Tips for Accessible Social Media Posts

Post formatting

- There are many options on how to format your post. Here's one option in 3 parts:
  - Part #1, Include a descriptive sentence or two that tells what the post content is about. Alternatively, when possible, you could include a direct quote from the content.
  - Part #2, Include your image description.
  - Part #3, Include relevant hashtag's. For example: #AssistiveTechnology #AT #Disability #Access
    - When writing your hashtags, capitalize the first letter of each word; this can help readers understand your hashtags more clearly.
- Other ideas to include in your post:
  - Ask your audience how they feel about the post and if they have questions.
  - Ask your audience if they share the same experiences as those in the post content or have had different experiences.

Thoughts about using image descriptions on social media

- Image descriptions share about what's visually included in the post. If you don't include an image description, you're not sharing the content in an accessible way and your audience will not receive all the information. Don't leave people out.
- You may want to share or repost a post from another page, but notice that it doesn't include an image description. Please include an image description in your post.
- When sharing something such as a screen shot or image of a meme or Tweet (for example), be sure to type whatever text is in the image into your post. Screen readers may read the image as "image" and not what the image says so it's important to make sure you include the text in your post.

- When the image includes an image and text, be sure to include what the text says along with the image description. For example, [Image description: a person with their eyes closed. Their fist is raised into the air. Image text: Disability Pride. End image description.]
- Placement of image text: if you're posting something with a lot of text or if the primary information in the image is text (like a screen shot of a Tweet), include the image description at the beginning of your post. If the image supports the post content or only has a small amount of text in it, post it after your descriptive sentence(s) and before your hashtags.

Ideas for how to write image descriptions for social media

- There are many schools of thought on how to create an image description and it really is an art. Here are some options:
  - Option 1: write the basics of what's in the image. Example: a person outside.
  - Option 2: Write why the image helps tell the story of what's in the post. Example: a person is using their wheelchair to travel on a paved nature path.
  - Option 3: Write what you might want to know about the image and know from the post content. Example: Jeanie Hayman is shown using her powerchair to travel on a new, paved nature path in at her local county park. Jeanie has short, dark hair, is wearing glasses, and smiling for the photo. She has on a red hoodie, jeans, and sneakers. Her service dog stands next to her with their head raised and their tongue is out.
- Identity information is being included in image descriptions on social media more and more! For examples on how this is incorporated, check out The Body Is Not An Apology's facebook page and read the image descriptions in their posts. And The Disabled and Here Collection ("free and inclusive stock photos shot from our own perspective, featuring disabled BIPOC (Black,

Indigenous, People of Color"); click on a photo and the image description is listed just below the photo.

- o Typically, it's best to use "the person" or "they/their" instead of using gendered terms unless you know how the person in the image identifies; this information could come from the article where gendered terms are used, from your own interactions with the person, etc.
- Another resource on image descriptions is, [All About Image Descriptions](#).
- Formatting: image descriptions are usually enclosed with brackets or parenthesis and text. Example: [Image description: in this space is where you place your image description. End image description.] This formatting helps readers (those using screen readers and others) process the description.

Embedding image descriptions

Social media sites include options to include alt text or image descriptions embedded in the image itself. It's helpful to include the image description in both the embedding option and the post itself. Images that are embedded with image descriptions can be read by those using screen readers, but not by those who aren't. Image descriptions can be helpful to many people so it's helpful to have it in both places.

Here are directions for embedding image descriptions for a few popular social media outlets:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter](#)

Emoji or Emojis

- Emojis are fun, tiny pictures that can be included with text. Including Emoji in your post can improve the chance that your audience will read your post.
- It's best to only include 1 or 2 emoji per post.

- Place parenthesis or brackets around each Emojis so that screen readers will read them clearly. Example, (😊).

Example of an accessible facebook post:

(from: this MATP blog repost)

Therese Willkomm, Director of the New Hampshire AT Program, notes that [social isolation] (👥) may become a critical issue this virus season, particularly for elderly family members. She shares, "This is where technology can be especially useful." Read on to learn more about how an old cellphone (📱) can help keep loved ones connected! Are you finding different ways to connect with you loved ones? Comment what's worked for you!

[Image description: graphic of a purple germ with a grinning face and menacing, arched eyes & eyebrows. End image description.]

#COVID19 #AssistiveTechnology #AT #StaySafeAtHome