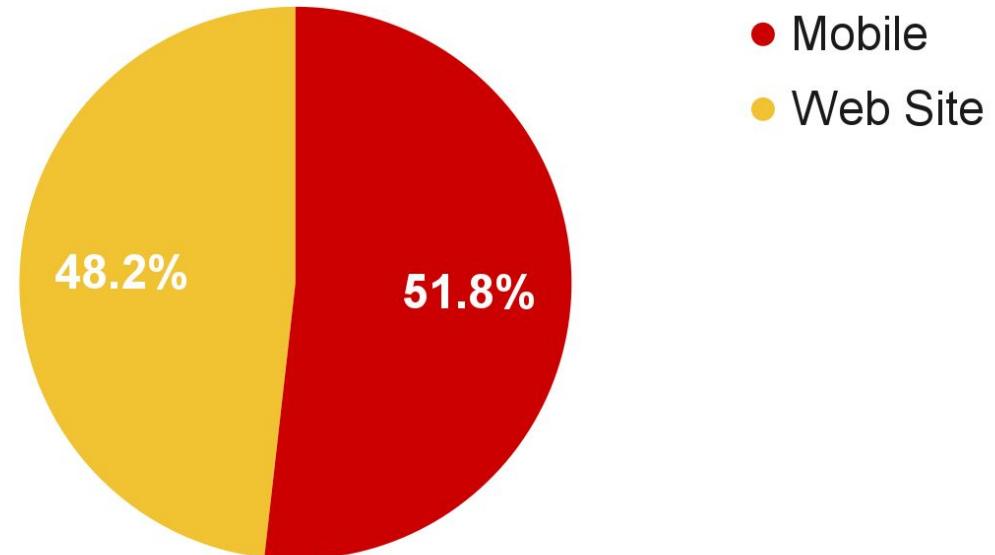
People who live with disabilities



<https://webaim.org/projects/screenreadersurvey8/>

Screen Readers

Mobile App vs Web Site Usage



<https://webaim.org/projects/screenreadersurvey8/>

Image Types



Why do we love images?



Images can be
major barriers
when they are
not accessible.

Accessible images benefit:

- ▶ Screen readers
- ▶ Speech input devices
- ▶ Speech enabled websites
- ▶ When images are turned off in their browsers
- ▶ SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Image Types

- ▶ Simple
- ▶ Decorative
- ▶ CAPTCHAs
- ▶ Images of Text
- ▶ Groups of Images
- ▶ Image Maps
- ▶ Complex
- ▶ Functional

Common uses for images

- ▶ Links
- ▶ Logo
- ▶ Decoration
- ▶ Orientation
- ▶ Buttons



Simple Images

Simple Image

The image conveys simple information
(e.g., a photograph, icon, or logo)



Head Shot (Simple Image)

- Person's name
- It's a headshot
- Is something happening?
- Don't over-describe





Decorative Images

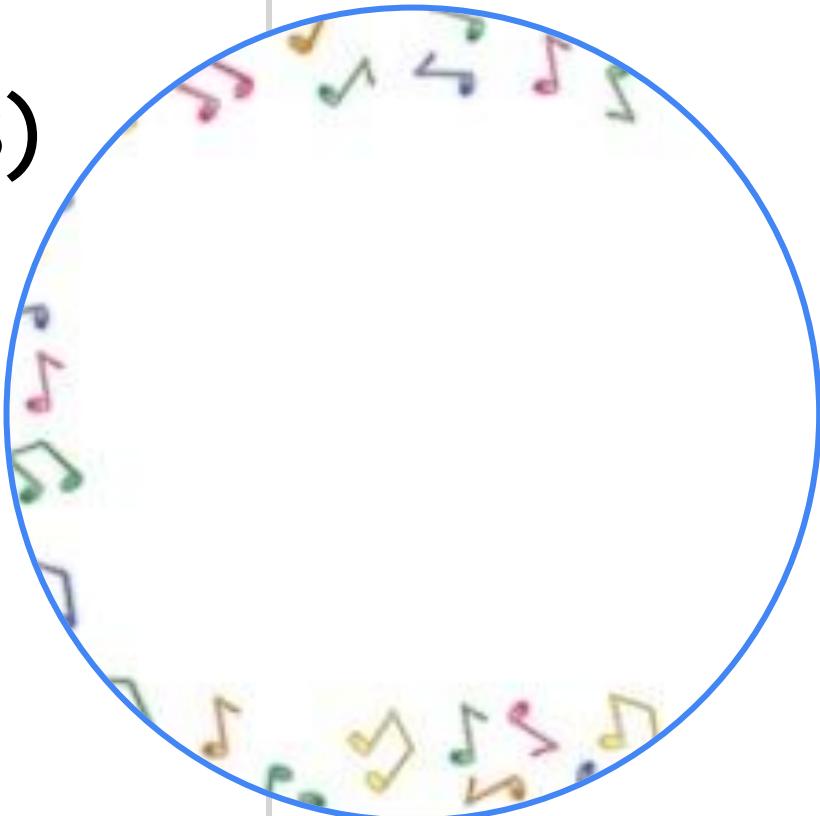
Decorative Image

The image is purely decorative, not informative



Borders (Decorative Images)

The image is purely decorative,
not informative





Images of Text

Images of Text



THE BEST '80S MUSIC:
WHAT'S 100 GREATEST SONGS OF
THE '80S

Images of text display text that is intended to be read

Logos (Images of Text)

- ▶ Every logo needs alt text
- ▶ "[Organization name] logo."
- ▶ Include text





Groups of Images

Groups of Images

The text alternative for one image should convey the information for the entire group



4.7 out of 5

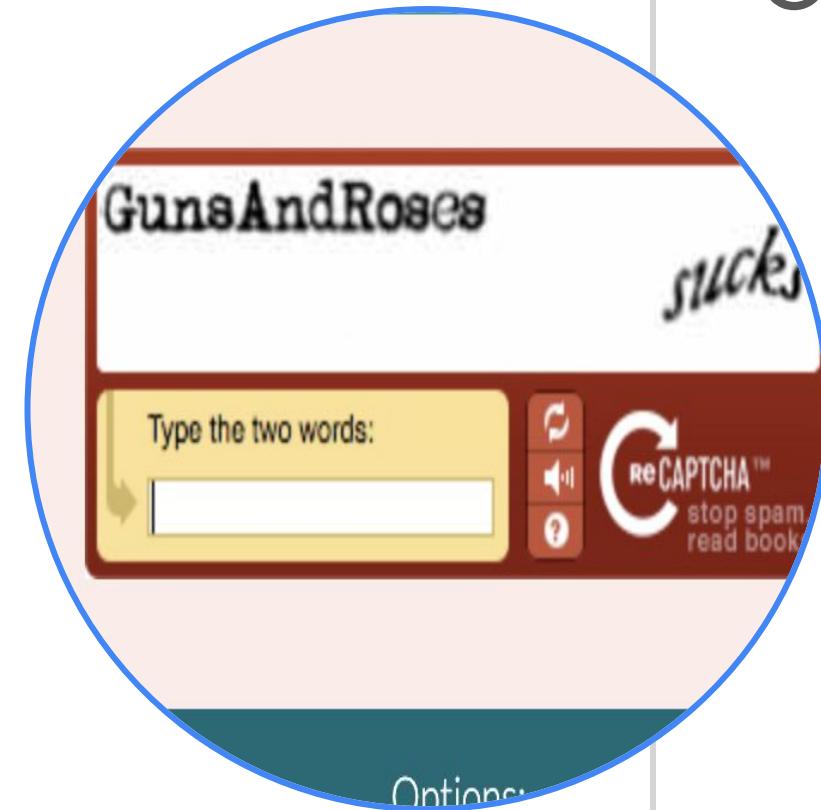


CAPTCHAS



CAPTCHAs:

Confirm whether we are human



CAPTCHAs:



How to avoid user input

- No single way
- Honeypot
- Simple questions
- Are you human?



Complex Images

Complex Image

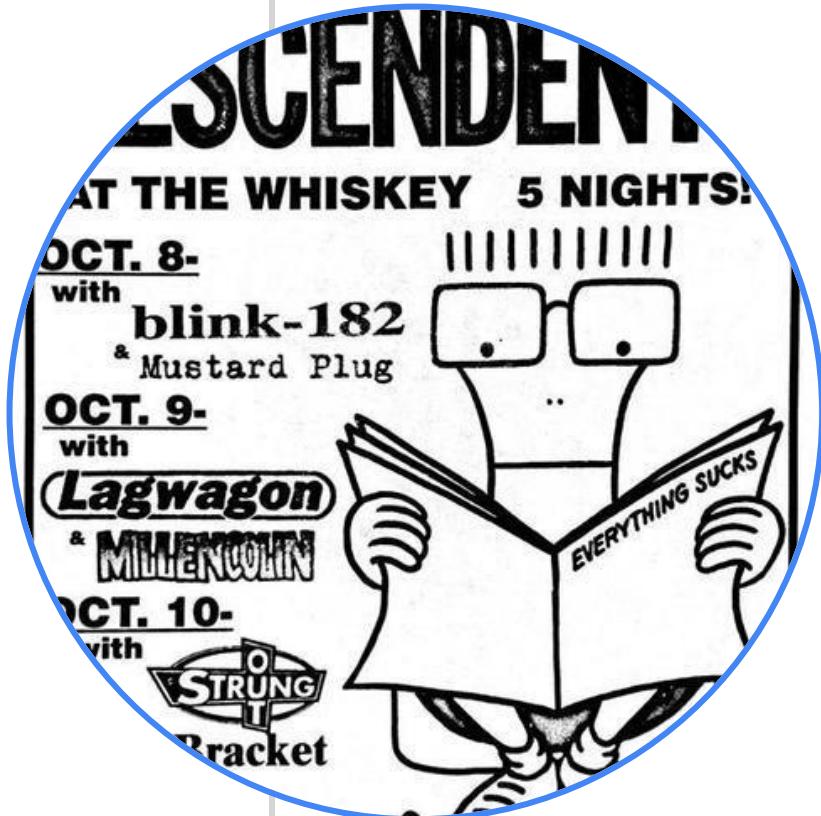
The image conveys complex information (e.g., a chart or graph)



<https://unsplash.com/photos/YljqPO1nLmY>

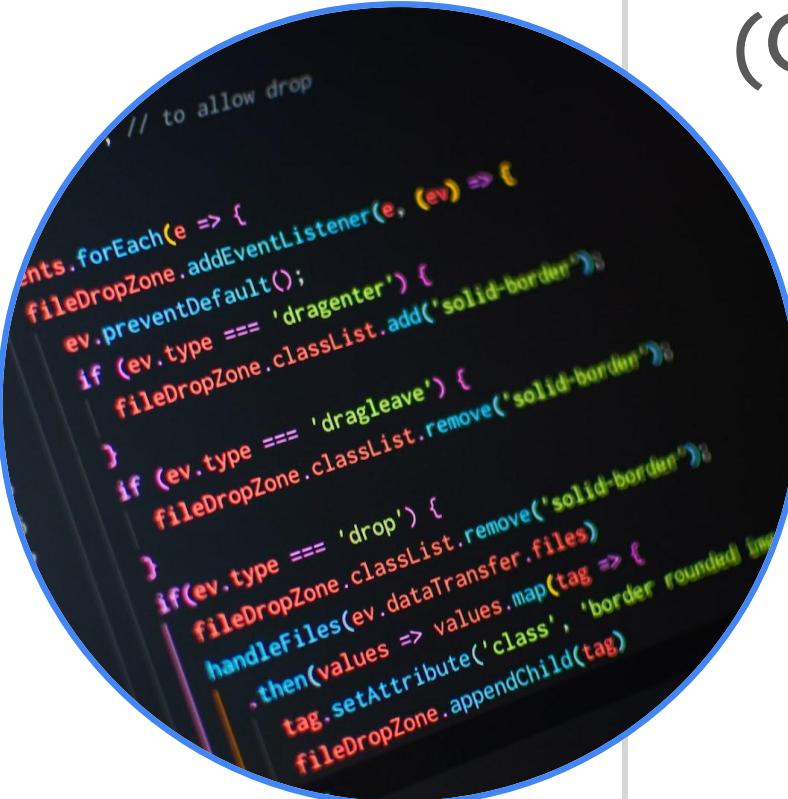
Infographic (Complex Image)

- ▶ Include any text
- ▶ Provide vital layout information
- ▶ Order the information



Code (Complex Image)

The image is a screenshot of code, try to use code blocks





Functional Images

WCAG

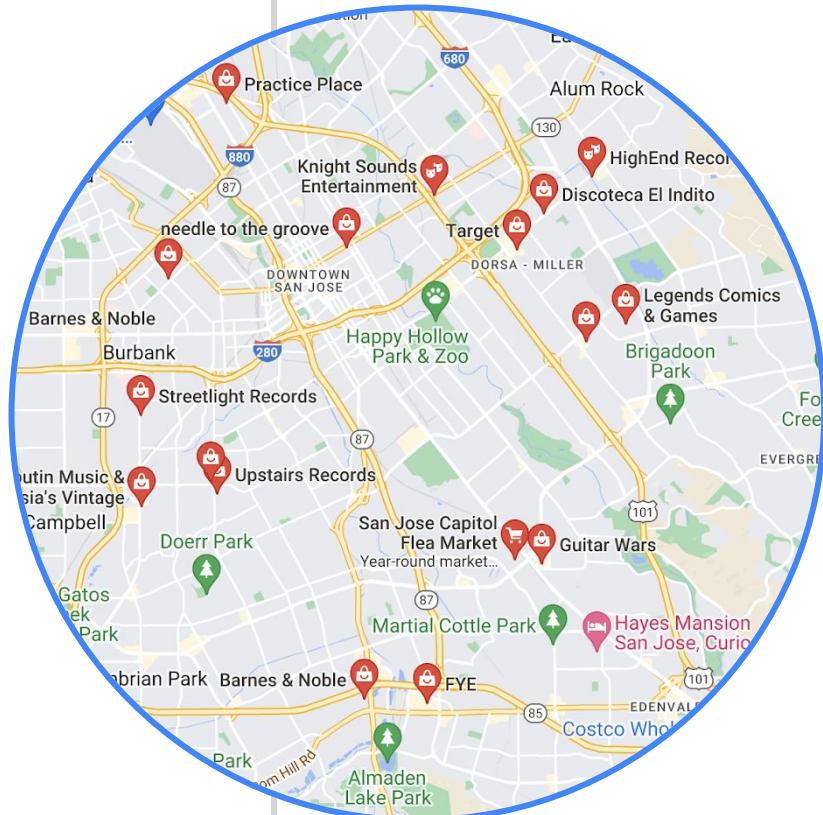
Success criteria around the use of functional images

- ▶ **2.4.4 Link Purpose (In Context):** The purpose of each link can be determined from the link text alone or from the link text together with its programmatically determined link context. (Level A)

- ▶ **2.4.9 Link Purpose (Link Only):** A mechanism is available to allow the purpose of each link to be identified from link text alone, except where the purpose of the link would be ambiguous to users in general. (Level AAA)

Functional Images (Images maps)

- ▶ Must include alt text
- ▶ Provide all text in the image



Images conveying file format (Functional)

Conveying information within link text



Image used in a button (Functional)

The image is used to give the
button a distinct style



Stand-alone icon image that has a function (Functional)

The image conveys a print icon





Miscellaneous Images

Screenshots

Generally add visual explanations to the text
(How-Tos)

- ▶ “Screenshot of [INSTRUCTIONS] as explained on page.”



Illustrations (simple or complex images)

Be sure to describe what adds value



Do's and Don'ts

Images can be major barriers when they are not accessible:

Alt text Don'ts

- ▶ Don't begin with "image of", "picture of", etc.
- ▶ Don't use the file name (screenshot.jpeg)
- ▶ Don't be too wordy
- ▶ Don't rely on Artificial Intelligence
- ▶ Don't use a space (" "), Use null ("")
- ▶ Don't use emoji icons or ASCII art in alt text

Alt text Do's

For descriptions, users generally want:

- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ Location
- ▶ Colors
- ▶ Feelings or emotions
- ▶ Who is present (people)
- ▶ What is present (objects)
- ▶ What is happening?



Not all
descriptions
are created
equal



What is the image's purpose?

Clarify the purpose of the image

Fun Examples





**Alt text:
Men with
makeup**



Men with makeup



Men with makeup



Men with makeup



The faces of the music group
Kiss in their stage makeup



The faces of the music group Kiss in their stage makeup



David Bowie with a red and blue lightning bolt on his face



Alt text:
Rio



Rio



Rio



Rio



The iconic statue of “Christ the Redeemer” looking over the city of Rio de Janeiro.



The iconic statue of “Christ the Redeemer” looking over the city of Rio de Janeiro



Duran Duran's album cover Rio by artist Patrick Nagel



Alt text:
Dead bug



Dead bug



Dead bug



Dead Bug



A bug on a leaf carrying a stack of dead bugs on its back



A bug on a leaf carrying a stack of dead bugs on its back.



A volkswagen beetle with a Grateful Dead logo on its hood



**Alt text:
Paul Revere**



Paul Revere



Paul Revere



Paul Revere



Statue of Paul Revere in a park on his horse



Statue of Paul Revere in a park on his horse



DefJam record of Beastie Boys songs Paul Revere and It's the new style



**Alt text:
Flock of
seagulls**



Flock of Seagulls



Flock of Seagulls



Flock of Seagulls



A flock of seagulls flying
against a bright blue sky



A flock of seagulls flying
against a bright blue sky



The band Flock of seagulls
posing with 80's style clothes
and hairstyles



**Alt text:
AC/DC**



AC/DC



AC/DC



AC/DC



AC: a tilde over a line. DC: a line over a dashed line



AC: a tilde over a line. DC: a line over a dashed line



The band AC/DC with
Malcolm Young in the front



Alt text: The Cure



The Cure



The Cure



The Cure



Someone holding a tray of
pills



Someone holding a tray of pills



The Cure's "Kiss Me Kiss Me Kiss Me" album with shiny red lips on the cover

Bottom Line





Social Media Accessibility should be across all platforms

Why write accessible content for social media?



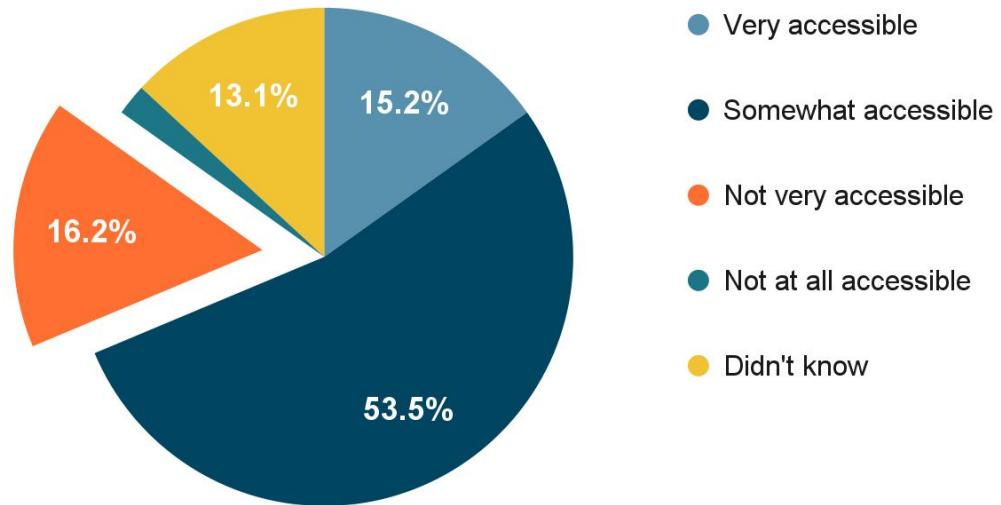
88%

Of 1792 screenreader users, 88% use it
on a mobile device

54.3% found social media SOMEWHAT
accessible

Screen Readers

Social Media Accessibility

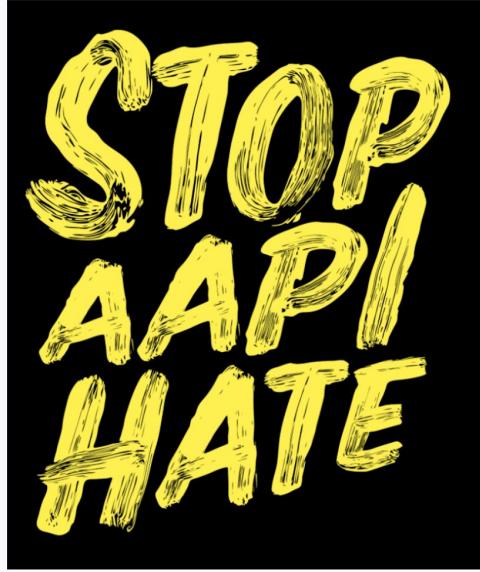


<https://webaim.org/projects/screenreadersurvey8/>

Accessibility in apps

← Edit photo Save

ALT



Description 141/1,000

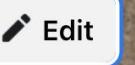
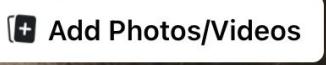
Our communities stand united against racism. Hate against Asian American Pacific Islander communities has risen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

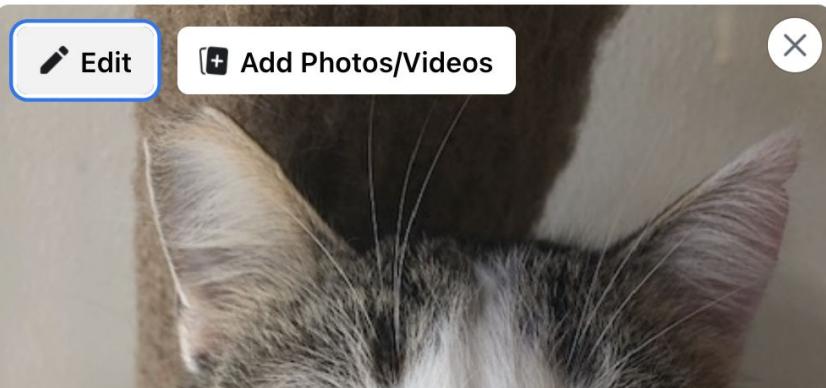
What is alt text?

Alt Text in Facebook

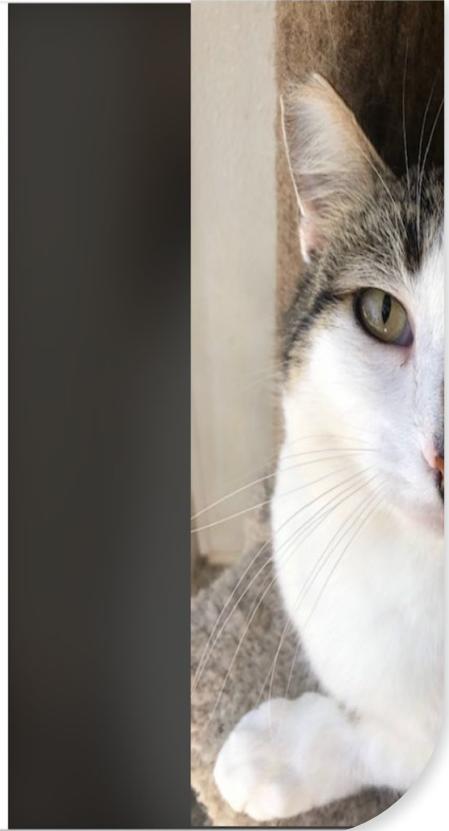
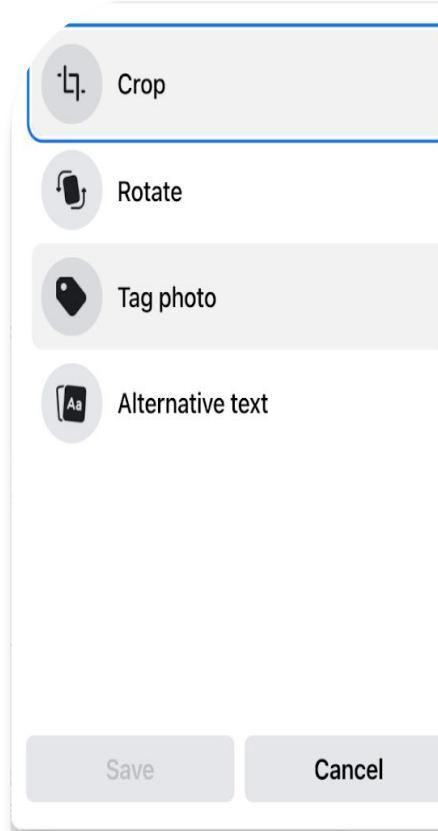
AmyJune Hineline
Public ▾

What's on your mind, AmyJune?

 Edit  Add Photos/Videos



Add to your post      ...



Alt Text in Instagram



volkswagenchick Caption:

If you've never had a supreme court case decide if you have the same rights as others. You have privilege.

Share Your Posts to Facebook



Automatically share your photo and video posts to Facebook.

Facebook Audience

Only Me >

Accessibility

Write Alt Text >

Alt text describes your photos for people with visual impairments. Alt text will be automatically created for your photos or you can choose to write your own.

Alt Text in Twitter

Home

This is how you add alt text

Caption: A11yTalks logo



Unsent Tweets

Tag people Add description

Everyone can reply

Tweet

What is alt text?

Home

Edit photo

ALT



Description

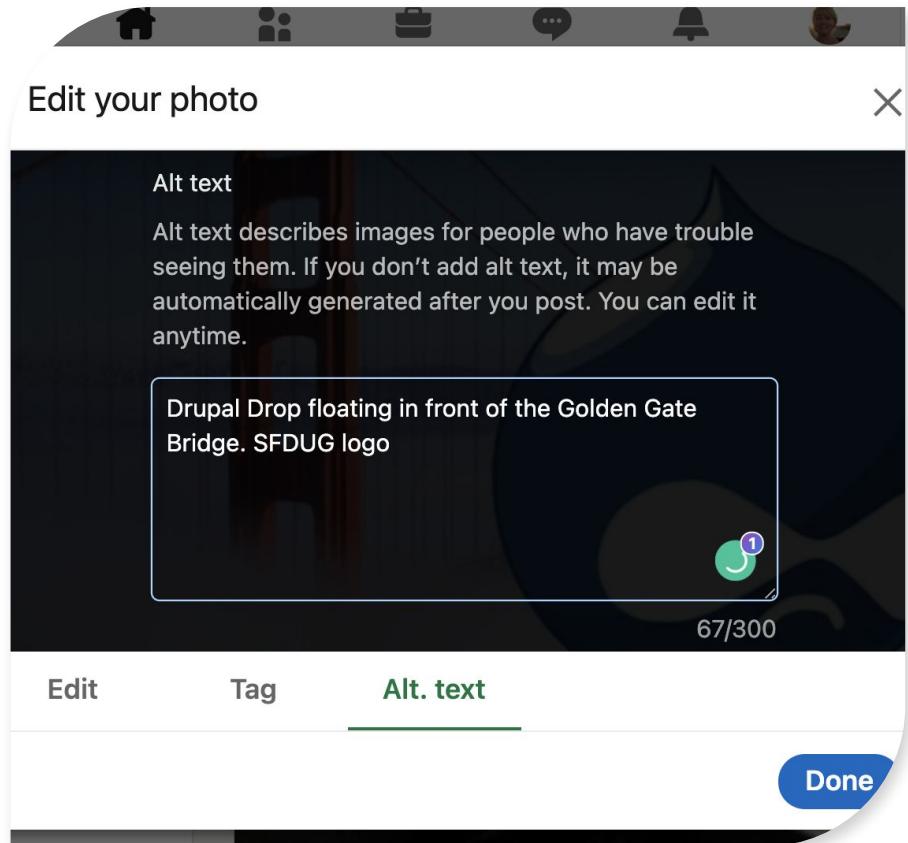
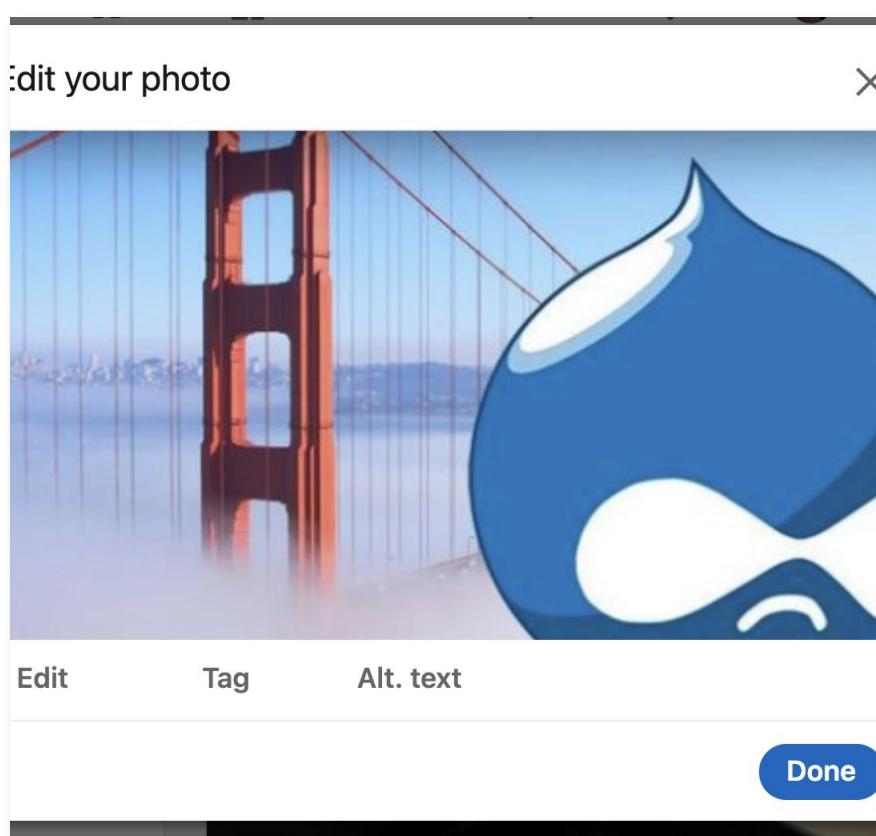
A11yTalks logo

14 / 1,000

Save

What is alt text?

Alt Text in LinkedIn





Thanks!!



linkedin.com/volkswagenchick



twitter.com/volkswagenchick

Slide Shows

The first rule of slideshows is
not to use slideshows

Slideshows

Accessible controls

- ▶ The ability to turn off the player
- ▶ Visible controls
- ▶ Highlighted on focus
- ▶ No keyboard traps

Slideshows

Color contrast



- ▶ Make sure the controls are visible
- ▶ Size and color!
- ▶ Provide generous touch targets

Slideshows

Reasonable alternative



The slideshow does not need to function with style sheets disabled, but all the content needs to be available.

Slideshows

Reasonable
alternative



The slideshow does not need to function with style sheets disabled, but all the content needs to be available.



Tools and Resources

Free tools

- WAVE
- aXe
- WebAim: Contrast Checker
- Siteimprove Accessibility Checker
- Tota1ly
- Section 508 Checklist
- CSS Validation
- HTML Validation
- Readability
- The A11y Project checklist

Links for additional resources

- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#)
- [Understanding the Four Principles of Accessibility](#)
- [ADA COMPLIANCE](#)
- [How to Design Great Alt Text](#)
- [W3C - Resources on Alternative Text for Images](#)
- [Fast Facts of Common Eye Disorders by the CDC](#)
- [Screen Reader User Survey #9 Results](#)