



Section 508 Compliance Services

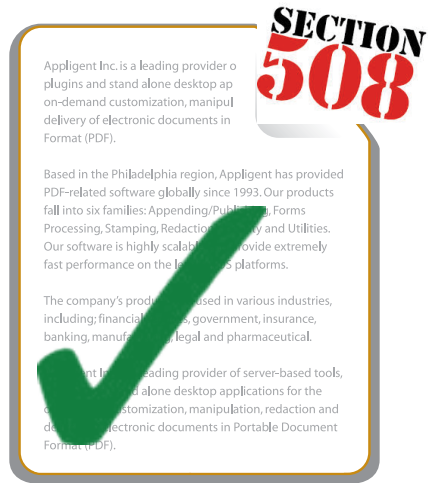


PDF is the ideal format for distributing documents and forms. Documents can be easily read and forms completed electronically using freely available apps like Adobe Reader... unless you have a visual impairment

appligent
DOCUMENT SOLUTIONS

What is Section 508?

In 1998, the U.S. Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to require Federal agencies to make their electronic information accessible to people with physical, sensory or cognitive disabilities. Section 508 was enacted to eliminate barriers in information technology, open new opportunities for people with disabilities and encourage development of technologies that will help achieve these goals. The law applies to all Federal agencies with regard to all electronic and information technology. All states now have guidelines and policies in place with regard to the accessibility of electronic information. By extension, companies and organizations who deal with the government must also provide accessible content. This includes Healthcare companies who deal with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, as well as Universities and Colleges who deal with the Department of Education or other government entities.



As of September 30, 2024, the Access Board has established a Baseline for Electronic Documents. Electronic documents are to comply at a minimum with requirements specified in WCAG 2.0 Success Criteria Level A and Level AA with the exception of 4 specific Success Criteria that are specifically for Web content and do not relate to documents. The most current version of WCAG is 2.2.

For more information on the timeline and history of Section 508, please see <https://www.access-board.gov/>

For more information on WCAG 2.0 please see <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>

For more information on WCAG 2.2 please see <https://www.w3.org/WCAG22/>

Reading an electronic document or filling in a standard form is a challenge if someone has limited or no vision. Screen Reading software can be used to read electronic documents and forms to the end user. To be read in this way, documents must be modified with a tagging structure and descriptions of images. This enables the Screen Reader to access the text and images of documents and forms and ensures that the end user has equal access to the information being provided.

What does Appligent provide?

- Remediation of existing PDF content to meet or exceed the accessibility requirements of Section 508 , PDF/UA and WCAG 2.x (2.0, 2.1 or 2.2).
- Development or revision of accessible PDF and dynamic AEM forms that include the proper logical tab order and tool tips, as well as advanced features such as JavaScript and form field validation.(AEM forms were formerly known as XFA or LiveCycle forms)
- Information and best practices on developing Section 508“friendly” source documents and PDF documents.
- Scanning and conversion of print content to accessible,electronic content or large print format.

Why use Appligent’s remediation services?

- There is no substitute for experience. We have provided PDF accessibility services since 2000.
- We specialize in remediation of complex documents and forms. Many of our customers have in-house staff for basic remediation of documents, but have us remediate the more complex documents and develop accessible forms.
- We offer high quality, cost effective PDF services and will work with you to help you create Section 508 friendly PDF files and forms. Client projects are put into production quickly and completed in a timely manner.
- We guarantee our work. Our deliverable PDF files are guaranteed against any verifiable defect in tagging for one year following delivery.
- All remediation work is done by Appligent employees in the United States.

Creating Accessibility “Friendly” Source Files

Fonts and Bullets

Don't use custom typefaces or stylized bullets

In addition to taking up more space in your document, custom typefaces and stylized bullets can trigger Unicode mapping errors in Accessibility Checkers. If images are used as bullets, they will require text descriptions known as Alt Text.

Use Standard Fonts

Standard or web-safe fonts are well understood by Screen Reading software. Bullets and other special characters should also be chosen from these font.

Avoid extra bold, black, or heavy font variations

These type styles can cause text to appear multiple times in the tagged document.

Don't use small caps

Using small caps can cause text to appear as a mix of upper case and lower case characters in tags and cause the screen reader software to repeat content as if stuttering.

Use Text not Images of Text

Screen Readers can not read images of text. Processing image based PDF files through Optical Character Recognition software (OCR) will convert images of text to actual readable text. The OCR process also usually significantly reduces the file size. Manual reorganization of the tags is required so that the information can be read in the correct order and context.

Differences in Content Creation Software

Be aware that not all content creation software creates accessibility friendly PDF files. Some files may need extensive cleanup during the tagging process to correct Unicode or other errors in the files. For example, web based collaborative design software is great for images to be posted to Social Media, however it is very difficult to make accessible for use with screen reading software.

Color

Color Contrast

Document authors and designers need to be aware of their color selections, especially with regard to text placed on top of a color. There needs to be sufficient contrast between the colors so the text can be read accurately.

For example, placing pale yellow text on a light green background will not be sufficient contrast to pass accessibility requirements. Color contrast is required to be a minimum of a 4.5:1 contrast ration for text. Large scale text is permitted to have a 3:1 contrast ratio.

Use of Color

If colors are used to identify specific information, the information should also be provided in text that can be read by screen reading software. For example, colors used to denote information in charts and graphs should also have text descriptions for people who cannot see color.

Formatting Issues

Avoid double-page spreads

Headers, body text or tables split into two pages are seen and tagged as separate pages in Acrobat. Manual reorganization of the tags is required so that the information can be read in the correct order and context.

Use embedded, flattened .jpg files

In files with layered graphics, such as Illustrator drawings, or multiple layers of background shading, tagging can change Layer order and 'break' images or cause text to disappear behind shading.

Simplify Tables

Multiple levels of row/column headers are more difficult and labor intensive to tag. Even when structured and tagged perfectly, many screen readers will read them row by row, making them difficult for a non-sighted end user to decipher.

Limit 'Visual' cues and information

Avoid using graphic elements or color coding to convey essential information. Differently colored or formatted words such as bold, italic, etc. need to be separated and tagged individually and supplied with alternate text. This can increase tagging time significantly.

Exporting from inDesign to PDF with Tags

When exporting from InDesign to PDF, select Interactive PDF, which will export to PDF with tags. This will give the resulting PDF file a basic tag structure which will make the document easier to tag for accessibility compliance. It can also help clean up any underlying font issues.

How Alt Text is Used

Alternative text or “Alt” text is text associated with an image that conveys the same essential information as the image. For example, a photograph of two boys riding bicycles would be given the Alt Text “Two boys riding bicycles.”

Alt text is used by Assistive Technology (AT) devices such as Screen Reading Software. Users will hear the descriptions of images read aloud through their computer’s speakers or through headphones.



Adding Alt Text with Authoring Applications

Different word processing and desktop publishing applications feature different methods for adding alt text to images in those applications.

Alt text that is added to images in Microsoft® Word, or Adobe® InDesign® documents will be added to tagged PDF files that are exported from these authoring applications.

- In Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and other Microsoft Office applications, alt text is placed in the alt text field of the format picture dialog.
- In Adobe InDesign files, the alt text is based upon values in the Object Export Options dialog.

Microsoft Word

Select the image with a Right Mouse Button Click and choose “Format Picture” (Right Click and Type “o”). Choose the Format Picture option for an image in Word From the Format Picture Dialog, do the following:

1. Select the Alt Text Category.
2. Type the desired Alt Text in the Description field.
3. Select the Close Button when done.

Adobe InDesign

To add Alt text in Adobe InDesign:

1. Select the image with the Selection Tool. If the image is contained within a graphic frame, select the frame with the Selection Tool.
2. Choose Object > Object Export Options from the Menu. You can also Right Mouse Click on the graphic frame to select Object Export Options.
3. Select the Alt Text Tab in the Object Export Options Dialog.
4. Choose Custom from drop down list in the Alt Text Source Menu.
5. Enter the Alt text description in the text field.
6. Select Done.

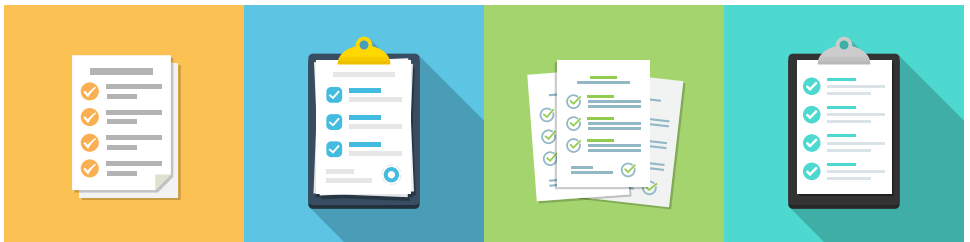
Adobe Acrobat (PDF)

To add or change Alt text in a tagged PDF using Adobe Acrobat (not the free Adobe Reader):

1. Open the Tags panel in Acrobat. From the Acrobat menu, choose View > Show/Hide > Navigation Panes > Tags.
2. Select items that are tagged as <Figure>.
3. Right Mouse Click on each <Figure> tag and select Properties.

This displays the Adobe Acrobat Object Properties Dialog.

1. Select the Tags Tab from the Object Properties dialog.
2. You can enter an Optional Title in the Title field to identify individual figures in the Tags panel view.
3. Enter the Alt text description in the Alternate Text field
4. Select Close.



Questions? Contact Appligent at 610-284-4006 or e-mail documents to Section508@appligent.com for a no obligation quote for document remediation.

Appligent has specialized in PDF since 1993 and is one of the oldest and most innovative independent PDF technology companies, servicing the needs of customers across many industries including education, government, publishing, healthcare, and legal.

For more information on Appligent, visit us on the web at <https://appligent.com> or call us at (610) 284-4006.

© 2024 Appligent Inc.

appligent
DOCUMENT SOLUTIONS

22 East Baltimore Avenue, Lansdowne PA 19050-2202

Section508@appligent.com • 610-284-4006

<https://appligent.com>