Beyond "99 Red Balloons" - A Pragmatic guide to alternative text

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Images, graphics, and charts are often incredibly important elements in your documents, and that makes it all the more important to make them accessible. Learn the art of writing effective alt-text. Never struggle with accessible images and graphs again!

Terms and Definitions

1. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are primarily for:
   a. Web content developers
   b. Web authoring tool developers
   c. Web accessibility evaluation tool developers
   d. Anyone who wants or needs a standard for web accessibility
2. POUR - an acronym for four high-level principles that describe functional accessibility.
   a. Perceivable - Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.
   b. Operable - User interface components and navigation must be operable.
   c. Understandable - Information and the operation of the user interface must be understandable.
   d. Robust - Content must be robust enough to be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

User agents

1. Assistive Technologies and Adaptive Strategies
   a. Screen Readers
   b. Screen Magnification
   c. Eye-tracking
   d. Accelerators
   e. Keyboard customization
   f. Pop-up and animations blockers
   g. Refreshable Braille display
   h. Reading assistants
   i. Page maps

Image Types

1. Simple - The image conveys simple information
   a. Photos
   b. Illustrations
2. Complex - The image conveys complex information
   a. Graphs
   b. Charts
3. Decorative - The image is purely decorative, not informative
   a. Spacers
   b. Borders
4. CAPTCHAs - Confirms whether we are human
5. Images of Text - Images of text that display text that is intended to be read
6. Groups of Images - The text alternative for one image conveys the information for the group
   a. Star Ratings
7. Image Maps - An image that contains multiple clickable areas
   a. Park Maps
   b. Org Charts
8. Functional Images - Functional images are used to initiate actions rather than to convey information
   a. Buttons
   b. Links

Slideshows

1. Provide the ability to turn off the player
2. Provide visible controls accessible to the keyboard, mouse, and touch
3. Highlighted on focus with no keyboard traps

Tools and Resources

Tools

1. [Section 508 Checklist](#)
2. [WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#)
3. [Siteimprove Accessibility Checker - Browser Extension](#)
4. [axe - Web Accessibility Testing](#)

Resources

1. [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Overview](#)
2. [Understanding the Four Principles of Accessibility](#)
3. [ADA COMPLIANCE](#)
4. [How to Design Great Alt Text: An Introduction by Deque](#)
5. [W3C - Resources on Alternative Text for Images](#)
6. [Fast Facts of Common Eye Disorders by the CDC](#)
7. [Screen Reader User Survey #9 Results](#)