



**General Services Administration (GSA)  
Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)  
IT Policy and Compliance Division (IEC)**

**Guidelines for Creating Accessible PowerPoint Documents**

The following guidelines are being enforced by the General Services Administration to assist GSA Employees and it's customers in the development of accessible Microsoft PowerPoint documents.

PowerPoint documents must meet W3C accessibility ([W3C.org](http://W3C.org)) requirements to ensure the information contained within the document is accessible to assistive technology.

- Complete document properties by identifying pertinent information under "Summary" and "Custom" tabs.
- All images must include alternative descriptive text or be indicated as a spacer image if appropriate.
- Title your image when possible to help all users understand the purpose of an image (ie. Figure 2 – Understanding Accessibility)
- Do not use color to convey important information. Use textual annotations instead.
- When using tables, label row headers and column headers to enhance accessibility. Make sure row and column headers are clear and self-explanatory.
- Don't rely on sound alone to convey important information.
- Microsoft PowerPoint presentations containing audio, should have a text description of the audio content available as part of the slide. A text description will benefit users who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, or those who don't have a sound card or have sound turned off.

- Make use of pre-defined slide layouts. This will help in making the slide content more accessible in format, and easier when converting the presentation to HTML format.
- Monitor your slides using in Outline view. This approach will ensure that each slide is using the correct slide layout and includes a slide title, creating proper text flow.
- Insert data tables by using the slide layout that contains a table or by selecting "Table" from the Insert menu.
- Tables should only be used for the presentation of data and not for slide layout.
- Create charts and graphs using the appropriate slide layout or by selecting Chart from the Insert command. Use alternate text or "d" link to describe charts and graphics when accessibility of either cannot be achieved any other way.
- When audio is included with the presentation, text captions must be synchronized with the audio.

**References:**

California Polytechnic State University. Retrieved January 2009 from <http://warc.calpoly.edu/accessibility/508indepth/index.html>

Section 508.gov. Retrieved January 2009 from <http://www.section508.gov/>

Access-Board. Retrieved January 2009 from <http://www.access-board.gov/508.htm>