

# WHO CAN EXPERIENCE MY POST?

## An Accessibility Guide to Everyday Social Media

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For many arts organizations, individual artists, and event organizers, social media is a useful channel of communication between community members and audiences alike.

During this one-hour presentation, demo, and Q&A with artist, communications specialist, and accessible designer, Yasmeeen Nematt Alla, community organizers learned about some basic do's and don't's of online accessibility.

As community organizers, arts workers, and/or artists, everything about the work that we do can become a fountain of knowledge and ability sharing. Therefore, it is essential to consider accessibility when delivering communications, creating programming, sharing resources etc. as an important way of supporting and caring for all of those in your community.

## GRAPHICS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

- Not everyone can process a visual image the same way, therefore, accessibility considerations need to be implemented into every visual element you use to communicate.
- If you find yourself in need of a graphic for social media platforms, make sure you consider contrast and color — text and background colors that lack contrast are hard to read and hard to consume.
- Use tools like Web AIM's contrast checker to see how your design stacks up.

**TIP! Black and white is always easiest to read.**

## FONTS

- It is preferred to use sans serif fonts for graphics.
- Most fonts come into 2 two types: those with tails and those without. Fonts with tails aka Serif fonts can become inaccessible for folks who happen to be dyslexic. Therefore, sans serif fonts (without tail) are preferred as each letter is separated from the other letters.

**TIP! If you squint looking at your graphic and you cannot read your letters, it is likely your font is too small, or your contrast is too low.**

## EMOJIS

- Emojis are fun! However, screen readers read emojis as their traditional coded name which takes much longer to listen to through screen readers. So make sure not to over use them!

## CAMEL CASE

- #CamelCase is when capitalizing each word in your hashtags. Without capitalizing words in hashtags, screen readers receive words as just a string of letters.
- Make your hashtags accessible to screen readers by making the first letter of each word a capital, regardless of traditional grammar (capitalize “A” and similar).

## ALTERNATIVE TEXT (ALT TEXT)

- Alt Text, also known, as alternative text is a wide umbrella of different levels of image descriptions.
- Alt-text is used only for screen readers and cannot be consumed in any other way. It is meant to be an easy and straightforward description of your image so the person using a screen reader can get a general idea about the image and then move on to the caption of the post itself.
- For video content, consider always providing subtitles.
- For auditory content, provide a script if possible.

## IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

- Image Descriptions exist outside of the image itself and more likely in the caption – sometimes even as a pinned comment. Consider image descriptions as an elaboration of an Alt-Text.
- An image description is useful for someone who uses a screen reader and would like more information about your image. It is also useful for people who might be overwhelmed by a visually complex image.

- An image description allows you to navigate and translate a visual experience to your audience. It also allows creative interpretation from you as the translator. It makes space for the kind of information you want to provide to the person consuming this post.

**TIP! Use descriptors that you find relevant to the context of the image and the image itself.**

**Remember to be transparent with your audience and communicate that the image description is your interpretation of an image. With time, you will better understand your audience's needs and follow the best approach to image descriptions.**

## **SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF WHEN WRITING IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS:**

- Is this image in colour or black and white?
- Are there people in the image?
- What is a piece of their perceived identity that I can provide? Are the people racialized? What is the perceived gender of the people in the image?

**It is essential not to assume elements of people's identity, such as race and gender. If you are not sure how to describe these elements, connect with the folks in the image you are describing or stick to visual descriptors.**

- Can I carry the reader through the image's background, middle ground and foreground? Or is better to carry them clockwise through the image?

## KEY LEARNINGS

- Writing alternative text and image descriptions takes practice! Edit, edit, and edit.
- Visual writing, interpreting, and alternative text are very much rooted in translation. Meaning two main things: 1) There is no right way to do it 2) It will never be perfect.
- Connect with your community to ask for feedback and areas of improvement regarding accessibility considerations.
- Creating access in small capacities in our everyday social media creates ripples in ways nothing else will!

**|| ONLINE PLATFORMS HAVE THE POTENTIAL  
OF BECOMING SPACES OF PROTEST, OF CARE,  
OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, OF EDUCATION,  
OF ART-MAKING, AND INCLUSION.**

- Yasmeeen Nematt Alla