

Emails that welcome new subscribers

Emails that entice subscribers

Emails that keep customers

▶ **Video:** Types of email marketing: Retention emails
4 min

⏮ **Ungraded Plugin:** Identify: Types of email attributes
30 min

✔ **Practice Quiz:** Activity: Write subject lines and preview text
1 question

⏮ **Reading:** Activity Exemplar: Write subject lines and preview text
10 min

⏮ **Reading:** Create accessible emails
20 min

⏮ **Reading:** Spamming: When not to send emails
10 min

📖 **Practice Quiz:** Test your knowledge: Retention emails
4 questions

Review: Types of email marketing

Create accessible emails

While emails can be an excellent marketing method, it's essential to create content every audience can experience equally. This includes people with sensory disabilities, which affect one or more of a person's senses.

In this reading, you will learn about accessibility and explore some best practices for designing effective emails for all audiences, especially for individuals with a disability related to hearing, vision, or both.

Why is accessibility important?

The term **accessibility** refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people with disabilities. Emails with poor accessible design may fail to convey auditory and visual information. For example, some emails you send might include videos with information spoken by a narrator or speaker. Including an option to show captions on the video screen or in a transcript helps ensure that people with auditory disabilities can understand the content. Captions or a transcript can also be helpful for any user in an environment where they cannot easily hear sound, such as on a loud, crowded bus or cafe, or play sound without disturbing others, such as in a library.

Inaccessible emails can be confusing or difficult for many with auditory and visual sensory disabilities to navigate. Consistently producing inaccessible emails can reflect negatively on a brand and may lead to a decrease in email open rate and click rate over time. This means lower engagement and a missed opportunity to gain revenue.

Assistive technology

People with disabilities may use assistive technologies to perform tasks that would otherwise be difficult or impossible for them. Some examples of assistive technologies include well-known inventions such as wheelchairs, which help people with mobility disabilities move around, and hearing aids, which enable or enhance people's hearing.

There are lesser-known assistive technologies for text- and image-based digital media. Screen enlargement applications and screen readers are the most popular forms of assistive technology for accessing emails. A **screen enlargement application** helps users see content more easily by magnifying text and images on a computer or digital device screen. A **screen reader** is an application that converts text, buttons, images, and other screen elements into speech or Braille.

Screen readers can identify an email's text content and any invisible code connected to the email's elements like headers, images, or links. When the screen reader reads the invisible code aloud, it identifies the element type and the description the email's creator added. For example, email creators can add invisible code to images called alternative text, or alt text. **Alt text** is a brief, written description of an image with the primary purpose of assisting individuals who are visually impaired. The alt text is not shown visually in the email, but is read aloud by a screen reader. In addition, structural elements such as headers provide screen reader users with information about the content hierarchy in the email.

Best practices for accessible email design

Accessible emails provide clarity and help readers navigate the email's elements. The following best practices and considerations are categorized based on these elements.

Formating

- **Organize headings thoughtfully.** Headers have invisible code called **header tags**. When a screen reader reads a header, it describes header size.
- **Avoid using all capital letters and excessive italicized or underlined text.** This can be difficult for screen readers to process, which means that the information isn't being communicated clearly.

Fonts

- **Text font size should be at least 14.** Small fonts can be hard for individuals with low vision to read. Larger fonts help users identify characters and words more easily. For headings, consider adding bold or using a larger font.
- **Use simple fonts.** Fonts without serifs, or decorative strokes that finish off the end of a letter's stem, are called **sans serif** fonts. These fonts have a minimalistic style, often incorporate wider letter spacing, and are easier for users to read. This is helpful for those with low vision or other types of visual processing disabilities such as dyslexia.
- **Be careful when using emojis.** An emoji is a small, text-based illustration used in electronic messages and webpages. While they can be visually interesting, they may be difficult to understand and hard for low vision users to see. For this reason, avoid using emojis in subject lines and to represent important information.

Colors

- **Use contrasting colors for text and background colors.** Having significant contrast between foreground and background colors helps users with low vision identify words. The most effective contrasting color pair is black text on a white background.
- **Don't rely solely on colors to communicate meaning.** Relying on specific text or image colors to deliver a message can be confusing to those who are color blind.

Images

- **Only use text in images if necessary.** Relying on text in images as the sole method of conveying important information can be confusing to low vision users.
- **Include alt text for all images that are critical to your message.** If an image is informative, actionable, or necessary for the user experience, include accurate alt text that describes the image.
- **Omit alt text for decorative images.** Including alt text for decorative images such as logos, lifestyle images, and icons can be confusing for those using screen readers.

Links

- **Make the purpose of hyperlinked text clear.** In hyperlinked text, vague statements like "Click here," "Go," and "Get started" make an email difficult to understand when using a screen reader. Instead, use actionable language. For example, hyperlinked text for an online retail store sale could read "Learn more about our sale" instead of "Click Here."

Key takeaway

Considering best practices for accessibility is essential for designing emails that are useful to everyone. Be sure to always take time to verify that your email design follows accessibility principles. You can always check how accessible your emails are by testing them with the screen reader tool included with most computers under the accessibility tab or by using an online accessibility checker.

Resources for more information

Review the following resources for more information about accessibility:

- [Google Accessibility](#) 🔗: Explore some of Google's accessibility features and products.

Mark as completed

