



The Bureau for Management, Office of the Chief Information Officer (M/CIO), Knowledge Services Center

Tips for Creating Accessible Documents

Implementing Section 508

Disclaimer

This document is offered as a tip sheet for those preparing documents that are accessible (“Section 508 compliant”). Always consult:

1. the USG web site titled Section508.gov¹,
2. your organization's compliance entity, and
3. the guidance provided by the COR/AOR pertaining to your award from USAID.

These suggestions on constructing or authoring an accessible document are only meant as helpful tips, and are not opinion or policy of USAID.

These tips refer to Word 2010 and Acrobat Professional XI. Consult your own version's product information as needed.

Policy

1. Complete USG regulations on Section 508 for federal departments and agencies can be found at Section508.gov.
2. USAID ADS guidance states:

Electronic submissions to the Development Experience Clearinghouse, made in accordance with AIDAR 752.7005 will be made available to the Agency employees and members of the general public and, as such, must be 508-compliant².

So how do I author or construct an accessible (Section 508 compliant) document? Tools and Tips

1. Create and author files to represent standard printed publications in Microsoft Office™ applications like Word™ or PowerPoint™. Use the accessibility instructions from product help in Word³ or PowerPoint⁴ to:

- ▶ Embed **structural tags (i.e. headings, paragraph text, lists, tables, graphics, footnotes, etc.)**

Use **Style** elements to format your document text in Word to create the structural tags for your textual document (Heading 1 = Title, Heading 2 = main document section headings, Heading 3 for sub-section headings, Normal for regular paragraph text. Heading styles should only be used for hierarchical content headings).

Use MS Word's **Bullet and Numbering** preformatted list styles to correctly embed structural tags for lists.

Use MS Word's **Insert Table** function to embed structural tags for a simple table, marking header row using **Table Properties** – select “Repeat as header row at the top of each page.”

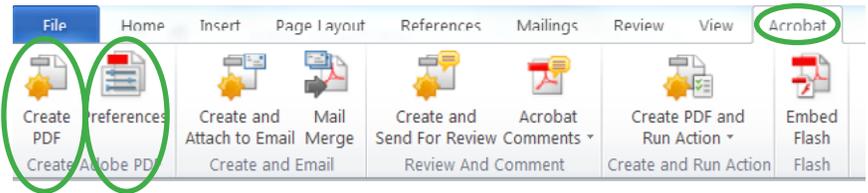
- ▶ Create **alternative text (alt text)** descriptions for **Charts, Diagrams, Images and Other Graphics**

- ▶ **Document properties** and metadata⁵

Specify **Title, Subject, Author, Keywords** by embedding document properties in Word and PowerPoint

2. Check for accessibility issues⁶.

3. Create PDF. (**But don't print to PDF** as this will remove the Section 508 features described.) Use fully configured MS Office and full Adobe™ Acrobat Professional to convert the MS Office file to Adobe PDF. From MS Office, use the Acrobat menu from the MS Office application to set Preferences and Create PDF.



4. Open in Adobe Acrobat Professional. Optionally, check for accessibility compliance using Adobe Acrobat Professional's Accessibility tool to **Check** and **Report**⁷.
 - ▶ Additional resources on making Adobe PDFs accessible are cited specifically on the section508.gov website⁸.

Endnotes

1. USAID ADS reference: [USAID's Mandatory Reference on 508 Compliance](http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/302mak)
<http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/302mak>
2. [Section508.gov](http://www.section508.gov)
3. [Creating Accessible Word Documents](https://support.office.com/en-in/article/Creating-accessible-Word-documents-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d)
<https://support.office.com/en-in/article/Creating-accessible-Word-documents-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d>
4. [Creating Accessible PowerPoint Presentations](https://support.office.com/en-ie/article/Creating-accessible-PowerPoint-presentations-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25)
<https://support.office.com/en-ie/article/Creating-accessible-PowerPoint-presentations-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25>
5. [View or Change Document Properties in an Office File](http://support.office.microsoft.com/client/View-or-change-the-properties-for-an-Office-file-21d604c2-481e-4379-8e54-1dd4622c6b75?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US&NS=WINWORD&Version=14)
<http://support.office.microsoft.com/client/View-or-change-the-properties-for-an-Office-file-21d604c2-481e-4379-8e54-1dd4622c6b75?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US&NS=WINWORD&Version=14>
6. [Check for Accessibility Issues](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Check-for-accessibility-issues-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f?ui=en-US&rs=en-001&ad=US)
<https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Check-for-accessibility-issues-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f?ui=en-US&rs=en-001&ad=US>
7. [Adobe Acrobat Pro XI Accessibility Checker](http://www.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/accessibility/products/acrobat/pdfs/acrobat-xi-accessibility-checker.pdf)
<http://www.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/accessibility/products/acrobat/pdfs/acrobat-xi-accessibility-checker.pdf>
8. [Section508.gov provides a link to "Creating Accessible Adobe PDF Files"](http://www.adobe.com/enterprise/accessibility/pdfs/acro6_pg_ue.pdf)
http://www.adobe.com/enterprise/accessibility/pdfs/acro6_pg_ue.pdf