Quick Last-Minute Fixes: Making Your Word and PowerPoint Documents Accessible

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Making Office365 Word and PowerPoint documents accessible to all our students, including those who have disabilities, is vital. Accessibility means that a document can be accessed by any user regardless of the device (e.g. browser, screen reader, mobile device) they are using and regardless of their disabilities. This is vital because it provides educational opportunities to all students. For example, a map or an image that has alternative text is of benefit not only to students with a visual impairment. It also benefits students who learn better from verbal than from visual material. "Plus, when it comes to accessibility, it is better to be proactive than reactive as you may be required to redesign major parts of ... the assignment to make it accessible to students with disabilities" (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2020).

It is important to make your documents accessible because of the diversity of Canadian post-secondary student populations, the variety of different technologies used by faculty, and the large number of post-secondary students with disabilities. Well over 11% of the American and Canadian undergraduate population have a disability (Fichten et al., 2018; Snyder, et al., 2016). According to an extensive American study of freshmen enrolled in 184 different universities, 21.9% of students self-reported a disability (Eagan et al., 2017). A recent study of two-year Canadian college social science students (Fichten et al., 2019) found that 26% self-reported a disability.

Luckily, it has become easier for instructors to create accessible Word and PowerPoint documents, since needed information can now be accessed anywhere and anytime through short, just-in-time training videos. We understand that knowing how to create an accessible document may become vital the night before you have to upload your documents to your course management system, such as Moodle. So just-in-time help is often what faculty need.

In this presentation we will highlight the importance of the accessibility of Microsoft Office documents and we will show you two brief (< 6 minute), up-to-date videos on how to make Office365 Word and PowerPoint documents accessible. We will also provide the URLs so that you can view these videos, or portions of them, whenever you need to. The videos are part of a Coursera course (Basics of Inclusive Design). You can view the videos for free (Word https://www.coursera.org/learn/inclusive-design/lecture/DGB3g/creating-accessible-microsoft-word-documents ; PowerPoint https://www.coursera.org/learn/inclusive-design/lecture/hNF8m/creating-accessible-microsoft-powerpoint-documents) any time you wish. You can pause or rewind as needed. If you are interested, you can view the entire Coursera (2019) MOOC on making accessible documents for free.

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