

Can Everyone Read Your Content?



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Small changes can make social media and websites much easier to use

When we publish content online, we tend to assume everyone sees and experiences it in the same way.

Today we're looking at a few simple ways to make our content more accessible.

Accessibility helps more people understand your content

Who might experience it differently?

There are over 2 million

people in the UK living with sight loss.
Source: RNIB.

Around 1 in 10

people are estimated to have dyslexia.
Source: British Dyslexia Association.

**Some use screen readers or text-to-speech
Others use magnification, captions or other tools**

These are not estimates of how many people use screen readers

Let's start with emojis

How do blind people experience emojis?



Have you ever wondered how somebody using a screen reader experiences emojis?

Every emoji has a description assigned to it

That description gets read out by Screen readers

[Click to watch the video](https://www.youtube.com/shorts/h0r9LvO_msw)

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Long strings can interrupt meaning

Be mindful when using emojis



Everyone ▾

I 🖋️ love ❤️ writing 🖋️ content 💻

“I pencil love red heart writing writing hand: light skin tone content laptop.”

Hard to follow & understand

🚀 ✨ 🔥 💥 Exciting news! 🎉 🎉 🙌 🙌

Lots of symbols may be announced one after another.

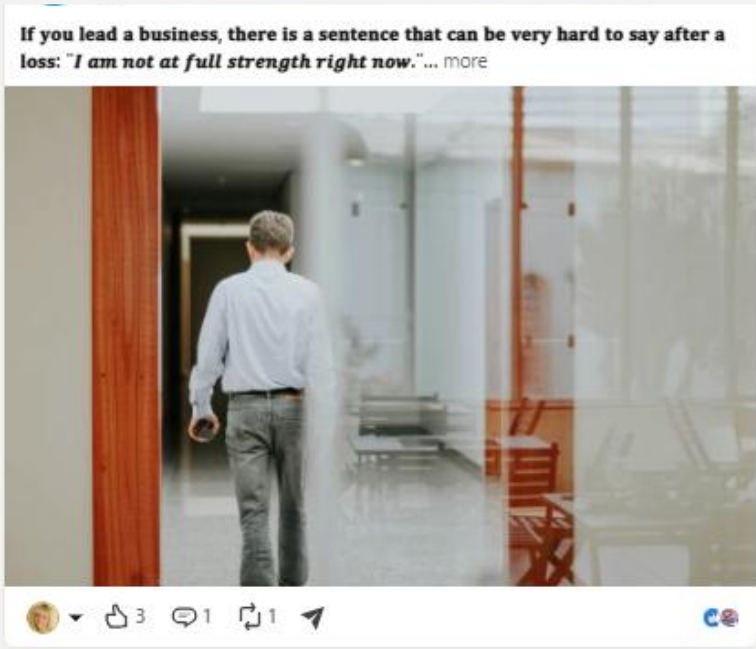
Much clearer option

Exciting news! 🎉

Use an emoji where it adds meaning, not simply decoration.

Use emojis to support your message, not replace words or make it harder to follow.

Decorative text



Social platforms don't generally offer bold or italic formatting in their standard post editors, so people often use Unicode text generators to make certain words stand out.

However, these replace ordinary letters with special characters, which can cause problems for screen readers.

What looks like ordinary text isn't always read like ordinary text.

Decorative text

Difficult for screen readers

Decorative Unicode characters may be announced individually, incorrectly or skipped altogether, making text difficult to understand.

Search & readability

Decorative characters aren't the same as ordinary letters.

They can make text harder to search, copy and interpret.

My Advice:

Use ordinary text wherever possible, particularly for important information.

A visual effect can change how the underlying text is read

Can Everyone Read Your Colours?

Join us for our next networking event!

Poor contrast

Join us for our next networking event!

Good contrast

Good colour contrast helps people read your content, particularly those with low vision or colour vision deficiencies.

If people struggle to read it, your message may be lost.

Can everyone understand your images?

What is Alt text?

A short description of an image that helps people using screen readers understand its content and purpose. This also applies if an image doesn't load.

Less Helpful

“Woman at a table.”

This leaves out the purpose of the image.

More Helpful

“Trainer showing three business owners how to edit a LinkedIn profile on a laptop.”

What about words on images?

If your graphic contains important information, such as an event date or special offer, make sure it's also available in the post text, webpage or appropriate alt text.

Describe what matters in the context of the post but not every tiny detail

Don't rely on an image alone to communicate important information

Why are video captions important?

They help people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

They help people watching without sound.

They make spoken information easier to follow.

Remember:

Check automatically generated captions. They don't always get the words right!

Three things to check before you post

1. Can it be read?

Use clear text, good colour contrast and capitalise each word in hashtags, e.g. #SocialMediaTraining rather than #socialmediatraining.

2. Can it be heard?

Add accurate captions to videos with speech and check auto-generated captions

3. Can it be understood?

Add meaningful alt text and use emojis and decorative characters thoughtfully.

Accessible content is about including more people, not making content boring