

HTML and Screen Reader Accessibility

Images

One of the easiest ways to make your Web page more accessible is to add alternative text for graphics and images. Visually impaired individuals often use screen readers to read Web pages. If the images on a Web page do not have a text alternative (contained in the “alt” tag), the screen reader will only state “image” when it encounters the graphic. The user would have little idea what the image is or whether it is important.

Example:



The html code for this image is:

```

```

- To make this image accessible, add the alt tag:

```

```

The screen reader will read all the words following the alt tag. Make sure that the text alternative accurately describes the graphic.

Some images on the Web, such as borders, convey no information and therefore are difficult to describe in an alt tag.

Example:



The html code for this image is:

```

```

- To make this image accessible, add the alt tag but leave the description blank:

```

```

Because the alt tag is empty, once the screen reader comes across this image, it will essentially skip over it. Use empty alt tags sparingly. Remember, your goal of building an accessible Web site is to convey the entire content of the page to all individuals who access your site.

Tables

Screen readers have difficulty reading tables. Some tips for making tables accessible:

1. Make sure the information in the table makes sense when read linearly.
2. Use the table header <th> tag
3. Use the <caption> tag to name the table
4. Avoid overly complex tables

Example: Data Table

Spring Training Schedule

Date	Class	Location
March 1	Basic HTML	Room 101
April 17	PubMed	Computer Lab

Here's the standard html code for this table:

```
<table>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Basic HTML</td>
<td>Room 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 17</td>
<td>PubMed</td>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
</tr>
</table>
```

Here's one possible accessible html code for this table:

```
<table>
<caption><b>Spring Training
Schedule</b></caption>
<tr>
<th scope="col">Date</th>
<th scope="col">Class</th>
<th scope="col">Location</th>
</tr>
<tr>
<th scope="row">March 1</th>
<td> Basic HTML</td>
<td>Room 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<th scope="row">April 17</th>
<td>PubMed</td>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
</tr>
</table>
```