TTI employees who would like guidance or assistance in making deliverable documents accessible can contact Rhonda Brinkmann or Michelle Benoit for more information. For assistance with accessibility for media deliverables such as videos and interactive files, contact Mark Coppock.

Overview

Accessibility is making electronic information usable to all users, whether hearing impaired, vision impaired, or mobility impaired.

TTI maintains working knowledge of accessibility requirements set forth by Texas Administrative Code Sections 206 and 213, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 508 of the federal Rehabilitation Act. Electronic information generated through state and federal funds must be accessible to all users.

Many aspects of making electronic information compatible with assistive devices and accessible to disabled users benefit all users. The following sections outline the basic concepts of electronic report accessibility.

Deadline

Any new website, CD, video, or other electronic/information technology that TTI develops for a federal sponsor is subject to the standards for accessibility (if the contract was signed after June 21, 2001). Any page on a website developed for a federal sponsor that is modified after June 21, 2001, must also meet these standards. Redesigns do not count as modifications; changes to the content/purpose of a page do.

Electronic information prepared with state funds must now be accessible. TTI Communications staff are working to create accessible PDFs for document files prepared as deliverables for TxDOT RMC projects. For nondocument deliverables, contact Rhonda Brinkmann if you have questions regarding accessibility requirements.

Planning for accessibility

Keep the following issues in mind when you plan for accessibility:

- During project concept and proposal, make sure you understand sponsor requirements and preferences. For documents, as an example, some sponsors accept accessible PDF files, but others require hypertext markup language (HTML) coding.
- If you include electronic accessibility in your proposal, explain related budget and timeline requirements.
- Determine how your project will incorporate accessibility tasks and allow appropriate funding and time to cover the tasks.
- During the project, keep accessibility in mind from concept to ongoing maintenance when designing electronic deliverables of any kind.
Text

The following general guidelines apply to electronic accessibility of text portions of a document:

- Use a single-column format for text.
- All text should be given a style defined within the word-processing software.
- Do not indent or skip lines to format paragraphs. Use paragraph attributes instead.
- Use clear, consistent, and simple headings and organizational structure.
- Do not use or reference color to convey meaning.

Graphics

For graphic elements, the following guidelines apply in regard to accessibility:

- All nontext elements (image, graphic, audio clip, or other feature that conveys meaning through a picture or sound) should have accompanying text descriptions (alternative text).
- The text description of nontext elements should give the figure number (if there is one), the figure caption, the type of element, a short description of visual content, and the purpose for the element’s inclusion in the report, e.g., “Figure 1. Test Equipment. Photo. This photo shows the equipment used in this project for testing: falling weight deflectometer (FWD) and ground penetrating radar (GPR).”
- Do not use color to convey meaning if possible. If color is used for enhancement, avoid bright or blinking colors.

Tables

For tables, the following guidelines apply with regard to accessibility:

- Create a brief summary of each table.
- Use short, clearly defined row and column headers.
- Tables should use a simple structure and no more than one level of nested headers.
- Provide a text summary for tables if needed.

Equations

As with other graphic elements, equations should comply with accessibility requirements. For each equation:

- Write a text description of each equation.
- Convert equations themselves into images and handle as a nontext element.

More information

Section 508 Standards Training is discussed on TTINet at http://ttinet.tamu.edu/training/web_development/508_standards/.

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