



Allegra tip sheet for print accessibility

KELLY PARKINSON
Client Services
734.944.1404 x118
kparkinson@allegra.net

Collecting content is always a challenge. Providing the keystrokes in a Word document will help initiate steps toward ADA Compliance before the visual design work begins. Reverse engineering an ADA compliant PDF is more time consuming than starting from a basic Word document. Adobe Acrobat and InDesign both feature options to review documents for ADA Compliance. Complicated graphics such as maps and graphs are not addressed in this overview.

Having everything before starting a page is helpful. Rearranging reading order can be extensive if you add elements later.

1. Layers affect reading order.
2. Use an appropriate minimum type size.
3. Be certain there is sufficient contrast between type and background colors or images.
4. Don't use double spaces or double tabs.
5. Avoid special characters.
6. Avoid ALL CAPS – less legible.

If Tables are being used, alternating shading for rows may help separate information.

Reverse engineering a fully designed document presents unique challenges, such as establishing the reading order. Other challenges may include:

1. Call out boxes
2. Statistic “bubbles”
3. Graphs or Maps
4. Placement of photographs
5. Logos or other graphic elements repeated throughout a document

Many of these issues may be mitigated with a conversation establishing consistent placement of these elements throughout the document.

For example, call out boxes should come first, followed by general page content, with statistic bubbles coming last on each page. Maps and photographs will always be left or right of the content. Any non-essential elements should be evaluated to determine where they fall, or if they should be eliminated.

Master page items are not handled consistently by Acrobat. Sometimes they're included in reading order, sometimes not. They need to be checked carefully as there seems (so far) to be no pattern to issues that arise. Try to set up reading order within InDesign to avoid re-arranging them after the PDF is exported. Description should be included in original image files.

1. Add Alt Text and Descriptions to images:

Right-click the image and select “Object Export Options.” Type the alt text in the ‘Alt Text’>Custom window. Click Done.

2. Add tags to text and paragraph styles:
 - a. To edit existing paragraph styles: Open the Paragraph Styles window. Click on the drop-down menu (upper right of window) and choose “Edit All Export Tags.” Select “PDF” at the top. Review all tags for each paragraph style listed. To change or add a tag, click in the appropriate column, and select the correct tag.
 - b. To map a paragraph style to a tag when defining a new paragraph style: Select “Export Tagging” in the New Paragraph Style window, choose the appropriate tag in the lower portion of the window labeled “PDF”
 - c. Be sure to select ‘Create Tagged PDF’ when exporting to PDF.
3. Tag images/graphics as Artifacts:
Select the item(s) and right-click > “Object Export options.” Choose “Tagged PDF” from the top and “Apply Tag > ‘Artifact’.” Select ‘Done.’
4. Create the Reading Order: **Do this as the last step before creating the PDF!**

Best practice: keep all text in text frames that flow from page-to-page. This will enable the pdf to automatically apply the appropriate reading order. However, for those instances where this isn't feasible, do the following steps.

- a. Open the Articles window. This is where you will establish the individual ‘articles’ of the document, arrange them in the order they are intended to be read in, and then organize the structure of the document.
- b. For each page/spread, select all items that should be considered one article.
- c. Click the ‘+’ button in the Article window > name the article in the pop-up window, and select “Include when Exporting”
- d. Repeat as needed throughout the document. To change the reading order, drag and drop the individual items within the Article window.

PDF files should have bookmarks to aid the reader in navigating to specialized information they may be seeking.

To export a PDF from InDesign:

General > Options

Select “Create Tagged PDF”

General > Include

Select “Bookmarks” — if created in InDesign

Select “Hyperlinks” — if needed

Open PDF in Acrobat to check:

- Reading order
- Images for descriptions
- Bookmarks

These things can be changed in Acrobat, if necessary, but fixing them in InDesign before re-exporting is recommended. This will ensure the changes are permanent and won’t have to be redone after future exports. The goal is an Acrobat check that flags no issues.