

ACCESSIBLE STORYTELLING

Approximately one billion of the approximately eight billion people on Earth struggle with accessibility. Impairments affecting vision, hearing, motor abilities or cognition are some of these difficulties. These accessibility challenges can make it more difficult for people to use technology. Therefore, it is important to create accessible digital content. There are many key aspects to consider when creating accessible content, such as:

Colours. The key factors when choosing a colour palette are *contrast* and *colour vision deficiencies*. Contrast refers to the difference between two colour hues, particularly the contrast between light and dark elements, which is crucial for readability. Colour vision deficiencies affect how some people perceive colours, causing them to have difficulty distinguishing certain hues that may seem distinct to those with normal vision. To ensure good contrast and accessibility for those with colour vision deficiencies, you can use tools like Colorblindly, Color Oracle and Sim Daltonism, which simulate how colours appear to individuals with different types of colour blindness.



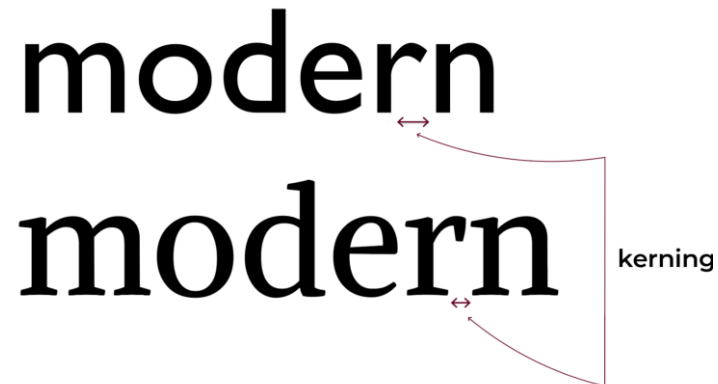
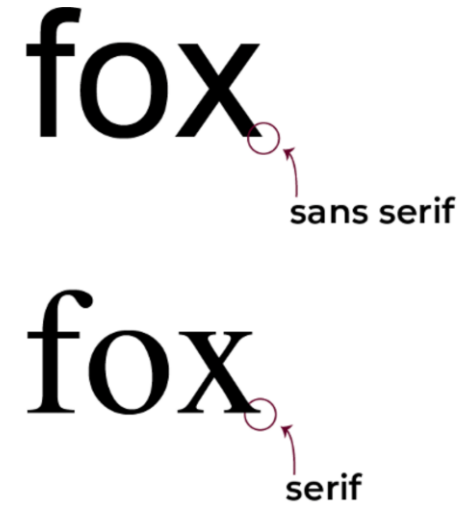


Source: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/02670c9018f14cfbbaef7c5a5c54d453>

This image gallery of a field of tulips uses a filter to simulate different types of colour vision deficiencies. The full-colour vision is on the far left. The second and third images are examples of Deuteranomalopia and Protanomalopia, respectively, two forms of red-green colour vision deficiencies. The image on the right shows Tritanopia, a yellow-blue colour vision deficiency.

ACCESSIBLE STORYTELLING

Typography. Typography is divided into two main types: serif and sans serif. Serif typefaces have decorative strokes or "trimmings" at the ends of characters. They are often used in print media for a stylish and elegant look. *Sans serif* typefaces lack these trimmings and are generally better suited for digital content, offering greater accessibility, particularly for paragraph text. Examples of such fonts are Arial, Verdana, Lucida Sans, Helvetica and others.



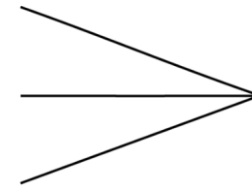
Letter spacing. Display fonts typically have interesting embellishments. Usually used for headings and titles, display fonts can add visual appeal. However, they frequently use looping strokes, oversized characters or odd shapes, making them difficult to read. Thus, they should not be used for body text.

The font on top has a looser kerning between the "r" and the "n," so the word "modern" is easily legible. The font on the bottom has a tighter kerning, so the word "modern" may appear as "modem" to some readers.

ACCESSIBLE STORYTELLING

Character ambiguity. When selecting a font, look for unclear letterforms. Some characters, such as a capital "I" and a lowercase "l," can be confusing. Additionally, some characters – like the lowercase "p" and "q" in particular typefaces – are mirror images of one another. People learning to read, those with vision problems, and those with reading difficulties like dyslexia may find similar characters problematic.

India
lettuce
l cat



The I, l and l
all look the same
in Gill Sans

atypical

embellishment

FONT

Embellished fonts. Typeface kerning, or the distance between character pairs, is the next factor to be taken into account. Certain letter pairings may collide in typefaces with tight kerning. For example, if the second "o" and "l" collide, the word "cool" might read "cod". Serif fonts are more likely to have tighter kerning, making them less accessible.



ACCESSIBLE STORYTELLING

Story structure

The visual language of your tale will influence its accessibility, but the structure of your story is equally important. Everyone benefits from well-structured storytelling, but people with learning difficulties and attention deficit disorders particularly do. And for people using assistive devices such as screen readers, using headings for navigation is vital.

Paragraph length

Both large text sections and single lines should be avoided on screens. Readers may feel overwhelmed by walls of text. Many short, choppy lines of text in a row can also be distracting. Your audience will better understand the content if you can have a comfortable medium between them.

Video and audio

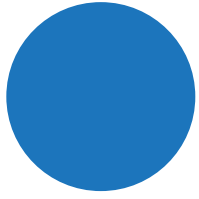
If a story includes videos with speech, those videos should include captions or a transcript. Audio clips should also have a written transcript available.

Choosing words

Your message will be easier for people to understand if you use simple vocabulary, avoiding idioms and slang. Additionally, non-fluent audiences and those with cognitive impairments benefit from the use of simple language. Sentence length should also be considered because it relates to reading levels, or, how easy your text is to understand.

Description

Your headings, subheadings, buttons and hyperlinks should be concise and descriptive. Titles for links and buttons such as “Click here” or “Learn more” are not helpful for consumers using screen readers. Instead, describe what the link or button will do, for example “Read more about accessible storytelling here”.



EXERCISE: ACCESSIBLE DIGITAL STORY

Watch this digital story. Note down elements that make it accessible or vice versa – what makes it inaccessible.

