

# 5 Tips

## to Get Started in Digital Document Accessibility

**Making your content accessible is not only the right thing to do, but it also expands your reach to the 15-20% of the global population who live with disabilities.**

**This tipsheet focuses on digital document accessibility.** To the right are five brief tips for designers who are getting started in accessibility.

**For additional tips, check out the post [“5 Keywords to Get Started in Digital Document Accessibility.”](#)**

If accessibility sounds overwhelming, reach out to the [Learning and Resource Center](#) for assistance. Our team includes experts in design, accessibility, and e-learning who are ready to guide you through the process or take your project from concept to completion.

Content for this tipsheet was written by **Lindsey Engelhardt**.

- 1. Understand the purpose.** Making a document accessible is the right thing to do. It removes barriers for those with disabilities while also making your content more accessible for all users. For example, did you know adding metadata to your file is not only an accessibility requirement but also assists with search engine optimization (SEO)? Metadata is a key part of what search engines rely on to display relevant search results to users. Your document is more likely to get found online because you added metadata.
- 2. Learn the language.** Key terms to get started in digital document accessibility include Section 508, ADA, WCAG, PDF/UA, testing, remediation, tags, tag tree, alt text, reading order, artifacts, and color contrast. Familiarize yourself with these terms so you can better understand the accessibility test results. You must first understand what the test results are saying before you can start to learn how to resolve the errors.
- 3. Explore built-in accessibility features.** Unfortunately, there are no built-in accessibility checkers in Adobe's InDesign or Illustrator. But there are checkers in Microsoft's Word and PowerPoint. Use these checkers as a first step to see what changes you can make in your source file before you export to a PDF.
- 4. Practice testing your exported PDF.** Adobe Acrobat's accessibility checker is more advanced than Microsoft's checkers in Word and PowerPoint. Run it on your PDF to see what errors and warnings you get. Are there fixes you can make in your source file?
- 5. Run the PDF through a more advanced checker.** Once your PDF passes Acrobat's accessibility checker, you're ready for advanced checkers such as CommonLook or Pac3. Run an accessibility test based on which standards you need to achieve and see what you get. You will probably get hundreds if not thousands of results depending on the size of your PDF. Don't panic! This is very common. Filter by the fails and the user verifications to see what might need to be remediated (or fixed) in your PDF. Again, are there fixes you can make in your source file?





Transform  
your content  
into effective  
communication strategies.

## Learning and Resource Center

### A centralized team of designers and developers

TriMetrix's Learning and Resource Center (LRC) brings the expertise, skills, and creative know-how to help our clients effectively reach their audiences.

We work with your project's subject matter experts to make your content and messaging come alive for your audiences through print and digital content and innovative learning solutions. Our team collaborates with clients to develop effective and efficient learning solutions grounded in adult learning theory. This approach magnifies the knowledge, skills, and application of learning for your audiences.

Let's get started.

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