

# Alternative Text: A Brief Introduction

Accessibility Video Tutorials

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**Katie Allen**  
**Center on Victimization and Safety**  
**Vera Institute of Justice**

**December 19, 2019**

*This project was supported by Grant No. 2016-TA-AX-K068 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this program are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.*

# What we will cover in this video

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In this video, we will discuss & demonstrate:

- ✓ What is **alternative text**?
- ✓ Why does alternative text matter for survivors with disabilities?
- ✓ How can I use alternative text to make my images and other visual elements accessible for survivors?
- ✓ How can I add alternative text in Microsoft Office and on Facebook?

# What is Alternative Text?

And why does it matter for accessibility?

# What is alternative text?

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**Alternative Text:** briefly describes the meaning of an image, graph, chart, or other non-text item

- You can type alternative text into the image format in an electronic document or web content
- It is not visual. It is mostly for survivors using screen readers and other assistive technology.
- It is not just for images, but also for charts, graphs, buttons, graphics, symbols, logos, etc.

# Definitions: Assistive Technology

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- **Screen Reader:** software that communicates displays (text, images, icons ,etc.) from a computer to users in a non-visual way, through speech or Braille.
- **Text-to-Speech Technology or Speech Synthesis:** general term for the technology that reads text from your computer aloud. Many applications and plug-ins are free and open-source.
- **Refreshable Braille Display:** device that communicates the written text from a screen reader on a computer to a user in Braille.

# When should we use Alternative Text?

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Always!

- All images, photos, charts, graphics, graphs, logos, symbols, and any non-text element in **electronic documents** or on **websites** and **social media** need alternative text.
- Check out our National Resource Center's *Social Media Access Tip Sheet* to learn more about social media accessibility and alternative text.

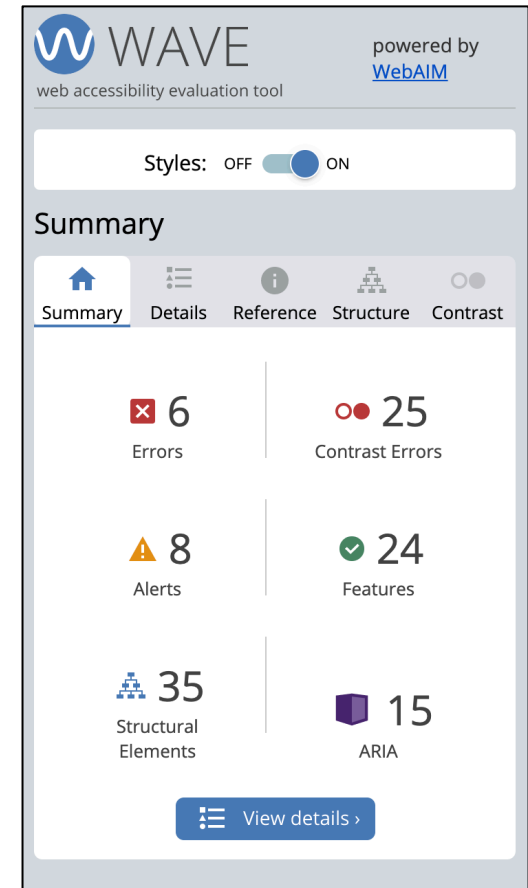
# Screen Reader Demo: Voice Over

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# Alternative Text on your website

- Your website and social media pages are the gateways for many survivors to access services.
- You can check to see if your website includes alternative text by using a Web Accessibility Evaluation tool, [WAVE](#).
- Copy and paste your website URL into [WAVE](#), or use the browser plug in.
- The results on the side bar will tell you if you are missing alternative text, and how to fix it.





# How to Add Alternative Text

## In Microsoft PowerPoint for Mac & Facebook

# How to describe an image

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- Context is everything.
- Be accurate and succinct.
- Describe the meaning of the image, not the appearance.
- Avoid redundancy. Don't add "Image of...", "picture of...", or "link to".
- Only mark the images as "decorative" if it is not meaningful information.

# How NOT to describe an image

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- “Two women sitting in an office on green spotted armchairs talking and taking notes. One woman is wearing an aqua shirt with a blazer and the other woman is facing her and has red hair.”
- “Two women”

# Image Caption vs. Alt Text



PORTSMOUTH, Va. (April 5, 2019)  
Sailors assigned to the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) stand next to flags with encouraging messages during a kickoff event for Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

Alt Text

How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind?

(1-2 sentences recommended)

☐ Mark as decorative

Generate a description for me

The alternative text is added to the format of the picture. It is not visible.

# Adding Alternative Text

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# Another way to add Alternative Text

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- Adding alternative text may be different depending on your version of PowerPoint and whether you are using a Mac or PC.
- **Another way to add Alternative Text is to:**
  - Go to the *Format* drop-down menu and choose "**Format Object**".
  - Click on the "**Size and Properties**" option, (the option with the square and arrows pointing in different directions). Click "**Alt Text**" from the list.
  - The Alt Text box will appear in the side bar. You can add a title and brief description.



# Alt Text on Facebook

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Facebook automatically generates alt text for your images, but it is almost always inaccurate. Don't worry – you can change this!



# To Recap: Alternative Text

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**Alternative Text is important for survivors with a variety of disabilities.**

- ✓ All images, charts, graphics, graphs, and non-text items in electronic documents and web-based materials should include alternative text.
- ✓ Survivors who use assistive technologies access images and non-text items through alt text.
- ✓ Alt text descriptions should be **accurate** and **succinct**.
- ✓ You can add alt text in Microsoft Office & Facebook, and check your website's alt text with [WAVE](#).
- ✓ Captions and alt text should be different from each other.



# Thank you!

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For more information and videos about accessible content, visit: [www.endabusepwd.org](http://www.endabusepwd.org)

Ending abuse of people with disabilities is a team effort.

Contact us for support:

**End Abuse Email Address:** [cvs@vera.org](mailto:cvs@vera.org)

**End Abuse Phone Number:** [\(212\) 376-3096](tel:(212)376-3096)

**End Abuse Toll Free Phone Number:** [\(855\) 274-8222](tel:(855)274-8222)