# Accessibility Features

- Screen Readers
- Alt Text
- Closed Captions
- Auto Captions
- Audio Descriptions

# Screen readers

A screen reader is software that helps people who have difficulties seeing to access and interact with digital content, like websites or applications via audio or touch. The main users of screen readers are people who are blind or have very limited vision.

Screen readers can either read text out loud, or convert text to braille.

# Alt text

Alternative (Alt) Text is meant to convey the "why" of the image as it relates to the content of a document or webpage. It is read aloud to users by screen reader software, and it is indexed by search engines. It also displays on the page if the image fails to load, as in this example of a missing image.

Twitter, Instagram and Facebook all have an option of adding alt text which can be read by a screen reader program.

Both text on an image and any visuals should be described in the alt text.

Tourists pose for pictures while touching the foot of the John Harvard Statue.

# Closed Captions

## .SRT files

Most social networks have features for uploading an .SRT file in their media player. An .SRT file is a written transcript with corresponding time-stamps to display as captions on your video. These captions can also be accessed with screen reader technology.

## Burned-in

Captions can also be burned-in on videos with video editing software if the media player does not have captioning features available. However note that you should make a written transcript available to people that use screen readers.

# Auto Captions

Use when closed captions and/or interpreter are not available.

Use for LIVE streamed events and recorded sessions (Zoom).

Auto-captions can also be useful to create a rough draft transcript which can be reviewed later for accuracy.

# Audio Description

Audio description is an audio track that narrates the relevant visual information in media. Audio description assumes that the viewer cannot see, and therefore depicts the key visual elements that are necessary to understanding the content as an accommodation for blind and low vision viewers.

# Example: Accessible Audio Intros

For our Mentors Who Inspire series and BUILD Graduating Seniors videos we asked the subjects of the interview to describe themselves and self-identify any important information about themselves, such as general appearance, ethnicity and pronouns (if they are comfortable sharing).

This allows anyone that cannot see to still get a mental picture of who our interviewees are.

Example:

BUILDing Future Researchers | Samantha Wade

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# Planning ahead

- **Think accessible first**
  - When planning a new campaign or media project consider from the start how it will be accessible to people with disabilities.
- **Build accessibility into your production process**
  - Allocate the right resources to create quality captions, alt text and audio-descriptions.
  - Make accessibility features standard and required in your communications
- **Create a checklist for posting**
  - Make sure all of the pieces make it into the final public post and consider anything that is not accessible as not ready to post.

# Example: Social Media Calendar

**Social Media Copy:**

Science wasn't Tyler Alexander's first love growing up, but all it took was a pharmacy technician class in high school to set the Xavier University of Louisiana alumna on the road to being a scientist. Learn about how the XULA Project Pathways program helped Alexander develop her confidence as a researcher in the DPC's third Class of 2022 Spotlight. https://bit.ly/3DxGKV1



**IMAGE ALT TEXT:** Photo of Tyler Alexander, smiling in her graduation cap and gown. She is holding up her diploma proudly.

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# Resource Pages

Federal Social Media Accessibility Toolkit Hackpad – Digital.gov

Create Accessible Video, Audio and Social Media | Section508.gov

An introduction to screen readers | AbilityNet

The Ultimate Guide to Audio Description - 3Play Media

Write good Alt Text to describe images | Digital Accessibility