Alternative Text

Alt Text

- Alt text is... A principle of accessibility
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Principle 1: Perceivable Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive

HTML

- <img src="dog.jpg" alt="Dog with a bell attached to its collar.">

- Note Alt Attribute

Alt Text

- A requirement for accessibility Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1
- Guideline 1.1 Text Alternatives: Provide text alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed into other forms people need, such as large print, braille, speech, symbols or simpler language.

Who Needs it

- Screen Reader Users
- People with poor connections when the images don't download
- Search engine Crawlers

Alt Text

- Alt text is… Part of appealing to all senses.
- Images – alternative text
- Video – captions and video descriptions action
- Audio - transcripts
- An accessible UX principle: Accessible Media:
- Appeal to all Senses A Web for Everyone by Sarah Horton and Whitney Quesenbery http://rosenfeldmedia.com/books/a-web-for-everyone/

Alt Text – The Problem

- Alt text is invisible content
- It's hard to tell if it's good or bad…or even it it's there.
- Even bad alt text passes some accessibility checkers.

Alternative Text

- The provision of useful alternative text for images is dependent on a number of factors apart from the content of the image itself.
- These factors include the purpose or role of the image within the document and the kind of image it is. For example is it a graph or a picture of some object or an image of text?
- The context of the image,i.e. the page it occurs on, the overall purpose of the page or document in which it occurs and the content surrounding the image, plays a big part in determining appropriate alternative text for that image.
- Images must have text alternatives that describe the information, reflect the role, specify the function, indicate the target of the link or in the case of charts convey the data represented by the images.

In General

- In general alternative text should be accurate and equivalent- specifying the same information that the image is meant to convey.
- It should be concise and precise by representing the information in as many words as necessary, but no more than required.
- It should not be redundant, repeating the same information that is already available in the text content of the page where the image occurs.

An AltText Decision Tree

- https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/ images/decision-tree/

Does the image contain text?

- **No**
  - **Continue**
- **Yes:**
  - **… and the text is also present as *real* text nearby.** *Use an empty alt attribute. See [Decorative Images](#).*
  - **… and the text is only shown for visual effects.** *Use an empty alt attribute. See [Decorative Images](#).*
  - **… and the text has a specific function, for example is an icon.** *Use the alt attribute to communicate the function of the image. See [Functional Images](#).*
  - **… and the text in the image is not present otherwise.** *Use the alt attribute to include the text of the image. See [Images of Text](#).*

Is the image used in a link or a button, and would it be hard or impossible to understand what the link or the button does, if the image wasn't there?

- **No**
  - **Continue**

- **Yes:**
  - *Use the alt attribute to communicate the destination of the link or action taken. See [Functional Images](#).*

# Does the image contribute meaning to the current page or context?

- **No**
  - Continue

- **Yes**
  - **… and it's a simple graphic or photograph.** *Use a brief description of the image in a way that conveys that meaning in the alt attribute. See Informative Images.*
  - **… and it's a graph or complex piece of information.** *Include the information contained in the image elsewhere on the page. See Complex Images.*
  - **… and it shows content that is redundant to *real* text nearby.** *Use an empty alt attribute. See (redundant) Functional Images.*

Is the image purely decorative or not intended for the user?

- **Yes:**
  - *Use an empty alt attribute. See [Decorative Images](.).*
- **No:**
  - Continue.
- **Is the image's use not listed above or it's unclear what alt text to provide?** This decision tree **does not** cover all cases. For detailed information on the provision of text alternatives refer to the [Image Concepts Page](.).

Different Kinds of Images

Decorative Images
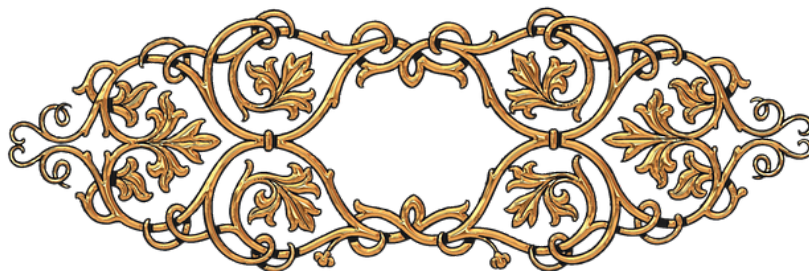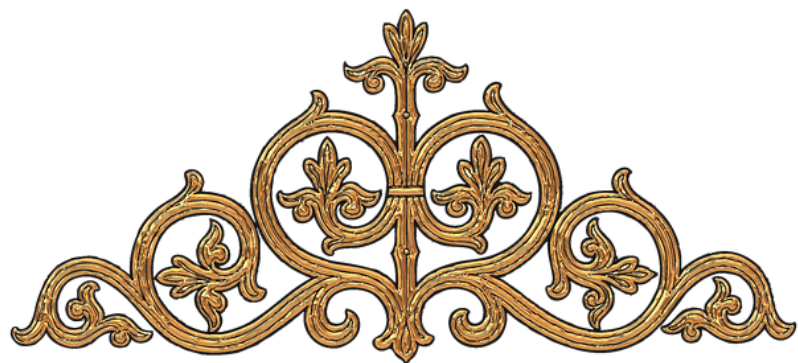
Decorative Images

- **Decorative Images**
  - Decorative images are typically used for layout or visual aesthetic purposes. They do not provide information content on the page.
  - They also do not represent links for example to the home page or important site functionality such as settings or save file.
- Examples of decorative images are line breaks or geometric patterns used to give the page a visual style.
- Alternative text is not specified for decorative images. The alt attribute is left empty in these cases, i.e. alt = " ". For more on decorative images see the
  [Web Access Initiative tutorial on Decorative images](#) or the
  [Web Accessibility in Mind (WEBAIM) Tutorial on Decorative Images](#)

Functional Images
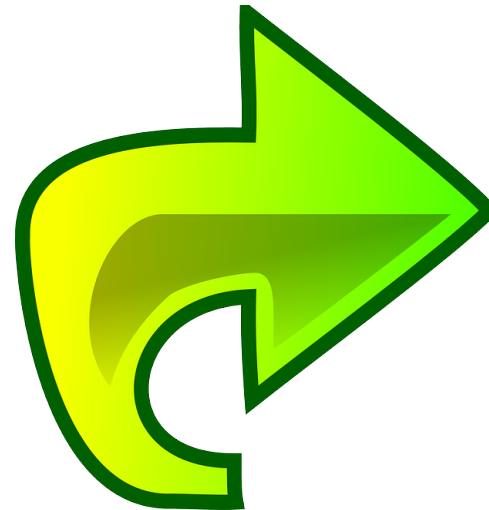
Functional Images

- Functional images are those images which represent functions or links within a page.

- Examples of functional images are those which appear on the ribbons of word processors representing formatting functions such as bold and italics, pictures of clipboards representing copy and paste functions, scissors representing cut, cans of paint representing fill functions and pictures of printers representing print functions.

- The text alternative for these functional images should say in one word what the function is. The alternative text for a printer image should be just "Print".

Functional Images with Links Behind

Functional Images with Links Behind

- Images which have links behind them like the classic Home icon, are also considered functional images.
- The text alternative for these images should indicate the target page of the link.
- For example- the company logo on a web page often has a link to the site home page.
- Consider the Dublin Institute of Technology logo which has a link to the Dublin Institute of Technology home page on all web pages where it occurs. The appropriate alternative text for this image is "Dublin Institute of Technology home page"
- For more on functional images see the [Web Access Initiative tutorial on Functional images](#) or the [Web Accessibility in Mind (WEBAIM) Tutorial on Functional Images](#)

Informative Images

- Informative images are images that graphically represent concepts and information. The major kinds of informative images are listed below.

Typical informative Images

- Pictures, photos and illustrations are typical examples of informative images. The text alternative should be at least a short description conveying the essential information presented by the image.
- For more on Informative images see the [Web Access Initiative tutorial on Informative images](#)
 or the
[Web Accessibility in Mind (WEBAIM) Tutorial on alternative text basics for Images](#)

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Picture to represent Chalk and Talk
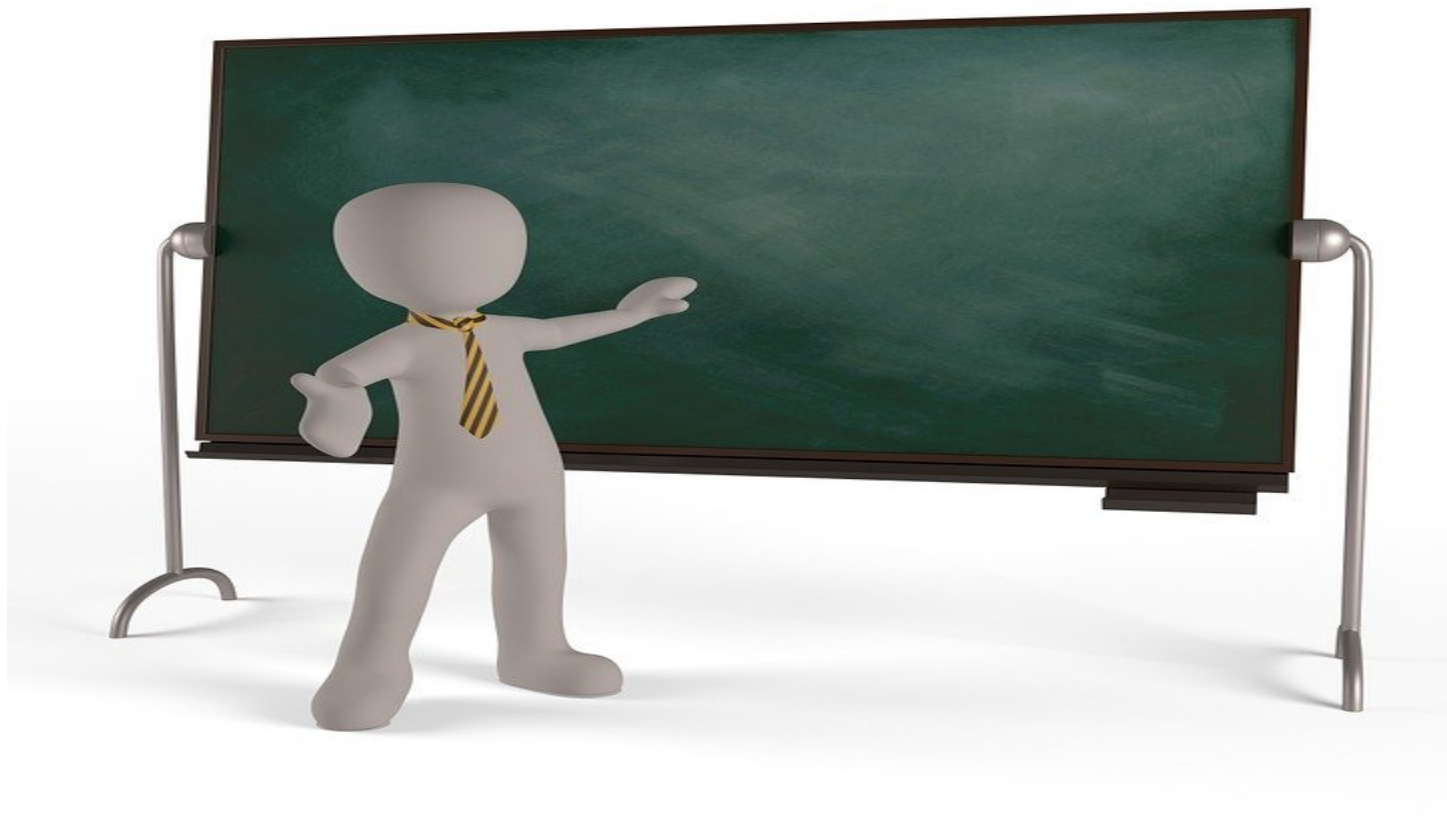
Images of Text

- Images of text: Readable text is sometimes presented within an image.
- If the image is not a logo, text in images should be avoided.
- However, if images of text are used, the text alternative should contain the same words as in the image.
- https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/textual/
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Images with Text embedded

Complex Images

- Complex images such as graphs and diagrams: To convey data or detailed information, the text alternative should be a full text equivalent of the data or information provided in the image.

- For more on complex images see the [Web Access Initiative tutorial on Complex images](#) or the [Web Accessibility in Mind (WEBAIM) Tutorial on Complex Images](#)
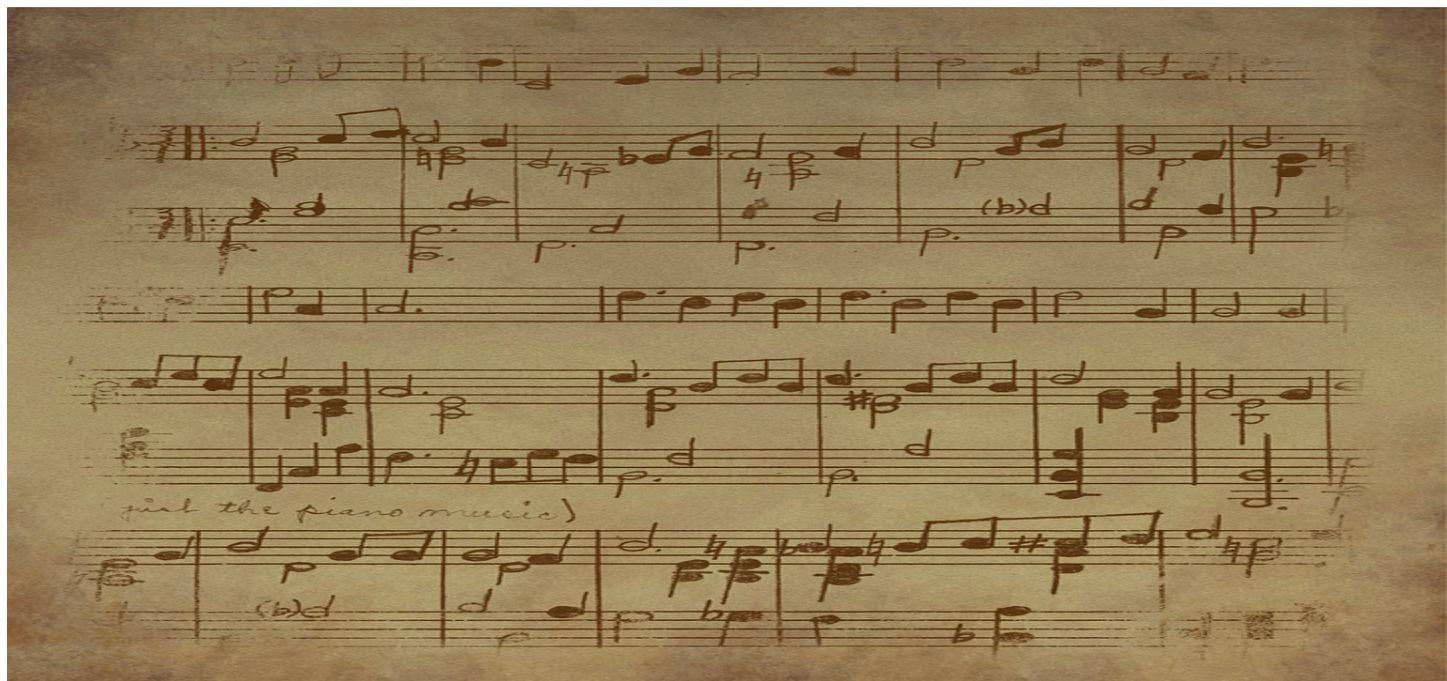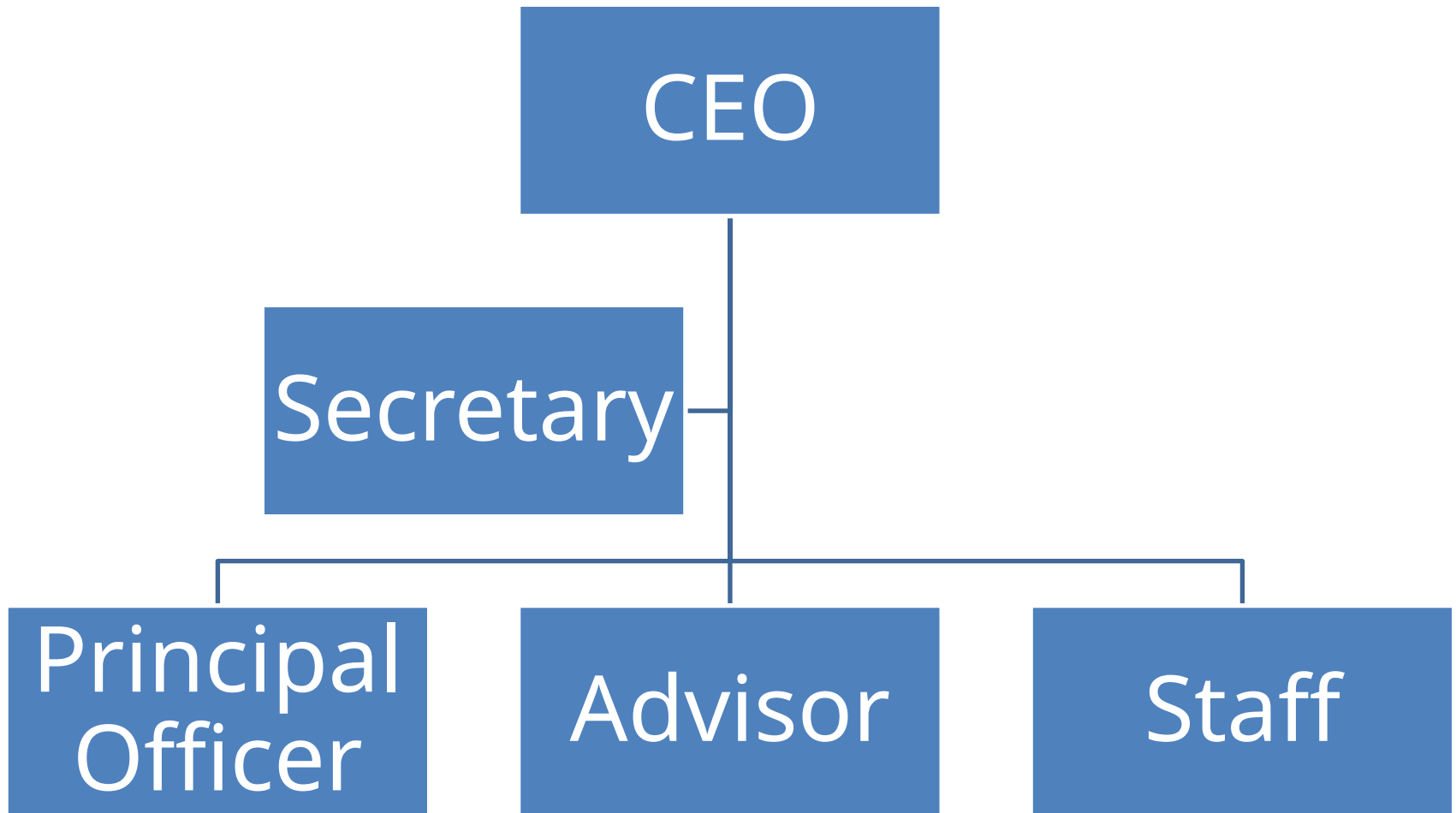
Graphs
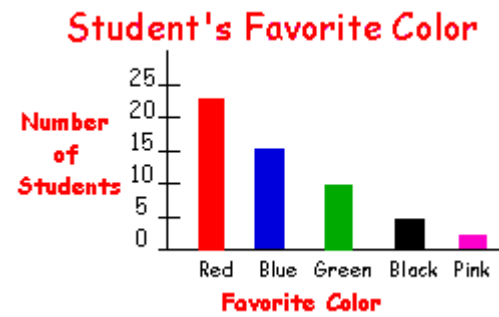
Maps

Music

Hierarchies

Groups of Images

- Sometimes there is more than one image to consider, for example a connected group of images or an image map.
- Groups of images: If multiple images convey a single piece of information for example a five star hotel rating represented by five pictures of stars, the text alternative for one image should convey the information conveyed by the entire group. For more on group images see the [Web Access Initiative tutorial on group images](#)
- Image maps: The text alternative for an image that contains multiple clickable areas, for example a map of a city with different areas such as the north and south side, should provide an overall context for the set of links. In addition, each individual clickable area should have alternative text that describes the purpose or destination of the link. . For more on Image maps see the [Web Access Initiative tutorial on Imagemaps](#) or the [Web Accessibility in Mind (WEBAIM) Tutorial on Image maps](#)
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Interactive Map

Useful Resources

- There are many excellent resources available online which provide guidance for the provision of alternative text. Before proceeding to the quiz please visit some of these.
- 1. The World Wide Web Consortium(W3C) Web Access Initiative (WAI)
- Alternative Text Tutorial is available at the WAI Alternative the
[WAI Alternative Text Tutorial site](#)
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- 2. There is an excellent [WEBAIM Alternative text overview](#)
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- 3. The specification for the HTML5 img element specifies the requirements for
- alternative text.
[The requirements for providing alternative text for images are listed here](#)
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Australia: [the 4 Syllables Alternative text Decision tree](#)