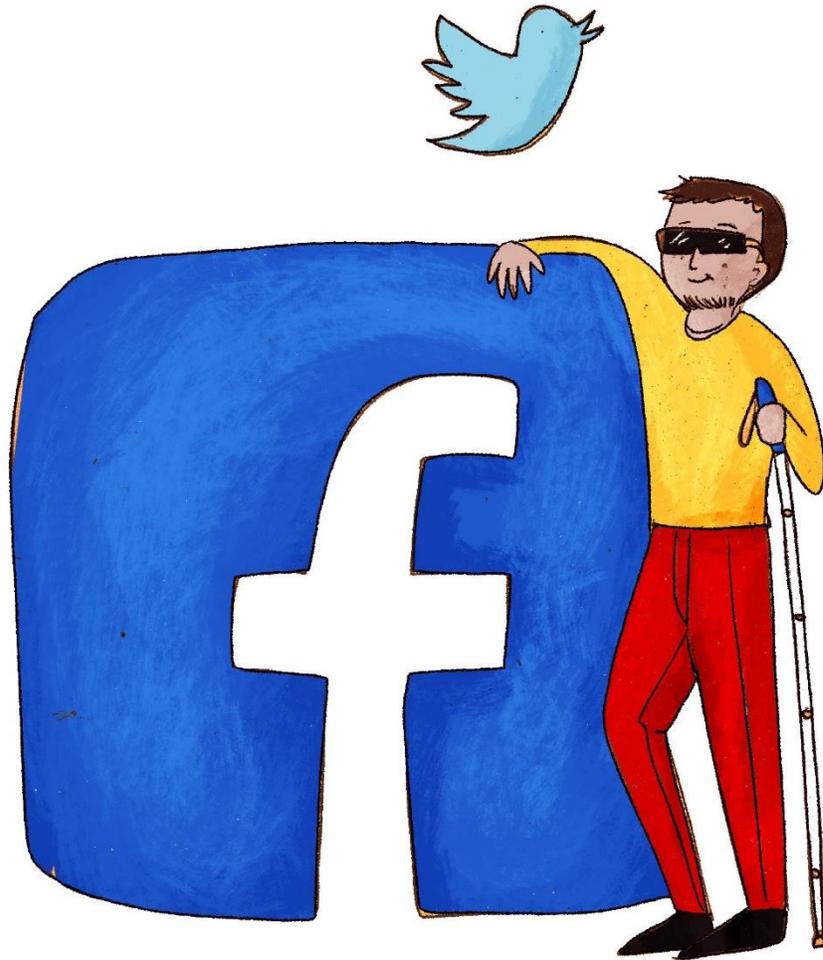


Accessible Social Media



Accessible Social Media

Social media is one of the most powerful and wide-reaching ways to share and receive information. But as social media platforms evolve, so must accessibility standards. When developing and communicating different types of content on social media, keep the following areas in mind.



Social Media Accessibility

[Language](#)

[Hashtags](#)

[Acronyms](#)

[Images](#)

[Links](#)

[Videos and Captioning](#)

[Contact Information](#)

Language

Use common words that are easy to understand

- It is best practice to use plain English for social media posts. This means language that is basic and clear.
- If you can think of [a shorter alternative](#) to a wordy phrase you have used, go with the shorter one

Hashtags

Capitalize each word

- The first letter of each word in a hashtag should be capitalized. Not only is this visually easier to read, screen readers for persons with visual impairments will insert a space after each word that is in this format, making the overall meaning easier to understand.

Keep hashtags short

- Short hashtags are easier to remember and, in cases where space is limited, gives you more room for content

Know the hashtag best practices for the platform

- Specific platforms use hashtags differently. For example, with a character limit on Twitter, you might select 2-3 hashtags to use along with @mentions and links. For Instagram, you can use up to 30 tags on a post.

Acronyms

Spell acronyms out the first time

- Spell out acronyms when using them the first time, with the acronym added after in parenthesis. For example, National Hockey League (NHL).
- Do not assume that your reader knows what your acronym means. If there is not enough space in a post or a tweet, try to use another way of saying the acronym or link it to its corresponding profile page on the platform.

Images

Describe images

- Images require alternative text (alt text) to be accessible to blind persons, but not all platforms provide mechanisms for this functionality. If you cannot add alt text to an image, create an enhanced description for the image.
- When posting images containing text, ensure that your description includes all the text content from the image. For example, if you post an image of a quote, your description should contain the text of the quote in addition to any other text you are including.

- If your tweet links to photo, video or audio content, make your tweet act as a descriptive caption so it provides context for the item

Use each platform's image tools

- Facebook provides [automatic alternative text](#) for images using object recognition technology to create a description of a photo for the blind and vision-loss community
- Instagram now offers a way to [create and edit alternative text](#). When adding a photo, choose the Advanced Settings option and then under the Accessibility section, choose Write Alt Text. The alt text will not show up in the caption for the photo, but it will be read out loud if the individual is using a screen reader.
- Twitter allows you to automatically add descriptive text on mobile by using the 'Add description' button once you have attached a photo, while this feature can be selected on the desktop version by going into your settings and then clicking on Accessibility

Links

Announce linked content

- If your post links to a video, photo, or audio file, be sure to mention this in the content. For example, [VIDEO], [PHOTO], or [AUDIO]. This allows people using screen readers to know what to expect before opening any link.
- If your post links to a page that features videos, photos, or audio, include as much descriptive text as possible in your content so users have an idea of what to expect upon arrival.

Prepare users for inaccessible link content

- If you must direct users to other sites with content that is not accessible, inform them first by including a short note of what to expect. For example, let them know if a video does not have captions or descriptive text, or if a video will start automatically.

Videos and Captioning

Burn in permanent captions

- When creating videos specifically for social media platforms, consider burning in the captions (these are known as open captions) to the video using a free tool such as [Handbrake](#). While users will not be able to turn off the captions, there is value to having them on by default.
- You can learn more about captioning through New York University's [captioning tipsheet](#)

Make use of captioning support

- Facebook [offers support for captioning videos](#) on their platform. However, you will first need to prepare a .srt file. To do so, you may upload your video to [NYU Stream](#) or [YouTube](#) and then download the file. There is also a [best practices guide](#) available for Facebook Live use.

- Instagram does not offer a built-in way to caption video. However, as mentioned above, if you are creating promotional video content for this platform, consider burning in the captions to the video using a free tool such as [Handbrake](#).

spencer@bcdisability.com
BCDisability.com

- You could also [upload your video to another platform](#), such as Facebook or YouTube, generate captions using that platform's utility, then link the captioned video in the Instagram description.

Contact Info

Let people know how they can reach you

- Include a support email somewhere on your page. Providing contact information for a user that may be struggling to access your online content will be of great help.

[Back to Top](#)

