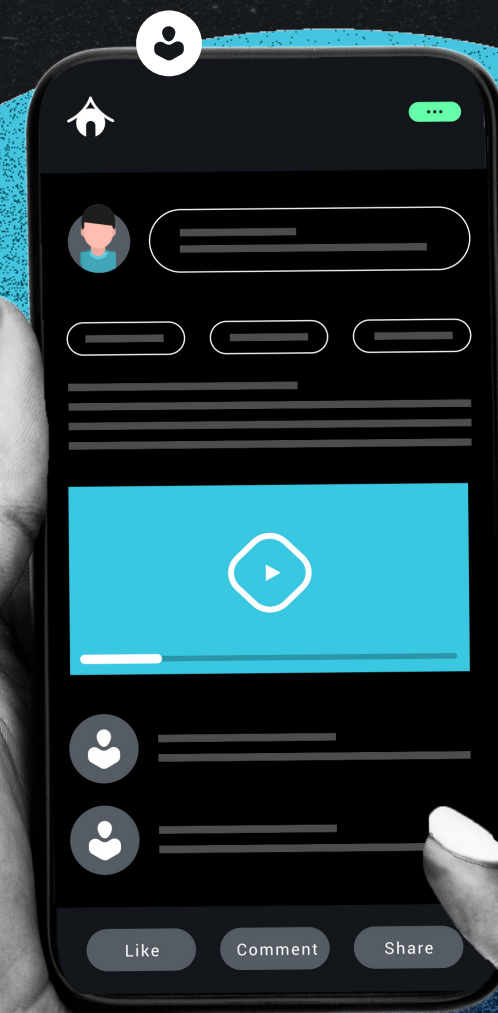# Your Fast Track Guide to
SOCIAL MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY

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OVERVIEW

Social media is an **ESSENTIAL** part of our daily lives — and whether you like it or not, it's here to stay.

From Pinterest to Instagram to LinkedIn and beyond, we use it to connect with others, share information, and stay up-to-date with the latest trends. But, as we rely more and more on social media, it's crucial to ensure that everyone, including those with disabilities, can access and enjoy your content.

In this guide, we'll provide you with practical tips and best practices to make your social media presence inclusive and accessible to all. We'll start by exploring how you can make your content accessible via social media and then we will end by taking a deep dive into each social media platform, highlighting the accessibility measures you need to take for each platform.

Let's get started!

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How to Practice Accessibility with Social Media

KEYBOARD

Keyboard

Are you aware that many social media platforms have keyboard user accessibility issues?

Sadly, it's the reality.

One simple way to ensure accessibility for all users is by testing your social media account with a keyboard. This will allow you to identify and address any keyboard accessibility issues, such as keyboard traps, inaccessible columns, or incorrect focus orders.

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KEYBOARD

AUTOPLAY

HEADINGS

IMAGES

GIFs

EMOJIS

Autoplay

Your users should have the power to choose whether or not they want to play media. That's why it's vital to offer a pause button so that users can control what they see and hear.

But, what if the platform plays media automatically and it can't be turned off?

If this functionality cannot be turned off, it's crucial to inform users about this before they interact with your media. Nobody likes being taken by surprise, especially when it comes to sound and video.

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KEYBOARD

AUTOPLAY

HEADINGS

IMAGES

GIFs

EMOJIS

Headings

Did you know that Facebook is the only platform that properly uses the H1 heading? None of the platforms properly nest headings.

Why is this important?

Well, when you're posting content on social media, using proper headings and formatting can make a significant difference in how accessible and readable your content is. It's important to note this when posting.

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KEYBOARD

AUTOPLAY

HEADINGS

IMAGES

GIFs

EMOJIS

Images

Adding alternative text to your social media images can make a significant difference in the accessibility of your content. When you add alt-text to your images, users who are visually impaired or use screen readers can understand the content of the image through a description.

Keep in mind that if alt-text is not available, you can describe the posted images in the body of the post. To learn more about image accessibility, download our **Best Practices for Accessible Imagery** guide.

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KEYBOARD

AUTOPLAY

HEADINGS

IMAGES

GIFs

EMOJIS

GIFs

While GIFs can be a fun and engaging way to add some personality to your content, it's essential to use them carefully and thoughtfully.

If you do choose to use GIFs, it's crucial to ensure that it is set up to **stop after five seconds**. This way, users can take their time to read and digest the information you're presenting.

It's also important to avoid using flashing and blinking lights as they can trigger seizures and other medical conditions.

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KEYBOARD

AUTOPLAY

HEADINGS

IMAGES

GIFS

EMOJIS

Emojis (or Emoticons)

Let's talk about the use of emojis and emoticons in social media.

Emojis

Emojis are a great way to add personality and emotion to your posts.

For those who use screen readers, the program will read emojis appropriately, such as "smiley face" or "heart." However, it's important to use them sparingly and to place a space between each one. Overuse of emojis can be overwhelming for some users and may make your posts harder to read.

Emoticons

Emoticons, on the other hand, are a representation of an expression created through a variety of keystrokes, such as :) or ;).

With screen readers, emoticons are often read as "semi-colon parenthesis" or "colon parenthesis." Because of this, emoticons **should be avoided** when possible. Instead, try using words (or emojis) to convey the same meaning.

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Alternative Options
& Accessibility

We are looking forward to the day when social media platforms are 100% accessible to all — but until then, you as the poster, must do the due diligence to ensure that your content is inclusive.

Here are some tips and tricks to continue ensuring social media accessibility.

Provide Contact Information

Another accessibility rule of thumb is to include your contact information on all of your social media accounts! If you can't fit all of your information in the post, you can always provide a link to your full contact details.

Repeat Content

Repeating the same content across many accounts (including your website) is another way to encourage accessibility.

You should also consider offering daily or weekly digests of information posted on social media sites to ensure that your audience can gain the same

information as others even if they do not have access to social media.

Suggest Alternatives

To be a steward to your audience, consider providing links to accessibility tips and support pages on each platform. This will help your audience navigate the platform with ease.

Additionally, you can provide links to alternative apps and websites that offer accessible interfaces for social media, further improving the accessibility of your content.

Be Clear

At NMR Designs, we always say, "The clearer you are, the better." This same holds true for social media accessibility.

Here are some best practices to consider when posting:

- Use camel case in your hashtags (ex. #ThisIsCamelCase)

- Avoid abbreviations

- Use hashtags only as needed and at the end of posts.

- Avoid misspellings

- If you link to inaccessible content on social media platforms, let the user know prior to viewing the media or post

The tips listed above will ensure that you're posts are clear for everyone to enjoy!

Test

Another effective way to ensure that your social media content is accessible is to have it tested by someone with a disability. You will want to use a variety of testers to make sure your content is digestible — no matter their abilities.

After testing it with your audience, make sure that your content meets **WCAG 2 AA standards**, which are widely recognized as the standard for web accessibility.

Next, let's take a look at how you can make your posts accessible to your audience, regardless of the platform you're posting to.

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# A Platform-by-Platform Deep Dive into Accessibility

Facebook

- ✓ Add **alt-text to images**.

- ✓ Add **captions to your Facebook videos**.

- ✓ Consult American Foundation for the Blind's **Facebook Accessibility Tips** to understand how users with disabilities might navigate through your content.

- ✓ Check the color contrast in your images for those who have color blindness or cognitive disabilities.

- ✓ Use camel case in your hashtags, e.g., #ThisIsCamelCase. Place hashtags at the end of your posts.

- ✓ Recommend alternatives to Facebook's interface.
  These alternatives include:

  - ✓ **Facely HD on iOS**

  - ✓ **G-Whizz! on Android**

  - ✓ **Metal on Android**

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Pinterest

✓ Identify your content as follows, [PIC], [VIDEO], [AUDIO].

✓ Add **alt-text to Image Pins and Video Pins**. (Keep all alt-text under 500 characters.)

✓ Add captions to **Video Pins**.

✓ Check the color contrast in your images for those who have color blindness or cognitive disabilities.

✓ Use camel case in your hashtags, e.g., #ThisIsCamelCase. Place hashtags at the end of your posts.

✓ Recommend alternatives to Pinterest's interface. These alternatives include:

  ✓ **Facely HD on iOS**

  ✓ **G-Whizz! on Android**

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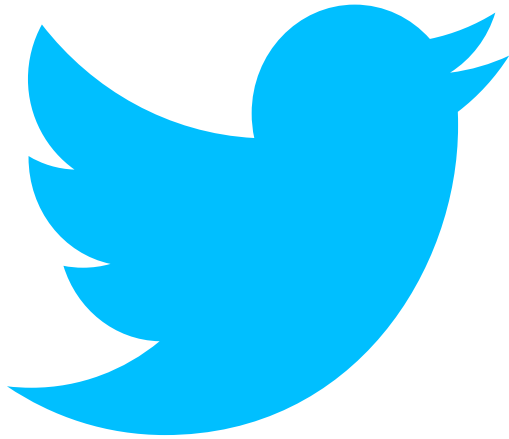
Twitter

- ✓ Add **alt-text to images**.

- ✓ Add **closed captions on Twitter videos**.

- ✓ Check the color contrast in your images for those who have color blindness or cognitive disabilities.

- ✓ Use camel case in your hashtags, e.g., #ThisIsCamelCase. Place hashtags at the end of your posts.

- ✓ Recommend alternatives to Twitter's interface. These alternatives include:

  - ✓ **EasyChirp**

  - ✓ **Twitterific on iOS**

  - ✓ **Metal on Android**

Instagram

- ✓ Add **alt-text to images**.

- ✓ Burn captions to your videos through free sources like **Handbrake**.

- ✓ Check the color contrast in your images for those who have color blindness or cognitive disabilities.

- ✓ Use camel case in your hashtags, e.g., #ThisIsCamelCase. Place hashtags at the end of your posts.

- ✓ Recommend alternatives to Instagram's interface. These alternatives include:

  - ✓ **Facely HD on iOS**

  - ✓ **G-Whizz! on Android**

LinkedIn

- ✓ Add alt-text to images.

- ✓ Add **captions to videos**.

- ✓ Use a clear profile image. People with Prosopagnosia (face blindness) may rely on your profile photo to recognize who you are.

- ✓ Check the color contrast in your images for those who have color blindness or cognitive disabilities.

- ✓ Use camel case in your hashtags, e.g., #ThisIsCamelCase. Place hashtags at the end of your posts.

- ✓ Recommend alternatives to LinkedIn's interface. These alternatives include:

  - ✓ **Facely HD on iOS**

  - ✓ **G-Whizz! on Android**

YouTube

✓ Notify users about auto-play when posting links to videos on YouTube.

✓ Enable closed captions for your YouTube videos.

✓ Test using a screen reader with YouTube to see how it works for someone using the program.

✓ For blind and low-vision users, Android uses the **TalkBack's special accessibility features** for YouTube videos. Test this program to ensure your content is optimized for all users.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

All in all, accessibility isn't something to overlook — especially on social media!

By being mindful of the small but significant details such as using alt-text, closed captions, high contrast ratios, and camel case hashtags, you can make your posts inclusive and accessible for everyone.

As we strive for a more inclusive society, it's up to each of us to do our part. So let's put our knowledge into practice and make social media a space that welcomes and includes everyone. By working together, we can create a more accessible and equitable world.

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