508 Compliance Webinar for PI Meeting

CHRISTINA CHHIN, Ph.D.

National Center for Education Research

KATIE TAYLOR, Ph.D.

National Center for Special Education Research

Transcript

(Slide 1)

[Christina] Hello, thank you all for joining us. I'm Christina Chhin, from the National Center for Education Research, and I'm also joined by my colleague, Katie Taylor, from the National Center for Special Education Research. In today's webinar, we're going to discuss tips for creating presentations that are accessible and 508 compliant. This webinar is geared towards individuals who are presenting at the upcoming IES PI meeting.

However, we hope that the tips provided here will also be useful for future presentations you may have at other meetings as well.

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So why does your PowerPoint presentation need to be accessible and Section 508 compliant? It needs to be 508 compliant in order to comply with federal regulations and to promote equal access.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires that federal agencies' electronic and information technology be accessible to people with disabilities. So, all electronic documents that are posted on federal websites, including the Department of Education's internal and external websites, must be 508 compliant.

Please note that copies of the presentations from the PI Meeting will be publicly available on the IES PI Meeting website, which is one of the Department of Education's external websites. So they must be 508 compliant. 508 compliance is also necessary to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access information. Assistive technology is used by individuals with impairments to help them understand electronic information.

For example, screen readers or text-to-speech software is one tool available and assists individuals who are blind, have low vision, or a learning disability. This technology interprets words on the page and translates them into a computerized voice that reads the information. Accessible documents work in partnership with assistive technology to ensure individuals with disabilities have access to information.

And lastly, accessibility makes for a better user experience for everyone.

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We will now provide some tips for how to make your presentation accessible and 508 compliant.

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Tip #1. Make sure to use the PI Meeting presentation template in creating your PowerPoint presentation.

Please note that we are using the PI Meeting presentation template for this webinar so you can see what it looks like. This template has been specially developed to be 508 compliant. You

should receive a copy of this template from your session organizer. When using the PI Meeting presentation template, make sure to use the provided layouts as instructed.

Please refrain from creating your own bullets or slide layouts or changing the color schemes. This will help make the content more accessible and easier to convert to other file formats, including braille.

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Tip #2. We know you may want to create an engaging presentation by including slide transitions or embedding animations within a slide.

But do not do it! Screen readers have difficulty interpreting transitions and animations, so it is not 508 compliant.

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Tip #3. Format images and clip art appropriately. Documents are usually a combination of text and non-text elements, including images, photos, charts, graphical text, or audio files.

Because a screen reader cannot read a non-text element, it is important to include text equivalents so that people using assistive technology have access to the graphical or visual elements. Text equivalents are referred to as "alt text" or alternative text that describe the information in a non-text element. Alt text is required for all non-text content, such as images, graphs, charts, etc.

It should be a clear, concise description that conveys the meaning or purpose of the media content. Please note that if an image is purely decorative, you can use the null tag or double quotations ("") for alt text. We'll go over how to create alt text in the next slide. When creating a document image with multiple associated images, instead of providing alternative text for each individual component, you must group the images together, as shown to the right here, and then, provide one alternative text for the whole image group.

You can do this using the Snipping Tool, which we'll describe shortly.

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Here's some information on how to create alt text to describe images in your presentation. First, right-click on the border of the non-text element and then click on "Size and Position." Then select "alt text" and include your text in the box labeled "Description."

The description should be about 250 characters or less and you do not need to include a title.

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As we mentioned earlier, if you have multiple images on a slide, you can use the Snipping Tool to take a screenshot so that you can capture and save the multiple images as a single image.

To use the Snipping Tool, select the "Start or Windows icon" button, type "snipping tool," and then select it in the search results. Once the Snipping Tool is open, select "New" and "Rectangular Snip," and use your mouse to select the area that you want to capture.

Save or copy your snip and insert or paste it into your presentation. Remember, after pasting the new image on your presentation slide, don't forget to also include the corresponding alt text.

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Tip #4. PowerPoint has some tools for creating and including shapes, smart art, and charts.

We recommend that you use the pre-defined formats in PowerPoint when creating these visual aids. Similar to images and clipart, you should provide alt text for all shapes, smart art, and charts. Group multiple shapes or smart art and use the Snipping Tool as needed.

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Now here are some tips for creating accessible tables in PowerPoint. Visually, tables are easy to understand because a sighted user can scan up, to the top of the column or the beginning of the row, to read the column and row headers for any data cell in the table.

Individuals using a screen reader rely on the software to announce the column or row headers. Therefore, it is important to identify the headings in a table so that a screen reader will be able to clearly match which heading relates to a data cell. For simple tables, create your tables within PowerPoint. You can designate the first row as a "Header Row" in Table Style Options by selecting the "Design" table and placing a check in the check box for a "Header Row" in the Table Style Options.

The screen reader will read each column and row. For more complex tables, including tables with merged cells or multilevel headings, you can either; (1) create a table in PowerPoint and add alt text - by adding alt text to the table, the screen reader will be prevented from reading the columns and rows; or (2) you can copy and paste the table as an image and provide alt text.

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Here is an example of different table layouts that you can create within PowerPoint. For the simple table on the left, the screen reader can easily read each row and column.

The table on the right, is considered a complex table due to the merged cells for Week 1 and Week 2, making it difficult for the screen reader to accurately convey this information. So, for the complex table on the right, alt text should be used to describe or explain the table content.

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Tip #6. For more technical presentations, you may choose to include statistical equations in your presentation. That is fine to do, but to increase accessibility, you should treat your equation as an image. To do this, use the Snipping Tool to capture the image of the equation and paste it on the slide.

Don't forget to use alt text to describe the equation.

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[Katie] Hi, this is Katie Taylor from the National Center for Special Education Research. And I'm going to pick up where Christina left off with Tip #7, which is to use unique titles for each slide.

This will make it easier for individuals using a screen reader to follow along and keep track of your presentation. If you have multiple slides that address or build on a continuous topic, add text at the end of the title to distinguish it from the previous slide. For example, if you have two slides that are all about reading, label one, "All about Reading, Part 1," and the next slide "All about Reading, Part 2."

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Tip #8 is to provide hyperlinks to videos. To make your presentation more engaging, some of you may choose to include a video clip or an audio file as part of the presentation. That is fine to do, however, please refrain from embedding the video or audio file within the slide or presentation.

Instead, provide a hyperlink to the file. The example we've provided here is a link to a video about IES available on YouTube. Also, please note that presentations containing an audio file should have a text description, captions, or a transcript, as part of the slide.

A text description of an audio file will benefit a user who is deaf or hard of hearing.

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Okay, Tip #9, hyperlink web addresses. This is another important tip regarding the use of hyperlinks in your presentation. When referring to a website, we recommend that you do not include the URL address because it's not descriptive and it can be difficult to listen to when using a screen reader.

Instead, we recommend that you hyperlink the website to a descriptive sentence or phrase within your presentation. And don't just hyperlink a phrase like "click here." And then, remember just to double-check and make sure that all of the links in your presentation work.

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Okay, Tip #10, be careful with color.

Color is useful in conveying important information, but you'll need to be careful with the use of color to ensure that it is 508 compliant. If you're creating content with text or images of text that use color, make sure that there is a sufficient color contrast.

The images on the right of this slide provide some examples of background and text-color combinations that would or would not be 508 compliant. Also, please avoid color coding information in your presentation. When color alone is used to convey meaning, for example,

making a section of text purple, then a person who is blind or colorblind may not have access to the information.

Therefore, color alone will not make information accessible. This is true for bolding and italics as well. So a remedy would be to use color and another indicator, such as an asterisks or a heading, to emphasize or indicate important information.

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A final tip is to pay attention to the formatting of your presentation.

First, you should make sure to use a minimum font size of 12. Also, refrain from using abbreviations or acronyms, as the screen reader may read the abbreviation or acronym as a single word. Finally, we want to stress again that you should use the PI Meeting PowerPoint template with the predefined slide layouts. This will help make our jobs easier in ensuring that your presentation is 508 compliant.

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To double-check whether you have an accessible document or presentation, here are some tools that you can use, and these tools are within PowerPoint.

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You can run the Accessibility Checker, in PowerPoint, to see if there are any potential issues a user with an assistive technology device may have understanding your presentation.

To run the checker in PowerPoint, go to "File," then "Info,"then "Check for Issues," and finally, "Check Accessibility." A new tab will open up on the right side with information about any issues and instructions on how to fix them.

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In addition, you'll also want to double-check the reading order on your slide to make sure that the screen reader will convey information in the correct sequence. The selection pane provides the reading order for the slide. To check the reading order within PowerPoint, go to "Home," then under "Editing," click "Select," then "Selection Pane," and then, on the right, there's a list of items contained in the slide.

The reading order is from bottom to top, meaning that the first item to be read is always at the bottom of the list. And then, if anything is wrong, the items can be reordered using the arrows provided.

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The following slides will provide some tips for making a 508 compliant video.

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For a video to be accessible, the viewer must be able to understand what's happening in both the visual and the audio portions of the video. Accessible videos have three main elements. First, they must have captions, meaning that the audio parts of the video appear as text at the appropriate time and give access to people who are deaf or hearing-impaired.

Second, they must include an audio or a text description of important visual elements. This will ensure that people who are blind or visually impaired have access to this content. Third, they must use a 508-compliant video player. This ensures that a person who requires keyboard navigation or an assistive device can navigate the window where the video plays, that is the video player.

Please note that posting a video on YouTube and clicking on the closed captions option does not make the video automatically 508-compliant. You need to take into consideration some of the tips I just mentioned as well as tips on the following slide.

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Here are some additional tips when preparing and developing a video. First, a method must be provided to pause, stop, or hide any media content that begins playing automatically and which lasts 5 seconds or more.

Second, a mechanism must be provided to stop, pause, mute, or adjust volume for audio that automatically plays on a page for more than 3 seconds. Lastly, a page must not contain content that flashes more than 3 times per second, unless that flashing content is sufficiently small, the flashes are of low contrast and do not violate general flash thresholds.

These tips, along with the ones on the previous slide, should be followed when developing an accessible video.

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Finally, if you want additional information about how to make a presentation or another type of document Section 508 compliant, you can visit the sites linked here.

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We hope that you found these tips and resources helpful. If you have any follow-up questions, please feel free to reach out to your session chair. Thank you.