Introduction to Accessible Communication

2018

KATS Network/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

What is “accessible” communication ?

- An exchange of information that can be obtained, understood, and used by everyone.

Disability

- The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity.
  - Includes people who have a record of having a disability or are regarded as having a disability.

- “Disability” is experienced by different people in different ways – it depends upon personal, social, environmental, and cultural factors.
  - While people experience disability differently – and in a whole range of severity – when we plan for our communication to be accessible, it can be accessible to everyone, regardless of how they experience disability.

Types of Disability

- Vision
  - Blindness, low vision, color blindness
- Auditory
  - Deafness, hard of hearing
- Motor
  - Paralysis, spasticity, weakness, missing/damaged limbs, range of motion limitations, dexterity, pain, fatigue
- Cognitive
  - Learning disabilities, autism, intellectual disabilities, developmental delays/disabilities, neurodegenerative disabilities, brain injuries
- Mental Health
  - Anxiety, Depression, Bi-polar

The Law:

- The Rehab Act of 1973:
  - Section 504 (non-discrimination under Federal grants and programs)
  - Section 508 (accessible Federal information technology)
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 – requires accessibility of programs, services, public accommodations and employment
- Kentucky Accessible Information Technology Law (2000) – accessible KY state information technology

Barriers

Accommodation

Accessibility

What makes communication accessible?

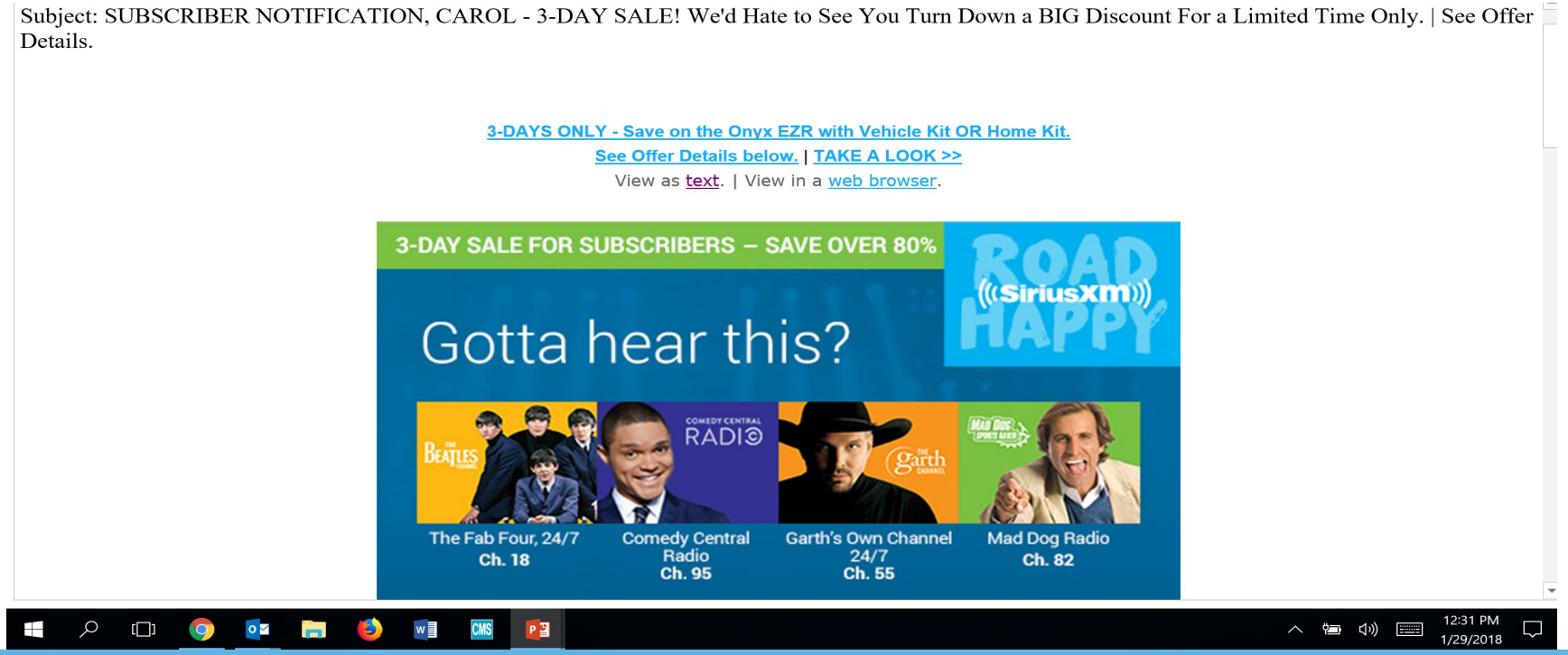
- Perceivable
- Operable
- Understandable
- Robust

Perceivable

- Perceivability means that the user can identify content and interface elements by means of the senses.
- In this document, it doesn't matter if it is electronic or printed, it is hard to see the information.

Operable

Operability means that a user can successfully use controls, buttons, navigation, and other necessary interactive elements.



Understandable

- Understandable means that it can be easily read and understood.
- The sky is blue.
- The firmament that encompasses this terrestrial realm appears a luminous cerulean.

Robust

Robust communication is designed to get information to the users regardless of the technology employed to access the information.

General Accessibility Features

Plain Language: Before

When the process of freeing a vehicle that has been stuck results in ruts or holes, the operator will fill the rut or hole created by such activity before removing the vehicle from the immediate area.

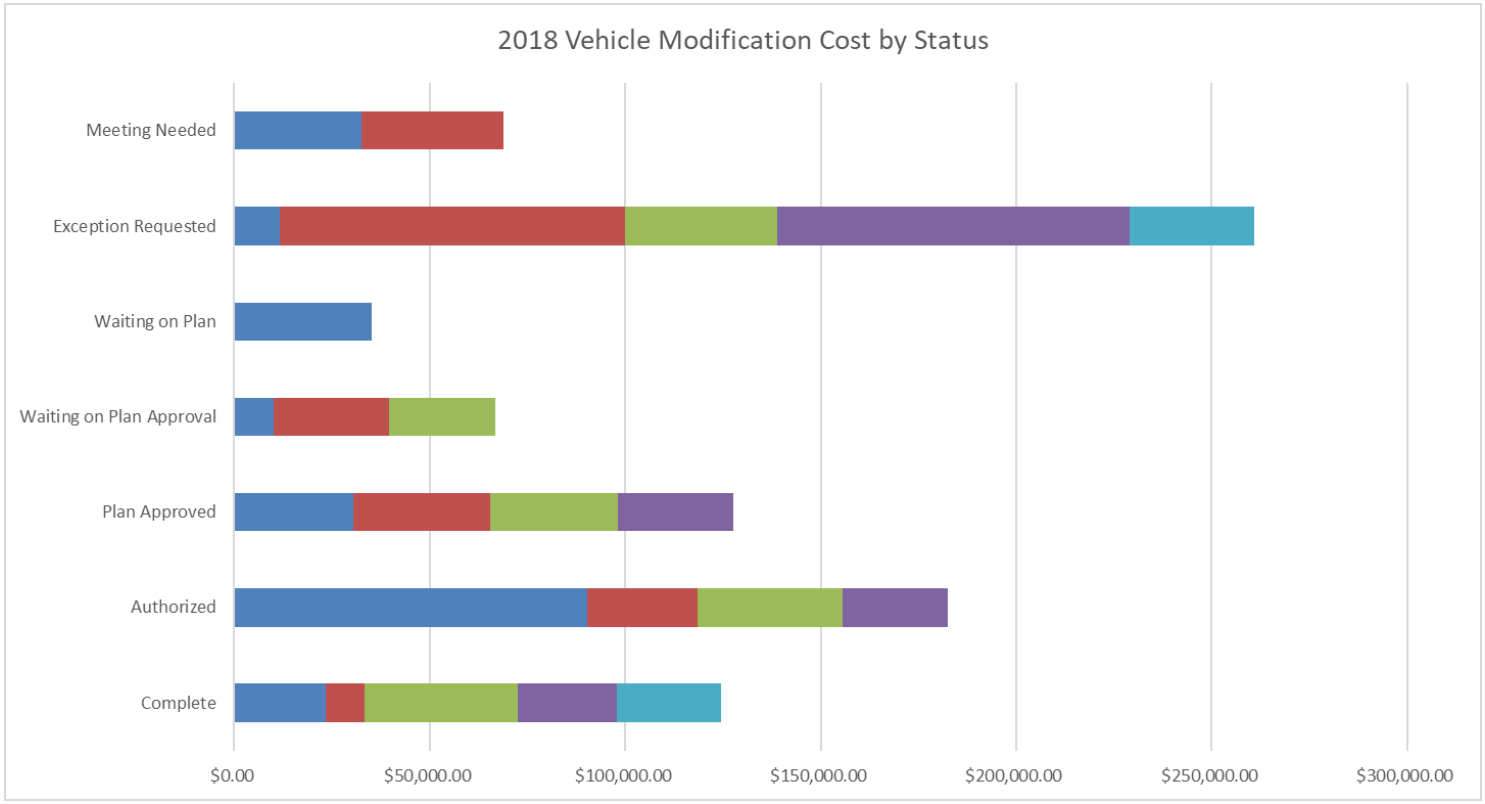
Plain Language: After

If you make a hole while freeing a stuck vehicle, you must fill the hole before you drive away.

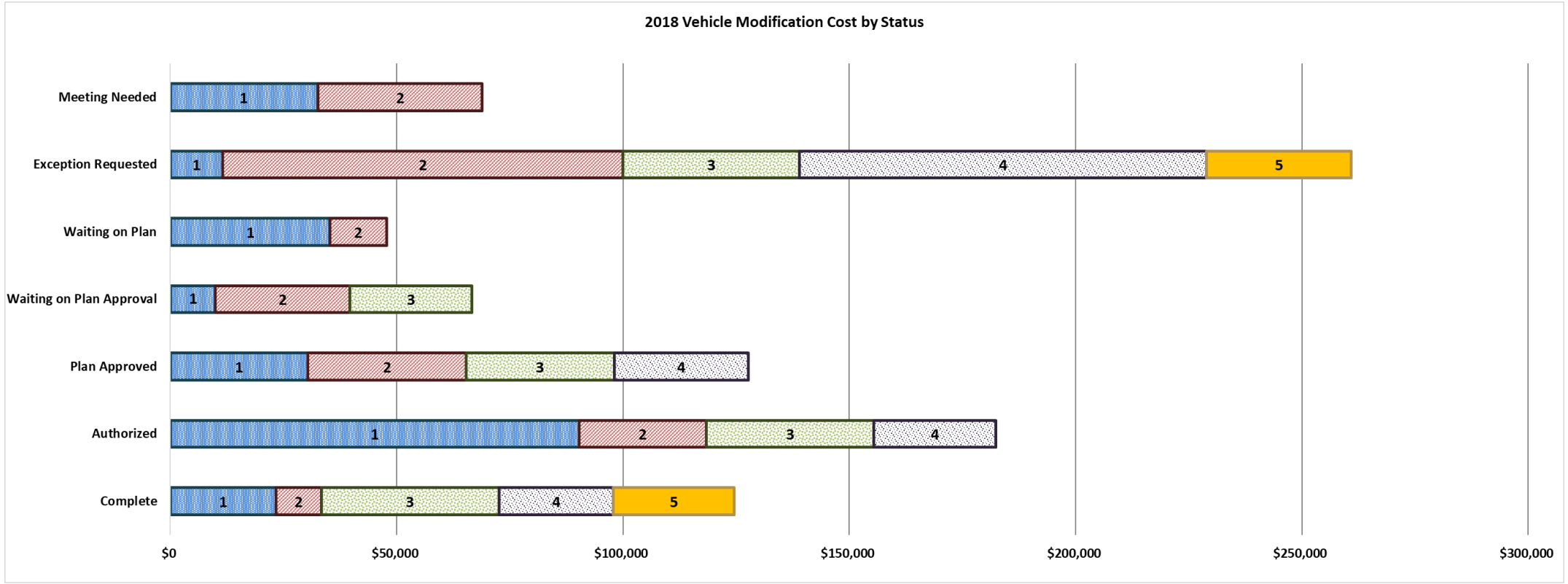
Color Contrast

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

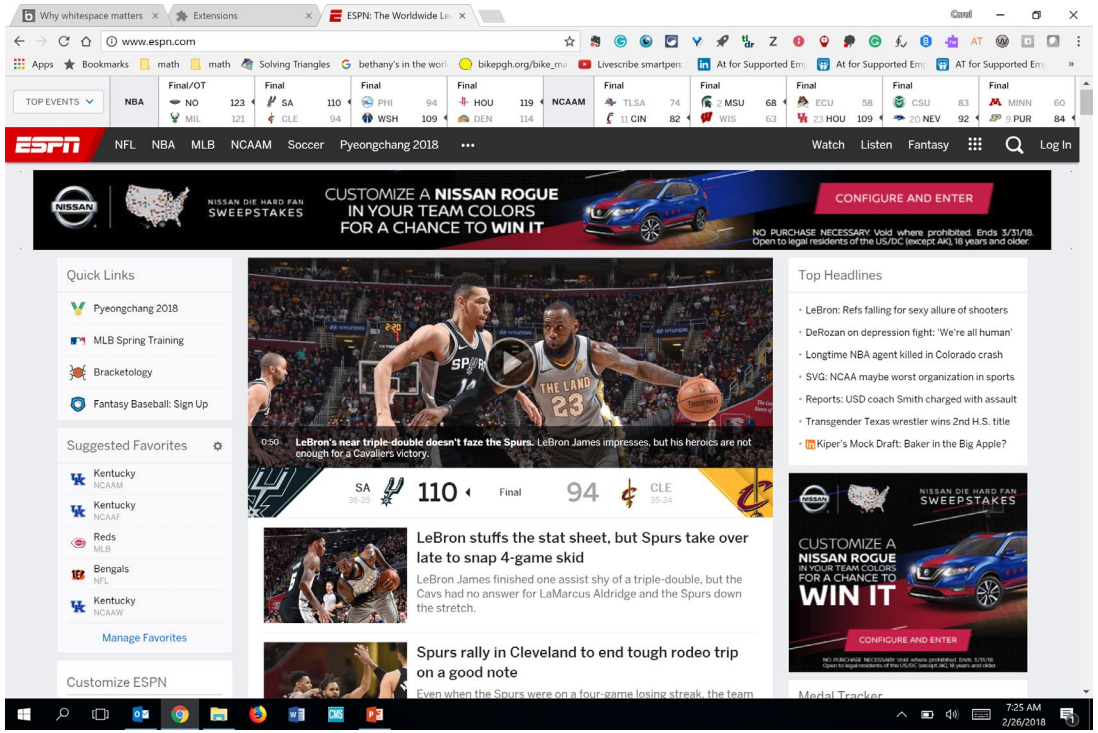
Color and Information

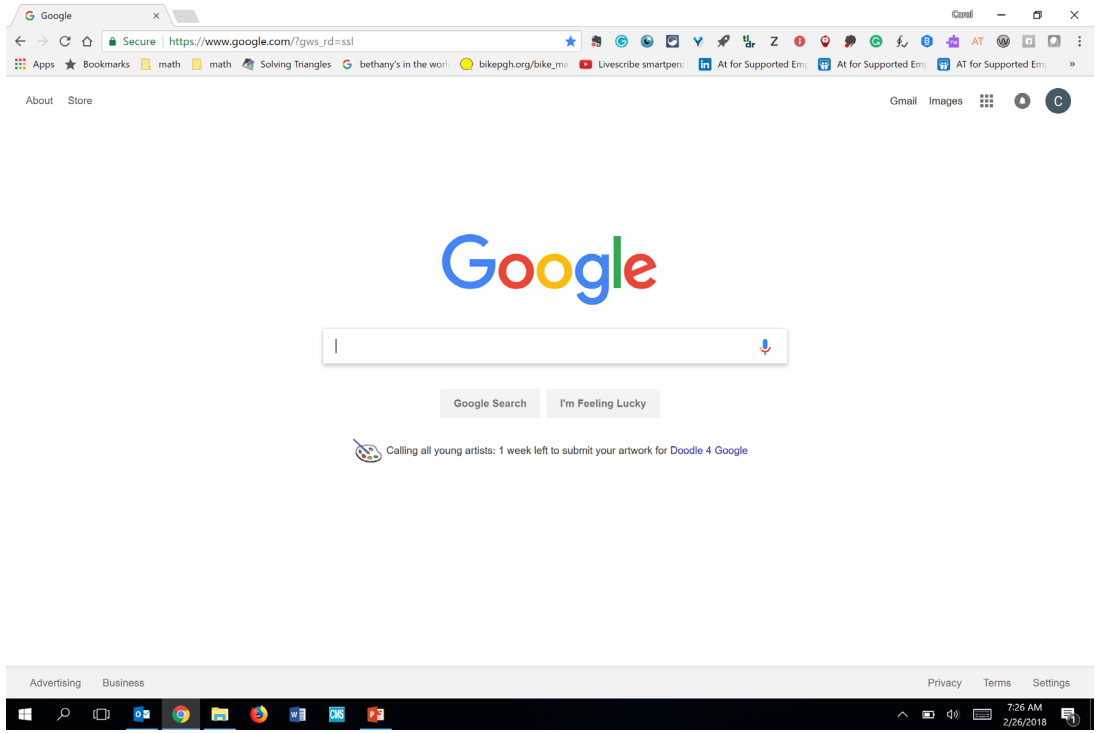


Provide Information with more than Color



“White” space





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Font Size & Style

- Testing how easy it is to read something based on how large the font is.
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- Does the font style affect the readability of text?
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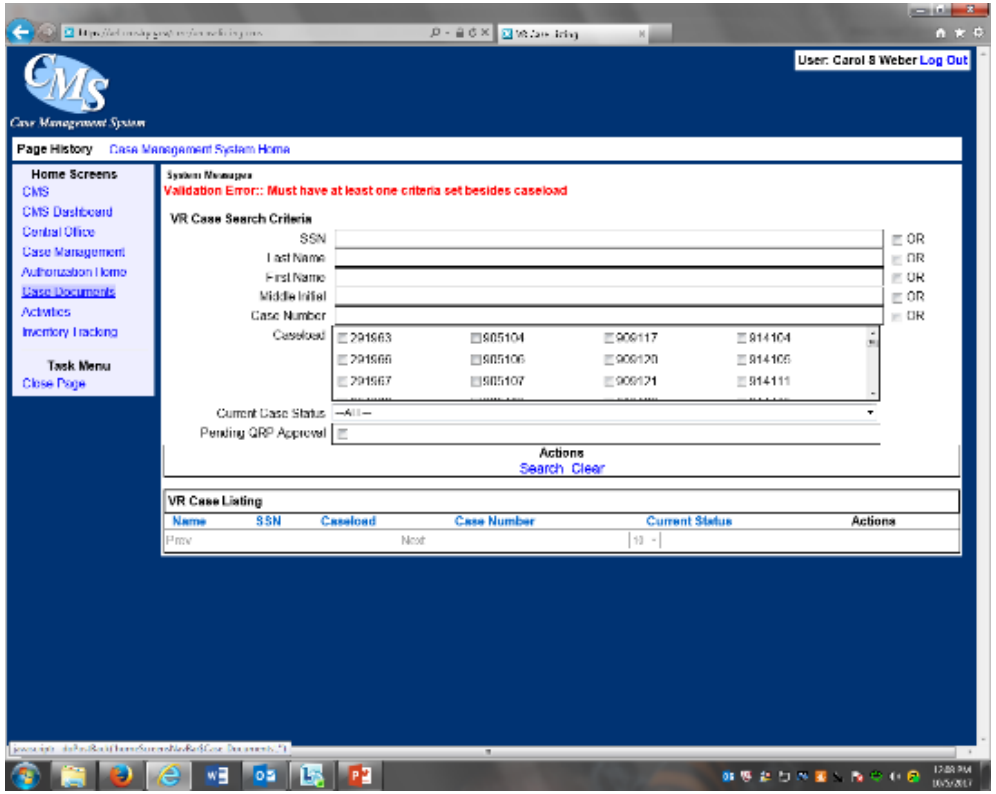
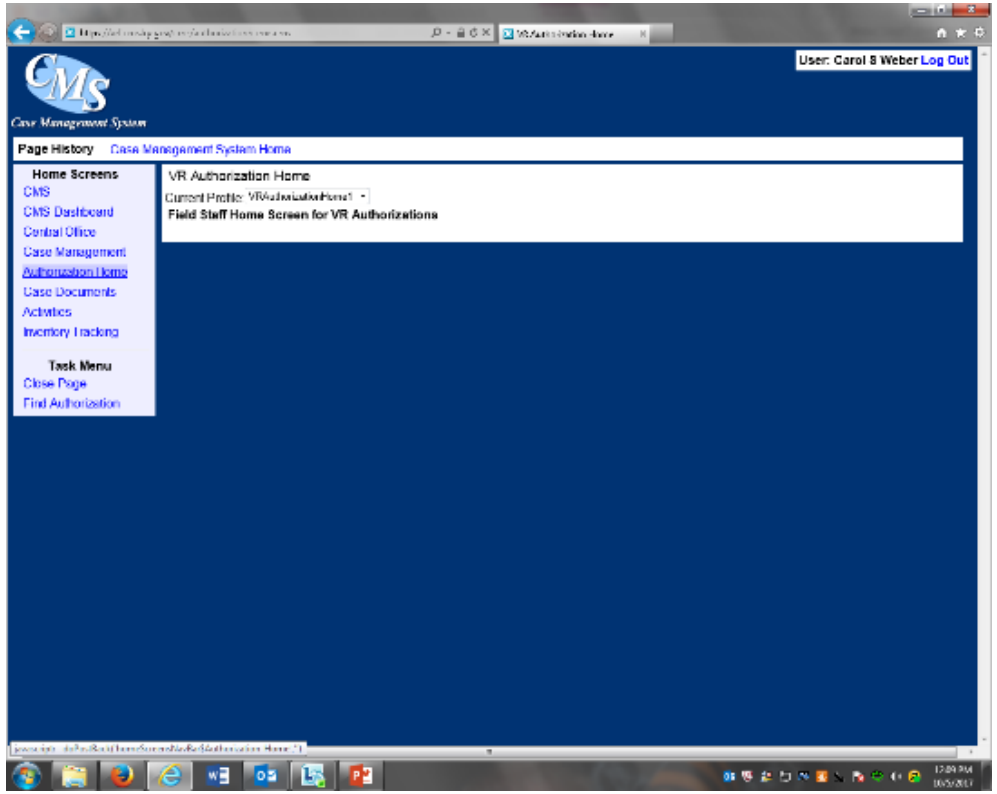
Consistent





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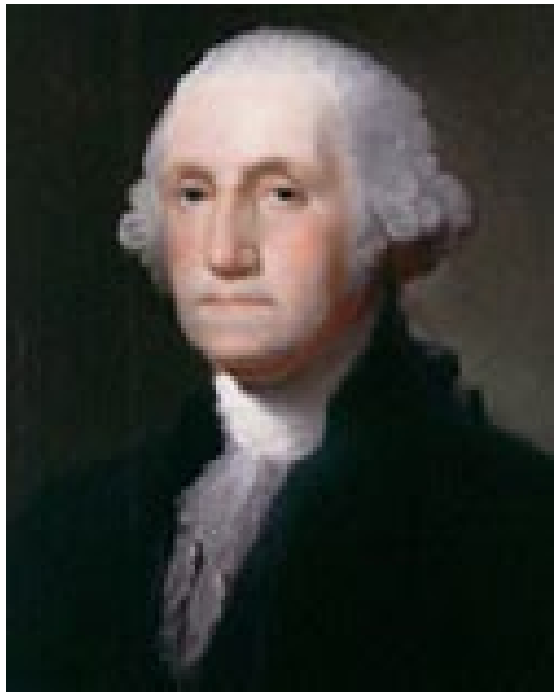
Text Equivalents

- Alternative Text Attribute (images)
  - Hidden from view
  - Replaces visual element for those who cannot access the visual element
  - Allows an individual to perceive the information conveyed by the image
- Captions
  - Further visible information just above or below an image
- Long(er) Descriptions
  - Higher level descriptions (charts, graphs, etc)
  - Include in document body, separate page, appendix/reference

Text Equivalents – Alt Text

- Context is everything
  - The alt text for one image may be drastically different based upon the context and surroundings of the image itself



Links

- Link text should make sense out of context
- Avoid “Click Here”, “Read More”, etc.

Links - Inaccessible

https://www.katsnet.org/services/ramps/formbuilder/form.php?form_id=8u4903v5789034n85903485j90458n90nb4938w=9-n8943

Links - Accessible

Fill out our form to request a portable ramp

Links – which is better?

Fill out our form to request a portable ramp

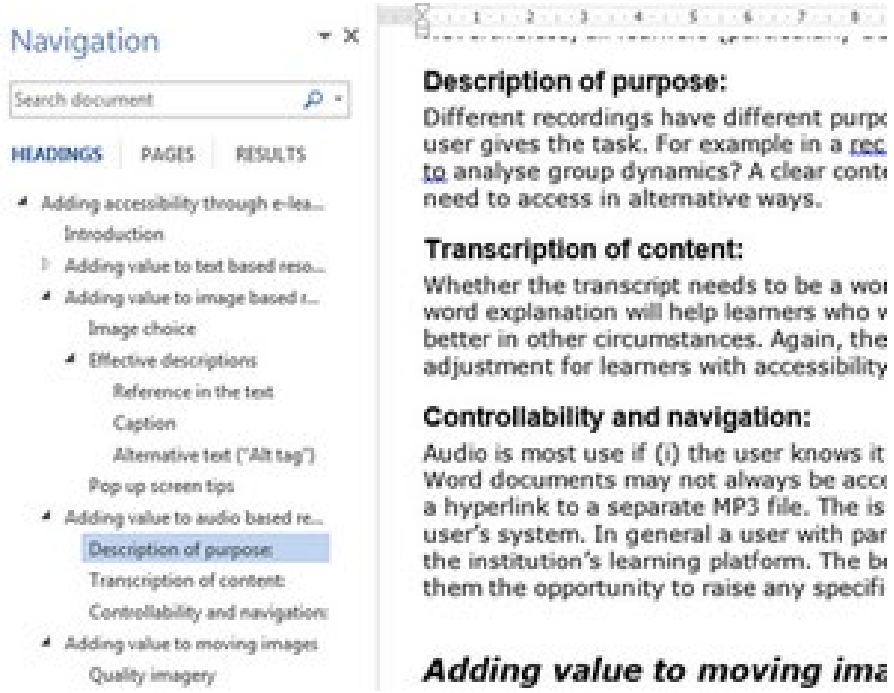
(https://www.katsnet.org/services/ramps/formbuilder/form.php?form_id=8u4903v5789034n85903485j90458n90nb4938w=9-n8943)

Fill out our form to request a portable ramp

(goo.gl/FGH6Bx)

Structure

- Accessible Documents – especially long documents – have “structure” to allow easy navigation.



Some Common Mistakes

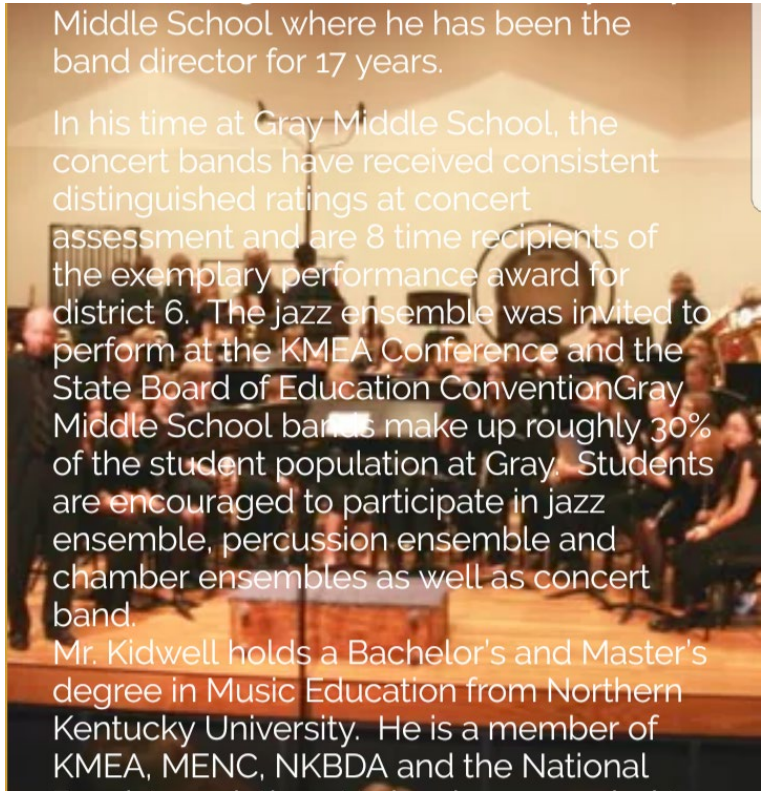
Backgrounds on documents

- Contrast
- Busy – ness
- White space

Background - contrast

Picture backgrounds

(Just in case you were ever tempted to put text that you actually wanted people to be able to read over a picture.)



Text that is a “picture”

- Sometimes, what is on the page “looks” like text – in that I can, as a sighted person, read the text.
- When the text is actually a “picture” of text, it is much more difficult to read for a person using a screen reader.
- It’s not that you can’t use “fancy text”, but the picture must have a text-equivalent.
- The software used to generate the fancy picture with embedded text may allow you to type the text in, but when you save it, it saves as a picture.